

SPACE, PLACE AND THE PAST: THE CONSTRUCTION OF
NATIONAL CINEMA AND IDENTITY IN THE CONTEMPORARY
FILM DE PATRIMOINE IN FRANCE

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Abstract

This thesis aims to identify a recent genre in French cinema, namely the *film de patrimoine*. Through a consideration of the social, cultural and economic context and textual features of this body of films, I intend to develop a critical language appropriate for the analysis of this genre. While the British heritage film can be used as a major filmic point of reference for high budget French costume dramas, I will argue that a separate theoretical model needs to be constructed in order to accommodate the national specificity of this form of film-making. My argument proceeds from the idea that the *film de patrimoine* can be distinguished by contextual and textual characteristics both of which respond to the demands and limitations of the film market in France. From a contextual perspective the production of the *film de patrimoine* is determined by the relationship between protectionist cultural imperatives and industrial strategies deployed to promote national cinema. From a textual perspective it can be said that this genre is marked by the projection of the national landscape, particularly of the South, thereby casting geography as a generic site of enunciation. In order to illustrate my argument I will examine the wider cultural discourses underpinning the *film de patrimoine* in the first instance and then provide close readings of three key films.

Clearly the underlying motivation outlined above demands that a multitude of concepts, which are clustered around the notion of the past, the nation and cinema, are given detailed consideration within a context relevant to France and to French cinematic production. The three primary areas of research and debate involved in the analysis of the contemporary French costume drama and its cultural and economic significance can be broadly

defined as heritage, national cinema and identity. Although the logic supporting the French costume drama can be regarded as a synthesis of all three, each element will be isolated in turn for careful consideration. The main theoretical point of departure will be the notion of heritage and heritage culture. In the absence of a critical debate on this subject in France, this thesis attempts to construct a set of discursive parameters relevant to the concept of 'patrimoine' which can then be considered in relation to the filmic texts analysed. Taking British heritage culture as its main referent, I analyse the significance of the past in contemporary French society, considering the recent evolution of the term 'patrimoine' and its application to an increasingly wide body of artefacts. Given that the films examined here can be seen to patrimonialise elements of the national territory it is particularly important to explore the value of heritage as expressed by the spatialisation of 'patrimoine'. Thus my analyses of *Jean de Florette* (Claude Berri, 1986), *Ridicule* (Patrice Leconte, 1996) and *Le Hussard sur le toit* (Jean-Paul Rappeneau, 1995) will determine to what extent geography acts as a marker of national identity. The textual analyses will also highlight the ways in which France and Frenchness are constructed and articulated by the narrative, the stars, the mise-en-scène and the period chosen for re-creation.

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Introduction

In this thesis I examine the relationship between the nation, the past and their visual representation in a particular form of contemporary cinema in France which I have termed the *film de patrimoine*. I intend to assess the ways in which the *film de patrimoine* or costume drama of the last two decades articulates and responds to this relationship, and thus to determine whether one can construct a unified analytical approach to this configuration of culture and economy. Clearly the underlying motivation outlined above demands that a multitude of concepts, which are clustered around the notion of the past, the nation and cinema, are given detailed consideration within a context relevant to France in the first instance and then, more specifically, to French cinematic production, as the thesis progresses.

The three primary areas of research and debate involved in the dissection of the contemporary French *film de patrimoine* and its cultural and economic significance can be broadly defined as heritage, national cinema and identity. Although, as indicated below, the logic underpinning the French *film de patrimoine* can be regarded as a synthesis of all three, it is first necessary to isolate each element for careful consideration. Thus, the course of this thesis has been determined by an initial objective of theoretical contextualisation of these issues. The first five chapters will situate these concepts within appropriate theoretical contexts with a view to creating a theoretical model relevant to French cinema. This model will then be applied to selected filmic texts in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

1. Heritage Discourses

1.1. General Critique and Terminology

The theoretical and aesthetic point of departure for this thesis is the notion of heritage. In addressing this notion one must draw largely on British critique of this area of cultural activity given that the national debates on this subject are both more evolved and more prominent in Britain than in France. The term 'heritage' has common critical currency in this country, having been used in relation to a variety of developments since the 1980s such as the growth of museum culture, trends in consumer products, clothing and interior design, and styles of production in film and television [Corner and Harvey (1991), Wright (1985), Hewison (1987), Higson (1993)].¹ Patrick Wright, Robert Hewison and many contributors to the Corner and Harvey collection have tended to focus on the manipulation of the past represented by heritage culture. This manipulation has caused concern on three levels. Firstly, the distortion and reinvention of the past constitutes misrepresentation and, more importantly, engenders a neutralised picture of the past which has been stripped of its complexities, thereby greatly diminishing the possibility of historical understanding. Secondly, while heritage can be used in tandem with the idea of modernity to ease society through a transitional phase, it has been observed by the commentators mentioned above that heritage can be viewed as a political strategy of diversion: the failings of the present (the floundering of industries and local economies) can be masked by the generation of a tourist industry predicated on nostalgic evocations of Britain of yesteryear. Thirdly, dominant images of Britain emanating from the ideologies of the Conservative party can be said to wilfully overlook the multicultural nature of contemporary British society (Craig

1991). Hence, arguments about heritage as a general cultural phenomenon are characterised by contentions of dishonesty and political manipulation.

The conspicuous lack of an equivalent debate around the idea of 'heritage' in France raises many questions. It leads one to ask whether 'heritage' is nationally and culturally particular. Is the term *patrimoine* employed in this thesis charged with similar meaning? Does it designate a parallel corpus of artefacts? Can parallel accusations be made of *patrimoine*? Clearly there is a need to clarify the terminology employed here in its national context. Unlike heritage which appears predominantly to designate the transmission of a collective past, *patrimoine* possesses two possible meanings, relating not only to the nation's heritage but also to the question of familial inheritance. The term *patrimoine* connotes the value attributed to the transference of the past at various levels in the French national context, specifically at the level of the indigenous historical tourist, the local community, the region, the state and the critical establishment. It is hoped that exploring the conceptual significance of the past at each of these levels will provide the parameters for a discussion of *patrimoine* and its eventual application to cinema.

1.2. Cinematic discourses

As the ultimate focus of analysis is cinema, it is vital to consider the filmic implications of the terms 'heritage' and *patrimoine*. Again British cultural commentators provide the basis for this discussion; film criticism in Britain has produced a set of analytical tools for the study of heritage films (Higson 1991 and 1996). Critics have identified the heritage film in Britain as a filmic form

which is characterised by nostalgic evocations of the past, an iconography informed by authenticity (in terms of the reconstruction of the past and the film's relation to the original literary text taken for adaptation) and a close connection to canonical culture. The term 'heritage' film was widely used in relation to Merchant/Ivory costume dramas of the 1980s such as *A Room with a View* (James Ivory, 1986) and subsequent films which mimicked this now classic heritage formula. It appears to be an accepted term with definite cultural and filmic points of reference.² It is used in reviews or discussions of any period film such as *Babette's Feast* (Gabriel Axel, 1987) and *Belle Epoque* (Fernando Trueba, 1992), two very different films united by their generic temporal setting of the past.³ Thus, for example, we find references to 'the Laura Ashley style of film-making' in discussions of the direction of British cinema in the 1980s and to 'heritage moments' in a review of *A Portrait of a Lady* (Jane Campion, 1997), indicating the way in which the heritage film and the expectation of a museum aesthetic has thoroughly permeated film criticism in Britain.

The use of the term *film de patrimoine* is more problematic in that it does not have the critical or industrial currency of the term applied to British films; it is a term I have used here to designate a type of cinematic production which is associated with similar discourses of nostalgia, national culture and national identity.⁴ The term 'nostalgia film' has been applied to costume dramas/period productions but this lacks precision (Powrie 1997). It does not specify a particular aesthetic, time frame or industrial significance and therefore groups together films such as *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (Roger Coggio, 1981), *La Passion Béatrice* (Bertrand Tavernier, 1987), *La Baule-les-Pins* (Diane Kurys, 1989) and *Jean de Florette* (Claude Berri, 1985) thereby subsuming stylistic

diversity, different temporal settings and various budget sizes into one category. The only criterion applied by French criticism to films discussed in this thesis is that of quality which implies a set of aesthetic choices and budgetary factors; the term *qualité* evokes a stylised type of cinema established in French film-making in the 1940s and 1950s - *la tradition de la qualité* - which displayed a preference for high production values, studio-based filming, stars and literary adaptations. The *film de patrimoine*, however, does not embrace all films set in the past; it delineates a narrow band of film-making within film production which works in tandem with, and feeds from, a distinctive set of discourses around heritage culture and cinema. In terms of the French film industry, *film de patrimoine* implies a set of economic imperatives, funding strategies and film-making style which pertain to the late 1980s and 1990s. Jack Lang actively promoted this type of film-making as *cinéma-spectacle-populaire*, hoping, as the label suggests, that big French films could lure the indigenous audience back to the cinema. It was hoped that the emphasis on size, which has emerged as a defining feature of contemporary French film production, would provide 'énormes machines susceptibles d'être assimilées à ces films anglo-saxons, synonymes d'Hollywood et de communication internationale'(Prédal 1996: 480). Thus, the term *film de patrimoine* imparts substantial information about the cultural positioning and intended performance of a film within both the film industry and within wider discourse about the transmission of identity through public and private channels. It is one of the three terms I use in this thesis which emanate from the French context. I also make use of *la nouvelle qualité* - a contemporary reworking of *la tradition de qualité* which stresses the relationship between recent productions and historical trends in French cinema

- and the superproduction which relates specifically to expensive films displaying high production values.⁵ These terms will be explored and defined in greater detail in the first part of this thesis.

The films I will analyse in this thesis have not been discussed within a coherent critical framework using the terms 'heritage' and 'heritage film' in France. Taking the critical heritage discourses examined in chapter one and the model of British heritage films outlined in chapter two, it will be possible to assess whether the *film de patrimoine*'s constituent parts follow the pattern discerned by British critics. To do this it is necessary to examine the *film de patrimoine*'s general relationship with heritage culture in the first instance, determining whether similar heritage discourses underpin the production and/or circulation of this filmic form in France. Is the popularity and expansion of heritage culture in contemporary France reflected by films such as *Ridicule*, *Le Hussard sur le toit* and *Jean de Florette*? Rather than viewing the *film de patrimoine* as an offshoot of the heritage film, can a claim be made for its independent, nationally specific status?

The heritage film is seen to be tied in very closely with the heightened importance of the past in contemporary society thereby aligning it with a more general heritage culture in Britain (Higson 1991). The mode of representation is a key feature of debates around heritage culture; as mentioned above, heritage is often correlated with the prettification and neutralisation of the past and also with a vision of the past which corresponds to the experiences of a very precise social grouping (the upper middle/upper classes in their country house settings). Therefore, in my endeavour to establish the existence of the *film de patrimoine* in France and its national specificities, I will consider the position

occupied by the past and the favoured mode of representation in this filmic form. For the heritage film the past is clearly pivotal; it informs the films made in this vein both thematically and stylistically. I will interrogate the *film de patrimoine* with a view to ascertaining whether it is the visual possibilities offered by the rich surface of the past or indeed the desire to present national history which drives the narrative. If historical interest is indeed the catalyst in the *film de patrimoine* does this affect the status of the narrative and of the visuals? Andrew Higson and Cairns Craig have commented that there is a tension between narrative and aesthetics in the heritage film whereby the narrative is at points suspended to showcase the period settings (Craig 1991 and Higson 1991). It has been argued that the emphasis on showcasing the heritage credentials results in the marginalisation of the narrative. I will consider this tension in relation to French productions with a view to identifying any nationally specific narrative/aesthetic dynamic. In addition, it has been suggested that the heritage film provides a space for present-day social concerns and anxieties to be expressed (Higson 1991). It may be revealing to draw out subtextual narratives or commentaries from the *film de patrimoine*, considering the effect produced by the collision of an iconography of nostalgia with a narrative which functions in terms both of its pastness (that is, as a canvas for retrospection and visual national affirmation) and its contemporaneity (that is, as a mediated, temporally distanced portrait of present day France).

With regard to the temporal setting of costume dramas, it can be said that archetypal British heritage films have tended to be located in the Edwardian period as this represents the last days of fast diminishing certainties

and a distinct social order. In contemplating the relevance of this factor in French costume dramas, it is equally important to reflect on the possible significance of the periods chosen for depiction in the *film de patrimoine*. Where the milieu of upper middle-class genteel society tends to be the focus of the Merchant/Ivory productions, the French films studied here appear to be more diverse in their choice of social and historical setting. When, as in the case of *Ridicule*, historical events and historical figures have been selected for the screen, one must ask why. It is also necessary to consider the position of the historical background in the hierarchy of representation: does history merely provide the opportunity for detailed period reconstruction as it does in the Merchant/Ivory films or conversely are the visual pleasures afforded by the past secondary to its cultural significance?

In investigating the question of heritage it is necessary to consider the visual style of the high budget costume drama as aesthetics are vital in defining the heritage film. Firstly, do the camera movements, camera angles, lighting, editing and sound either individually or collectively connote an explicitly national form of film-making? Are these elements used to emphasise the nation or national identity?

2. National Identity and National Cinema

Benedict Anderson contends that the nation is a cultural artefact; the cultural apparatus of a country constructs and perpetuates the idea of the nation and of nationhood (Anderson 1983: 4). The nation is 'imagined' and 'invented' through a set of conceptual points of reference which create a sense of tradition and continuity. In relation to the films studied here it is essential to pose the

question of cinema's contribution to the imagining and transmission of the nation. Can the *film de patrimoine* be seen to reinforce an established discourse on national identity or perhaps to circulate an alternative version of Frenchness? To what extent is the nation stereotyped or invented through the choices of imagery, filmic form and content? The heritage film has been accused of presenting national identity from a narrowly circumscribed, monocultural perspective. This criticism leads one to consider how Frenchness is presented here. The films under discussion facilitate the exploration of this issue from a variety of angles; *Jean de Florette* highlights the conflict between regional and urban identities, *Le Hussard sur le toit* between French and the non-French other, *Ridicule* between progressive and regressive versions of Frenchness as expressed through the socially aware aristocrats and the court respectively. These two areas of research have been fused here because certain critical positions cast the representation of national identity as one of the major defining features of national cinema (Elsaesser 1989; Higson 1991; O'Regan 1996). In addition, the question of national cinema and of heritage cinema are inextricably linked; critical literature inevitably invokes the spectre of one when discussing the other (Higson 1991).

The relationship between these two concepts is by no means pre-determined; one can discern a certain overlap in intention and form between these two spheres of cinematic production. This overlap gives rise to the following questions: to what extent is heritage cinema a type of national cinema? Can the aesthetics of the heritage film be regarded as an explicitly 'national' style of film-making? Do other factors such as audience figures, narrative content, filmic style and cost mark the *film de patrimoine* as national

cinema? The subject of national cinema inevitably involves a consideration of the effect of that global point of reference - American cinema. Therefore the relationship between the *film de patrimoine* and the dominance of American cinema at the French box-office must be investigated, exploring the influence of Jack Lang's vision of *cinéma-spectacle-populaire* in the production and promotion of the high budget costume drama in the 1980s and 1990s.

In the films chosen for consideration in this thesis the question of the representation of the national space, particularly the rural space, is central. It is necessary to consider the role of geographical loci in the construction of identity in the *film de patrimoine* for two reasons. Firstly, heritage film criticism has observed that the preferred physical setting of the heritage film is the rural South East of England inhabited by the middle-classes (Craig 1991 and Higson 1993). This location can be said to convey, along with the social groups portrayed, a specific vision of Britain. Indeed, this projection of Britain echoes the predominant construction of this country circulated by political rhetoric for the greater part of this century: as Stanley Baldwin once commented, 'To me England is the country and the country is England'.⁶ The landscape of Southern England has been used as a site of national enunciation; in literature as in politics this specific vision of the countryside has been utilised to convey quintessential Englishness. Can a similar observation be made of the *film de patrimoine*? It is also important to establish the hierarchy of value attributed to geographical representation, looking at the relationship between the provincial environment (the landscape and the village) and the urban environment (the city and the court), determining whether the filmic language and visual style negatively or positively emphasise one context rather than another and to what

effect. Secondly, in the context of French cinematic traditions, the preference for natural, external locations in the *film de patrimoine* is significant given the strictly studio-based nature of its generic forerunner, *la tradition de la qualité*.

In terms of the actors appearing in the *film de patrimoine*, one can pose the question of human embodiment of the nation in the form of national stars such as Gérard Depardieu, Isabelle Adjani and Juliette Binoche. In the case of *Ridicule* in particular, it is also valid to assess the extent to which the female characters (Fanny Ardant and Judith Godrèche) are representative of certain regressive and progressive versions of Frenchness. Moreover, through a consideration of gendered movement within *Ridicule* and *Le Hussard sur le toit* in particular, I examine the representation of femininities in the period film, assessing the way in which female characters embody a contemporary form of femininity which is also tied into notions of French national identity.

3. Methodology and structure of thesis

In this thesis I attempt to construct a nationally specific theoretical framework for the analysis of the *film de patrimoine*. This aim has clearly influenced the organisation of my work; this thesis contains two parts which can be broadly described as theoretical and analytical. In the first part, which contains five chapters, I will explore the concepts pertaining to this genre - the nation, identity, the past and heritage - as well as the economic realities of the French film industry. In the second part, comprising of three chapters of textual analysis, I will read three films using this theoretical structure. Analysing these films in terms of narrative content, characterisation and visual style will enable me to both verify and question my approach to this genre.

Given the contextualisation necessary for a discussion of the *film de patrimoine*, chapter one will concentrate on the heritage debate in Britain and discourses around *patrimoine* in France. This chapter will provide an overview of the evolution of heritage culture in both countries, examining definitions and cultural associations of the terms. Here I will address the problematics raised by the question of re-creating the past in diverse contexts such as in museums, in the tourist industry and in political rhetoric. The main bone of contention highlighted by critics is the loss of historical consciousness brought about by heritage culture whereby our relationship with history is no longer critical, given the sanitised projection of the past (Wright 1985 and Hewison 1987). This analysis will also centre on an examination of heritage culture as a symptom of nostalgia and as a displaced forum for the expression of concerns about contemporary society. In the French context the rural space can be interpreted as a particularly potent symbol of societal anxieties; I argue that it expresses nostalgia for a recent past - that is, France prior to the rural exodus of the post-war period - and also denotes the rise in green issues in the wake of May 1968 and in the 1980s. Moreover, the rural space can be read as a vector of national identity, visually imparting a sense of the national territory through a very localised but nonetheless domestically and internationally recognised and idealised site.

Chapter two will move the discussion of heritage culture into the field of cinema, delineating the heritage film debate which arose in Britain in the early 1990s. In the first instance this involves exploring the concept of genre in order to ascertain whether the heritage film does exist as a separate filmic category. I will then examine heritage texts in terms of aesthetics and narrative, drawing

out the characteristics of the films in question. I will also review critiques of the British films which offer explanations for the rise of the heritage film in Britain and suggest the ways in which heritage films constitute national cinema. The question of national cinema and national identity will be touched upon but expanded into fuller analyses in chapters three and four. With the aim of contextualising the *film de patrimoine*, I raise the notion of quality film-making and therefore *la tradition de la qualité*, a filmic form associated with the 1940s and 1950s in France which achieved market differentiation through recourse to high production values, high budgets, stars and high levels of government funding.

The issue of national identity will have arisen several times in the course of the first two chapters in relation to heritage culture and the search for a stable identity in the post-industrial, postmodern age and in relation to national film industries' attempts to foster a distinctive and successful film product in their domestic markets. In chapter three I offer various perspectives on the concepts of the nation, national identity and the French nation in particular. I situate this hypothesis historically, indicating the way in which nations were originally shaped and governed by religious and dynastic forces. These systems of belief and rule have been gradually replaced and superseded by other formations; at the present time processes such as globalisation require the reconceptualisation of the national space and the renegotiation of power relations between local and national and national and global. Although I assess these formations from political and economic standpoints I consider the most relevant approach to be from the angle of the nation as a cultural form, arguing that cinema is another agency which can give cohesion to the nation through its

visual representation of difference. This point ties chapter three in closely with chapter four which is concerned with national cinemas and French national cinema. Cinema can indeed fulfil a nationalising function in its construction and projection of the nation (Higson 1991 and O'Regan 1996). It can provide a sense of history and geography through its narratives and visual representation and cultural validation of the national territory. Cinema as an agent of national cohesion raises the dichotomy of culture and commerce often invoked in this context whereby national cinemas are frequently perceived as high cultural, qualitative and marginal and Hollywood - the major referent in national cinema - as the ubiquitous, successful and popular form (O'Regan 1996). I argue in this chapter that the French *film de patrimoine* blurs this dichotomy through its recourse to a cultural mode of production in terms of content and an industrial mode in terms of exhibition, distribution and often budget size. Moreover, the culture/commerce discourse is further problematised by government intervention and funding. The question of funding strategies and state attitudes to film-making is raised and addressed in chapter five. In this chapter I consider official attitudes to cinematic culture in France and illustrate the strong correlation between national identity and cinema at the heart of government policies of the 1980s and 1990s. Within the parameters of this discussion I am able to highlight the way in which the cultural and industrial modes of production are fused through the medium of state intervention. I contend that the *film de patrimoine* is the tangible expression of these intersecting discourses; this filmic form exhibits the hallmarks of national cinema in content and style. To determine the veracity of this argument and other points raised in the earlier stages of this thesis, I will undertake close textual analysis of *Jean*

de Florette, *Ridicule* and *Le Hussard sur le toit*. In chapters six, seven and eight I examine the way in which these films encode French national identity through characterisation. I pay particular attention to the characters of Mathilde and Madame de Blayac in *Ridicule* and Pauline de Théus in *Le Hussard sur le toit* because they can be seen to articulate a contemporary version of femininity which pertains specifically to France. In *Jean de Florette* I concentrate on the character of Jean who appears to embody the nostalgic drive and idealism in his desire to establish a self-sufficiency in the house of his childhood. Moreover, he can be regarded as an expression of current social and ecological concerns. Drawing on the effects of globalisation outlined in chapters two and three where I suggest that this process has led to the accrued significance of the local space, I underline the patrimonialisation of the national, rural space, suggesting that the regional has been used to connote the nation. I will return to these points once again in the conclusion where I hope to integrate fully the theoretical and the textual analyses in support of my hypothesis.

¹ Heritage is used in a variety of contexts usually to designate an element of artifice in the reconstruction of the past. The past re-created is often based on the idea of a rural England. Hence we find references to Burberry's Laura Ashley and Wedgwood's 'green and pleasant brand' which makes use of the formulaic heritage imagery - the country house idyll - to create a brand image anchored in Englishness. It is used with frequency in relation to a particular style of reconstruction evident in contemporary Britain. Thus, in a review of the film *The Full Monty*, film critic Matthew Sweet refers to one location as a 'heritage pub', while in a piece on the building of faux classical shopping centres, Jonathan Glancey refers to 'heritage-style street lamps'. In both cases the term is used with disdain. Charlotte Brunsdon refers to 'heritage export' when discussing the label of quality applied to 'Brideshead Revisited' and 'The Jewel in the Crown'. See Robert Gray (1995) 'A green and pleasant brand' *Marketing* 20 July, p. 23. Film reviews in section 2 of *the Independent*, 31st August 1997 and 'Tear down terraces, shopping centres, the lot' in *the Independent*, 10th January 1997. Charlotte Brunsdon (1997) *Screen Tastes: Soap Opera to Satellite Dishes* London and New York: Routledge.

² See note 1.

³ In the entry under 'heritage cinema in Europe' in the G. Vincendeau (ed) (1995) *Encyclopedia of European cinema* London: BFI/Cassell the label of heritage is applied to a wide range of films from *My Left Foot* (Jim Sheridan, 1989), *Rouge Baiser* (Véra Belmont, 1985) and *Rosa Luxemburg* (Margarethe von Trotta, 1986).

⁴ I have only seen the term *le film de patrimoine* used on one occasion by the trade magazine *Le Film Français* in relation to costume dramas. In this context it was used in the industrial sense, designating films which had 'une image de cinéma d'exportation'. The term *patrimoine* was not

associated with any wider discourse other than that of producing films for successful exhibition in Europe. *Le Film Français* listed the *film de patrimoine*'s characteristics as stars, costumes, settings, budget, and high visibility distribution. *Le Film Français* no2583 3 November 1995: 24.

⁵ Superproduction is the most commonly used term applied to this type of film-making. I have come across in it reference to films such as *Le Hussard sur le toit* which was described as a superproduction 'à la française' in one review. See Pierre de Gasquet (1995) 'La plus chère des superproductions 'à la française' *Les Echos* 20 September. Ginette Vincendeau also uses this term in relation to films such as *La Reine Margot* (Patrice Chéreau, 1994) and *La Fille de D'Artagnan* (Bertrand Tavernier, 1994). In an article in *Sight and Sound* she comments that 'the French heritage film adopts Hollywood-style 'super-production' values while establishing its difference through historical subject-matter and language'. This citation illustrates the critical tendency to view the *film de patrimoine* through the British heritage film and in relation to American cinema. See Vincendeau (1995).

⁶ The formation of a coherent image of the nation anchored in the rural idyll is also evident in literature published from 1918 onwards. As Sophie Breese points out in her article 'In Search of Englishness; in Search of Votes' many texts (ranging from fiction, to guide books and educational texts) published in the interwar years firmly situated Englishness and national unity in a nostalgic image of the countryside. This locus of national identity was given credence through references to history, heritage and traditional literature. (Breese in Arnold, Davies, Ditchfield 1998).

Chapter One: Heritage and *Patrimoine*: definitions and debates

In this chapter the growth of heritage culture and the meaning of 'heritage' will be examined within the British and French national contexts. In the opening sections the British case comes under scrutiny, with an analysis of the literature pertaining to the emergence and the legitimisation of heritage in Britain in the 1980s. The academic literature considered here is almost exclusively anti-heritage with the exception of Raphael Samuel's *Theatres of Memory*¹. This emphasis is an accurate reflection of heritage debate which is largely fuelled by a cohesive body of anti-heritage arguments. The main exponents of such views are Patrick Wright, Robert Hewison, Sylvia Harvey and John Corner whose contributions to the debate will be reviewed below. Although both sides of the debate examine similar issues, for example nostalgia, identity and the effects of modernity, it is evident that the anti-heritage analysis has a markedly different focus from that of Samuel who examines the issue from the perspective of the visitor/consumer rather than from the perspective of the governmental and entrepreneurial creators of heritage culture. Samuel may not have provided empirical data for his hypothesis but he can nonetheless be credited with introducing a vital component into an otherwise narrowly circumscribed debate. Taken as a whole, this analysis sets the parameters for the discussion of the heritage film in chapter two and also provides critical tools for an assessment of French heritage films which lack a national debate of their own.

The French debate on *patrimoine* differs from its British counterpart in that there is a paucity of literature exhibiting a critical attitude towards this

subject. While there are four main critical texts to be considered in the British context, the French debate is more difficult to separate according to specific texts with the exception of Jean-Michel Leniaud's *L'utopie française: essai sur le patrimoine* (1992). This text offers a comprehensive overview of its subject matter coupled with sociological and political analysis. This text is also notable as Leniaud is the only French critic to mention the British concept of heritage. Where most French texts take one particular area for examination,² Leniaud approaches the issue in very general terms, tracing its history and its contemporary appropriation. Therefore the latter part of this chapter takes *L'utopie française* as a core text and also considers the less central contributions of other writers in this field.

While similar issues are raised by the notion of heritage and *patrimoine*, there are, however, national specificities which need to be illuminated. One major specificity is the question of rural space. Given its centrality in the construction of the national past one must consider the particular meanings attributed to it in French society. The idea of the national rural space has particular implications in contemporary France for three reasons. Firstly, the rural exodus occurred comparatively late in France, continuing well into the post-war period. This process and the changes it engendered therefore form part of the nation's recent shared memory. Secondly, the French rural landscape occupies a considerable percentage of the nation's overall landmass.³ Thirdly, the rise of ecological movements in the 1970s and 1980s placed the rural space in the public spotlight.

Section A: Heritage Culture in Britain

1. The Emergence of Heritage: Political discourses of the 1980s and the misuse of history

'Heritage' is widely considered to be a largely inauthentic and commercial project and therefore at variance with an accurate, verifiable rendering of history. It has been tarnished by associations with Thatcherism, tourism and 1980s entrepreneurialism. Attempts to marry the two in the shape of museums or heritage centres have met with fierce criticism; Britain, it is feared, will succumb to the noxious influence of Disney and become one large theme park (Zukin 1989: 1). There is a consensus amongst left-wing critics that history is being 'bent into something called Heritage whose commodity value runs from tea towels to country house' (Zukin 1989: 1). In the light of this commodification, the 'history' presented for display by the heritage industry is both politically suspect and historically incorrect.

I will consider the political and economic context from which heritage emerged with such potency in the 1980s. The term 'heritage' is generally believed to have entered linguistic usage in the mid 1970s, gaining common currency in the wake of The European Architectural Heritage year in 1975.⁴ Robert Hewison argues that 'heritage' did not appear as a phenomenon until the onset of economic malaise in the 1980s, an idea which is shared by other critics (Hewison 1987): this assumption underpins Patrick Wright's work, *On Living in an Old Country* (1985), and the subsequent heritage debate which was heavily informed by his seminal critique. Patrick Wright closely aligns heritage with Thatcherism, outlining the problematic nature of heritage when it is used as an ideological concept to promote and validate reactionary and

regressive politics. The notion of heritage which Wright defines as particular to the 1980s is one which has been intentionally juxtaposed with modernisation by a government eager to conceal national decline. Wright argues that this particular mobilisation of heritage has contaminated views about modernisation, creating a counter-progressive discourse which has impaired our ability to conceive of or to confront the future. In his view the term heritage has also been tainted in this process: although environmental and historical preservation can stem from left-wing initiatives, the rearticulation of the past in order to give credence to the Thatcherite view of England has led to the derogation of heritage which is often associated with vulgar commercialism and staunch right-wing ideology. 'Heritage' is therefore perceived, Wright comments, as

the historicized image of an instinctively conservative establishment (Wright 1985: 47).

Heritage, in Wright's view, is a synthetic, selective and inert version of the past produced by a state which aims to naturalise its own manufactured image of a homogeneous national past. While it is contended that a community can only truly construct its identity through an awareness of history, it is also possible to argue that national identity does not evolve organically: history is consciously and often artfully enlisted to forge a desired form of identity which will serve particular ends:

Communities have been known to survive without a sense of history, others with a number of competing identities. Thus when History is pushed forward as creator of identity, it is not offering identity in the abstract, but a distinctive identity. Indeed the very purpose of identity-creation through History is to confer a sense of distinctness, to differentiate and exclude. The intensity of the passions generated by the process of forging any particular identity confirms that this cannot be achieved in a benign and neutral manner (Furedi 1992: 63) ⁵

The key words in this citation are exclusion and neutrality. There is a certain exclusionary strategy involved in the process of selecting suitable episodes from the past to build an authoritative, politically-serviceable history. In colonising the past for its own political ends, the Right in the 1980s can be deemed guilty of stripping the past of all its contradictions and complexities and, as a result, neutralising it. This process has also had the effect of abstracting and decontextualising the past: presenting the past as a concluded narrative robs it of any contemporary relevance, which, given the importance of stories from the past in everyday life as discussed in section four, can be detrimental to our everyday historical consciousness.

Wright also highlights the role of modernity in weakening the relationship between the past and present. Firstly, capitalisation and industrialisation have brought about extensive changes. Secondly, on a less tangible level, society has also experienced the freeing of morality and knowledge from the constraints of religion⁶. This freeing, he contends, has been perceived as dislocating. Science may have provided a world view to replace that of religion but it has not offered a system of values. The pragmatic, rational approach of science can only go some way towards explaining social conventions and morals and not dictate them. Moreover, if the world is explained through scientific inquiry and not through the traditional and sometimes mysterious narratives of religion, then the role of everyday life as the holder of meaning is diminished even further: following the demise of religion in Western societies, Wright argues, meaning is extracted and conferred in the 'institutional', official sphere of science thereby reducing the importance of personal or collective experience.

It can be argued, therefore, that museums have a significant role to play in the post-religious age, providing the nation with a past and a history from which to construct its identity (Hewison 1987). Hewison contends that museums are central to our society's ability to perceive itself historically: they enable a society to understand the present day in relation to the past. Society, unsettled by unprecedented rates of change and the disintegration of a once powerful conceptual religious apparatus, turns to narratives of the past for reassurance which it receives in the sense of continuity with the past and tradition imparted by these narratives. Museums are able to provide this reassurance given their position as official organs which construct and present images and narratives of the past. This status validates the authenticity of the spectacle of the past on display. Hewison's arguments are echoed by other academics writing on the subject of contemporary museum culture. Referring to the writing of Antonio Gramsci, Lianne McTavish comments that museums are:

institutions of civil society...[C]ivil society creates hegemony, or the manufacture of consent through the production of cultural and moral systems that legitimate the existing social order...As part of civil society, museums participate in the way society is ordered and governed, although often without easily discernible links with politics...as part of public culture, museums are places for defining who people are and how they should act and places for challenging those definitions (McTavish 1998: 172).

2. Nostalgia and the stabilising effect of the past

In contrast to the unsteady effects of deeply altered work practices and social structures and the disempowerment caused by the removal of knowledge production from the arena of everyday life, the past offers certain utopian comforts. Ironically, as Hewison points out, to indulge in a nostalgic

idyll of the past does not necessarily signify the reinvigoration of historical consciousness. On the contrary, in keeping with the entropic nature of heritage culture, the contemporary nostalgic longing for the past does not proceed from a critical perspective. There are parallels to be drawn here between entertainment and heritage: both project utopian desires and both are forms of spectacle. They are also leisure activities which are characterised by a contradiction between verisimilitude and the unreal. In his article 'Entertainment and Utopia' Richard Dyer touches on these issues in relation to musicals, pointing to the escapist possibilities offered by musicals which are structured around the recovery of utopia (Dyer 1981: 29). Utopia here is defined as

...a world permanently without strife, poverty, constraint, stultifying labour, irrational authority, sensual deprivation (George Kateb quoted in Dyer 1981: 23).

He examines the interplay between the representational and the non-representational - a tension which manifests itself in the context of heritage consumption; depictions of the past must have a certain grounding in lived experience but can also deviate into the unreal, supplying an improved version of the real. In the critiques of heritage culture offered by Patrick Wright and Robert Hewison it is often argued that heritage exhibits display a neutralised and sanitised image of the past, eliminating the elements of labour and poverty, thereby retrospectively codifying the past as a better place than the present but also, crucially, than the past as a real lived experience. The utopian sensibilities Dyer isolates in musicals are strongly reminiscent of those underpinning heritage culture: although this genre does not present models of a utopian world, these sensibilities are predicated on a set of

oppositions whereby abundance, energy, intensity, transparency and community are in diametric opposition to scarcity, exhaustion, dreariness, manipulation and fragmentation.

This latter set of categories from Dyer's schema correlates with the reasons offered for the emergence of heritage. Given the shifting social, cultural and national points of reference caused by accelerated rates of change (see section three), the projection of the past as utopia can be seen, as Dyer suggests, as a form of escapism where the imagined past is constructed as a site of stability, distinct identity and well defined modes of social interaction:

The impulse to preserve the past is part of the impulse to preserve the self. Without knowing where we have been, it is difficult to know where we are going. The past is the foundation of individual and collective identity, objects from the past are the source of significance as cultural symbols. Continuity between the past and the present creates a sense of sequence out of aleatory chaos and, since change is inevitable, a stable system of ordered meanings enables us to cope with both innovation and decay (Hewison 1987: 47).

The preservation of identity, whether national, social or generational, explains why we cling so tenaciously to the idea of the past as utopia. The past, as Hewison outlines, shores up selfhood and nationhood in a variety of ways. It can be said to smooth our passage through a period of rapid change which is often believed to herald a total break with the past and, at times, the onset of economic decline. Since the 1970s, for example, the combined sense of dislocation and helplessness caused on the one hand by the decline (high levels of unemployment, the decay of the inner city and the faltering welfare system) and on the other by progress (the exponential growth of technology in the shape of computers) have added credence to the idea of the past as a better, safer place where individual and collective identities were clearly

defined. Given that the onslaught of change is experienced as an ever-widening chasm between the past and the present, identity is perceived as under threat: Hewison maintains that identity is contingent on the interrelationship of the contemporary and history and therefore once this connection is severed it is difficult to conceive of a cohesive sense of self. The past, or more correctly a form of the past, is called upon to reaffirm our links to these firmly anchored identities. Nostalgia in this instance is not unlike the spectacle of heritage in that they both invite the nostalgic gaze: according to Fred Davis, the nostalgia experienced in response to an uncertain present tends to erase the unpleasant aspects of the past (Davis 1979).

3. Heritage as industry in the 1990s and the effects of globalisation

Where Wright and Hewison could locate heritage culture within an economy in decline, Corner and Harvey were compelled to acknowledge the correlation between growth in the financial sector and heritage culture in their 1991 essay 'Mediating tradition and modernity'. It would indeed be difficult to ignore the realities of the tourist industry and the significant part played by the carefully packaged past within it. This industry has come to yield considerable economic fruits in the 1990s: in 1992 tourism accounted for 5.6 per cent of Britain's gross domestic product and 6 per cent of the workforce.⁷ In terms of visitors to heritage attractions, the number rose from 52 million in 1977 to 68 million in 1992. Moreover, it is predicted that the industry will multiply twofold by 2005.⁸

The growth of this sector can be explained by the fact that historical tourism has been under pressure from the same market and ideological

forces as the rest of the economy since the 1980s. Under the impetus of Conservative government, free-market values have permeated not only the economy but also culture to the point where historical tourism has become an economic as well as a cultural activity (Jameson 1991). This attitude to tourism as a commodity is clearly demonstrated by the Confederation of British Industry who stated that Britain should

...offer a superb product to customers, and provide better quality and value than our competitors (Bowen 1994).

It is possible to regard tourism as more than just the commodification of place: it can also be viewed as

...an ideological framing of history, nature and tradition; a framing that has the power to reshape culture and nature to its own needs (MacCannell 1992: 1).⁹

In the context of the 1980s, tourism, especially heritage tourism, has certainly been elevated from a leisure activity to an activity which has shaped history not to suit its own needs but those of enterprise culture.¹⁰ The heritage and enterprise couplet at the heart of Corner and Harvey's article certainly points to the close relationship between economy and culture, exploring the way in which heritage has enabled Britain to confront national redevelopment. Hewison's description of heritage as a 'social emollient' resonates here: the myth of inheritance is resurrected to ease the nation through a technologically and economically turbulent phase (Hewison 1987: 47). In this particular equation, Corner and Harvey suggest that heritage and enterprise are fused together to promote the growth of enterprise culture, producing a complex and powerful symbiosis of tradition and innovation in which the past is rearticulated in the modern present in order to envisage the future. The heritage/enterprise couplet responds to the challenge presented by

innovation, ingeniously combining both the fear of change and its antidote, that is economic modernisation packaged with a sense of historical continuity.

In the 1990s the most unsettling consequence of a modern present is the phenomenon of globalisation which has necessitated a rethinking of the relationships between individual nation states and also of the interface between the national and the global. While globalisation and national identity will be addressed in detail in chapter three, here I will explore the implications of the former for the construction and value of the past in contemporary society. Globalisation is a source of disquiet for, despite the massive changes it has introduced, it is an abstract and intangible process. As the motor which has facilitated globalisation, computer technology defies traditional concepts of space and time; the Internet, for example, allows disembodied communication and access to information regardless of geographical boundaries. Progress, particularly in terms of computer culture, resists conceptualisation; it is no longer experienced visually.¹¹ This may explain the desire to 'witness' the past and the attendant trend in museology to display history in an increasingly visual and interactive manner. Thus, it can be said that an impression of the past is imparted through sensory rather than factual information: where museums presented a single relic supported by accompanying data, the newer heritage centres organised their objects within naturalised *mise-en-scène*, distilling the past into uncomplicated snapshots. This tendency to impart the past in one glance could be deemed wholly postmodern. Nigel Wheale has argued that the predominance of the visual media, especially television, in contemporary society has significantly diminished our receptivity to written stimuli and also reduced our attention

span ¹². One could suggest, therefore, that the heritage industry caters for the quickly distracted, visually-stimulated visitor by articulating the past of a particular object/objects through one complete scene.

More significantly, globalisation has transformed the flow of information and the structures of finance, moving these areas out of the sphere of national control and into the international arena thereby effectively overriding the nation as the centre of control. In the wake of such geographical and cultural reconfigurations a new sensitivity regarding national identity has come to the fore: it has become increasingly difficult to conceive of Britain, especially of its future, and Britishness in an atmosphere of Europeanisation and/or encroaching universality. It is possible to detect, consequently, a motive for the pathological interest in the past and history which surfaced most visibly in the 1980s. A clear manifestation of concern for the nation's heritage appeared strategically in 1981, between the two Heritage Acts and in the run up to the Falklands conflict. *Brideshead Revisited* (Granada, 1981) was perhaps the most striking televisual interpretation of national nostalgia for that most English setting, the country-house. Sidestepping the issue of mutating Britishness which denotes a multiplicity of regional and ethnic identities and histories, *Brideshead* instead focuses on Englishness, capturing the quintessential fantasies of national identity:

...home counties, country house, public school, white flannel, rules, and games; Edwardian England, Decline of Empire, Privilege and Treason; male bonding, female hysteria (Elsaesser 1993: 67).

Englishness as constructed in *Brideshead* and *The Jewel in the Crown* (Granada, 1984) is very much divorced from contemporary Britain; it is inflected by class and imperialism (Brunsdon 1997: 143). It is built around a

set of codes determined by established upper-middle-class tastes which are deemed to be synonymous with quality (Brunsdon 1997). The image of England formulated in these two series suggests unity and permanence portrayed through the high-cultural markers of the past, namely art, the architecture associated with aristocracy and learning (Castle Howard and Oxbridge) and the pastoral idyll. Although the question of national identity is discussed at length in chapter three, here one can comment that encroaching globalisation, Europeanisation and the destabilisation of Britain's position within supranational hierarchies of power appears to have coincided with if not engendered the projection of national identity from a very localised and class-oriented perspective. In relation to television series made in the early 1970s, Raymond Williams remarked that the programmes tended to be set in the past. He explained this tendency by commenting that 'the past is all art and buildings, the present all people and confusion' (Brunsdon 1997). This observation is equally applicable to British television and film production in the 1980s where this trend in visual representation appears to have persisted. I will consider trends in representing the past in film production in France both historically in chapter two and then within a contemporary context in chapter five. I will examine the way in which the continued and indeed heightened presence of the one truly global visual referent - American cinema - has led to the reinvigoration of the costume drama in France, assessing the particular focus of filmic projections of the past.

4. Heritage and the loss of historical consciousness

The concept of historical consciousness is central to Patrick Wright's assessment of Britain's involvement with the past. Drawing on Agnes Heller's hypothesis in *A Theory of History* (1982), everyday historical consciousness can be viewed as an extension of historicity which, as a conceptual tool, enables society to 'act on itself and determine the order of its representations' (Wright 1985: 14). Where historicity functions at the level of society as a system, everyday historical consciousness is more aligned to the dilemmas faced by individuals in daily life which Heller neatly summarises as the common questions 'where have we come from, what are we, where are we going?'. In response to these questions posed by day-to-day situations and social interaction, we are aware of history and its potential to cast light on present difficulties encountered by the individual. Pivotal to everyday historical consciousness is the role of the narrative¹³: not unlike the limited number of scenarios drawn on by the fairy tale described by Vladimir Propp, a well-established stock of situational and behavioural paradigms has traditionally been available to indicate motives, causes and possible outcomes in a given situation. The narrative provides a means of locating and anchoring the self within society for, as Graham Dawson has observed in his analysis of the role of narrative in the construction of masculinities:

The narrative resource of a culture - its repertoire of shared and recognized forms - ... functions as a currency of recognizable social identities.¹⁴

The narrative supplies the individual and the group with 'a degree of continuity and composure', enabling experience to be moulded and organised.¹⁵ As a consequence of modernity, however, new situations have arisen which cannot

be contextualised or explained through their similarity to the past and subsequently our stories cease to relate to the present. Thus historical memory and, by implication, everyday life are displaced and devalued in the hierarchy of meaning.

Hewison's main point of criticism similarly centres on the waning relevance of history (Hewison 1987). The rise of heritage as a popular concept has modified our perception of history, presenting history as finished, a fossil which requires preservation and not as an ongoing, dynamic and dialectical process. The picture we favour is by no means a factual representation of the past but rather an idyll which we have constructed to fuel our contempt for the present and satiate our nostalgic appetite. Heritage is, then, a selective and wholly contrived rendering of the past; it

... is bogus history. It has enclosed the late twentieth century into a belljar into which no ideas can enter, and, just as crucially, from which none can escape (Hewison 1987: 144).

Just as society may crave a hermetically sealed world, distorted and reconstituted but, most importantly, free from the contamination of our post-lapsarian, post-industrial state, the heritage industry is equally keen to recondition the past, expunging its contradictory, unpleasant and therefore less saleable aspects. Consequently, to suit the imperatives of commercialism, the industrial past put on display by museums eschews the realities of working life to the point where the spectacle no longer refers to a reality: the industrial museum tends to 'clean up' working life for display and in the process the connection between the display and actual lived experience diminishes.

5. Heritage and Postmodernity

Given the eventual focus on cinema in this thesis I will consider the way in which the heritage industry relates to the question of the visual representation of heritage in culture more generally. Robert Hewison touches on this point in his later essay in the Corner/Harvey collection (1991) where he contextualises the widening distance between the sign (the lived experience) and the referent (the past put on display by the heritage industry). Of the three theories of spectacle which Hewison cites,¹⁶ Baudrillard offers perhaps the most methodical dissection of the image's four phase progression from reflection to simulation whereby the link between the referent and its representation is progressively weakened. At the fourth and final phase, the link dissolves completely and the image becomes its own discrete, independent entity

...it [the image] bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum (Hewison 1991: 174).

The dynamic of the spectacle is such that it produces its own vision of history which is then lent weight and credibility by museums.

Again the question of historical consciousness is raised by this craving for knowledge of the past given that this desire does not ultimately give rise to a greater understanding of history. History, if anything, is becoming increasingly remote as heritage culture continues to project a contemporary image of the past.¹⁷ We can perhaps attribute this impoverished relationship with historical knowledge to the way in which the heritage industry uses the past. Using the example of Gothic revivalism in architecture to illustrate a creative, progressive dialogue possible between the past and the present, Hewison suggests that the current recycling of the past by the heritage

industry has a somewhat sinister agenda: heritage does not produce renewal or innovation through reference to an earlier tradition but instead it wilfully moulds the past into a useable, economically rewarding version of history (Hewison 1987). While there is exchange between the past and movements such as Gothic revivalism or neo-classicism, our relationship with history is neither dynamic nor critical. Moreover, the individual's perception of history is not only dulled but also denied by representations of a definitive collective past. On this point Hewison differs greatly from the more mitigating views on the effects of displaying history expressed by commentators such as David Lowenthal who, in his study of the past in contemporary society, claims that people visit historic sites to 'share recall of the familiar, communal recollection enhancing personal reminiscence' (Lowenthal 1985: 8). Here quite the reverse is suggested - personal reminiscence is all but erased by authoritative reconstructions. The quintessential locus of heritage for the 1980s, the country house, and the industrial museum are both guilty of fabricating an account of the past: where the industrial museum wipes away all traces of hard labour in its depiction of working life, the country house projects its own fiction - a highly romanticised vision of an aristocratic, rural past - as reality.

Here there are strong echoes of Frederic Jameson's discussion of pastiche and parody in relation to the past (Jameson 1991). This non-critical relationship with the past suggested by Hewison appears to corroborate Jameson's assertion that the postmodern condition favours the neutral, blank form of pastiche. While the imitative act is implicit in both parody and pastiche, the latter lacks the satirical, humorous edge and the ability to convey originality which Jameson attributes to the former. Parody is perhaps not

possible given the heterogeneous nature of postmodern society: in such a society the 'norm', crucial to the deviation involved in parody, is lost. As he comments:

For with the collapse of the high-modernist ideology of style - what is unique, as unmistakable as your own fingerprints, as incomparable as your own body (the very source, for an early Roland Barthes, of stylistic invention and innovation) - the producers of culture have nowhere to turn but to the past: the imitation of dead styles, speech through all the masks and voices stored up in the imaginary museum of a now global culture (Jameson 1991: 17-18).

It can be argued, therefore, that the heritage spectacle is a form of pastiche based on the premise that both function in a similar fashion.¹⁸ In both the critical drive has been subjugated in the indiscriminate recycling of the past. The conception of time anterior to the present is also crude and intentionally unspecific; history is conceived of as an amorphous entity, an endless wealth of material for use where any sensitivity to the subtleties of historical development is markedly absent.

6. The Validation of Heritage Culture: Raphael Samuel's *Theatres of Memory*

In contrast to the critiques outlined above, Raphael Samuel asserts the validity of heritage culture in Britain. Samuel maintains that heritage should be celebrated as the expression of popular memory rather than reviled for its supposedly reactionary ideological associations. Heritage culture, it is argued, is a valuable element of the left-wing academic project of rewriting history from below and does not merit the frequently invoked right-wing and therefore overwhelmingly negative associations. In supporting his argument he pays particular attention to left-wing activism, claiming that heritage owes much of

its dynamism to both middle class radicalism and Green politics of preservationism. As a tract of staunch defence, *Theatres of Memory* presents heritage as a positive force in British culture. Samuel repeatedly stresses the democratising power of heritage, its ability to dissolve class boundaries by emphasising place rather than social status as the locus of inheritance and also to rewrite history from a popular base. On this point there is a degree of conflation with Corner and Harvey in that both assert that formerly eclipsed social groups can forge a space for themselves in history through the assertion of their heritage. Although heritage is deemed guilty of diminishing historical consciousness, it is suggested in *Theatres of Memory* that the hegemonic view of culture can be challenged by the emergence of alternative histories.

Samuel also offers an alternative chronology for the emergence of heritage, aligning it with a period of prosperity and technological progress rather than with the climate of decline suggested by other critics. He ascribes the genesis of this phenomenon to a different, earlier era and different set of modern rather than postmodern anxieties. Although the railways and industrial heritage became areas of public interest as long ago as the 1860s, Samuel contends that the most palpable expressions of interest in national inheritance surfaced in the 1950s. In the rapid technological development and economic expansion of this period, the 'past' surfaced as a panacea, a comforter for an increasingly modern society uneasy with the rate of change. Connections were made between the industrial past, namely the industrial revolution, and the present to stir up a sense of progression and continuity rather than one of abrupt, disorienting change. Samuel contends that modernisation increased

our awareness of the past and our ability to engage with it as a leisure activity. With post-war reconstruction and mass car ownership threatening the urban space, the idea of preservation broadened to include the 'built heritage', which, although overlooked up until this point, was brought to public attention during The European Architectural Heritage Year in 1975. The heritage structures of the countryside were superimposed onto the urban setting instigating town trails and the construction of heritage centres (Light 1991). Moreover, the new mobility allowed by cars and the increase in leisure time facilitated the growth of historical tourism by allowing the middle-class public in particular greater access to the countryside. This continues to be a feature of the tourist industry in Britain: the private car remains today the most common mode of transport for visitors to heritage sites.

Section B: *Patrimoine*

1. French heritage and *les poubelles de l'histoire*

Des pénates à l'intempestive valorisation d'outils, gigantesques *ready made* faits de rebut de la société industrielle, aux poubelles de l'histoire. La politique du *patrimoine* conçue comme l'art d'accommoder les restes (Leniaud 1992: 26).

As Jean-Michel Leniaud argues above, the corpus of *patrimoine* seems infinite: where the historic monument was once the focus of the state's policy for safeguarding the vestiges of the past, the last twenty years have witnessed the enormous widening of this field to the point where the selection of objects to be included in the nation's *patrimoine* seems indiscriminate. It is fair to comment that, in the French context, one can speak of everything constituting history. The explosion of heritage culture in the 1980s in France is

indicative of a change in attitudes to the past and of the past's heightened significance to contemporary society. There has been a reappropriation of the term *patrimoine* as well as the assimilation of the everyday past (that is objects, customs and buildings) into the substance of *patrimoine*. In the following pages I will examine how and why these changes have occurred. I will also assess the impact of these changes on areas such as tourism and concepts of space and identity.

2. Notions of French heritage: *Patrimoine* in the 1980s and 1990s

As discussed in the preceding pages, the debate around the notion of heritage in Britain has produced three primary issues - the exponential growth of what is believed to be heritage in recent years, the reinvention of the past, and its commodification. Although the subject has not incited a similar heated debate in the press nor infused the word *patrimoine* with the negativity and triviality associated with 'heritage' in Britain, these three issues also surface in writing on this area in France. Most of the writing arises in two areas of academic study: tourism, particularly in the field of museum culture in France, the area where the effects of *la folie du patrimoine*¹⁹ are most palpable, and discussions on the subject of memory and history. Clearly there are characteristics linking both French and British heritage culture but, unlike the British debate on heritage which encompasses any aspect of cultural production, tourism or commercial design with recourse to the past - for example, Laura Ashley and the country house look- little connection is made between the two in France, leaving the area of contemporary cultural production (heritage films in this instance) and consumer tastes and

commercial trends untheorised. Hence the growth of shops with a heritage theme, such as L'Occitane or La Méditerranéenne, the magazine Côté Sud, brands such as Côté Bastide, Comptoir du Sud, Les Olivades and Souleiado which have taken the theme of Provence as the 'image de marque' for their business, are not included in analyses of *patrimoine* in contemporary France.²⁰ Instead, it is more common to see British critics discussing the bourgeois appropriation and revalorisation of Provence by the British themselves, exemplified by Peter Mayle's *A Year in Provence*.²¹ Heritage is largely a retrospective movement in France, concerned with the expansion of representations of the past to include areas of life formerly excluded from primarily bourgeois, museum-based depictions and not with the influence of heritage on the production of contemporary culture or consumerism. Therefore, heritage films are not seen to be involved in the same process of reconstitution and reinvention of the past. This absence of debate explains the recourse to British analyses of heritage in this thesis.

3. Definitions of *patrimoine*

With regards to definitions of contemporary French *patrimoine*, we can start from Pierre Nora's rather broad description of heritage as 'la conscience de la perpétuité nécessaire d'objets sacrés, essentiels à l'existence d'une communauté' (Nora 1991: 12). Moreover, and equally cryptic, *patrimoine* is 'ce qui est encore visible d'un monde qui nous est devenu invisible' and 'le déchiffrement du mystère de ce que nous sommes au miroir de ce que nous ne sommes plus' (Nora 1991: 12 and 13). From this collection of vague definitions we can extract the core features of *patrimoine*: heritage as a tool

for self-analysis and as a search for identity through a comparison with former social configurations, the need for continuity and familial ties and the sense of loss associated with modernity, postmodernity, industrialisation and post-industrialisation. Nora speaks of 'le culte de la trace' and this certainly seems to correspond to the mania for preservation and cultural/historic tourism in the 1980s and 1990s (Nora 1991: 12). Nora is obliged to leave his concept of *patrimoine* fairly undefined given his hypothesis that *patrimoine* no longer relies on history for its substance but rather on memory and the *lieux de mémoire*. A *lieu de mémoire* can be described as anything which holds or imparts meaning for the collective memory. It designates that which is important to the nation or to a particular group; therefore it can designate an abstract sentiment or concept which may find expression through the tangible.

In effect the protection of *lieux de mémoire* since 1985 suggests the valorisation of the intangible as opposed to the physical remnants of the past. This corresponds to Nora's juxtaposition of memory and history; memory often has no substance or place where history is the result of analysis and reconstruction (Leniaud 1992: 121-122). Despite the very broadness of his definitions, the distinction Nora makes between history and memory does shed a certain light on the idea of *patrimoine*. Although his 1989 article is largely concerned with the history of history and the move away from memory in the study of history, Nora makes several useful points. As we have seen in the first part of this chapter, heritage culture in Britain is criticised for its reinvention or manipulation of the past, for the twisting of history to suit the economic demands of heritage tourism. If we apply Nora's analysis of

memory and history to heritage it is possible to consider the latter in more generous terms.

Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived... Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal... Memory, insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it...memory is by nature multiple and yet specific, collective, plural, and yet individual.[it] takes root in the concrete, in spaces, in gestures, images, objects (Nora 1989: 8-9).

Where history implies a cerebral, critical activity involving cold dissection, the fixing of temporality in the construction of a historical narrative and the problematisation of the past, memory suggests fluidity, selectivity, fabrication and a tendency to view the past not as distant from the present but in fact part of it. Moreover, in view of its lack of material substance and its roots in memory which is essentially unstable, the *lieu de mémoire* can be described as a postmodern phenomenon: as Nora explains, the *lieux* are 'exclusively self-referential', meaning that they do not have direct correlation to a past. This state is reminiscent of that outlined by Jean Baudrillard in his assessment of the evolution of the image mentioned earlier in this chapter: moving in four stages from reflection to simulation, the representation gradually replaces the original image, eventually eradicating the relationship between the sign and the reference. The *lieu de mémoire* is thus caught at the intersection of self-referentiality, fixity and instability, resulting in ambiguity. This ambiguity is engendered by the lack of strong association with the 'real' and by the slipperiness of memory.

Using Nora's hypothesis it is possible to connect memory and heritage because memory inherently possesses those very features for which heritage

culture has been so fiercely criticised. Clearly, the process of remembering entails selectivity and subjective emotional responses to the past by an individual or a group. Given the interplay of these two elements in the resurrection of the past it is not surprising that the resulting picture of the times gone by is sometimes simplistic: without the contextualisation and critical investigation of 'history', the past can appear stripped of conflict and complexity.

As one of the more unified works on *patrimoine* in contemporary France, *L'Utopie française: essai sur le patrimoine* (1992) opens with the vague idea that *patrimoine* denotes 'les choses du passé transmises à la postérité en raison de leur intérêt historique et esthétique' (Leniaud 1992: 1). According to Leniaud, *patrimoine* is similar to a myth or a cornerstone of faith which serves a similar purpose to the heritage/enterprise couplet outlined by John Corner and Sylvia Harvey, namely as conceptual tool to ease a society through a period of change. In fact, heritage seems to create a particular situation where the past is ever-present in contemporary life. Far from being confined to museums or galleries, the expression of the everyday past through the images, sites and language of heritage has resulted in 'la thèse de l'antagonisme entre passé et progrès' (Leniaud 1992: 35). Leniaud stresses the role of the past in the construction of the future, stating that *patrimoine* is 'un culte qui fonde la nation dans son passé et pour son avenir' (Leniaud 1992: 2). The past can offer the present society a way to understand itself and its evolution, providing it with the self-knowledge and the awareness of temporality to proceed into the future:

Qu'est-ce donc que le patrimoine? C'est l'ensemble des biens
qu'une génération veut transmettre aux suivantes parce qu'elle estime

que cet ensemble constitue le talisman qui permet à l'homme et au groupe social, qu'il soit famille, nation ou tout autre groupe, de comprendre le temps dans ses trois dimensions (Leniaud 1992: 3).

Leniaud evokes the idea of 'une sorte de religion populaire' and 'la prolifération du collectionnisme' when speaking of *patrimoine* in France, indicating the fervour with which the French nation has embraced the reappropriation of the past (Leniaud 1992: 2 and 32). In his view, this new form of reappropriation which has latterly emerged in France, that is the inclusion of mundane objects from everyday life into the body of *patrimoine*, points to the desire to capture an accurate representation of present day society through the medium of its past.

Fernand Braudel goes one step further in *L'identité de la France* (1986) by claiming that a nation can only exist if it is aware of its past and its *patrimoine*, if it identifies with 'l'essentiel de soi, conséquemment de se reconnaître au vu d'images de marque, de mots de passe connus des initiés' (Leniaud 1992: 3). It is these 'images de marque' which are particularly relevant in the context of the superproduction; it can be said that this filmic form tends to promote a certain positive iconography of the French landscape, culture and society, creating a particular 'image de marque' of France in the 1990s for the affirmation of France in the context of national and international cinematic consumption. These issues will be dealt with in detail in chapters four and five where I examine the concept of national cinema and the state of contemporary French cinema. The issue of iconography will be assessed in relation to three filmic texts in chapters six, seven and eight.

In relation to the idea of an imagery of the past, it has been said that the historical search in France for a national heritage has led to a visual rather

than a written representation and iconography of the past. In her analysis of architectural heritage and the value of built environment, Françoise Choay maintains that since the emergence of the historical monument in the fifteenth century, antiquities have been viewed as mirrors for society, relaying the present society with its history and explaining its evolution but also, through the links with the ancient world, allowing post-medieval society to dissociate itself from Christianity and thereby liberating it (Choay 1992: 158-159). The mirror creates historical continuity and provides the freedom to determine the future without the constraints of religion. Choay believes that the study of monuments and buildings seen to represent the past leads to a valorisation of the visual markers of history: the importance of the monument resulted in both the rigorous study and the development of plastic forms (Choay 1992). By the nineteenth century, thanks to recognition of its official status, the monument acts as a visual, physical reminder of the past, inscribing it in such a way as to render the past fixed and also to illustrate the changes undergone by society in the industrial age. The process of industrialisation and the accompanying social mutations imbued material history with a new significance:

Sur le sol déstabilisé d'une société en cours d'industrialisation, ils semblent rappeler à ses membres la gloire d'un génie menacé (Choay 1992: 159).

4. Recent mutations in the concept of *patrimoine*

The term *patrimoine* has evolved in France in recent years to encompass an ever-wider and increasingly eclectic assortment of objects, buildings and even industries and economic sectors as a result of patrimonialisation²², a process which has distanced the word from its original use. The term itself was already well-ingrained into the French consciousness in another form: the laws

regarding inheritance make use of the concepts of *patrimoine* and succession, indicating the incorporation of a deceased person's belongings into the patrimony of the heir thus insuring a consistent transmission of family inheritance from father to son (Bazin 1995: 121). While the inheritance may change from one generation to the next, private inheritance is strictly defined by an inventory of the dead person's patrimony; as Bazin points out, once the list of belongings has been drawn up, the inventory is declared '*closed* and final' (Bazin 1995).

This is clearly not the case where public heritage is concerned: the act of patrimonialisation involves a reassessment of the past from the perspective of the present thereby disrupting the idea of patrimony being either fixed by law or determined by the person bequeathing the patrimony. Thus public *patrimoine* is not derived from the institutions holding material history, that is archives, museums or libraries, or even monuments, but rather it embraces all forms of life: as the Minister for Culture, Jean-Pierre Lecat proclaimed in 1979:

The notion of heritage has been expanded...The national heritage is no longer merely a matter of cold stones or of exhibits kept under glass in museum cabinets. It now includes the village wash-house, the little country church, local songs and forms of speech, crafts and skills (cited in Hoyau 1988: 28).

This marks a distinct shift in attitudes to heritage in France. The idea of protecting and cataloguing the past is not new; the idea was born in 1790 and concretised later when Prosper Mérimée, the second inspector of historical monuments, travelled throughout France collating a definitive list of France's heritage (later published in 1840). As Pierre Nora observed the desire to establish the symbols and objects of the nation's memory and then ensure

their preservation was finally realised as a result of the fateful intersection of certain factors in the aftermath of the Revolution; in his view

... la première génération romantique, la voix de Hugo, l'oeuvre administrative de Mérimée, l'oeuvre historique de Thierry, l'oeuvre institutionnelle de Guizot, le grand fondateur de nos institutions de mémoire (Nora 1991: 12)

contributed to the fixing of the idea of *patrimoine* within the French national consciousness and state apparatus.

The original enterprise targeted mainly architectural heritage and, to a lesser extent, the arts. Only in the latter half of this century have major changes occurred in definitions of heritage, with the gradual inclusion of other forms - furniture in the 1920s, natural sites in 1930, archaeological digs in 1941, the first twentieth century building in 1957, 'secteurs sauvegardés' in 1962 which were then furthered protected by UNESCO recommendations in 1976,²³ ethnology in 1978²⁴, sites containing archaeological material in 1980, architectural, urban and natural heritage in 1983, regional, historical and ethnographic heritage in 1985, gastronomy in 1991 (*Quid* 1997: 560 and Leniaud 1992: 23). Another important addition to the field of heritage occurred on 25th February 1943 when a law was passed stating that the area surrounding a historical monument, up to a distance of 500 metres, could not be changed without the authorisation of the state (Leniaud 1992: 22). The laws regarding heritage continue to change to accommodate a conceptual shift towards 'une notion atomisée et vernaculaire' (De Saint Pulget 1995: 94). As recently as 1994 it is possible to discern a shift in the focus of such laws: where the heritage laws covering the 1988-92 period covers only built heritage, that is largely monuments, the laws for the 1992-94 period embrace all the elements listed above (De Saint Pulget 1995: 91).

These additions to the corpus of French heritage were legitimised and then etched into the national consciousness by *L'année du Patrimoine* in 1980, the subsequent annual *journées du Patrimoine* and by the high profile events undertaken by le Ministère de la Culture in the last few years such as the press conferences held by the Ministry announcing 'les nouveaux patrimoines' in 1989 and the report entitled *Apologie du périssable* sponsored by the government to survey the policies concerning *patrimoine* in the 1980s (Leniaud 1992: 25-26). Moreover, while most heritage associations are governed by a specialised body of experts, the high media profile they enjoy - in the form of open days, magazines and talks - has allowed the general public to become involved (Gravari-Barbas 1996: 57). A reflection of the expansion of the definition of *patrimoine* is the growth in the number of organisations concerned with heritage. Of the fourteen major organisations listed in 1997 five were founded between 1967 and 1988, with the Union Rempart (1988) representing 150 separate associations for the protection of French heritage²⁵. Before this period, the majority of the other organisations were founded between 1900 and 1939. Broadening the field of what is understood to be 'heritage' in France has in turn occasioned a modification in the time scale attributed to it: heritage is no longer the far off or even ancient past - temporally, it has mutated to incorporate recent lived experience.

The French public has shown a growing interest in visiting heritage sites: whereas in 1981 30 per cent of the public visited a form of heritage site, this figure rose to 57 per cent in 1993.²⁶ Moreover, the 'Journées portes ouvertes' which take place in September every year attract vast numbers of visitors - 7 million in 1995 (Gravari-Barbas 1996: 56). The public's interest in

this area is both 'récent et massif'.²⁷ The rise in the number of specially designated government bodies is another indicator of *la folie du patrimoine*. To accommodate the official recognition of multiple forms of heritage the last three decades have seen the modification of existing state bodies and the founding of new organisations. Thus *La direction du Patrimoine* was set up in 1978 by the Ministère de la Culture. *La direction* is responsible for four sub-directorates and three 'missions'. Of these seven different organisations, five have come into being since 1975: *la Mission du patrimoine photographique* in 1975, *la Mission du patrimoine ethnologique* in 1980, *le Conseil supérieur de la recherche archéologique* in 1985, *la Mission des relations publiques et des affaires internationales* and *la sous-direction de l'Administration et de l'Action culturelle* in 1990. To further reinforce the impression that *patrimoine* has grown in size and importance one need only look at the figures for government spending in this area: the part of the annual budget spend on heritage is considerable - 15 per cent on '*patrimoine monumental*' and 21 per cent on museums and the arts - as is the rise in the budget in recent years - in 1980 2.65 billion francs were allocated to the Ministry, an allocation which had risen to 13.55 billion in 1995 (Patin 1997: 45).

5. Reasons for the rise of *patrimoine*

We speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left
(Nora 1989: 7).

With regard to the reasons for the emergence of '*lieux de mémoire*', Nora maintains that they have proliferated in recent years because of the loss of the physical sites of memory which convey a sense of continuity and tradition

(Nora 1989: 7). The initial interest in patrimonial reappropriation was triggered, as Françoise Choay was cited as stating above, by the process of industrialisation which induced a sense of destabilisation and loss. With the increased speed of change occurring in this century there has been a major impetus to preserve all forms of the past which are perceived to be in greater danger of disappearing than ever before. Since the end of World War Two the threat of loss has increased with radical changes reshaping the French population nationally and internationally. In the post war decades profound transformations have taken place in the distribution and movement of the population; urban populations have grown while the rural community has been progressively depleted. The total percentage of people working in agriculture has decreased from 32 per cent in 1946 to 5 per cent in 1990 (Goubet and Rouchelle 1992: 45 and *Quid* 1998: 1588). Conversely, the urban population has risen, accounting for 53 per cent in 1946 and 73 per cent in 1975 (Goubet and Rouchelle 1992). Given that a significant part of the population has experienced uprooting and relocation to an urban area, it is therefore not surprising that there is a nostalgic attachment to the countryside.

Various other arguments have been offered to explain the attraction of *patrimoine* for contemporary French society. Régis Neyret, an active member of the heritage community, believes two factors have contributed to this evolution²⁸. In a somewhat undeveloped essay, he advances the idea that the culture of the image, the televisual image in particular, has ousted the culture of the written word and its sense of permanence. It is a culture characterised by instantaneity and temporariness. Television provides copious information about the world but in small, disjointed pieces which cannot be understood

within a greater framework. The culture of the image has the effect of creating a state of atemporality:

...nous voici face à 'la perte du sentiment du présent, l'indifférence pour l'avenir et l'oubli du passé' (Neyret citing Serge Daney 1991: 8).

Time is then marked only by specific days set aside to commemorate the past such as the annual day of the book. The other factor relates to the pressure placed on the individual, on the collective and on nations which he terms 'l'hypercompétition'. For individuals, 'hypercompétition' takes the form of pressure to compete in a workplace where there is both a high level of unemployment and a work force which is increasingly specialised. Neyret maintains that the leaders of collectives are also affected by ethics of the market place and are fast becoming 'entrepreneurs du développement'. With regard to countries, pressure is placed on a nation to compete with other nations on a global level, particularly with America which is seen to be dominant, especially in the audiovisual market.²⁹ Nations are thus forced to develop a distinctive self-image in order to differentiate themselves in a highly competitive market.

Patrimoine has indeed become an important feature in the marketing of the past and the nation. With regard to the benefits the promotion of the past can have, it has been asserted that, on the level of individual business,

...le patrimoine, utilisé comme image de marque d'une entreprise, dans le droit fil de son histoire et de son activité, peut avoir une action très bénéfique...en lui permettant d'avoir une retombée médiatique de qualité et une reconnaissance d'identité (Peltre and Charbonnel 1987: 95).

In terms of cinema, the concept of national distinctiveness achieved through the representation of *patrimoine* is a key area of discussion for this thesis. As

discussed in chapters six to eight, cinema draws heavily on the past and nationally coded values and symbols, vaunting canonical culture, historical figures and established concepts of gendered identity. The *film de patrimoine* is also predicated on a particular aesthetic which validates and patrimonialises the national landscape whilst simultaneously using it as a marker of national difference. It is believed by experts in the field of tourism that heritage could act as a commercial, industrial or agricultural strategy especially in the bid to regenerate France's rural areas.³⁰ Rural areas are intimately concerned with the development of heritage tourism given that over half of France's historic monuments are situated in communities of less than ten thousand inhabitants and that eighty per cent of the national territory consists of rural land (Peltre and Charbonnel 1987: 96). From the proceedings of the *Forum du Patrimoine* in 1987, it was agreed that heritage could be used to revivify local economies: by linking past, present and future *patrimoine* could foster the development of an area and its products, facilities, specific techniques and spatial arrangement (Peltre and Charbonnel 1987). To illustrate the impact of heritage tourism as an area of economic activity, one need only look at the employment it creates and its annual turnover. In 1985 ten thousand people were engaged in the restoration of France's monuments alone (Peltre and Charbonnel 1987: 96). In the same year the overall heritage economy totalled thirty-eight billion francs (Peltre and Charbonnel 1987).

6. History or fiction?

As in the case of Britain, heritage in France has been largely reinvented and reconstituted from a contemporary, often nostalgic perspective. In its attempt

to build an economy from the tourist activity associated with heritage, the business sector has also recreated the past but clearly with another imperative in mind. In both cases the question of recreation, or indeed invention from a contemporary perspective, arises. French debates around heritage acknowledge this situation, treating it less as a problem but more as an unavoidable part of the patrimonial process. In the literature reviewed for this chapter only one French left-wing critic treated this issue with the same disdain as Hewison or Wright, offering the negative opinion that heritage culture seems to recreate naturalised, falsified images of the past and to reduce the possibility of critical historical thinking

...dead labour is restaged, with the violence done to the producers and the environment spirited away in a search for lived experience and past forms of social life...the questioning and self-questioning history of concepts and criticism is replaced by the illusion of colour, the magic of diversity, the detail of inventories, and an ecstatic contemplation of the Unchanging (Hoyau 1988: 29).

Even here, in this critique of heritage culture, Hoyau appears to condemn the act of dissimulating the past but also appears to understand the motivation for doing so, that is the desire to understand how society existed and interacted in the past. He also appreciates the way in which the shift from high *patrimoine*, that is the elitist symbols of the nation, to minor, popular and ethnographic *patrimoine* opens up the contemplation of and identification with the past for a mass audience.

In the French critical context there is an awareness that *patrimoine* does not exist *a priori*; a trace of the past can only become *patrimoine* if it is appropriated by a social group. Thus the appropriation of *patrimoine* involves the transition of an object/building/ritual from its original use to a state where it is exalted for its 'valeur patrimoniale' (Leniaud 1995: 3). Given the slippery

nature of memory, upon which appropriation is contingent, and the selective act of recontextualising an object of *patrimoine*, there is an undeniable element of retrospective fetishisation and fictionalisation of the object.

This attitude is exemplified by cultural tourism, particularly by industrial tourism which has only been recognised as part of heritage since the early 1970s and which is currently enjoying unprecedented popularity. In this sector there is an awareness of the mutations heritage brings about. Should a heritage site aim to be historically correct or to attract tourists through the nostalgic representation of the past? (Bazin 1995). Bazin expresses the view taken by French critics without any of the contempt characteristic of the British perspective:

From the very beginning, the patrimonial enterprise, which claims to be inscribed in continuity, demands a radical departure from the original purposes and values of all that is the subject/object of patrimonialisation (Bazin 1995: 123).

As an example of this radical departure one can point to the conspicuous mixture of tradition and modernity provided by the renovations and additions to the Louvre in Paris. The pyramid, designed by I. M. Pei, was built as a part of Mitterrand's *grands projets* of the early 1980s. It marks Mitterrand's reconceptualisation of the French nation whereby history and tradition are flanked by a willingness to engage with the future and with cultural diversity. This is exemplified by the choice of architect for the pyramid - I. M. Pei is of Chinese-American origin - and for the Carrousel - the architectural practice responsible for the design of the mall are Camdi, a Québécois firm (McTavish 1998: 177). Both constructions are fiercely modern and are marked departures from the style of the original buildings. The tension between

tradition and modernity represented by these structural additions is echoed in the museum officials' approach to the material chosen for display: while there is a drive to respond to and accommodate the cultural differences of the French population, there is also a wish to 'preserve both the cultural authority and unified national identity of the museum' (McTavish 1998: 185). This point reiterates Hewison's argument about the position of museums in contemporary society mentioned earlier in this chapter. Using the repository of the past, museums can be said to provide models for identity formation and modes of social interaction. While this function is maintained by the Louvre through its heavy bias towards the classic icons of French culture, there is an awareness that the present multicultural composition of society must be integrated into the museum experience in order to attract a broad audience.

7. *Le sol et le patrimoine*

As may have become clear in the preceding pages, the idea of *patrimoine* is closely linked to the idea of *le sol*, natural physical geography of France. Other forms of equally important *patrimoine* exist which do not require spatial or physical anchoring but nonetheless provide a group with a distinctive identity. This is perhaps best illustrated by the religious rituals practised by Jewish communities who, despite the diaspora, retain a strong cultural identity. Territorial affiliations are of a different nature. The link between 'le sang' (and the idea of transmitting heritage) and 'le sol' has persisted in the French consciousness through the laws of inheritance. It has found an expression in cinema, with Pagnol's films and the Pagnol adaptations of the

1980s conveying, particularly through the character of *Jean de Florette*, the idea of heritage through the medium of the southern French landscape.

More recently this link has manifested itself in another way, that is in the tendency to 'patrimonialise' land, particularly urban space, in the last two decades (Gravari-Barbas 1996: 55). It is claimed that this has occurred as a reaction to the high mobility of the population which precludes the development of a consistent social identity. In order to counteract the effects of a transient society, territory is invested with historical importance. This desire to use space to convey historical continuity is reflected by the large number of local heritage groups who campaign for the valorisation and protection of minor heritage sites which are of significance to the immediate community. Sites such as a family forge or an old school become the focus of such attention because they embody a small-scale history;

Des éléments patrimoniaux auxquels un groupe précis s'identifie, parce que ses parents y ont travaillé, parce qu'on y a vécu, parce que ces témoins font partie de l'imaginaire local (Gravari-Barbas 1996: 57).

There is a correlation between the movement of the population, or to be more precise the uprooting of the population, and the patrimonialisation of territory with *patrimoine* playing the role of 'ciment identitaire' for a group (Gravari-Barbas 1996: 65).

One can suggest that the act of patrimonialising the urban space illustrates the diametrical opposition of country and city in public mythology. It must be said that the city can be read in positive terms; it is a place characterised by heterogeneity and anonymity and therefore provides the opportunity for individuality to be expressed. From a pro-urban perspective, the city space is a vision of a future where diverse cultures have been

absorbed into the national culture and where society find itself in a radically different position from the present. Anti-urban sentiment, however, casts the city as a marker of alienation, insurrection, crime and disease (Short 1991). It can be seen as a place which allows the unpleasant aspects of society to surface. It is thanks to this latter perspective that the countryside has been elevated to its mythical status. The city is seen to represent the anti-pastoral, as the symbol of social transformation and disintegration which has resulted in the breakdown of traditional forms of human interrelations (Short 1991: 47). The countryside stands in contrast to the city and both symbolise a certain attitude to temporality. The countryside is associated with a romanticised, unchanging picture of the past; it is a symbol for the continuity of the social group within a traditional context.

The countryside figures as the place of our past... It is the location of nostalgia, the setting for the simpler lives of our forebears, a people whose existence seems idyllic because they are unencumbered with the immense task of living in the present... This nostalgia is... the basis of the role that the countryside plays in national identity... It becomes the scene of national harmony, peace and stability, to be contrasted with the conflict, strife and change of the present; it becomes the container of national identity and the measure of social change (Short 1991: 34).

Simon Schama reiterates this view in *Landscape and Memory* (1995).

He contends that national identity has historically been contingent on a strong connection with a mythical geography:

National identity... would lose much of its ferocious enchantment without the mystique of a particular landscape tradition: its topography mapped, elaborated, and enriched as a homeland. The poetic tradition of *la douce France* - 'sweet France' - describes a geography as much as a history, the sweetness of a classically well-ordered place where rivers, cultivated fields, orchards, vineyards, and woods are all in harmony with each other.³¹

It would appear that identity and the idea of national continuity are closely linked through the imagery of the national landscape. This imagery does not always have its roots in the real but rather in the imaginary. Thus, through the filter of fantasy and nostalgia, the idea of France is often conveyed by a prettified picture of the Provençal landscape. Again one can cite the prominent heritage films of the 1980s in this context; it can be said that the Berri and Angelo adaptations of Marcel Pagnol's novels illuminate the close connection between community and countryside, physical beauty, social cohesion and continuity, to the point where these visual factors obscure the tragic elements in the narrative. *Jean de Florette* in particular conveys a sense of inheritance and nostalgia through a personal connection with the land whereas *Le Hussard sur le toit* takes a broader, less personal view of Provence, amplifying its pictorial qualities to add both texture and cultural legitimacy to the film. This positive appraisal of a nostalgic landscape of the past stands in sharp contrast to depictions of contemporary urban life in French cinema. A film such as *La Haine*, for example, portrays the tension, alienation and despondency of France's multi-ethnic society living in modern built environments which are far removed from nature to the point where a symbol from this latter world (the cow seen briefly wandering through the housing estate) becomes a hallucinatory vision.

It is relevant to address the question of the country house as it surfaces not only here but in subsequent analyses of filmic texts in chapters six, seven and eight. The country house is arguably a vital component in the nation's iconography; it is a stock image of England which permeates many areas of national life from historical tourism to consumerism and interior design. As

mentioned above, one could cite Laura Ashley, Past Times, magazines such as *Country Life* and *Country Homes and Interiors* and design consultants Colefax and Fowler for examples of the prominence of the country house look in the 1980s and early 1990s (Hewison 1987: 77). In explanation for the status of this architectural form in contemporary life, it can be said that the country house has long been an emblem for a lost England. The National Trust began to acquire such properties in the 1930s and the start of the Second World War heightened the importance of the Trust's process of acquisition:

The need to preserve and record what was now perceived as an expression of the civilised values for which the country was now fighting had become urgent (Hewison 1987: 60).

In this respect the symbolic value of the country house has changed little. Becoming even more prominent in the late 1970s in the wake of the European Architectural Heritage Year in 1975, the country house still represented 'a paradise lost', acting as a physical embodiment of the tradition of rural living and values for an urban society (Hewison 1987). This attitude to the country house attests to the value accorded to the rural space more generally by national cultures whereby the country is temporally coded as a projection of a safer, solid past in stark contrast to the mutability of modern life (see above). While the economic and political instabilities of the 1930s and the 1970s may have elevated the country house to a position of national reverence in Britain, the *maison de campagne* had gained a certain cachet much earlier in France with guidebooks, advertisements and the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau indicating the emergence of this phenomenon in the 1760s (Green 1990: 169). Guidebooks and Rousseau's writings on the values of the countryside

resulted in a trend for excursions for their educational and philosophical merits. By the 1840s this sensibility had changed; the advent of railway travel and the growth of Paris engendered a taste for nature tourism and also the popularity of the *maison de campagne* (Green 1990). This sensibility was not so much informed by an educational imperative but rather a desire to have contact with nature which was becoming increasingly foreign to urban dwellers. Urbanisation had begun the process of distancing a growing proportion of society from its rural origins thereby casting the country living as both lost and, in the light of its veneration by tourists, worthy of recapturing. This widening gap between country and city also signals the process of sanitising of the country and rendering it a nostalgic space, a theme to which I will return in relation to in my analysis of *Jean de Florette* in particular.

In assessing the importance of the land within the context of heritage and heritage films, one must also mention the rise of green politics in France in the 1980s and the accompanying valorisation of the land. Although the green movement in France may have achieved prominence in the 1980s, it emerged two decades earlier with the stimulus provided by the events of May 1968 (Raymond 1994: 263). Its first official manifestation came in the form of the French arm of the Friends of the Earth in 1970 by Brice Lalonde and Yves Cochet who were later to be key players in *Les Verts*, *Confédération écologiste - Parti écologiste* organisation founded in 1984 (Raymond 1994: 264-265). Ultimately neither *Les Verts* nor *Génération Ecologie*, founded by Lalonde in 1990 after his departure from the former, managed to translate a growing green consciousness into a cogent political force. While events such as the disaster at the nuclear power station in Chernobyl, the Exxon Valdez

oil-spill and the Rainbow Warrior affair in 1985, along with the parallel consumer trend for 'green' products, gave considerable fuel to the green cause, it has been difficult to forge a unified political identity for green parties in France. The importance of green issues has been acknowledged by the state: Lalonde was made Minister for the Environment by Michel Rocard in 1988 and as a subsequent Minister for the Environment Michel Barnier introduced a plan to educate students in higher education to be 'éco-citoyens' (Raymond 1994: 264 and 269). Hence the green issues have filtered down through the public and the state's consciousness resulting in a shift in attitudes to the purchasing and disposal of consumer goods for the former and environmental education for the latter.

8. *Patrimoine* and the State

Given the close connection made between heritage and Thatcherism by British critics, one must also address the question of *patrimoine* and the French state. There are several points to be made in this response to this question. Firstly, it can be said that the French state has clearly embraced the expansion of the concept of *patrimoine* as illustrated by the gradual protection of diverse areas of heritage in the second half of this century (see section four). The state is indeed responsible for the protection of *patrimoine* and the research and administration which takes place around it. It can be suggested that this willingness to take on board the multiplicity of *patrimoine* arises in part from the process of decentralisation. The transferral of decision making and administration to smaller units of power such as the region, the département or the community may well have necessitated the recognition of

minor *patrimoine* and local identities. Certain critics have discerned an underlying political aim in the project of preserving the nation's heritage. Philippe Hoyau is one such critic who identifies an underlying political motivation in the construction of a popular heritage culture. He contends that *patrimoine* is used to forge or reinvigorate connections between the state and the French population:

What is involved here is...an opportunity to renew the public's commitment to the political sphere and give fresh stimulus to local and regional allegiances; the leaders of a certain 'soft' socialism are already working towards this goal, as the uncritical advocates of a decentralized, self-governing, even 'ecological' society, which will somehow take over 'from below' at the end of the 'crisis' (Hoyau 1988: 32).

It can be said that the state occupies a central role in the construction and preservation of the nation's past. Apart from the critic cited above, there has been little critical opposition to the multiple projects of *patrimoine* undertaken in France; the part played by the state has been necessary to ensure the official recognition and then protection of the ever-increasing number of areas of *patrimoine*. Whether this link between state and *patrimoine* has strengthened the bonds between the French nation and the political sphere is debatable. It is certain, however, that there is considerable interest in the vestiges of the past as indicated by the popularity of the various heritage associations and heritage events in recent years.

Conclusions

If we borrow the conceptual tools employed in the study of historical tourism, it is possible to contend that heritage in Britain and France is indeed an economic activity which has been shaped by market forces. While the desire

to display the nation's heritage initially grew from a more altruistic concern for the preservation of artefacts and then later the conservation of environments and the regeneration of certain sites, the activities of the heritage industry are less concerned with safeguarding the existence of historical sites or relics than with transforming history into the raw material for the leisure industry, in short, a resource which feeds the consumer's demands.

History is the remembered record of the past: heritage is a contemporary commodity purposefully created to satisfy contemporary consumption. One becomes the other through a process of commodification (Ashworth 1994: 20).

Following the hypothesis offered by Ashworth, the consumer is one of the most powerful figures in the heritage industry who determines both the nature of the heritage product through his/her demands and the authenticity of the heritage spectacle at the moment of consumption (Ashworth 1994: 17 and 18). At the level of active historicity, it is claimed by Wright et al that there is little two-way interaction between the two constituents which leads one to ask why this is so. One probable answer to this question lies in the widely held view that heritage in Britain is the product of a very specific form of political commodification. Wright, Hewison, Corner and Harvey all stress the legitimating function of history in the Thatcher years whereby a carefully selected view of the past was genericised to promote the ideology of a particular group as the dominant ideology. The specificity of heritage is believed to effectively shut down and close off history, either excluding the recipient or preventing his/her engagement or total identification with this reconstructed past. While heritage culture can be put to positive political use, such as the creation of regional and local identity within the context of new Europe, or perhaps to broaden concepts of heritage to include previously

excluded ethnic groups, it would be impossible to ignore the political ramifications of heritage culture in Britain during the preceding decade.

Raphael Samuel adds an extra dimension to the heritage debate, that of the audience, which allows him to view this culture as the product of the interest of ordinary people in their past and not as a politically and economically motivated project. From this particular viewpoint he is able to frame the growth of heritage culture in Britain within a different, more positive discourse where the success of historical tourism is explained by the motivations of tourists and not the tourist industry (Samuel 1991). His perspective on heritage culture shifts the emphasis away from politics and the producers of heritage. However, one should also stress that the past is not above commodification or exploitation; one only has to turn to history to find many examples of the use of the past to provide firm foundations for emerging nation states or indeed the use of the past to support a version of national identity which breeds nationalism and ethnic conflict. As Furedi comments,

Every form of historical representation can become a resource when legitimacy or identity is contested (Furedi 1992: 6).

In the case of Britain and France in the 1980s, it is less a case of an emerging state extracting legitimacy from the past but more of societies in transitional phases, adjusting to the transformations taking place at the level of national/international importance, of economic activity and at the level of the increasingly diverse composition of society.

Perhaps one of the most worrying features of heritage culture is the alleged waning of our historical consciousness. This waning is, however, not an unavoidable consequence of the reappropriation of the past: if one is open to the concept of social structures being in a constant state of development,

then change can be perceived as a necessary and positive stage in society's evolution and betterment. If, however, the past is turned to by the conservative majority to provide security in times of flux, as in the case of heritage culture, it can be said that anti-historical thinking takes the place of a more progressive stance on social and economic change. Furedi observes that

...a critical attitude towards the present state and a commitment to a direct, purposeful change towards some objective in the future, the paradigm of critique implicit in historical consciousness is absent in heritage culture (Furedi 1992: 193).

In principle there is a certain limited cross over between historical consciousness and the dynamic of the heritage and enterprise couplet in that three temporal zones (past, present and future) are involved in a conceptual equation. However, while the heritage and enterprise couplet may hypothetically share this tri-lateral understanding of the past, its main objective is not to deepen our knowledge of or our connection with history but primarily to ease the nation through a period of transition by reinforcing national history and social myths. The past created to meet this requirement is deemed to be a synthetic, reconstituted construct overlaid with a patina of age and authenticity.

In terms of similarities between French and British discourses around heritage, if we consider the scope of heritage, it can be said that the works published in the 1980s in France tend towards the Raphael Samuel model of heritage; taking an encyclopaedic approach, heritage becomes an unselective, all-embracing notion which relates to anything (document, building, object, custom) from the past. *Patrimoine* has become a fluid concept, encompassing the past in what appears to be an indiscriminate

fashion. The idea that change and uncertainty have generated an interest in the past is reminiscent of British arguments on this subject exemplified by Patrick Wright and Andrew Higson in his discussion of the heritage film. Echoing these critics, Leniaud observes that

Avec ces changements brutaux sont nés les inquiétudes, les nostalgies et le désir de retenir artificiellement les vestiges d'un passé qui glisse entre les doigts: Marx avait déjà observé que le culte du passé naît dans les périodes de changement (Leniaud 1992: 29-30).

With the reduced importance of the nation internationally (particularly in the light of globalisation discussed in detail in chapter 3) and the rupture with traditional rural lifestyles and social configurations occasioned by the move from an agricultural to an industrial to a post-industrial nation, France appears to be afflicted by similar fears similar to those expressed by the British. As Jean Le Goff comments, echoing the views of Andrew Higson and other critics in their analysis of the significance of the past in Britain:

Memory is an essential element of what is now called individual or collective identity, whose quest is one of the fundamental activities of individuals and societies caught up in the fever and anguish of our day (le Goff quoted in Bazin 1995: 125).

Patrimoine is then an expression of the search for stable points of reference in a fast changing world. It imparts a sense of communal, regional, urban, national or linguistic identity, a sense of continuity or connection to the past. As Gravari-Barbas has commented, *patrimoine* is the manifestation of the search for social or communal cohesion through the medium of the past:

le principe de l'héritage est un des liens éternellement nécessaires à toute construction sociale, dans le sens où seule la tradition permet l'intégration temporelle d'une société: en priver c'est la menacer d'anomie (Gravari-Barbas 1996: 59).

Clearly, there are points of overlap between the two national discourses on the concepts of heritage. There are, however, significant areas

of divergence. Firstly, where heritage did not possess a specific, long-enduring meaning in Britain, the idea of *patrimoine* has long been in existence through both the idea of private inheritance and the protection of the historical monument. From its close and long relationship to these two well-defined concepts, *patrimoine* has come to encompass a multitude of meanings: *patrimoine* now designates a plurality of sites where the past is believed to reside - it has become 'une notion atomisée et vernaculaire' (De Saint Pulget 1995: 94). Thus, an article of *patrimoine* is no longer confined to the function of conveying a sense of France and French history from the perspective of the nation but rather it can express the local, the regional or the ethnic. Secondly, there is not a comparable critical debate in France concerning heritage cinema. I have come across the label of *film de patrimoine* once in my research in an industry publication. Aside from this brief reference there is no critical analysis of these films within the specific context of a French conception of 'heritage'. Thirdly, analyses tend to be less coloured by left-wing resistance to the perceived right-wing project of *patrimoine*. The consumer of heritage and the need to preserve everyday heritage are subjects of greater consideration than any political motivation harboured by the state.

Another considerable difference exists in relation to the process of creating heritage for public consumption. In Britain this area has been particularly contentious; as indicated in the course of this chapter, the idea of (re)constructing or inventing the past has provided many commentators with material for strong criticism. In French critique there is an awareness and an acceptance that the element of fiction in the construction of the past is inevitable. This perhaps stems from the perception of *patrimoine* as a

retrospective process of appropriation and assimilation which entails a certain artistic licence given the unstable nature of memory. If we proceed from Pierre Nora's notion of 'les lieux de mémoire' which asserts that *patrimoine* is the opposite of the fixed, official narratives of history, then it follows that *patrimoine* and its representations are essentially open to interpretation and recreation, perhaps reflecting Samuel's view of heritage as the discovery of the past from below. This approach highlights the juxtaposition of British claims of wilful manipulation of the past and the French acknowledgement of instability and fluidity.

Perhaps the greatest divergence between the two national discourses around heritage and *patrimoine* for the purpose of this thesis lies in their attitude to heritage as a contemporary phenomenon, that is, as a discernible movement in the present. This movement can be seen in the design and marketing of consumer goods and in the production of certain forms of cinema (see note 19). In France *patrimoine* is primarily seen from the perspective of the present onto the past, the addition of elements from former modes of living into the body of the recognised French past. This retrospective action has largely overlooked the idea of heritage culture generated from the position of the present.

Therefore, one can conclude that while a new, temporally-specific form of heritage emerged in France in the 1980s which differs from its British counterpart, one which responds to the particular anxieties and interests of contemporary France, it has not provided a framework through which to view contemporary culture. The use of the past as a concept in the production of consumer goods or indeed visual representations of the past in cinema has

not been examined through this optic. I am proposing to counteract this theoretical oversight by assessing the idea of *patrimoine* in the contemporary costume drama. In chapters two and five I will consider the historical and contemporary cinematic context for the production of period dramas in France. Chapters six, seven and eight will then consider the implications of *patrimoine* in terms of aesthetics, narrative and characterisation with a view to ascertaining whether we can speak of the *film de patrimoine*.

¹ Outside academia, particularly in conservative circles, there is ample support for heritage. For example, the publications *This England*, *Heritage* or *the British Review*. The journal *American Heritage* attests to a more positive attitude to the past which is widely held judging by its healthy subscription figures. In contrast to other periodicals which have been in decline over the past twenty five years, this magazine is the only one which has continued to thrive without the need for advertising. (See Ferudi, p. 17).

² For example, Françoise Choay's book focuses on the historical monument and architectural heritage whereas Valery Patin, Claude-Marie Bazin and Régis Neyret et al focus on tourism.

³ As Peltre and Charbonnel observe on p. 96 of their article 'Impact Economique du patrimoine' in *Patrimoine et Société Contemporaine*, the French territory is made up of 80 percent rural and 20 urban space.

⁴ Wright, Hewison et al. It is important to emphasise at this point that a particular form of historical interest is under discussion. Clearly interest in the past is not a wholly contemporary phenomenon. As Lowenthal (1985) points out, the fast expanding middle classes of the nineteenth century triggered a resurgence of historical tourism. Here the notion of heritage under discussion is a specific product of 1980s Britain which shares certain features with earlier manifestations but, due to the conditions of this period, is also distinctive.

⁵ On p. 63 of his book *Mythical Pasts, Elusive Futures* (1992), Ferudi responds to A. Marwick's naive contention in *the Nature of History* that history is used for genuinely positive purposes such as to understand itself and to provide direction for the development of society.

⁶ It is interesting to note the way in which heritage can be linked to religious and political extremism. In terms of politics, Hewison points to the establishment of the Heritage Foundation in 1973 by the New Right. This foundation seeks to stimulate the world-wide popularity of conservative political philosophy. In terms of religion, Hewison singles out Heritage USA theme park in Carolina which acts as the centre for Praise the Lord fundamentalist Christian television network.

⁷ From David Bowen, 'Packaging Places: These days Buckingham Palace must compete with bouncy castles' in *The Independent* 14 August 1994 (CD-ROM).

⁸ To illustrate the significance of the tourist industry within the wider context of the national economy, David Bowen compares figures for the tourist industry and engineering and construction. The tourist industry does not lag far behind engineering with 8.5 per cent of the gross domestic product and 8.4 of the workforce and construction with 6.6 and 3.6 per cent. See note 7.

⁹ This view will be considered in relation to national cinema in chapter four.

¹⁰ It is interesting to note that the Heritage Foundation, already mentioned above in note 6, was created in order to 'spread ideas of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defence'. This mission statement, to be found on their home page on the Internet, is not far from Thatcherite values of the 1980s.

¹¹ Hewison makes this point in *The Heritage Industry*, claiming that the computer has heralded the fourth machine age which, unlike previous ages, is organised around the barely visible and uninspiring microchip. *The Heritage Industry*, p. 133.

¹² Nigel Wheale (1995) ed. *The Postmodern Arts: An Introductory Reader* London and New York: Routledge: p. 53. Visual culture is accused of many crimes including the 'dumbing down' of children in America. The IQ of this generation is believed to be lower than that of their parents because of the damaging effects of television which discourages reading and long periods of concentration. Advertising illustrates the increasingly visual quality of contemporary culture: whilst advertisements in the 1940s relied heavily on the text to sell the product, it is now fair to conclude that advertising images have overtaken the text. We have now reached a point in advertising where the image is also totally dissociated from the product and the distinctive, stylised look is more of a selling point than the product itself. Recent Guinness adverts are a particularly good example of this.

¹³ This perhaps explains the desire to see historical objects embedded within a narrative scene in heritage museums rather than isolation.

¹⁴ See Graham Dawson (1994) *Soldier Heroes: British adventure, empire and the imagining of masculinities* Routledge: London and New York: 24.

¹⁵ Dawson (1994): 22.

¹⁶ Hewison also engages with Eco's theory of hyperreality and Jameson's theory of historicism. Both theorists offer pertinent hypotheses of the way in which the preservationist drive actually brings about the effacement of history and reality. I refer specifically to Baudrillard here because his appraisal of the image serves to uphold Hewison's concept of heritage culture in Britain.

¹⁷ On this point Hewison concurs with a variety of cultural critics and historians including Wright, E. P. Thompson, Jameson in his seminal article 'Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', Ferudi and Hobsbawm.

¹⁸ Pastiche is a key feature of the British heritage film and will therefore be discussed in greater detail in chapter three with particular reference to Andrew Higson's article 'Representing the National Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film'.

¹⁹ This term was used by Prof. Françoise Péron in her analysis of the rapid growth of maritime *patrimoine* in Brittany in the 1980s during the conference entitled 'Recollections of France: The Past, Heritage and Memory' held at the French institute in December 1997. It has also been used by the 1990 book edited by M. Guillaume *Patrimoines en folie* Paris: Robert Laffont.

²⁰ L'Occitane and La Méditerranéenne are shops that can be seen as a Provençal version of Crabtree and Evelyn, selling products for the face and body. Côte Bastide and Comptoir du Sud also produce products for the body with a Provençal theme. Les Olivades and Souleïado make furniture and fabrics. Here one could add many other companies who take Provence as the inspiration for their products. One could mention the furniture producers Un Jardin...en plus, Le Pin Bleu, Tonge and even Habitat in France. Moreover, Provençal designs are popular in fabric design (see Urgé, *Indiennes Valdrome Tissus d'art de Provence, Mistral*).

²¹ Peter Mayle's particular representation of Provence has become a point of reference in the British press, particularly in articles on travel. It is often used as a contrast. In a filmic context, for example, Matthew Sweet comments that Sandrine Veysset's *Y'aura-t-il de la neige à Noël?* depicts 'a rural Provence that Mayle-mad weekenders wouldn't recognise if it collided with their 2CV'. See Screen in *The Independent*, section 2, 9 November 1997: 10. In travel journalism we find references to Mayle's view of Provence as 'red roofs and sunny landscapes'. See J. Atiyah and A. Eames, Travel section, *The Independent*, 13 July 1997: 4 and 5. Also, in an article discussing the acquisition of property in France, one journalist observed that 'most people's dream of a holiday home in France involves a Peter Mayle idyll tucked away among the vineyards of some undiscovered corner of Provence'. See *The Independent*, property section, 6 September 1997: 6.

²² This word is used by several writers to describe the phenomenon which became apparent in the 1980s, that is the interest shown in the past by the government, the tourist industry, private organisations as well as the public at large who visited heritage sites in increasing numbers. See Bazin quoted extensively in this chapter and also Gravari-Barbas's article (1996) regarding 'le sang et le sol' which cites *patrimonialisation* as a key word.

²³ According to Régis Neyret, 'Secteurs sauvegardés' can be said to include any area of historic interest or value (Neyret 1991). Introduced in 1962, the law concerning these

'secteurs' was the result of André Malraux' commitment to preserve threatened historic sites such as those in Avignon, later changing to incorporate more recent urban developments. This marks a move away from the strict correlation between *patrimoine* and the historic monument which determined official French attitudes to heritage prior to this point.

²⁴ In Leniaud's text, ethnology is described as ' traditions, rites, récits, chansons, métiers en voie de disparition' (Leniaud 1992: 28).

²⁵ In *Quid* 1997, Association des centres culturels de rencontre, Association nationale des associations régionales Etudes et Chantiers, Association Sauvegarde de l'art français, Fédération nationale des associations de sauvegarde des sites et ensembles monumentaux. Caisse nationale des Monuments historiques et des sites, Chantiers-Histoire et Architecture Médiévales, Club du Vieux Manoir, La Demeure Historique, Ligue Urbaine et rurale, Maisons paysannes de France, Société française d'archéologie, Société pour la protection des paysages et de l'esthétique de la France, Union Rempart, Union nationale des associations régionalisées, Etudes et Chantiers and Vieilles Maisons françaises are listed.

²⁶ Figures provided by Patrick Faucheur (1994) in 'Mise en valeur du patrimoine du territoire' in *Cahiers des Espaces*, no. 37.

²⁷ Gérard Poumarède (1995) 'Tout commence à Athènes' in *Revue des deux mondes*, no. 10, p. 69.

²⁸ M. Neyret is the President of 'Patrimoine Rhonalpin' and of 'Le Collège Régional du Patrimoine et des Sites Rhone-Alpes' and a member of 'La Commission Nationale des Secteurs Sauvegardés'.

²⁹ See earlier in this chapter and chapter 3 (national identity and French national identity) for analysis of globalisation.

³⁰ This idea was put forward at the 1991 conference on the subject of *patrimoine* and the regeneration of space using tourism. See R. Neyret *Le Patrimoine atout du développement: Colloque dans le cadre des Quatrièmes Entretiens du Centre Jacques Cartier* Paris: Presses universitaires de Lyon.

³¹ Simon Schama (1995) *Landscape and Memory* Harper Collins: Bath, p. 15.

Chapter Two: The Heritage Film Debate

The heritage debate in British cinema has evolved in a similar direction to that of the more general debate surrounding heritage culture outlined in chapter one, perhaps owing to the fact that the heritage film is considered to be another branch of the ever-growing industry.¹ Much of the cynicism expressed by critics of the heritage industry as an economic phenomenon was, and to some extent still is, echoed in caustic commentaries on the Merchant/Ivory productions of the 1980s which are regarded as cornerstones of this mode of film-making. The similarities between the two debates lie in the initial hostility of critics, who were as swift to condemn the so called 'heritage' film as cultural critics were to castigate the heritage industry, and then the later more muted responses from film critics concerned with the pleasures experienced by the audience rather than the conservative, consumerist politics allegedly naturalised by the film-makers. Just as figures such as Samuel have attempted to debunk notions of elitism associated with those who actively appreciate the past, recent assessments of the 'heritage' film have been informed by a greater sensitivity to the audience's reading of the filmic text and consequently a greater awareness of the plurality of possible readings, moving the debate from pure critique to questions of reception.

In the following pages I will discuss the heritage film within the wider framework of an inquiry into cinematic genres. The objective of this exercise is to situate the heritage film, assessing its aesthetic, thematic and political aspects in the light of its relationship with the time of its production. This will prepare the theoretical ground for a consideration of the heritage film in the

French industrial context both later in this chapter and then more specifically in chapter five. From an inspection of critical literature it is clear that the heritage film belongs to a tradition within British national cinema and is, therefore, not an invention from the Merchant/Ivory fold. *A Room with a View* and *Howard's End* are the most recent popular examples of the period costume drama which has often been the vehicle for nostalgic and sometimes escapist visions of Englishness in the cinema and thus can be considered not as a contemporary trend but rather as a 'cycle' in a particular British tradition of film-making (Higson 1991). To illustrate this point one needs only to refer to the Hepworth or Elvey productions of the early decades of this century (which have been the subject of considerable debate within the context of national heritage cinema²), *The Wicked Lady* (1945) of the Gainsborough pictures in the 1940s or even more recent period films such as *Hope and Glory* (John Boorman, 1987), *Dance with a Stranger* (Mike Newell, 1984) or *Wish you were here* (David Leland, 1987) articulate the past through the voices of the working class which is not normally the focus of the Merchant/Ivory productions. The group of contemporary British heritage films I refer to here is concerned with the lives of the upper/upper-middle classes and can therefore, borrowing Andrew Higson's term, be called the 'bourgeois' heritage film (Higson 1996: 236). I will also examine the relationship between contemporary French costume dramas and the trend of film-making of the 1940s and 1950s known as *la tradition de la qualité*. Thus this chapter will concentrate on defining the heritage film and the critical debates around it in the first instance, leading to a more specific assessment of French period dramas/literary adaptations within their own national context.

1. Genre

The fact that it has become a critical commonplace to speak of the heritage film and indeed the bourgeois heritage film as a generic cinematic product suggests that the heritage film is understood to operate as a fully fledged genre at the level of industry (in terms of marketing in particular) and critique. To ascertain whether this is in fact the case one needs to explore the question of genre itself, initially asking what constitutes a genre and what is its function before addressing the question of heritage cinema itself.

It is apparent from assessing various prominent studies of genre that the definition and use of the term are fraught with difficulties. To understand why the area of genre studies has produced certain obstacles which tend to hinder examinations of cinematic genres, it is perhaps useful to pinpoint the intentions of critics/academics in their work. The main problem can be clearly exemplified by Thomas Schatz's prominent text *Hollywood Genres* (1981) where he makes the distinction between genre and non-genre films.

Simply stated, a genre film - whether a Western, a screwball comedy or a gangster film - involves familiar one-dimensional characters acting out a predictable story within a familiar setting.... [non-genre films] generally traced the personal and psychological development of central character or protagonist. The central characters are not familiar types whom we've seen before in movies (like the gangster, the music man, the Westerner). Rather, they are unique individuals whom we relate to less in terms of previous filmic experience than in terms of our own 'real world' experience. The plot in non-genre films does not progress through conventional conflicts toward a predictable resolution (as with the gangster dead in the gutter, the climactic musical show). Instead it develops a linear plot in which the various events are linked in a chronological chain and organised by the central character's own perception (Schatz 1981: 6 and 7).

This quotation is indicative of two critical tendencies. Firstly, genre studies have concentrated on American mainstream cinema, usually with the Western

receiving the most intense attention. Secondly, the definitions created by critics have tended to be simplistic, reductive and largely self-serving. They seem to have been drawn up post factum with the intention of substantiating a particular paradigm predicated on the personal selection of a group of films on the basis of their similar thematic concerns or visual signifiers, that is iconographic features. As Ralph Cohen comments

[genres] do not exist by themselves; they are named and placed within hierarchies or systems of genres, and each is defined by reference to the system and its members (quoted in Neale 1995: 168).

Genre in this sense occurs at the level of theory alone; it is a body of thought constructed by critics for use by critics in their discussions of cinema.

The discussion of genres can be a potentially profitable activity if, unlike Schatz and other critics such as Cawelti (1995) who chose to view film genres as fixed organisational systems of analysis in relation to genre theory alone and in isolation from any wider cultural or social context, the discussion is taken out of the realms of criticism and into all areas where the notion of cinematic genre holds meaning.

It has been suggested that genre pertains to three areas - the production and marketing strategies within the film industry, the meaning systems operating in the filmic text and the expectations of the audience (Philips 1996: 123). This approach offers a more complete picture of genre; it highlights the way in which genre arises from a multilayered dialogue between industrial processes, critical examination and accumulated cultural knowledge about filmic language and conventions held by the public. In his 1995 article Stephen Neale elucidates the crucial role played by the spectator in the formation and

circulation of genres. The audience views films with an awareness of certain systems of expectation and hypothesis. These systems consist of

a knowledge of...various regimes of verisimilitude i.e. plausibility, motivation, justification and belief... It entails the notion of propriety, of what is appropriate and therefore probable (Neale 1995: 160).

By 'verisimilitude' Neale is referring to Todorov's use of the term in his dissection of literary discourse. Todorov outlines two forms of overlapping verisimilitude, that is generic verisimilitude and broader cultural or social verisimilitude (Neale 1995). While the first category refers to a film's fusion with the norms of a genre, the second category points to the manner in which a film functions hand in hand with 'scattered discourse' or 'public opinion' (Neale 1995: 161). This point is particularly important for the study of the heritage film which depends heavily on the authenticity of the mise-en-scène.

Genre is also created and disseminated by the film industry. In addition to the systems of verisimilitude underpinning the reading of a film, the spectator is provided with further information about a given film and its relation to a generic corpus by the film industry. Through marketing campaigns and tag lines the film industry constructs an image of a film to feed the spectator's systems of expectation and hypothesis. For example, *Volcano* (1997) by Mick Jackson is described as 'a classic disaster movie', 'awesome', 'a real nail biter' on the promotional poster (*Time Out*, October 15-22 1997: 93). This is termed intertextual relay, a process of definition and circulation of narrative and generic representations which continually redefine the conventions of the genre (Lukow and Ricci cited in Neale 1995: 162). The issue of constant generic redefinition is a key point to emphasise. Although genres are characterised as unchanging, predictable formulae, the interaction between industry, text, audience and

critique would suggest, as Neale has, that genres are not the fixed forms Schatz et al would have us believe. Neale identifies genres as processes whereby narrative forms are not 'replayed but in play', whereby the generic conventions are constantly shifting (Neale 1995: 170).

Finally Neale adds another dimension to the discussion, that of genre history, choosing to follow the work of Russian formalists who inserted genres into the history of culture. From this perspective cinema is not treated in isolation from its context but instead as a strand of cultural life which is open to social and economic influences. Citing the Formalists, Neale stresses that genre is a process of canonisation, automation and reshuffling; it is a question of dynamic cultural struggle between forms where they are in conflict with each other to become the dominant form. The idea of contextualising genres is particularly relevant to the development of this thesis.

2. The heritage genre

In terms of the heritage film the above description of genre is helpful for a number of reasons. The views discussed above lead to a definition of genre as a mutating, historically specific form of narrative cinema possessing a common set of narrative conventions or iconographic characteristics and understood through various systems of public, industrial and critical knowledge. These systems of knowledge are not mutually exclusive and one can inform another: as Neale indicates, knowledge about Hollywood films can feed into and influence public discourses (Neale 1995: 162).

The following section of this chapter will be broken down into several subsections each considering the heritage film in relation to notions of spectacle,

quality and the context of production in the 1980s in Britain. The latter subsection is intended to situate this type of film-making in the circumstances of its production and to consider the impact of Thatcherite government on the cinema. It is worth citing Pam Cook's definition of what she terms the historical film at this point for this definition sets the parameters for and highlights the problematic aspects involved in determining the generic status of films set in the past. Cook uses the term 'the historical film' to designate a diverse body of films united by the use of period costume. The historical film encompasses

prestige literary adaptations, bio-pics, period musicals and comedies, Westerns, swashbuckling adventure and romantic melodrama (Cook 1996: 58).

The decision to use an umbrella term when referring to such a wide number of types of filmic production usually analysed as independent genres illuminates the difficulty in isolating a generic category in which to place the heritage film. The ambiguity surrounding its generic status stems perhaps from its position at the intersection of the costume drama, the literary adaptation and the period piece which are themselves overlapping if not synonymous categories. The term 'heritage' may only have entered critical discussions about the trademark quality films of the Merchant/Ivory production team in the last six years, that is since Higson's cornerstone 1991 article, but the ingredients brought together in the heritage film, especially in certain French films such as *Le Hussard sur le toit* (1995) (to be analysed in chapter eight), are shared by other films which straddle many traditional generic categories. In citing Cook it is crucial to comprehend that the historical film she refers to in her analysis is in fact disengaged from an accurate rendering of historical events and is purely concerned with spectacle. In the historical film

history is always masquerade, and ...eschew[s] the very idea of authentic, stable identities' (Cook 1996: 57).

Whilst it is clearly necessary to differentiate between reconstructions concerned with correcting inaccuracies in official historical narratives and fictional narratives focused on visual style, Cook's definition is suggestive. It highlights important issues for a discussion of the heritage film, namely authenticity, identity and the way in which the past is manipulated in the process of (re)constructing it for film. As discussed in chapter one this is an issue that critics of the heritage industry have been keen to stress (see section 1 of chapter one where Wright and Hewison's arguments are outlined).

3. Spectacle

Firstly, adopting an iconographic approach to genre, the heritage film is composed primarily of characteristic visual signifiers such as country-house pastoral settings, an abundance of period props and authentically reproduced costumes to such an extent that these features have become sites of generic enunciation. The heritage film is very much defined by its rich visual texture or indeed the over-emphasis on visual signifiers. Higson remarked on this superfluity of signification, noting that

...heritage becomes excess, not functional, not something to be used, but something to be admired. (Higson 1991: 117).

Critically, much has been made of the contrasting narrative slightness (Higson 1991, Craig 1991). It has been argued that the narrative is marginalised by sheer opulence of a *mise-en-scène* characteristic of the conspicuous consumption of the 1980s (Craig 1991: 10). Rather than casting the aesthetics as the single most important factor, Higson chooses instead to

emphasise the dynamic between the narrative and the visual aspects. There is, as Higson highlighted, a tension between these two factors which produces a certain ambiguity: the evolving cross-cultural and social relations and the accompanying uncertainties Forster depicts in his novels are counterbalanced, if not erased, by the weight of English nation treasures filling the screen.

[The] narrative instability was overwhelmed by the alluring spectacle of iconographic stability providing an impression of an unchanging, traditional and always delightful England, the England of 'English Heritage' (Higson 1996: 239-240).

What is the cultural critic to make of this clash between narrative and spectacle? Are the progressive possibilities of the original text effectively dwarfed by the grandeur of the settings?

Higson avoids confronting any such issues directly in his 1996 paper on the heritage film by invoking the question of interpretation and thereby declining from offering any definite readings. While reception is a crucial point to address, it is also imperative to draw certain conclusions if one is to define and discuss generic qualities. The camera does indeed seem to function independently of the narrative in many instances, surveying the room/facade of a building in a slow, ponderous manner which allows the eye to luxuriate in the wealth and detail of the setting (see the opening and closing sequences of *Howards End*). This deliberate appreciation of the surroundings together with the tendency to use medium or long shots inserts a distance between the spectator and the narrative, disallowing close involvement with the characters. It also momentarily and gently interrupts the already leisurely narrative flow or, in the case of *A Room with a View*, adds to the fragmentation caused by the structure of discrete tableaux complete with intertitles. At such points the camera movement seems to perform two functions. Firstly, it reinforces the

oppositional nature of the film, confirming its genteel rejection of Hollywood action conventions so that this creates an impersonal viewing position for the spectator. Conversely the pleasure gained from this allegedly superior cultural activity is multiplied. Part of the pleasure is gleaned from the knowledge that this filmic product can only be fully comprehended with the relevant cultural and educational skills (to be discussed at greater length later in this chapter; see section 4.1.). However, another form of pleasure is to be gained from the nostalgic escape from the present the films allow. One could further suggest that these films are nostalgic in a number of ways. They can be regarded as attempt to recreate the feel of a European art house film in the days before the multiplex. This is born out by their exhibition and distribution abroad in particular where they are usually screened in arthouse cinemas. Secondly, the camera movement lends the period reconstruction authenticity, displaying the commitment to reconstituting the exact physical milieu of the past.

In Claire Monk's view the camera movement is not a manifestation of the films' obsession with the surface of the past but, on the contrary, an expression of the characters' inner life (Monk, 1994). It is difficult to support this claim for two reasons. Firstly, it has been noted that the characters' habitat has been used to greater effect in other heritage films. In *The Piano*, *The Age of Innocence* or *Dangerous Liaisons* the camera's relationship to the mise-en-scène was more dynamic and intimate: far from adopting the generic camera movement used, in Richard Dyer's words, to 'showcase' heritage attractions, the camera shows greater engagement with the characters, conveying the narrative from their perspective, thus injecting a sense of immediacy (Dyer, 1994). Secondly, the spectator's viewing position is problematised by the

camera's emotional detachment, highlighting yet again the tension between narrative and spectacle: the act of looking, appreciating one's surroundings and the lengths to which the costume and set designers have gone to ensure period authenticity render the experience of viewing a rather sterile form of historic tourism. The camera movement, though fluid, makes the spectators aware of the constructed nature of the spectacle before them. Indeed, to use Laura Mulvey's terminology, the camera work underlines the *mise-en-scène's* 'to-be-looked-at-ness' (Mulvey 1975: 116).

Following the Formalist model of competition and domination, it may be that the dominant feature of the contemporary heritage film is the visual. The notion of the 'dominant' was formulated by a prominent theorist, Tynyanov, who, along with other Formalists, broke new ground in genre theory by examining genres in relation to culture in general rather than only in relation to genres themselves. In this particular theory Tynyanov expresses the view that genres are characterised by one dominant feature and that this is then replaced by another in a process which Shklovsky, another Formalist, terms the 'canonisation of the junior branch' (Neale 1995: 175). Shklovsky suggests that non-canonised art permeates canonised but static forms to propel them out of their stagnation. In so doing the non-canonised forms displace the previously dominant forms and acquire legitimate, canonical status.

In the dynamic conflict and reconfiguration taking place in the evolving heritage genre, the narrative has been superseded by the spectacle of the past. The past as spectacle brings into question issues of verisimilitude and authenticity mentioned earlier. In the heritage film's attempt to assert its cultural validity and quality, strong links are made with the past through an iconography

reliant on the accurate representation of the material surface of the past and also through the references to written and visual forms of high culture. To appreciate the heritage film the audience must draw on accumulated cultural knowledge.

4. Quality

4.1. Education and the heritage film

The Merchant/Ivory productions are generally believed to be popular with the educated middle-classes. In outlining the heritage film debate it is necessary to discuss this belief as it is commonly expressed by critics. Claire Monk recently carried out preliminary research into the audience for this genre in Britain and observed that the heritage film occupies an uneasy position with critics given that they are:

...projected as both minority-taste films and popular commercial successes; disdained for both their high-cultural/"literary" pretensions and their low status as cinema, equally disparaged by the academic/intellectual Left and by media arbiters of hipness aligned with the interests of capitalist consumer culture (Monk 1999: 22).

While pointing to the curious highbrow/middlebrow criticisms levelled at the heritage film and problematising the notion of the 'mainstream' cinema audience,³ her results confirm that the audience is perhaps not as elitist as left-wing critics contend but is nonetheless 'bourgeois' (Monk 1999: 26). With regard to the American audience in particular, it can be said that literary adaptations set in the Edwardian era hold a strong appeal.⁴ As Whisky comments the heritage film captivates a disaffected strata of graduates in a labour market which no longer values their education:

It is no accident that the films exert this appeal at a time when the traditional ends of an expensive college education - guaranteed

upward mobility or the reproduction of one's comfortable class privilege - are fading out of the American dream like a lingering after-image of the mid-twentieth century (Whisky 1991: 103).

It is again a climate of insecurity and the disintegration of old certainties which intensifies the need for personal and cultural validation. Here the act of viewing a film rooted in literary culture has the effect of reinforcing social differentiation once promised by a certain educational route: to fully enjoy and understand the heritage film, with its literary references, sites of high culture and the corresponding social milieu, is to mark out one's position in society. In Whisky's words again, 'a Merchant/Ivory film subtly reaffirms one's 'superior' acculturation' (Whisky 1991: 103).

With regard to the English audience, one could draw parallels with the unfavourable professional situation in which the American middle-classes find themselves especially in terms of the precarious employment market of the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is often asserted that dislocated identities search for solid points of reference and here, within the context of the heritage film, the point of reference for British identity is provided by a literary and painterly vision of a lost England (Craig 1991, Wollen 1991 and Higson 1991). Here one could also mention the links between taste and education made by Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu strongly emphasises the constructed nature of cultural tastes. The copious empirical research he carries out in *Distinction* illustrates the way in which tastes and everyday social activities vary according to profession. As he points out:

surveys establish that all cultural practices (museum visits, concert-going, reading etc.), and preferences in literature, painting or music, are closely linked to educational level (measured by qualification or lengths of schooling) and secondarily to social origin...A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possess the cultural

competence, that is, the code into which it is encoded (Bourdieu 1984: 1 and 2).

More specifically for the present analytical context, Bourdieu discusses what he terms 'the enchantment of artistic contemplation', namely the pleasures gained from the recognition of references in a given art work (which encompasses painting, literature, music and cinema) to other aesthetic categories (Bourdieu 1984: 53) This means that the audience is able to locate the given art work in relation to other works of art or stylistic categories, bringing the work into 'an interminable circuit of inter-legitimation' rather like the intertextual interplay outlined by Neale. The result of recognising cultural/artistic codes is, in Bourdieu's words, 'elegance, distinction, delicacy and that subtle satisfaction' (Bourdieu 1984).

4.2. The Loss of Authorial Intention

A striking feature of the heritage film is its heavy reliance on literature, particularly on popular, canonical texts which have become part of recognised national literary culture. The classic heritage film of the 1980s, modelled on *A Room with a View* which can be seen as the archetype for reasons of popularity, durability and its aesthetic influence on subsequent productions, tended to use E. M. Forster novels as its major textual source or texts concerned with similar milieux. *A Handful of Dust* and *Chariots of Fire* emerged from different sources but were nonetheless in keeping with Forsterian preoccupations, namely, the binary of convention and contravention and the dissolution of the old social structures. Curiously for a genre which is accused of retreating to narratives of the past in search of stable points of reference, the source texts are concerned with fragmentation, instability and also a desire to

make connections across social, gender or national boundaries. Written and set in the years leading up to the First World War, Forster's narratives are primarily explorations of human relations and attitudes challenged by disruption or disintegration. The causes of disruption in those novels adapted for the screen are the encounters between the core upper-class/upper middle-class characters at the centre of the narrative and a variable group of outsiders (foreigners, members of lower social classes, those with 'unconventional' sexuality or modern outlooks). In addition, there is an authorial awareness of the inevitability of social change, whether in response to the Great War or to the less tangible influences of modernism, which prevents one from labelling the novels as anti-modern.

Alison Light has suggested that, in the light of such thematics, the Merchant/Ivory films are not Thatcherite texts (Light 1991: 63). In sharp contrast to Higson's initial appraisal of the heritage film in terms of its relationship to the contemporary political scene, Light believes these films reject Thatcherite government and instead turn on the axis of English liberalism. However, it is difficult to appreciate this reading when the process of adaptation has seemingly overlooked the author's intentions. It is apparent on viewing the films that the narrative is not strictly the main focus of attention. The distinctive features of these films are arguably not the interpersonal issues but rather the period settings and the romantic portrayal of genteel society. Forster's sense of satire and tragedy have been lost in visual translation. The issues of change and the defiance of convention at the centre of the novels which, given the heritage dynamic of enterprise and tradition discussed in chapter one, could

resonate with a contemporary audience, are diminished, if not entirely effaced, by the absence of authorial voice.

The films are not always faithful to the darker or more serious aspects of Forster's work. Unlike the novel which is a critique of 'the sterility, snobbery, and 'witty weariness' of the self-consciously cultured',⁵ Merchant/Ivory's *A Room with a View* lacked this sharp, satirical edge. Forster's work intimated that the modern world would encroach on the present and so lead to change. Change in the shape of the Great War and in the form of the increased interaction between diverse social and sexual groupings was considered inescapable and those who resisted it were satirised. Characters who were worthy of contempt in the novel for their intransigence in the face of change or their strict obeisance to stifling social conventions at the expense of human emotion and fulfilment, such as Cecil Vyse or Miss Bartlett in *A Room with a View*, become great examples of British actors (Daniel Day Lewis and Maggie Smith) at their best, exaggerating their characters' weaknesses or idiosyncrasies for comical effect. Their unpleasant small-mindedness is expunged and their ridiculousness becomes endearing. In a sense the specifics and subtleties of Forster's narratives and characters are overlooked or distorted in order to present pleasing composite images of middle-class, pre-war England.

Thus, the insights into the complex fabric of the middle-class or the particularities of Forster's settings, for example, are genericised. Summer Street and Sawton, for example, become a marker for England as a whole which is reinforced with the release of each subsequent provincial/rural heritage film. In the same way that Provence has come to signify France through Berri's Pagnol adaptations and the spin-off advertising campaigns that persist into the

late 1990s (such as the Stella Artois), the fine settings of the Forster adaptations - South East England predominantly - have come to function as the dominant image of the nation in circulation at home and abroad (see textual analysis in chapters six, seven and eight for in-depth discussion of this point). In competition with less attractive representations of contemporary British society seen in *The Full Monty* (Peter Cattaneo, 1997), *Secrets and Lies* (Mike Leigh, 1995) or *Trainspotting* (Danny Boyle, 1995), the heritage film offers an undoubtedly attractive alternative vision. But this vision is troubling: the narrow social and geographical environment of the heritage film, coupled with its problematic portrayal of foreigners, creates a stereotype of England based on homogeneity and elitism.

The tendency to emphasise the beauty of the setting can be regarded as another characteristic of the heritage film. The setting is indeed one of the most significant visual signifiers of this type of film. Christine Edzard's *Little Dorrit* (1987) provides a good example of the considerable deviations from the nature of Dickens' narrative. In sharp contrast to his accurate portrayal of Victorian England as dark and dirty, the film adaptation became a 'a tract for our [Thatcherite] times' in a manner quite contrary to that conceived of by Edzard who intended the film to be a critique of modern times (Samuel 1995: 423). Dickens' visions were replaced by prettified, sanitised images of London which devalued the tone of the narrative but corresponded to the contemporary approach to literary adaptations. The film displays generic heritage properties - a cast of quality British actors (Derek Jacobi, Alec Guinness, Miriam Margolyes amongst others), high production values, close attention to period reconstruction and partial fidelity to dialogue and narrative events to establish

the literary pedigree of the film. *Little Dorrit* is indeed a commentary on Thatcherite Britain but not through its narrative: in true adherence to the heritage mode of film-making the aesthetics of the film betray the era of production where the past is recreated uncritically.

In one aspect it [*Little Dorrit*] reflects that urban pastoral which emerged in the wake of modernisation and slum clearances; in another the aestheticisation of dying industries. One could note here the representation of the slum as an Arcadia and of machinery as pretty - no longer the monstrous engines of *Hard Times* but, as in the industrial museums, historical monuments (Samuel 1994: 411).

4.3. Cinematic Authorship and Originality

In tandem with these deviations from the source text there is an insistence on authorship and originality. As Andrew Higson has pointed out, there are divergent, contradictory discourses in the heritage film centred around the notion of authenticity (Higson 1991: 116). These discourses all aim to stress various levels of distinctiveness and cultural legitimacy but they ultimately appear to cancel each other out. In the first instance there is a tendency to place value on the singularity of the author and the text, to emphasise the marks of authorship which is achieved in part by adhering to the narrative tone and the original textual dialogue. This attempt to retain the aura of the original work would seem to corroborate Wollen's point about the self-effacing nature of the heritage film whereby the heritage film recreates the time prior to the infiltration of mass media in England (Wollen 1991: 185). Moreover, it could be said that the timelessness and permanence associated with art offer certain attractions for film-makers portraying a lost England. In keeping with the denial of modern media contained within the heritage film, classical art and literature are accorded high cultural value. Literary culture, imparted through the filmic

adaptation of the novel and also through the value placed on reading in the film, and the display of museum art (statues, paintings) convey the sense of uniqueness associated with works of art. Uniqueness therefore possesses recognised significance at the level of the film's concept and also diegetically.

In the heritage film there is indeed a valorisation of the work of art. Benjamin's famous discussion of the effect of technology on art seems relevant in the context of a film genre which emphasises art itself and controls the slow appreciation of a *mise-en-scène* which revolves around the treasures of the nation. The heritage film appears to run contrary to Benjamin's hopes for art in a mechanical age:

Above all, it is film which breaks down or dissolves this sense of aura [of a work of art] for Benjamin. This has to do, first of all, with the emotional effect of film, which depends upon motion and viewer-involvement, rather than stasis and contemplation (Connor 1989: 173).

The languid camera work, the static, tableaux-like composition of many interior shots of meticulously reconstructed period homes and exterior shots of country houses and rural England suspends our engagement with the film: the relationship between the spectator and the spectacle is changed qualitatively by the speed of the film which compels the spectator to view the scenes as works of art worthy of lengthy examination. In opposition to Benjamin's belief in the progressive possibilities offered by the reproduction of art on a large scale, there has been a movement towards rather than away from the aura of the original piece of art. It is possible to explain this movement in terms of the legitimacy which references to official sanctioned and recognised art may bring to a film - clearly an important factor in terms of attracting an audience. To function correctly the heritage film needs to locate itself within certain established, approved cultural parameters. The excess of visual points of

artistic reference in *A Room with a View*, *Howard's End* and *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (Charles Sturridge, 1991) would indicate that it certainly does this. Moreover, the static, restrained nature of these films differentiates the heritage film from mainstream cinema, where the narrative is driven by causality and pace and constructed around well-paid Hollywood stars. The heritage film offers the audience the promise of a European art house and therefore more 'cultural' experience.

Forster's texts are well suited to the heritage mode for they hold both cultural and nostalgic attractions for a contemporary audience. American and British audiences may find the very art house nature of the product along with the slow paced narratives centring on slight romances in tune with their desire for cultural reaffirmation. In terms of its 'stars', choice of primary text, distribution and exhibition, the heritage film is a marginal, and, outside Britain, foreign player in the mainstream film market and this position may possibly account for its popularity with a certain class of spectatorship.

Ironically it is precisely the insistence on originality, authorship and the attempt to generate the rarefied aura of art which characterises the heritage film. There is a desire to leave a series of recognisable imprints on the film - beginning with the mark of the source text's writer and ending with that of the film-maker - which Higson implies creates an atmosphere of competing and colliding discourses. It may be more profitable to view these discourses as non-conflictual layers of authorial identity, iconography and meaning whereby the image of the film is built up through a complex web of referents. Higson argues, for example, that the recreation of the period setting of the novel is at odds with

emphasis on authorship but one could equally claim that the very visual pastness of the films is in fact the sign of the film-maker's authorship.

5. The heritage film and Thatcherism

A Room with a View and *Chariots of Fire*, which I discuss below, have been closely tied to the moment of their production, particularly to Thatcherite values and, to a lesser extent, to popular style trends which were associated with the rise of the so called yuppie in the 1980s⁶. Indeed the connection between the films and the dominant conservative outlook of the 1980s would seem to be borne out by the inclusion of Andrew Higson's pivotal article on the heritage film in a publication dedicated to British cinema and Thatcherism⁷. The connection between cinema and the Thatcherite credo can be made at the level of subtextual political inferences; the early heritage films, particularly *Chariots of Fire*, appear to contain sinister undertones about the nature of a society which demands the assimilation of outsiders and resists the impact of foreign influences. To be English one has to earn the right through professional success and wealth. In *Chariots of Fire*, which was identified as 'an overblown piece of self-congratulatory emotional manipulation perfectly suited to Thatcherite liberals' by one critic,⁸ the two main protagonists are both outsiders; Harold Abrahams is a Jew and Eric Liddell a Scot and a Christian. Abrahams is especially problematic: his ethnic background and desire to succeed by means outside those prescribed by the English establishment - in defying his tutors at Cambridge University by engaging a professional coach whose Italian-Arab origins further compound Abrahams' non-conventional behaviour - fuel a wave of resentment against him. His inclusion into the Establishment is only finally

secured by his victory at the Olympics and his patriotism. Englishness in this film, moreover, is synonymous with the Establishment, upholding the critique that the heritage film portrays an upper/middle class-bound image of national identity (Craig 1991). Whether the Establishment or concepts of identity will be forced to change as a result of Abrahams' challenge is never confirmed.

To be English is also to be what others are not. In *A Room with a View*, the national identity of the characters finds reinforcement - and incidentally achieves the level of comical caricature - through their geographical displacement. The context of Italy permits the tight circle of the English middle and upper-class tourists to sense their difference through their distanced curiosity about the Italian not as an equal but more as anthropological subject. Only the English are seemingly capable of appreciating the culture of Florence while the Italians themselves are a coarse, undifferentiated group driven by animal instincts such as violence and lust. This group lurks at the outer edges of the tourists' perception and only come into focus in scenes which serve to strengthen the implied binary between the two nationalities. The scene of the murder by the fountain and later the incident outside Florence where the lascivious cab driver and his girlfriend trouble the prurient English priest provide two clear examples of this oppositional relationship. The unpredictable, unstable nature of the indigenous population is articulated through the fast movement of the camera and general confusion at the stabbing at the fountain which stands in stark contrast to the characteristic graceful, sweeping and sometimes virtually static camera movements elsewhere in the film. Miss Honeychurch's dramatic, forceful reaction to this outburst of passion and tragedy, namely her fainting, also betrays this binary between the restrained,

genteel and civilised nature of the English and the irrational, animalistic Italians. These clichéd images are perpetuated and exaggerated to a greater degree in the later Merchant/Ivory production *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. Other readings of these clichés are of course possible. If one looks beyond the humour created by the caricatural encounters between English and foreign characters, the clichés could be translated as an appeal for greater emotional expressiveness on the part of the English whose restrained, decorous conduct, far from indicating their cultural and national superiority, is actually a sign of their repression and their narrowly circumscribed lives. In this reading therefore the binary opposition of superior/inferior is turned on its head.

At the other extreme *Chariots of Fire* can be read as an allegory for the struggle between tradition and innovation thereby linking the film inextricably to its era. The film plays out the dynamic of the heritage couplet in narrative form, portraying the attempt to straddle the old and the new through a sense of transhistoricism (Corner and Harvey, 1991). As is common in the heritage film, a sense of persistent national identity is expressed through the bucolic: there is a tendency to punctuate the narrative with picture postcard images of pastoral England, and, unusually, of Scotland in the case of *Chariots of Fire* (Hugh Hudson, 1981). In this film Scotland is included in the representation of nationhood because Liddell rigorously embodies the traditions of his rural background, even refusing to run in a race at the Olympics which falls on the Sabbath.

Abrahams, however, incarnates the possibility for change through personal endeavour achieved within certain limits. From the mid 1980s onwards the requirements stipulated for entrance into the English society were arguably

dictated by an integrationist, market-orientated stance on national identity which marked a move away from the monoculturalist stance of the late 1970s (Corner and Harvey 1991: 11). This new position organised itself around a new player in the politics of identity construction - the consumer - who was strictly situated within the mainstream (Corner and Harvey 1991). Following this logic, racial differences could be overridden by consumption, particularly that of property. Viewed through this political perspective, Abraham's story functions as a metaphor for this Conservative ethos: his accession to English society is facilitated by attainment.

6. The heritage film and national identity

The hallowed status of the market and the consumer permeate the two heritage films discussed above, lending to both films a certain schizophrenic edge as they attempt to consolidate notions of nationhood in a marketplace where the concept of the global has superseded the notion of the nation, especially the British nation which is no longer recognised as a major power (Craig 1991: 10). Within the parameters of a global market place heritage cinema could be regarded as the reassertion of Englishness through a cultural medium which is also an economic commodity. Whilst it is vital to consider the exportability of films, particularly to America, there is also an awareness of American mainstream cinema as a threat and a competitor. Despite the multicultural nature of the Merchant/Ivory team, the heritage film thrives on its very English if not generic European and therefore arthouse, status, creating a selling point out of what could be perceived as a weakness in financial terms. For this mode of film-making turns on a different axis from dominant US films, operating in

opposition to the big budget, high profile style of industrial cinema designed and distributed to attract the widest possible audience. The cultural and national specificity of the heritage film betrays, as Higson has pointed out, the eighty year struggle to defend and nurture a British film industry in the overwhelming shadow of Hollywood (Higson 1996: 237).

While the question of national cinemas and the dominant referent of American cinema will be dealt with in chapter four, it is relevant to touch on the relationship of the heritage film to America. Hollywood has historically been the major source of competition for British and other European cinema and there has been a desire to cultivate a distinctive, enduring form of filmic resistance to the global penetration of this particular nation's cinematic products. In industrial terms, the heritage film is part of a long standing enterprise, that of attempting to counteract Hollywood through the promotion of quality home-grown products:

the heritage film is in part a nationally specific form of product differentiation based on indigenous cultural traditions, a historical effort to carve out a space for British, or English, films in a market dominated from the mid-1910s by the American film industry (Higson 1996: 237).

In foreign markets, however, it is not marketed, distributed or exhibited as an industrial product; it is promoted as a cultural product with limited exhibition in art-house cinemas.

Moreover, it has been suggested that there is at work in the heritage genre another more intricate and almost illogical mode of resistance: the heritage film, in using mass culture (the filmic form) to attract its spectators and yet situating itself squarely in a period and milieu which are free from the influences of America, effectively works against itself.

By proving that mass audiences can enjoy 'serious' drama they [nostalgic fictions] are self-declared un-American products and can

enjoy commercial success almost by virtue of their tacit effacement of themselves as mass media. (Wollen 1991: 185).

There is, then, a valorisation of inter-war English literary culture through the medium of contemporary visual culture which Wollen believes are at odds with each other given that the environment portrayed in the former would greatly disapprove of the latter. From this it can be surmised that America stands as a metaphor for the unfavourable encroachment of modernity and the de-intellectualising influence of the popular in English culture.

In addition, one could further assume that the proclivity for the pre-modern age, co-existent with disdain for any form of what could be termed Americanisation, are indicative of a more generalised recoil from the present exhibited in the heritage industry as a whole. Fears of Disneyfication, whereby the past is turned into a theme-park for unproblematic consumption, resonate here leading one to conceive of the heritage film as another component in the heritage industry.

The heritage film is also arguably a medium through which concerns about the fragmented, evolving nature of national identity are expressed at a subtextual level of oblique inference and allegory rather than through a narrative built around these issues. Thus the past is used in a number of ways for many ambiguous reasons. Firstly it is used to mark out Britishness and the quality of British cinema in contrast to the generic (American) cinematic product. Secondly it provides a narrative form in which concerns about the fading role of Britain as a national power, specifically a version of Britain as viewed from the historical perspective of a nation with a large Empire and society steeped in tradition, can be enacted in a muted, if ineffectual manner far from the contemporary political arena. The heritage film dramatises the heritage

couplet of tradition and modernity thereby underlining the inevitability of change but it also replays the past as haven where, in alignment with John Belton's summation of post-modern cinema,

imitation is of images from the past offered as a nostalgic substitute for any real explanation of either past or present (quoted in Philips 1996: 134).

7. Post-war French cinema and the past

Finally one further element must be added to this discussion - *la tradition de la qualité*, the French mode of making costume dramas in the immediate post-war era. The next two sections will examine firstly the attitude to the past in film-making in this period and then the specifics of the costume drama produced at this time. This examination will include comparisons and contrasts between the heritage film and the *film de patrimoine* of the 1980s/90s with a view to establishing to what extent the critical debate around heritage presented above relates to French costume dramas.

La tradition de la qualité is associated with the late 1940s and 1950s and it is interesting to examine why polished films set in the past were particularly popular at this time with audiences and film-makers. Where, during the period of Occupation, the costume drama/literary adaptation was considered to be a sign of the renaissance of French cinema, in the post-war period it marked, along with other cinematic forms, a turning away from or, in certain instances, a romanticisation of France's immediate history. Films set in the war years centred on the theme of resistance, often unjustly portraying the French in a positive light:

The [immediate post-war] period is marked by the myth of *la France résistante*, a tale of national heroism regarded as an essential precondition for national unity and post-war reconstruction and

regeneration...Films such as *La Libération de Paris* (1944), *Le Jugement Dernier* (1945), *Peloton d'exécution* (1945), *Jéricho* (1946), *Les Clandestines* (1947), *Le Père Tranquille* (1946) and *La Bataille du Rail* (1946) all served as a collective impression to corroborate the notion that the French were unified in their resistance...their role was not to emphasise the exploits of individuals or the heroics of an extraordinary organisation but to facilitate broader identification.⁹

Under the impetus of the censorship committee, the *Commission militaire nationale*, these films disseminated such fictionalised accounts and in so doing provided the fictional basis on which the myth of the nation could be built. While gradually becoming a nationalised sector in the decade following the war, due to the rigorous censorship controls and the subsequent reluctance of film-makers to defy them, cinema appears to maintain the selective reality of the nation, to circulate 'la stupeur ou l'oubli' in the name of the nation:

On parle d'un cinéma de propagande...Elle [la propagande] correspond, à coup sûr, à une nécessité inconsciente de protection et de défense d'un ordre social déterminé (Jean Grémillon, quoted in Jeancolas 1995: 64).

As Joël Magny comments, post-war cinema in France does not take the route of Italian film-makers, that is out onto the streets with their light weight equipment to capture the after effects of war (Magny 1993: 56-58). Instead, the majority of French directors take the well-travelled route, back into the studios and a decade or more elapses before the *nouvelle vague* follow the footsteps of Rossellini and De Sica (Magny 1993).

Films made in the *tradition de la qualité* mould represent another movement into the past: from its rise to prominence during the war until its peak in the late 1950s *la tradition de la qualité* appears to stem from the similar imperative and to follow a similar trajectory to the heritage film - out of the complexity and insecurity of the present into a time rendered comforting and non-threatening by its distance and its high cultural affiliations. Viewed through the medium of a

national cinematic institution (*la tradition de la qualité*), with its reverence for literary texts and its emphasis on the craftsmanship of set and costume designers, the past becomes a desirable location not only for entertainment but also for cultivating a sense of group identity which is seemingly achieved by a disregard for realism and reality.

8. *La tradition de la qualité* and *le film de patrimoine*: generic conventions, industrial conditions and state policy

The second issue to be addressed here is the relationship between *la tradition de la qualité* and *le film de patrimoine*. There are many parallels to be drawn between *la tradition de la qualité*, which is generally associated with the 1950s but had been a popular genre in cinema since the introduction of sound, and the preferred form of literary adaptation/costume drama in the 1980s and 1990s. Here one should define the 1950s films of quality in order to clarify its connections to the contemporary trend in film production in France.¹⁰ Certain critics consider the era of directors Yves Allégret, Jean Delannoy and scriptwriters Jean Aurenche and Pierre Bost to be cinema by numbers, with all the stock features of quality film-making predetermining the eventual outcome :

...*star system*, studio, décors construits, éclairages sophistiqués, dialogues brillants, recours à l'adaptation littéraire, technique très élaborée avec mouvements d'appareils compliqués, assurent un cadre qui permet au film de se faire presque automatiquement (Prédal 1996: 95).

All these elements lead François Truffaut to conclude that *la tradition de la qualité* - characterised by the important role played by scriptwriters, an adherence to psychological realism, high production values and its appeal to a broad bourgeois audience - ran contrary to the inventiveness and personal

vision expressed by auteur cinema. It is interesting to note that identical accusations have been levelled at the *film de patrimoine* as were famously levelled at *la tradition de la qualité*: while Truffaut attacked film-making of the 1950s in his tirade against the stultifying 'cinéma de papa' in his article 'Une certaine tendance du cinéma français' published in 1954, films such as *Madame Bovary* (Claude Chabrol, 1991) and *Jean de Florette* are virtually regarded as anti-auteur cinema. This type of cinema is seen to be marked by a redundant style of film-making showing little or no innovation in its choice of narrative, aesthetic and form: in his analysis of the costume drama François de la Bretèque applies the terms 'aseptisation', 'académisme' and 'sterilisation' to Yves Robert's Pagnol films, Chabrol's *Uranus* (1990) as well as to the two films listed above (de la Bretèque 1993: 20). Quality is often perceived as synonymous with stagnation and decline. This attitude is certainly evident in analyses of the 1950s which tend to create a binary between *la qualité* and *la nouvelle vague* with the former encapsulating everything that is hackneyed and therefore undesirable:

En somme, tout est vieux dans les années 50: les deux tiers des réalisateurs, scénaristes, chef-opérateurs ou producteurs ont débuté dans les années 30 et le corporatisme décourage les jeunes d'accéder aux postes clés de décision et de création...loin de réaliser chaque film comme s'il était unique, le metteur en scène est incité à le confectionner à la chaîne, identique à ceux qui l'ont précédé. Il n'est guère raisonnable de se poser des questions esthétiques ou dramatiques et il est conseillé de faire plutôt confiance aux habitudes (Prédal 1996: 92 and 93).

In terms of similarities between *la tradition de qualité* and the *film de patrimoine*, it can be said that the former became a dominant cinematic form at a time when American film products were inundating the French market (Austin 1996: 11-12). Secondly, the government (in the shape of the CNC in its early

days) intervened to assist the French industry to produce films of distinction: with the introduction of a new *loi d'aide* for cinema in 1953 it was asserted that a film seeking funding from the state must, above all, show signs of quality. Hence, as Paul L  glise comments,

...la qualit   des film de long m  trage m  rite d  sormais une r  compense, ou plut  t un encouragement...Les films b  n  ficiaires de cette mesure doivent   tre fran  ais et de nature    servir la cause du cin  ma fran  ais ou    ouvrir des perspectives nouvelles de l'art cin  matographique. La loi r  compense la qualit   (L  glise 1977: 12-13).

Not only was cinema rewarded for its high quality but it also received funding if it projected a certain image of France and French cinema (Magny 1993: 60).

These policies translated into financial assistance for

...films co  teux, fond  s sur des   l  ments s  rs: sujets adapt  s de textes c  l  bres et classiques, vedettes, qualit   technique irr  prochable, l  ch   photographique, somptuosit   des d  cors (Magny, 1993).

Thirdly, the *tradition de la qualit  * coincided with an increase in the size of film budgets which effectively doubled in the first half of the 1950s, rising from 50 million old francs in 1950 to 100 million francs by 1955 (Austin 1996: 12).

Fourthly, central to the *tradition de la qualit  * was the genre's star system. Where today we can speak of G  rard Depardieu, Juliette Binoche, Isabelle Adjani and Daniel Auteuil as heritage stars, *la tradition de qualit  * boasted stars such as G  rard Philippe, Jean Gabin, Dani  le Delorme, Danielle Darrieux and Martine Carol.

Clearly there are great similarities between the conditions of the film market and the features of the genre in the 1950s and the 1980s/1990s. In terms of the market, contemporary French cinema suffers from the same affliction experienced forty years ago: mainstream, big budget American cinema still poses a similar threat to the financial success of indigenous film products.

French cinema had experienced an artificial level of success during the war aided by the ban on the import of American films which resulted in the French industry acquiring 85 percent of box-office receipts (Austin 1996: 10). With the Blum-Byrnes agreement of 1946 the French market was once again open to the assaults of American imports, this time unlimited imports, with a small concession to French products which could be screened one month out of every three (Prédal 1996: 40). Although the French could not, in Jean-Pierre Jeancolas' opinion, provide more than this number of films per trimester, this agreement triggered violent reaction within the industry (Prédal 1996: 41). In terms of the state's response to this situation, one can also discern certain similarities between the 1950s and the 1980s: the nascent structures for the financing of cinema in the late 1940s and early 1950s moved towards the funding of a number of hand-picked quality films with a higher level of subsidy.

It is perhaps not surprising that the state funding strategies for cinema in the 1980s should echo attitudes articulated in the 1950s. This latter period represented 'la dernière décennie du cinéma en tant que spectacle populaire', precisely the kind of film-making and level of cinema-going Jack Lang envisaged for French cinema in his plans (Prédal 1996: 82). As discussed in chapter five, Lang sought to reanimate the film industry through the promotion of 'cinéma-spectacle-populaire', a type of high budget film-making targeted at a broad audience with the objective of increasing levels of cinema-going - particularly for indigenous films.

Recourse to a safe, successful formula is also a feature of quality cinema of the 1980s and 1990s where the production of 'recettes plus sûres, des sujets plus consensuels' was incentivised by the government (de la Bretèque 1993:

19). It is this reliance on established forms of cinema coupled with the tendency of certain directors to treat literary texts with utmost respect, that has led critics to term this type of film-making 'le cinéma d'illustration' or 'le cinéma haute couture' which are not far removed from the labels applied to heritage films in the 1980s (de la Bretèque 1993: 19). As mentioned below (see note 4), Alan Parker dismissed British heritage films as 'the Laura Ashley' or 'the masterpiece school' of film-making indicating not only the lack of narrative pace - that is the creation of tableaux of a certain idealised national lifestyle - but also the fetishisation of country-house objects.

9. The heritage film and *le film de patrimoine*

From the preceding discussion of the heritage film, it is possible to discern several connections between this cinematic form and what I have termed *le film de patrimoine* which clearly has its roots in *la tradition de la qualité*. The preference for high angle and tracking shots, the distinctive group of heritage actors, the use of literary classics and country house settings are the most obvious shared characteristics. In terms of preferred shooting locations, the heritage film favours both the interior and exterior shots, focusing on and validating the sites of official English culture, such as the country-house set in grounds or the period London house and the immaculately reconstructed internal scenes. Similarly, many French *films de patrimoine* display the attractions of French heritage sites - the Provençal landscape in the Pagnol adaptations and *Le Hussard sur le toit* and the finery and opulence of the royal court in *Tous les matins du monde* (Alain Corneau, 1992), *Ridicule* (1996) and *Beaumarchais l'insolent* (Edouard Molinaro, 1996).

However, there are considerable areas of divergence between the two cinematic forms, primarily involving cost and importance within the context of national cinema. The scale of the heritage film and films made in *la nouvelle qualité* mode are very different: *Howards End*, for example, cost £3 million whereas *Le Hussard sur le toit* (1995) cost £17.6 million. The choice of actors for *films de patrimoine* is also indicative of the grander industrial strategy at work in the French films. Although Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson may currently be broadening their repertoire beyond the heritage genre, their stature at the time of productions, along with that of Judi Dench, Rupert Graves and Helena Bonham-Carter, was that of accomplished stage and small screen actors in their national territory. French *film de patrimoine* actors tend to be national stars of another variety, renowned not only intertextually for their roles in *films de patrimoine*, but also for their fame gained through advertising, acting in other nationally celebrated films or, as in the case of Isabelle Adjani, for their political activity.

In addition, the perceived value of the *film de patrimoine* is quite different from that of the heritage film, with the former acting as a very expensive, grandiose mode of national resistance to American film products. While both the British and French body of contemporary quality costume dramas can be seen as national cinema (a subject discussed at length in chapter four), the French corpus, in view of the source of their funding and the cultural logic of the state in generating these finances, represents an active rather than incidental form of national cinema. Thus the idea of the nation is advanced and protected by means of state intervention and communicated through textual elements of the *films de patrimoine* such as the canonical literary texts used for adaptation,

the star quality and national stature of the actors and the national importance accorded the films by the press.

Moreover, one must assess the importance of the original text in the French literary adaptation. It is claimed that the majority of *films de patrimoine* adhere closely to the text, usually to the detriment of the film (de la Bretèque 1993: 20). It has been argued that Claude Berri, Yves Robert and Claude Chabrol approached their respective adaptations with 'une attitude d'humilité absolue' resulting in films which privilege the revered narrative over the image (de la Bretèque, 1993). Although, as mentioned, these films are not free from the aestheticisation of a certain rendering of the past, the respect towards the literary text appears to prevent the marginalisation of social commentary - but not the stereotyping of regional location or character - which occurs in the heritage film. Further, there is another divergence to be noted between the *film de patrimoine* and the heritage film, this time in terms of the choice of literary material and subject matter. While both cinematic forms indicated a preference for literary classics, the French films have not shied away from historical reconstruction. In Britain in the 1980s heritage films did not broach the subject of history or historical figures overtly; *Gandhi* (Richard Attenborough, 1982) appears to be the only example. *La Reine Margot* (1994), *La Nuit de Varennes* (Ettore Scola, 1982), *Tous les matins du monde* (1991), *Indochine* (Jean-Jacques Annaud, 1991), *Le Colonel Chabert* (Yves Angelo, 1994), *Fort Saganne* (Alain Corneau, 1984), *Camille Claudel* (Bruno Nuytten, 1988) and *Van Gogh* (Maurice Pialat, 1991) illustrate that French film-makers are not frightened of either referring to actual events in French history or to the lives of

certain individuals, even fictional lives, against a historical backdrop. Thus there is no division between literary adaptation and historical reconstruction.

A final point must be made about the position taken by British academics vis-à-vis the *film de patrimoine*. Guy Austin and Phil Powrie have both written on this subject and have viewed this mode of film-making in relation to British heritage films (Austin 1996 and Powrie 1997). In his examination of a broad range of films, Austin is sensitive to the particular economic and political environment of the French films, outlining the influence of the state's funding policies on film-making in France in the 1980s and the possible contemporary interpretations of the films' narratives. He recognises the connection between the French 'heritage' film and *la tradition de la qualité*; they are both predicated on notions of authenticity, high culture and spectacle. Although he does provide a certain amount of contextualisation, Powrie's analysis has a very specific focus. He considers *Jean de Florette* and *Un amour de Swann* (Volker Schlöndorff, 1983) and *Un dimanche à la campagne* (Bertrand Tavernier, 1984) in relation to masculinity and nostalgia, using a psychoanalytic approach to explore the latter. Powrie differentiates the French films from the British heritage film through terminology, employing the term 'nostalgia film' but, as emphasised in my introduction, this definition lacks specificity and encompasses a range of films set in the past regardless of aesthetic and narrative differences. While both critics make valuable contributions to a debate on the French films, they do not situate this genre within the wider discourses of heritage and enterprise. Moreover, their analyses of the films' aesthetics are determined by the criteria established by Higson. I would argue that the *film de patrimoine* needs to be read through a nationally specific framework which

proceeds from an understanding of film and heritage culture in France. I have addressed the question of national specificity in this thesis by constructing and applying a framework which takes into account issues of heritage, identity and representation and I would therefore contend that I have furthered the debate on the genre.

10. Conclusions: Comments on the mutation of a genre.

Throughout this section the question of the heritage film as a genre has been debated. As has been suggested in this discussion of the heritage industry and the heritage film, the label 'heritage' is not always used to positive effect. Although there are negative connotations, it is undoubtedly a useful tool for definition as it instantly identifies the film under discussion, invoking a precise image of the ingredients involved in this specific type of film. It has come to denote a very specific kind of film-making associated initially with the Merchant/Ivory team but now commonly applied to costume dramas, literary adaptations, period pieces and, to a certain extent, historical reconstructions, which are not mutually exclusive generic categories. The term carries with it a formula which can be broadly described as quality filmic adaptations of literary classics which display high production values and a recognised cast of actors. The texts used for adaptations tend to depict the intimate, personal dramas of the upper-middle classes but, as argued in relation to the camera movement and the spectacular aspects of the films, not necessarily in an intimate manner. These dramas usually unfold in coded national sites, for example in the South of England or in a country house setting, thereby reinforcing stereotypes of Englishness.

A further striking characteristic is the intertextual nature of the films. There is a significant overlap between the actors, the production team, the depiction of a certain social milieu and the choice of source author in key heritage films allowing each one to be read and appreciated in relation to the body of heritage films. Even *Carrington*, despite Monk's claim for its status as a post heritage film, feeds from the heritage intertextual relay in terms of the social and geographical setting, the characteristically distanced portrayal of a romance and its leading actor - Emma Thompson who appeared in both *Howards End* and *The Remains of the Day* (Monk, 1995). For a genre which critics have bound so closely with a specific era the heritage film has endured into the 1990s as a popular, exportable cinematic form. In searching for reasons for the continuing success of these films one must turn to television and point once again to the power of intertextuality. It was in fact television which set the archetype for the heritage film: the subject matter (the disintegration of the tradition staged at Oxbridge and Castle Howard) and the visual style which emphasised the splendours of location in *Brideshead Revisited* (Granada, 1981) indicated the potency of the bourgeois formula. The last four years attest to the persistence of the heritage formula with BBC's adaptations of Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Wharton's *The Buccaneers*, Stendhal's *Scarlet and Black*, Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, ITV's production of Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and Channel Four's *A Dance to the Music of Time*. The cinema has also succumbed to the allure of Jane Austen and the heritage attractions her novels allow, notably with Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility* (1996).

Given the two systems of knowledge required to appreciate and read the films, that is generic knowledge and broader cultural knowledge, one could make the claim for the existence of the heritage film as a genre. Although the heritage film, as dissected in tandem with a more general examination of cinematic genres, would appear to fulfil the criteria set down by Neale can the case be made for its independent generic status?

To answer this question definitively it is helpful to turn to Jean Gili's assessment of films set in the past as this may provide much needed clarity. For Gili there are two modes of historical treatment - the historical film and the costume drama. Both modes belong to different genres, such as adventure films, comedies, musicals and melodramas, and can be broken down into three types - the chronologically organised or flashback-based bio-pic, the bio-pic which revolves around a specific historical moment and lastly the costume drama which is the least serious of the three as it does not seek to narrate a story with any strict historical precision but rather narrates historical events through a fictional character (Gili 1979). Within this framework the heritage film falls into the category of costume drama; at the point of critical interpretation it is possible to draw out political or social import but at the point of production the heritage film would appear to have no greater project than the sumptuous and yet fairly low budget filmic adaptation of a literary classic. Precision is required only at the level of settings, props and costumes.

Taking both Cook and Gili's views into consideration, it would be fair to say that the heritage film works within the parameters of Cook's historical film and Gili's costume drama. With regard to Cook's definition, the heritage film is certainly prestigious but it cannot be separated from history completely: there

may be little or no link to real historical context in the film but the key initial films such as *A Room with a View* and *Chariots of Fire* are resolutely tied to their moment of production, that is the 1980s, if only by critical appraisal. It would seem that the success of the heritage film cannot be attributed to the way in which it dramatises questions of national identity; this drama occurs at a secondary subtextual level. Its success would seem to stem from the web of connected pleasures it offers the audience: the pleasure attached to the accumulation and the validation of cultural capital, the accompanying pleasure of shunning the mainstream in the consumption of an acclaimed art house product, the purely visual pleasure derived from the heritage aesthetic and the luxury factor, that is the genre's consistently high quality in terms of production values and performance.

With regard to Gili's definition, the ahistorical treatment of the past he attributes to the costume drama does correspond to the narrative of the heritage film which does not seek to align itself with specific historical contexts but rather is set in a generic pre-World War I era. Moving on from Gili's interpretation one could say, however, that the heritage film is zealous in its faithful recreation of the surface of the past above all else. Spectacle, and not history, is the dominant generic feature.

All this leads to the hypothesis that the heritage film is a historically specific form of the costume drama. Following Neale's view that genres must be viewed as transient, mutating cinematic categories, the heritage film can be considered as a visual representation of the past characterised by period dress, particular to the 1980s. The heritage film is a stage in the costume drama's evolution in Britain when wider social discourses informed an aesthetic anchored in

opulence and fidelity to the surface of the past. The changes in legislation regarding English Heritage, the growth of the heritage industry, the decline of Britain's heavy industries, issues of multiculturalism and the removal of financial, institutional support for British cinema are all factors which have explained and encouraged the success and persistence of the heritage film. The ambiguity surrounding the heritage film's generic status allegedly stems from an inability to decide whether it is a literary adaptation, a costume drama or a period film. As mentioned earlier there is little to separate these three categories and it can be contended that the majority of literary adaptations and period films are costume dramas by another name.

The heritage film continues to mutate. In the 1990s its star is somewhat dimmed but nonetheless bright enough to continue to attract film-makers and cinema-goers alike. Recent Merchant/Ivory outings such as *Jefferson in Paris* (James Ivory, 1995) have failed to fire the cinema-goer with as much enthusiasm as earlier literary adaptations possibly as a result of its banality in a market-place steadily saturated with heritage products and also as a result of the current predilection for the Empire-line adaptations (Jane Austen in particular). It appears that in the field of filmic adaptation the day of E. M. Forster is over. Pre-war England is no longer as attractive as it once was indicating that what is perceived as the classic heritage film was a stage in a more general tradition of costume dramas/literary adaptations. Critics may still refer to 'heritage' to describe the country house, museum aesthetic but the heritage aesthetic has evolved, widening its canon of source material and choice of temporal setting also moving beyond the crisis of Englishness in a global market as a motivating factor. For example, the canon of literature has

swelled to include other writers and more tragic stories such as *Mrs Dalloway* (Marleen Gorris, 1997), *Anna Karenina* (Bernard Rose, 1997), *The Woodlanders* (Phil Agland, 1998), *Jude the Obscure* (Michael Winterbottom, 1996) and *Jane Eyre* (Franco Zeffirelli, 1997). The latter three films deviate quite pointedly from the lighter, rose-tinted heritage films of the 1980s, painting bleaker, darker portrayals of society and human nature which are sensitive to the more critical aspects of their source novels.

Given the exportability of the heritage film and its position as a marker for British cinema one could view the costume drama as national and international cinema. In the ensuing study of contemporary French cinema, this definition is useful in explaining the rationale behind the large scale, high budget costume dramas which carry far more weight as national cinematic products in the continuing battle to preserve and boost a non-English language cinema in the shadow of Hollywood. This definition must also be informed by an understanding of French cinematic history; although this thesis focuses on recent 'heritage' French productions analysed through the optic of critical debates in Britain, it is necessary to consider the significance of the generic forerunner of the contemporary *film de patrimoine* in France, that is *la tradition de la qualité* and the time of its production, for there are clearly similarities in industrial and state discourses supporting the production of both types of films.

The *film de patrimoine* also highlights the mutation of the French costume film since its peak in the 1950s. Clearly there are similarities in industrial conditions and state imperatives of creating a national cinema in the 1950s and the 1980s. The reliance on canonical literature, high production values, stars and costumes are still characteristics common to both. The contemporary

mode, however, has lost the rigidity and formality of its predecessor, having left behind the stilted performances and the studio environment and the limiting lighting and camera angles it prescribed. Moreover, there is a willingness to portray the historical context, or perhaps references to the current context, in graphic detail: *Le Colonel Chabert* and *La Reine Margot* depicted massacres, dirt and illness, with the shots of piles of dead bodies resembling footage of the Holocaust or events in Bosnia.

While the tradition of costume drama/literary adaptation manifestly feeds into the *film de patrimoine*, it can be said that the latter shares contemporary concerns with the heritage film; both display an interest in the past specific to the time of the films' production. The upsurge in interest in the past and sites of collective memory lend films of the 1980s a particular aesthetic dimension. Thus, the *film de patrimoine* shares the distinctive heritage iconography, as well as the movement of nostalgic retreat, with the heritage film.

In view of the mixture of influences on the *film de patrimoine*, it can be concluded that there is indeed une *nouvelle qualité française* which has its industrial and artistic roots in the productions of the 1950s. As the label implies, films of this nature are contingent on quality in addition to the impact they are expected to make on the indigenous film market. The *film de patrimoine* is a national production which proceeds from an enduring concept of national cinema. It brings together the *film événement* and officially validated aspects of the nation's *patrimoine* to promote Frenchness and French film-making. In order to explore the specificities of the contemporary *film de patrimoine* in greater depth, that is the role this kind of cinema is perceived to have in France and how the state encourages its production, chapter 4 will concentrate on the

notion of national cinema and chapter 5 on the state of the French film industry from the 1980s onwards.

¹ Richard Gott is quoted as commenting that heritage, which is largely a 'bogus' creation, embraces 'Historical novels, Merchant/Ivory films, Victorian lampstands'. Quoted in Pam Cook (1996) *Fashioning the Nation*, p. 1.

² Higson refers to the term 'cycle' in the first major article on heritage films and it is a useful denomination as it takes into account the perennial existence of the costume drama/literary adaptation in British cinema. With regard to earlier 'heritage' films, Higson's book *Waving the Flag*, Sue Harper's *Picturing the Past* and Pam Cook's *Fashioning the nation* all provide historical examinations of this genre.

³ Monk indicates that the idea of a mainstream, mass, young cinema audience is a fallacy in Britain. She reveals that while this audience is presumed to be young and male it is in fact predominantly composed of those who fall into the 25-34, 35-44 and 45+ age groups who are members of social grades A, B and C1 (Monk 1999).

⁴ In the United States, *Chariots of Fire* netted \$18 million within eight months of its release while *A Room with a View* netted a total of \$24 million. D. Mahieu, 1990, 'Imagined Contemporaries: cinematic and televised dramas about the Edwardians in Great Britain and the United States 1967-1985' *Historical Journal of Film and Television*, vol. 10, no 3, 1990, p. 98.

⁵ *Oxford Companion to Literature* (1985) Oxford: Oxford University Press: 845.

⁶ The styles I am referring to here are the popular country house look which led to Alan Parker's comment that the heritage film was the Laura Ashley School of film-making, *Interview*, March 1992, p. 40.

⁷ Friedman, 1991.

⁸ Geoff Andrew, *Time Out Film Guide* 1997 Penguin Books, p. 134.

⁹ Howard Seal (1998) 'Revisioning History and the Myth of Resistance: The Challenge of *Un héros très discret*' ed. Maria Esposito *Multicultural France: Working Papers on Contemporary France* vol. 2, p. 4.

¹⁰ Films made in this vein include *La Fête à Henriette* (Julien Duvivier, 1952), *Lucrèce Borgia* (Christian-Jacque, 1952) *Nana* (Christian-Jacque 1954) *Madame du Barry* (Christian-Jacque 1954), *La Reine Margot* (Jean Dreville, 1954) et *Le Rouge et le Noir* (Claude Autant-Lara, 1954).

Chapter Three: The Nation and National Identity

In the last two chapters I have considered the way in which the past has resurfaced as a powerful concept in contemporary society. In this chapter I will examine another powerful concept - the nation - and, more specifically, the cinematic representations of the nation. In order to contextualise the discussion of national cinema which follows in chapter four, this present chapter will explore the concepts of the nation, nationalism and national identity. Then the three chapters of textual analysis will explore the iconography and aesthetics of the nation. The nation will be considered from various angles - as a cultural and political formation, as an imaginary entity, as a dying form of collective identity - with a view to lending precision to the idea of the French nation. Preference will be given to the cultural significance of the nation given that the focus of this thesis is cinematic. The cinema may seem a marginal, very specific and even obscure arena in which to discuss such grand concepts but, taking cinema's ability to translate key historical moments in the construction of nationhood or the Zeitgeist of a particular period into powerful and widely consumable visual narratives (here one could cite *Napoléon* (Abel Gance, 1927), *Birth of a Nation* (DW Griffith, 1915), *La Marseillaise* (Jean Renoir, 1937) and more recent films such as *Andrei Rublev* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1966), *La Reine Margot* (Patrice Chéreau, 1994) or *JFK* (Oliver Stone, 1991), this discussion seems valid.

The cultural significance of nationalism is reinforced by Benedict Anderson, a prominent commentator on the birth and growth of this phenomenon, who conceives of nationalism, nationality and nationness as 'cultural artefacts' above all else (Anderson 1983: 4). Emphasising the connection between the

nation and culture does not necessarily imply a lack of awareness of the inextricable links between the nation and politics; to cast the nation as a product of purely cultural conditions would be facile and, moreover, a serious oversight given the complexities and subtleties which beset any analysis of this issue. Therefore this chapter will include a historical overview of the rise of nations in Western Europe, considering diverse paradigms and projections of nationhood. Once the origins of the nation have been established, French interpretations of nationhood will be examined before finally assessing whether, in the wake of European integration and globalisation, one can still talk about the nation as a potent and autonomous political form.

1. Renan and the birth of the nation

The question 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?' is as relevant today as it was when Ernest Renan first posed it at the Sorbonne in 1882 (Renan, republished 1990). The answers he provided in response to this question also resonate in this inquiry into the spatial and conceptual limits of the nation, particularly in the importance he accords to the past. In his famous lecture, he does not approach the idea of the nation prescriptively; indeed Renan attempts to establish the principles which supported and encouraged the creation of nations, taking into account the great diversity in social composition, language and history in European countries. Renan's primary concern is to avoid a reductive, selective analysis and thus his hypothesis begins with the premise that nations are defined by 'the fusion of their component populations' brought about by a 'series of convergent facts' (Renan 1990: 10 and 12), a description which

illustrates the speaker's understanding of the nation as a complex and confusing entity born of disparate factors.

Renan proceeds initially by discounting the views of other theorists who have identified the nation as a dynasty or a race. Divine rights of monarchs and ties of blood do not adequately explain for Renan the emergence of all nations, particularly of Switzerland and the United States. Thus what he terms the primordial right and the ethnographic principle are rejected as the basis of the nation; the modern nation is neither a feudal formation nor one which can claim racial purity. Renan then eliminates both the linguistic and the religious principle from the discussion, declaring that language alone cannot induce individuals to join together to form a nation and that religion cannot produce a modern state as it is no longer practised or believed in a constant, invariable and strictly institutional fashion.

With regard to the last alleged force to shape nations, Renan concedes that natural features of the landscape have historically influenced the shape of nations but ultimately all the preceding factors, including geography, are superseded and in fact negated by the importance of the 'spiritual principle' which is a state of consciousness flowing from the past through the present and beyond. Following Renan's argument, the nation is rooted in genetic memory, desire and will. An awareness of the tribulations and conquests experienced in the past by a group of people will propel them as a cohesive body into the future in the pursuit of common goals. The key to Renan's concept of the nation does indeed reside in the significance of a shared past, a heritage and the desire to forge a common future. Pivotal to this hypothesis is the existence of a common past, in fact a heroic past as 'this is the social capital upon which one

bases a national idea' (Renan 1990: 19). One could suggest therefore that the nation resides at an abstract level of signification in the minds of its people - it lies in the imaginary and in historical communal memory, in the retrospectively imagined past of a group united by its actions and, most importantly, its will to be a people. In this way Renan casts the people as the impetus behind the modern nation, removing the act of nation-building from the hands of a royal and/or religious ruling elite. This transfer of power and decision-making from the centre should be absolute. For example, Renan believes in decentralising and empowering those who have willed the nation into existence, suggesting that they should participate in all matters pertaining to the nation:

If doubts arise regarding its [the nation's] frontiers, consult the populations in the areas under dispute. (Renan 1990: 20).

Despite his intention to eradicate the confusion surrounding the concept of nation and to undermine the idea of racial purity as the foundation for nationhood, Renan's highly influential lecture is riddled with ambiguities and contradictory imagery which have left his work open to appropriation by racist political theorists in France in particular. Maxim Silverman identifies the primary problem at the heart of Renan's address, namely the dichotomy he constructs between 'universalist ideas of the French Enlightenment and the particularist ideas of German romanticism' (Silverman 1992: 19). While Renan's argument indicates his adherence to the former through his validation of nations literally willed into being, Silverman points to the antithetical use of vocabulary and images which undermine his intended rationalism. Mentions of the soul, the spirit, a heroic past and the fatherland would appear to have their roots in the tradition of German romanticism. The lack of clarity injected by the overlapping

of these two paradigms of thought has made negative readings of Renan's work possible. It has, for example, been possible to read the text as a mildly xenophobic tract. Although Renan's distinction between nation and race would seem to repudiate notions of racial purity, it does not however reject the possibility of national purity which can be threatened by the arrival of foreign bodies. One could therefore level accusations of cultural essentialism at 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?' for it promotes the idea that nations are transmitted through culture not biology. However, not all members of a nation, especially newer members, are privy to the same cultural heritage, which would exclude them from fully comprehending and appreciating their adopted national identity. From a racist viewpoint, the intellectual capacity of immigrants has also been questioned; do they have the necessary intellectual skills to absorb and then perpetuate nationalist thinking? In his assessment of immigrants arriving in France, Georges Mauco comments that

The influence of foreigners from the intellectual point of view, although not clearly discernible, manifests itself especially as the opposite of reason, care, and a sense of balance and finesse which characterises the French people¹.

2. Renan's legacy: Nation as abstract imagining and cultural inheritance

Renan's discourse on the nation brings into play many issues that have concerned and continues to concern academics up to the present day. The notion that the nation resides predominantly in the imaginary of its people is one which is taken up and developed by Benedict Anderson in his cornerstone analysis, *Imagined Communities* (1983). Examining the nation and a sense of national identity requires an awareness of the constantly shifting, delicate

negotiations between the individual and a given community which take place at the level of abstraction. It also involves pinpointing the precise manner in which the nation is transmitted from generation to generation. The nation may be a territorial and therefore physical entity discernible on a map but the nation resides and gathers momentum largely as a conceptual space in the minds of its inhabitants and supporters. As a result of the invention of printing, the spread of education and, today, as a result of technology and the visual data gleaned from it, we are able to conceive of the world beyond our immediate surroundings and locate our country in relation to others. The nation takes shape at the level of the conceptual: to use Benedict Anderson's vocabulary, we 'imagine' the nation (Anderson 1983). A sense of national community is formed not by direct personal links between every citizen but by a perceived constellation of overarching cultural, historical, linguistic ties which transform groups of strangers into a cogent social, geographical entity.

Anderson is at pains to stress that although the nation and the national community are formed in the public imagination, they are not, as suggested by commentators such as Gellner, false or fabricated (Anderson 1983: 6). They are 'invented' which in Anderson's vocabulary is understood to mean imagining and creation (Anderson 1983). Imagination and invention may suggest a certain vagueness particularly with regard to questions of the physical parameters and political apparatus of the nation. Anderson, however, maintains that the nation as abstraction does possess a degree of specificity and does indeed encompass these elements. The nation is, then, 'an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (Anderson 1983). It is these three components - community, limited and sovereign - which

link the nation to the age in which it emerged. Firstly, Anderson uses the terms 'fraternity' and 'comradeship' to explain the precise nature of the nation as community which leads one to make obvious connections to the French Revolution. Secondly, the nation is limited for it conceives of its difference from other nations; there is an awareness of the boundaries with other nations. Thirdly, again the idea of a sovereign community aligns the nation with the Revolution and the Enlightenment. No longer is a community justifiably defined by rule from on high of a universal religion and/or monarchy, instead the nation 'dreams of being free' (Anderson 1983: 7).

Anderson's concept of the nation is especially pertinent to this thesis as it is anchored in culture. His views are echoed by other cultural commentators such as David Morley and Kevin Robins who maintain that the cultural apparatus creates the nation and an organised set of values, dispositions and differences (Morley and Robins 1995). While conscious of the way in which the nation became enmeshed in political and social configurations after its emergence, for Anderson the nation and the sense of nation-ness are first and foremost 'cultural artefacts' (Anderson 1983: 4). These artefacts arose not from a single event but from three principal developments which occurred in the middle to late eighteenth century and greatly transformed the prevailing cultural systems. These three developments, discussed in detail below, produced 'horizontal-secular, traverse-time communities' indicating that the changes taking place at this point in time relate to, most importantly, religion and forms of rule and, less obviously, perceptions of time (Anderson 1983: 37).

Anderson is emphatic in his claim that the age-old but threatened cultural systems in existence in the closing decades of the eighteenth century must be

understood if one is to comprehend the emergence of the nation, for the nation proceeded in contrast to and also out of systems of religious belief and dynastic rule. The religious community may have been undermined by the gradual rise of secularism at this particular point but its unravelling began in the Middle Ages. Two factors are cited as responsible for this unravelling, namely travel to lands formerly beyond the known realms and the waning domination of Latin. Clearly, news brought back to Europe by explorers transformed the way in which the world was understood and imagined. In the light of this data it was no longer possible to perceive the world in the same way in terms of its physical boundaries and the composition and lives of its inhabitants. The growth of publications in vernacular languages, in particular that of the Bible in the wake of the Reformation, and thus the accompanying demise of Latin also modified the views of the world: with books published in the language of a given community came the gradual break-up of old communities and the formation of new linguistic boundaries.

With regard to dynastic rule, by the mid-seventeenth century this particular cultural system was under threat, the legitimacy of divine, highly centralised modes of governing questioned. The English and then French Revolution provide the most distinct examples of this questioning. It is also interesting to note that Latin's dominance was eroded by the introduction of the vernacular to the sphere of administration by certain dynasties.

Finally, notions of temporality also underwent significant change during this period. Simultaneity, explained as 'a simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present' and 'something eternal and omnitemporal', was replaced by a form of temporal consciousness 'measured by calendar and

clock' enabling us to comprehend the word 'meanwhile' (Anderson 1983: 24). In terms of its relevance for the emergence of the nation, it is this 'meanwhile' which is crucial. Through this an individual is able to imagine other unknown members within the community existing and performing different acts at the same point in time. Moreover, the novel and the newspaper concretise this imagined community living as one but perhaps differently and in diverse locations in the present moment. The printed word adds substance to this imagining, reassuring the community through its reports of daily activity. It also fixed the national language and thereby created a sense of the language's and by implication the nation's history.

Tim Brennan reinforces Anderson's belief in the power of the written word to fix and determine the abstracted nation, commenting in his discussion of the novel and nationhood that

Nations, then, are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role... It was the novel that historically accompanied the rise of nations by objectifying the 'one, yet many' of national life, and by mimicking the structure of the nation, a clearly bordered jumble of languages and styles. Socially, the novel joined the newspaper as the major vehicle of the national print media, helping to standardize language, encourage literacy, and remove mutual incomprehensibility. (Brennan 1990: 49).

Eric Hobsbawm interrogates other forms of cultural fictions which cement the notion of a nation in the imaginary of its citizens (Hobsbawm 1994: 76). Hobsbawm is concerned with the constructed nature of national iconography and history; he uses the phrase the 'invention of tradition' to emphasise the associations of longevity and organicism which modern nations have fostered to justify their existence. Apart from mentioning the general observation that the flag and the anthem are the more common examples of national fabrications,

given the context of this thesis, I will concentrate on three French inventions instigated by the Third Republic.

In order to forge a national community out of the disparate elements of the French people, out of the rural dwellers in particular as they constituted the majority of the population, the French state established a series of visual signifiers and structures, both conceptual and physical, which would tie the individual to the nation on a daily basis. The first structure was the introduction of secular primary education which was conceived to provide an institutional, civic alternative to the framework offered by religion. Hobsbawm stresses the hidden agenda in this enterprise, namely the desire not only to turn the French people into French citizens but also into Republicans (Hobsbawm 1994: 77). The second structure pertains to the building of a national calendar of public events. These public events consisted in the main of celebrations related to the Revolution such as Bastille Day, which would annually unite the nation in official celebration. The third and final marker of the French nation came in the form of national buildings and statues. The statues of Marianne² and of notable local individuals, along with the erection of national buildings, added concrete weight to the more abstract notion of the Republic.

The process of cultivating national consciousness and allegiance, however, was not completed during the Third Republic. Up until the social reforms heralded by the 'New Deal' in 1945 the working class, women and immigrants were excluded from the political system and consequently their identification with the nation was somewhat limited (Jenkins 1997: 2). Although the Revolution had instigated the era of mass politics, the masses were not uniformly involved in nor catered for by the state: Edward Carr underlines the

social exclusivity implicit in the national consciousness raised by the Revolution when he uses the terms 'middle-class nationalism' and 'property-owner suffrage' which were prevalent throughout the nineteenth century (Carr 1983: 185). Jenkins amplifies this view, claiming that

...the notion of a socially undifferentiated 'Third Estate' was already illusory in 1789, and was even more so in 1848 as France's uneven capitalist development increasingly divided the interests of workers, middle-classes, and peasants. (Jenkins 1996: 105).

It is interesting to note that even in the Declarations of the Rights of Man and the Citizen in 1789 universal rights have their national limits. The citizen inscribed in this republican formulation could only be a citizen of France through his/her French nationality (Silverman 1992: 27). This reveals the distinct, exclusive and particularist nature of French identity.

3. The Nation as a political structure

Aside from questions of kinship and linguistic unity, the nation can also be defined as a society united under one government in a state. The relationship between the nation and the state is not always clearly delineated in critical texts: as Walker Connor explains, there is a blurring of the two caused by the loose 'interutilization' of these terms resulting in terminological confusion (Connor 1994: 36). Unlike the state, which he simply describes as a 'major subdivision of the globe', the nation defies easy definition; it is dogged by ambiguity and a wealth of competing critical views (Connor 1994). In a bid to achieve clarity one could turn one's attention to the sentiment and movement equated with the nation - nationalism - in the hope that this underlying principle could shed light on the make-up and significance of the nation itself. Indeed an

understanding of nationalism can be seen as central to an understanding of political and national configurations. Nationalism has been described as

one of the crucial moulders of modern Western social and political thought. The idea that human communities form a nation, that the nation is a suitable and in some accounts the only focus for political loyalty and collective life, is an idea that, whilst not originating in the French Revolution, was enormously amplified by it, and became a major force in all subsequent politics (Gamble 1981: 132-133).

This description of nationalism highlights the key features of the nations: community, loyalty and collectivity. John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith add further clarity to the fabric of nationhood by revealing that the foundation stones on which nationalism, and by inference the nation, is built: the desire for autonomy, self-government, unity, autarchy and authentic identity (Hutchinson and Gamble 1994: 4). It is again this final element - the production and promotion of identity - which is inextricably bound up with the *film de patrimoine*. The French nation and national identity are cinematically represented through a number of channels such as stars, canonical narratives, sites of national nostalgia and legitimation (Provence, the royal court and the château) all of which are analysed in detail in chapters six, seven and eight.

The relationship between nationalism and the nation is certainly close: Jenkins and Sofos conclude that the nation did not arise by chance from favourable cultural or economic factors but is in fact 'a political artefact called into being by nationalist ideologies and movements' (Jenkins and Sofos 1996: 11). In their analysis, the cultural origins of the nation - namely secularisation and the death of Latin as a unifying language - are acknowledged but are ultimately eclipsed by a conceptual shift affecting both universal political objectives and the structures of authority which were prevalent in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. During this period of political unrest

in France and elsewhere in Europe a new voice began to articulate challenging ideas: the 'people' began to question the rights of sacral monarchies and expressed the desire to move the base of authority and power away from its traditional site to the people themselves. The nation, in this particular rendering of its origins, is anchored therefore in the demand for popular sovereignty and democratic rights.

This demand has not always been met. Sofos and Jenkins use the example of Bonaparte and his 'authoritarian plebiscitary dictatorship' to illustrate the way in which the call for popular sovereignty has not always resulted in nations with equal measures of democracy and emancipation (Sofos and Jenkins 1996: 13). The bond of nationhood was, nevertheless, never lost under Bonaparte. Napoleon did, despite the democratic deficit during his rule, herald a new era of nationalism: again referring to the much cited French/German, Enlightenment/Romanticism dichotomy, Edward Carr emphasises the contrast between previous monarchs who ruled with their personal interests in mind and Napoleon's model of Romantic nationhood where the collective held more political sway (Carr 1983: 185).

During this period it is possible to isolate other political stirrings to account for the ascendancy of the nation and nationalism. In educated milieux, there was a distinct air of discontent in Europe: as a result of urbanisation and political systems entrenched in bureaucracy, the intelligentsia began to experience a sense of alienation and disaffection. Despite the low numbers of intellectuals suffering from this disenchantment with their social and political configurations, their ability to read and communicate permitted, in the first instance, the formulation and dissemination of new concepts of the nation. It

created a reading community, a 'social base' who could then take the conceptual out of the 'salons, coffee-houses, and clubs' and out into the political forum to form a movement (Hutchinson and Smith 1994: 6).

In terms of the territorial divisions in Europe, it would appear that this continent was well-prepared for the advent of the nation. In the absence of an overarching system of European-wide rule there had been a growth in the number of independent states differentiated by ethnicity (Spain and Holland, for example) and also in the number of absolutist states (such as Russia and Austria). This created an atmosphere of rivalry between states coupled with identification with one's own particular state (Hutchinson and Smith 1994). In this fertile ground, the idea of the nation could, then, easily take root.

Perhaps the most valid point made by Jenkins and Sofos is that nationalism and nations are malleable and ambiguous terms: both were initially associated with left-wing liberal connotations, namely liberty, equality and fraternity, and have been gradually appropriated by right-wing causes since the nineteenth century. While nationalism was once an expression of the desire for popular sovereignty and democracy in societies traditionally governed by élites, it is now difficult, in the light of examples from recent history, to conceive of this movement as a progressive project emanating from a popular, anti-parliamentarian base. National Socialism in Germany and the ethnic cleansing programmes in the former Yugoslavia, where nationalism has been used to justify the elimination of specific groups within society itself, prevent positive identification with this concept. At the heart of this shift from liberal to right-wing forms of nationalism is the fear of change, specifically a change in the

bourgeois social order (Jenkins and Sofos 1996: 21). At the end of the last century, nationalism, as a result of right-wing manipulations, shed its liberal skin and, far from acting as an agent of unification across a community, it was used as a political device to emphasise differences between groups in society to negative effect. In short, nationalism at this point in time was contingent on the perceived threat of change posed by the allegedly treacherous elements in society - those holding liberal or democratic beliefs who split the nation from within, or those foreign groups entering society who undermined the unity of the nation - and this threat was used by the conservative factions to fan a form of 'exclusionist nationalism' (Jenkins and Sofos 1996: 20).

Taking these different views into account it is possible to conclude that the nation is an eclectic mass of sentiments, imaginings and signs given cohesion by political and administrative systems and held together by ideology. In its predominantly civic form, it is the physical and political manifestation of a collection of abstract desires for democracy, emancipation and self-government. It inspires feelings of collectivity and loyalty across communities of anonymous, disparate individuals linked only by virtue of their inclusion in the territory of the nation. The nation is, therefore, a powerful idea residing in the imaginary and supported by outwardly visible structures of nationhood - national buildings, icons (the flag, for example), holidays and education, especially the teaching of history which gives the nation narrative form. The nation is therefore inscribed into popular memory and consciousness through a number of agencies. In order to consider the role of the *film de patrimoine* in the construction of national identity I will explore the ways in which cinema is an

area of identity production in chapter four before examining the particular identities presented in *Jean de Florette*, *Ridicule* and *Le Hussard sur le toit*.

4. National Identity

Having defined the nation it is now time to address the question of national identity. Perhaps the most constructive ways to approach this question is to conceive of the individual as possessing multiple identities (von Benda-Beckman (1995) and Smith (1991)). This multiplicity arises from the number of identifications with different groups which the individual forms. The main loci of identification recognised by von Benda-Beckman and Smith are gender, the region/the local area, class, religion and ethnicity. Each of these criteria produce varying degrees of collective identity with religion and ethnicity providing the most powerful and enduring affiliations across social class and linguistic diversity.

From the definition of the nation reached at the end of the last section, the web of identifications stimulated by the idea of national identity is revealed to be highly complex. The nation is perhaps one of the strongest sites of communal identity because it taps into a reservoir of other forms of existing collective identity such as the territorial, the political, the primordial and the religious, bringing together the civic and ethnic models of nationhood (Smith 1991: 15). The combination of these two models lends national identity and nationalism a malleability and an irreductibility: the sheer complexity of sentiments and associations created by the nation hinders any attempt to reduce nationalism to one defining feature (Smith 1991: 14). Equally, given the way in which national identity is embedded in everyday consciousness through the agencies outlined

in the preceding paragraphs, it is not easy to cultivate new forms of national or supra-national identity. For this kind of sentiment to take root a strong degree of attachment is necessary.

The European Community, for example, has made many bids to foster European identity through the use of everyday symbols. In the wake of a ministerial meeting of the Community in Fontainebleau in 1986 there has been a drive to create symbols of European unity such as the ECU, the European Flag and the European hymn (von Benda-Beckmann 1995: 19). In addition, following the logic of culture as the most viable proponent of a new non-national, pan-European identity, the Community has consistently highlighted the common cultural heritage of Europe, pointing to the common historical and artistic influences, philosophical traditions, conceptions of human rights and political cultures, to inspire feelings of solidarity ³. The Community has retrospectively recognised the value of culture in the building of Europe: as Jean Monnet commented

...if we were beginning the European Community all over again, we should begin with culture (quoted in Morley and Robins 1995: 44).

In examining why national identity is still a potent force in contemporary political and social life, Smith outlines its principal function as a force which defines and legitimises the existence of the nation and that of its citizens (Smith 1991). First and foremost, national identity has a crucial role to play in nation-building: von Benda-Beckman and Verkuyten posit the emotional attachment to the nation as the most important factor in this process -

The mere founding of a state is in itself insufficient to create a nation. There is more to it and this primarily concerns the formation of a national consciousness as well as national sentiments and loyalty. National or ethnic identity has to engage people both cognitively and (especially) emotionally... Emotions are more likely to mobilise and unite

people than similarities in understanding (von Benda-Beckmann and Verkuyten 1995: 23).

To comprehend why national identity is a potent force one must also examine why people seek collective identities and psychological bonds provided by collective emotions such as that offered by association with the nation. Arguably the most important function national identity performs lies in the sense of cohesion and distinction it imparts: through the various institutions, symbols, historical narratives and geographical co-ordinates an individual can place him/herself in relation to the national community and then in relation to the external world. Collective identity is indeed determined by inclusion and exclusion and, in order to arouse and then reinforce a sense of inclusion, the national community calls on the traditional loci of identification and association:

...it should be no surprise that appeals to feelings of national or ethnic loyalty predominantly use images and phrases that refer to blood, family and home. Such appeals are successful in eliciting strong responses because they touch on the important affective ties people develop at an early age...Hence, nationalism and ethnic ideologies appropriate meanings from cultural contexts which are important in people's everyday life: they speak about motherland, fatherland and kinship (von Benda-Beckmann 1995: 25).

The link between the individual and the community, however anonymous that community may be, fulfils a need for emotional attachment and belonging. Inclusion in a national community can also fulfil the individual's desire for a positive conception of the self and for social recognition: a sense of self-worth can be obtained through inclusion in a positively-perceived group. The group - national, ethnic or cultural - is accorded value and status through its difference from other groups and thus to maintain this positive group identification the difference must be maintained or increased (von Benda-Beckmann 1995).

Ironically, from a certain theoretical perspective, identity does not operate through positive associations but rather it is contingent on difference. Taking Saussure's approach to language, Morley and Robins propose a relational system of identity whereby selfhood or indeed nationhood is constructed through its distinctiveness from other forms of identity (Morley and Robins 1995). Hence, identity is produced by a system of difference and does not exist independently of this system. This hypothesis is upheld by Jonathan Rutherford who, using the example of Lawrence of Arabia to illustrate the power of difference in identity construction, examines the conceptual importance of the desert to Lawrence:

The desert as a metaphor of difference speaks of the otherness of race, sex and class, whose presence and politics so deeply divide our society. It is within their polarities white/black, masculine/feminine, hetero/homosexual, where one term is dominant and the other subordinate, that our identities are formed (Rutherford 1990: 10).

In a contemporary context, national identity is particularly attractive to the 'divided and disorientated' who are destabilised by the rapid rate of change in the modern world (Smith 1991: 17). It is perhaps the features of the postmodern world - multiplicity and infinite permutations - which pose the greatest threat to selfhood:

...they also represent a predicament that threatens fragmentation and psychosis - terrifying in their lack of personal, collective and moral boundaries. In this postmodern, 'wide-open' world our bodies are bereft of those spatial and temporal co-ordinates essential for historicity, for a consciousness of our own collective and personal past...If we cannot establish that sense of selfhood, only retreat and entrenchment are the viable alternatives to a schizophrenic and disturbed existence (Rutherford 1990: 24).

The appeal in traditional forms of collective identity, such as national identity, lies in the cohesion and, more importantly, the purpose it imparts. One could suggest that collective identities possess existential meaning, supplying a group

with a history and a location in the present as well as generally responding to the larger questions of 'origins, destiny and ultimately the meaning of life' (von Benda-Beckmann and Verkuyten 1995: 24). The question of national identity is clearly raising similar issues to that of the past in contemporary society. In chapter one I contended that dislocated societies in search of stable points of reference and narratives which reflect their life experiences explain in large part the significance accorded to heritage culture. As I argue in this thesis, the intersection of these two areas is to be found in the *film de patrimoine* which articulates the nation and identity through the medium of the past.

5. A Brief History of French National Identity: From the Revolution to de Gaulle

The French Revolution and its pivotal position in the rise of national consciousness has already been briefly touched upon in this chapter. It is now necessary to deepen the inquiry into this period in French history in an attempt to understand the mechanics of French national identity. The French Revolution is a seminal moment in the emergence of nations for it marked the rejection of

...the embodiment of the nation in the personal sovereign or the ruling class, boldly identified 'nation' and 'people'; and this identification became a fundamental principle both of the French and of the American revolutions (Carr 1983: 184).

Andrew Gamble remarks that the French Revolution did not give rise to the nation - states had fought to defend their interests in the name of the nation prior to this point in history (Gamble 1981: 133). Moreover, the Revolution did not determine the physical shape of France; with the exception of the Savoie, the present borders of this country were already in place by the mid-sixteenth century (Jenkins 1996: 101). The impact of the Revolution relates specifically to

ideology and the structure of political activity. It gave the collective, united under the banner of nationhood, impetus to sustain a communal sense of purpose and commitment (Jenkins 1996).

In discussing the French Revolution one must not overemphasise its contribution. There are other events which shaped the evolution of Western ideology to varying degrees. The late eighteenth century was marked by a period of political fermentation and subsequent transformation in which the French Revolution was arguably the most famous event. However, along with this particular revolution, the First Partition of Poland in 1775, the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 and Johann Fichte's Addresses to the German Nation must also be mentioned as they are flashpoints in the history of nationalism (Hutchinson and Smith 1994: 5). The sentiment of nationalism which arose in the aftermath of these events developed characteristics of a romantic persuasion which

...emphasized...the centrality of human emotion and self-expression, the need to find one's own identity through a return to authentic experience, the importance of discovering one's roots and true nature and, in the case of national communities, of rediscovering their pristine origins and golden ages (Hutchinson and Smith 1995).

It is the last three points of this description which are most relevant for the subsequent discussion of the *film de patrimoine* within French national cultural life; the insistence on literary and cinematic tradition and the importance of rural roots is played out in the French equivalents to the heritage film such as *Jean de Florette* or *Le Hussard sur le toit*. *Ridicule* underlines the struggle for selfhood and integrity using the watershed represented by the French Revolution to indicate the transformation of female identities and representations in the late twentieth century.

Returning once again to the precise relevance of the Revolution, it is claimed that only as a result of the Revolution did two significant changes occur in the political landscape. Firstly, the Revolution triggered mass participation in politics: as mentioned above large numbers of the French population, but not by any means the whole population, entered the sphere of national politics (Jenkins 1997: 1). Secondly, the Revolution transformed the relationship of the people vis-à-vis both the structures and the principles of power, replacing monarchical rule with the idea of popular sovereignty. Where absolutism had once, through its administration and military forces, overridden the sheer diversity in France, creating a sense of national coalescence in spite of the country's divergent nature, the state now formed the primary site of national identity (Jenkins 1997: 1-2).

6. French Nationalism

In France nationalism has generally been a form of political contestation used by the party in opposition to challenge the party in power. The process of appropriation and then counter-appropriation by the Left and the Right has resulted in two distinctive forms of nationalism, namely one rooted in liberal principles of democracy and a secular state and the other anchored in more traditional social and political structures. The character of these two forms has been lucidly described by one political commentator who deems the republican strain to be 'moderate, cautiously expansive, optimistic' and the anti-republican strain to be 'authoritarian, retreating, obsessively suspicious...pessimistic, highly adversarial' (Hazareesingh 1994: 128).

In his discussion of the origins of French nationalism, Hazareesingh suggested that, regardless of whether it eventually mutated along the right or left wing political lines, it simultaneously grew out of and was kept alive by a potent combination of historical factors centred on war, division and decline (Hazareesingh 1994: 126). Nationalism emerged from the intersection of political, military and cultural anxieties which plagued France from the early nineteenth century onwards. Threats to the nation's territorial limits marked the French consciousness from the moment Germany won Alsace and Lorraine in 1870. Uncertainty about France's eastern border continued through the nineteenth century and up until the end of World War Two. In combination with the need to repeatedly redefine this particular border, the issue of nationhood also came to the fore through the series of military conflicts the French were engaged in during this period. Politically speaking, the nation constituted a rare unifying feature in a political landscape shaped by division. Its ability to bring together various increasingly divergent factions meant that the nation remained a burning issue in French political life. The idea of the nation also retained a pivotal position in political thought given France's diminishing significance and size: with its shrinking population, failing economy and national language decreasing in importance the nation became a cause for concern.

Further to the threats posed to French soil by neighbouring countries at the fall of Napoleon's empire and then during the First and Second World Wars, the influx of immigrants, particularly from former French colonies, added another dimension to nationalist sentiment in the latter half of this century. Immigration indeed exacerbated the already sinister nature of Right-wing nationalism. This particular permutation of nationalism had rejected the civic model of national

membership, that is inclusion in the national community by virtue of loyalty to the nation, and instead adopted the ethnic or primordial model which can be summarised as 'the congruities of blood, speech, custom' (Geertz 1991: 31). In the closing decades of the nineteenth century a new form of right-wing nationalism emerged, bearing the hallmarks of primordialism taken to the extreme of racism, to reinvigorate the fast fading traditional Right. The 'integral' nationalism conceived of by its principal and celebrated exponents, Paul Déroulède, Maurice Barrès and Charles Maurras, shows the influence of the particularist model of French nationality and citizenship outlined above as it centres on the division between the truly French and the non-nationals (McMillan 1985: 31). Barrès has been credited as France's first national socialist and there are indeed reverberations of national socialist ideology in his credo which posits nationalism as

...a mystical...phenomenon, bred by a sense of communion with the national soil and the cult of one's ancestors (McMillan 1985).

The Dreyfus affair provides a vivid example of this 'integral' approach to nationalism, fuelling racism towards a Jewish officer. It also underlines the conflictual nature of the right-wing primordial paradigm of French nationalism:

Throughout the Dreyfus Affair the nationalist and anti-republican camp invoked the Jewish origins of the defendant as its principal argument against judicial revision. In their eyes the cosmopolitan character of Jews made them inherently treacherous, and therefore unworthy of full membership to the French nation. The same principle was invoked *a fortiori* against all foreigners who applied for French nationality (Hazareesingh 1994: 87).

The roots of contemporary nationalist activity are clear. The exclusion of Jews is still propounded by le Front National who believe that 'the membership of a Semitic culture is incompatible with the values of French nationhood' (Hazareesingh 1994: 88). A more recent incident has again given prominence

to this kind of nationalist thinking grounded in a primordial model of citizenship. The debate around the wearing of the veil by Muslims girls in France in 1989 brought to light yet again the problems of religious and ethnic difference in a secular state. Moreover, la Loi Debré highlights the continuing presence of this issue in contemporary political life (see section entitled '*Jean de Florette* and the 1980s' in chapter six).

Where the Second World War accentuated the divide between the types of nationalism propounded by the Left and the Right, between Resistance and Collaboration, between 'nostalgia for the pre-democratic, pre-industrial France [and] anti-Semitic populism' and 'revolutionary-democratic tradition of national liberation and social emancipation', The Fourth Republic was not characterised by such dramatically polarised internal rifts (Jenkins 1996: 108). The ideological differences implicit in the two forms of nationalism did of course remain but strict Left/Right political alliances were fragmented by multiple global developments. Firstly, it is indeed the tension between the global and the nation and the subsequent disempowerment of the national political unit that deflected attention away from domestic struggle. France was faced with its decreasing importance as a world power, a fact that was only finally accepted during The Fifth Republic (Jenkins 1996: 110). The loss of Algeria and Indo-China, the creation of a European power bloc, changes in relations between France and bordering nations and the advent of the Cold War continued to erode France's sense of self-importance and legitimacy. These factors did, however, result in bringing political factions together in their dislike for America and a centralised Europe. De Gaulle's presidency further dissolved dichotomous forms of

nationalist ideology with a consensual style of government which appeased in some measure both Left and Right.

It has been suggested that de Gaulle's ability to minimise the political divide stemmed from the highly optimistic, if not distorted, view of France he projected. This view was an integral part of his 'politics of grandeur' whereby he simultaneously attempted to elevate France's importance in world politics and contest the domination of America (McMillan 1985: 161). When one considers the various spheres of influence existing within the arena of world politics in the 1960s it is apparent that de Gaulle was out of touch with reality:

The discourse of national grandeur, the symbolism of the 'independent' nuclear force de frappe, and the self-assertive idiosyncracies of Gaullist foreign policy, tended to disguise the realities of 'super-power' politics and the constraints imposed by France's alignment with a 'bloc' system (Jenkins 1996: 110).

However, one can appreciate the motives behind his 'politics'. As McMillan points out, de Gaulle was acting with the home audience in mind, formulating this particular image of France to develop

...a renewed sense of national pride, to legitimize the Fifth Republic and to enhance the authority of the French state (McMillan 1985: 162).

Due to this emphasis on promoting the nation above all else, party-specific forms of nationalism were effectively overridden.

7. Beyond de Gaulle to the Present Day: the Problematics of Nationhood in a European and Global Context

While differences between forms of nationalism were demoted to a position of secondary importance by de Gaulle's drive to rally the collective around the idea of the nation, it became increasingly clear in the 1970s that both left-wing and right-wing conceptions of nationalism failed to correspond to contemporary

political and economic life. Nationalism in France was dented by the realisation that the state was not a prominent world power as de Gaulle had led the nation to believe through his actions in the realm of international politics and his rhetoric of grandeur. De Gaulle may have heightened France's importance in a series of attention-grabbing acts in the 1960s - for example, withdrawing from NATO, creating a Third Bloc to challenge the two super powers, officially recognising China and visiting Russia and Latin America (McMillan 1985: 161) - but the encroachment of the more abstract process of globalisation and the more concrete transnational economic structures could not but deflate such falsely inflated perceptions of France. France could not pretend to be the independent agent of its own destiny; it had to accept its middle-ranking international status. Given that the state is commonly discerned as being synonymous with the nation, this downgrading of France's status has had negative implications for the way in which national identity is constructed (Jenkins 1996: 111).

7.1. Globalisation and the demise of the nation

Here it is necessary to examine the issue of globalisation in greater detail in order to cast more light on the changing status of nations in an international context. As David Morley and Kevin Robins point out, the role of the nation state has changed in the wake of globalisation and the strengthening of supra-national blocs (Morley and Robins 1995). Globalisation is painted as a defining characteristic of the modern or even postmodern world and yet it is a very vague term which requires definition. In Morley and Robins' study, globalisation implies a new world order, the restructuring of geography through the

development of a world, as opposed to a national, economy. Globalisation is capitalism taken to its global conclusion for, as Morley and Robins point out, capitalism has always striven to become a world system and in order to achieve this goal it has been necessary to penetrate all areas of the globe (Morley and Robins 1995: 108). Thus goods are produced to be distributed and consumed in a global market and the markets themselves are regulated on an international level.

The scale of this new trend in economic strategies is crucial to an understanding of globalisation: in Morley and Robins' text the words 'world-scale', 'transnational' and 'international' abound for these are the dimensions and the objectives of a truly global economy. Clearly in the drive to achieve economic internationalisation the globe is no longer perceived in nor governed by national economic units; the national is effectively rendered redundant by the ever-growing tentacles of transnational companies.

The effects of this international economy are far-ranging. Perceptions of the nation and also the value of the nation are greatly modified by globalisation. As Morley and Robins indicate, there is a school of thought which believes that globalisation standardises and homogenises tastes, thereby erasing the distinctiveness of national markets and national tastes (Morley and Robins 1995: 110). Individuality and nationality are eclipsed by the tendency to universalise both the material for consumption and the consumer. The aim of global business philosophy is to innovate, produce and distribute 'global products' in as short a time as possible with the 'global citizen' in mind (Morley and Robins 1995). Viewing the world and conducting business in such terms reduces the importance of the nation, taking control away from multinationals

based in national centres and diffusing it over a much wider terrain. The terrain is also altered by this internationalising operation:

On the basis of an electronic communications network, the global corporation organises its activities around a new space of information flows...In this process, the decentred and deterritorialising corporation transposes a new and abstract electronic space across earlier physical and social geographies (Morley and Robins 1995: 111).

This view is reiterated by Claus-Dieter Rath who maintains that, following the restructuring of information, communication and broadcasting systems, it is now possible to speak of the globalised space as opposed to the national space. It is this unprecedented flow of information facilitated by recent technology which has eroded, and indeed superseded, established physical, geographical boundaries.

...Frontiers of a national, regional or cultural kind no longer count: what counts much more is the boundary of the territory of transmission (Rath quoted in Morley and Robins 1995: 61).

Alongside this phenomenon of a new global hyperspace and economy, other spaces have emerged to partially counter its abstracting, deterritorialising influence. It could be argued that the local and the regional have surfaced as significant sites of identification and economic and cultural activity. Although Morley and Robins choose to view the local as another less important element in the abstract logic of globalisation, the local and the regional nonetheless possess a certain value and impart a sense of belonging. Taking the example of heritage culture, it is possible to discern a revalidation of place, especially places of historic interest. Indeed, contemporary heritage tourism in France and Britain is inextricably linked to a need to rediscover identity and reaffirm certainties through a reacquaintance with sites of national importance. For societies unsettled by the disappearance of the old order, this form of tourism

strengthens connections with the past, allowing visitors to build up images of a particular local community. It is debatable, however, whether this interest in the past signals a new interest in the local: despite the specific economic conditions which triggered the growth of heritage culture, it is the case that the past is a recurrent panacea, repeatedly invoked to provide reassurance (see chapter one for discussion of heritage culture). In the *film de patrimoine*, moreover, it can be said that the regional/local space has become a marker for the national space as illustrated by *Jean de Florette* and *Le Hussard sur le toit* (see chapters six and eight).

While one could argue that the nation is in danger of losing its power to the new global-local nexus outlined by Morley and Robbins, it is also possible to speak of another global phenomenon which in fact preserves the status of nations. The 'globalization' of nations, nationalism and national identity can be regarded as the determining feature of the modern world (Smith 1991: 143). As Anthony Smith indicates, these three manifestations are ubiquitous and pervasive:

Not only has nationalism, the ideological movement, penetrated every corner of the globe; the world is divided, first and foremost, into 'nation-states' - states claiming to be nations - and national identity everywhere underpins the recurrent drive for popular sovereignty and democracy, as well as the exclusive tyranny that it sometimes breeds (Smith 1991).

National identity is a difficult construct to eradicate because of the extensive grasp it has on numerous aspects of a national community's life. For example, Smith contends that national identity permeates culture (myths, memory, values, language), society (defining the arena of social interaction and morality), official bodies (the legal system), politics (political figures, structures, objectives) and international relations (endorsing the world system of nations)

(Smith 1991: 144). Whether the nation can be 'superseded' or 'transcended', to use Smith's words, in the light of its strong global presence is questionable.

7.2. Audiovisual media, identity and the challenge of 1992

In charting what they believe to be the decline of the nation-state, Morley and Robins speak of the threat of transnational, supra-national blocs. Here one could cite the European Community, GATT, the IMF and NAFTA. The European Community is the most notable, and given the French focus of this thesis, the most relevant example to take. This Community is plagued by the conflict between members who conceive of it as a customs union and others who regard it as a political community. In terms of the future of the nation, the fundamental difference between the economic and the political conception of the EC lies in the value they accord the national unit in the attainment of their goals. The former position holds fast to the division of the Community by nation-states linked by economic interest. In this equation the nation provides a sense of unity and common purpose; the Community does not seek to disempower the nation. The latter position is anchored in the reverse image of the Community: nationalism has proved to be a lethal sentiment in Europe this century and thus the continued grouping of communities around the nation, cemented by nationalist feeling, does not have a place in a European bloc (Smith 1991: 151).

The nation, in Smith's rendering, is not on the verge of obsolescence. The above description of the European Community, with its stark underlying rift, would appear to uphold this argument. It is difficult to imagine the European Community as the new continental power bloc for several reasons aside from

any conceptual problems. European nations still possess individual military forces and are unlikely to relinquish the right to defend their territory. A further unfulfilled requirement for the successful supersession of the nation by the EC is the replacement of national consciousness with European political nationalism (Smith 1991: 152). Smith doubts whether this kind of European-wide sentiment can effectively eradicate nationalism; it can only perhaps be overlaid onto current nationalist sentiments (Smith 1991). One could also add that European nations have remained partially impervious to the spread of globalisation due to solidity of national public organisations. A firmly anchored public service culture, particularly one which supports film-making and broadcasting and thus promotes the idea of the nation through cultural manifestations, has helped to stem the flow of globalisation into individual nations. Given that France has the largest public sector in Europe it may take considerably longer to erode any sense of national cohesion.⁴

However, it would be unfair to imply that the Community is in a state of impasse due to differences in political concepts. Certain advances have been made in the cultural sphere. The European Community has created initiatives to promote a sense of pan-European cultural identity, particularly in the field of broadcasting and film-making. While the linguistic and cultural diversity of regional television programming has been nurtured by the Community's financial mechanisms such as MEDIA, the objectives behind most media transformations stem from a desire to establish a European audiovisual market capable of competing with the world media leaders (USA and Japan) and, to a lesser degree, of fostering Europeanness (Morley and Robins 1995: 3). This responsiveness firstly to national difference and then to collective European

identity reflects the more general position of the European Community vis-à-vis culture and the role of the media:

European cultural identity 'is one of the prerequisites for that solidarity which is vital if the advent of the large market, and the considerable change it will bring in living conditions within the Community, is to secure the popular support it needs'....Television, it is argued, can be important in 'promoting the cultural identity of Europe'; it can help to develop a people's Europe through reinforcing the sense of belonging to a Community...Television can actually be an instrument of integration. 'Television', the Commission maintains, 'will play an important part in developing and nurturing awareness of the rich variety of Europe's common cultural and historical heritage' (Morley and Robins 1995: 77).

Audiovisual media have been marked out as important by the European Union to the point where they have been elevated to a metaphor for European culture and collective identity (Schlesinger 1997: 370). Culture, in this instance, visual media, has become synonymous with wider culture, that is a nation's way of life, which is perceived as under threat. According to Schlesinger,

National audiovisual production - something quite distinctive, rooted in a given heritage - is perceived as a source of authentic self-expression. It needs to be sustained as a way of articulating a collective identity valued for itself (Schlesinger 1997: 371).

Therefore the liberalisation of the audiovisual market required by the USA in the GATT negotiations in 1993 met with considerable European resistance. This resistance stems in the main from a fear of Americanisation and the resulting loss of indigenous identity and national control in Europe. Schlesinger comments on the unfounded nature of this fear, claiming that America is also suffering from a crisis of identity caused by the end of the Cold War. In addition, the fear of domination by a homogenised American culture should also be minimised given that American culture is constantly being redefined in the light of the continual influx of immigrant groups (Schlesinger 1997: 374).

It has been suggested that Europe has adopted a national model of culture and applied it without considering that this continent does not, like America, possess a unified culture (Schlesinger 1997). European policy-making on the subject of culture stands in stark contrast to the US position; US media policy does not centre on the audiovisual as communicator and protector of national culture but rather works on the premise that cinema and broadcasting are commodities. Programmes such as MEDIA 1, MEDIA 2, EURIMAGES and EUREKA capture this dual focus of media and cultural identity by financing all stages of audiovisual production from script development to training for film-makers. MEDIA1 has encouraged all aspects of film-making through SCRIPT (the European Script fund for script development), MBS (Media Business), ACE (Ateliers du Cinéma), SOURCES (Stimulating Outstanding Resources for Creative European Screenwriting) and the now defunct EAVE (Les Entrepreneurs de l'Audiovisuel Européen).

The role of visual media in the construction of a European super-state and associated cultural identity is not unproblematic. Technology has produced transnational systems of communication and transmission which function above and beyond existing national systems. This evolution has the potential to reduce the power of the nation and increase the space for burgeoning regional and international configurations. It equally has the potential to exacerbate nationalist sentiment: in a centralised European state the cultural diversity of different member states could well be marginalised and lost by the drive to find European cultural standards (Morley and Robins 1995: 79). In reaction to this, there could be recourse to the concept of nationhood as the symbolic transmitter of national difference.

7.3. France and the European Community

France's relationship with the European Community has become increasingly problematic since the 1980s. In fact it has been suggested that 1992 proved to be a moment of crisis for French identity (Kassim 1997: 168). This feeling of malaise has persisted throughout the 1990s and has come to be described as 'une dépression nerveuse collective' (*Le Monde*, 11.1.97: 1). This collective depression was sparked by the negative perception of Europe which is seen, on the one hand, as an advance but one which is

...la dernière d'un processus né du despotisme éclairé des pères fondateurs, laisse les peuples sceptiques et leur donne le sentiment de devoir ployer chaque jour sous le poids des sacrifices (*Le Monde*, 11.1.97).

Beyond this supranational bloc there is another greater threat to French and also to European economic stability: the dual spectres of globalisation and America. America appears to be a metaphor for global economic domination in French eyes and Europe, weakened by high unemployment, cannot hope to compete on this level of economic gigantism. In *Le Monde's* review of 1996, pointedly entitled 'L'année de la mondialisation', America is portrayed as 'conquérant irresistible' while France is depicted as its polar opposite, a country afflicted by a shattered sense of national identity. Globalisation, like the EC, is seen to be both an advance and a cause of suffering, causing even higher unemployment, delocalisation and the disintegration of social cohesion. From a French perspective, globalisation is, in short,

...un cauchemar annoncé, un déclin programmé (*Le Monde*, 11.1.97).

Prior to this moment of crisis, France maintained a prominent position in the Community and was thus able to steer its direction and development to suit

French national concerns (Kassim 1997). In the post-war period France's main objectives were to limit Germany's power and to modernise the economy. Given the central role of the Franco-German axis within the Community and France's dominant status within this axis, France was largely able to achieve these objectives without making any major concessions to the EC. During this 'Golden Age' of France's involvement with the Community, France's own policies were largely unaffected by the wider European structure:

...France was not compelled to undertake involuntarily any far-reaching domestic reform either to comply with Community rules or to implement EC action. Indeed, although the common market project was inspired by free-market principles, France was unimpeded in its pursuit of its post-war interventionist economic strategy (Kassim 1997: 169).

However, realising both the limitations of their dirigiste-style economy in the wake of the internationalisation of the world economy and the need to comply finally with European directives, the French government of the 1980s introduced reforms in several key sectors. These reforms indicated a serious modification in the government's attitude to their own national role and also to their role in the European Community. Broadly speaking, there has been a loosening of ties between the state and business through deregulation, regional integration, Europeanisation, privatisation, greater interdependence and international business ventures resulting in a more market-orientated economy (Schmidt 1997: 230). Europeanisation, in the shape of the Single European Act, compelled France to change the way it operated within the Community: until the SEA France continued to view the EC as an instrument for the furthering of national projects.

From an international perspective, it has been suggested that the Single European Act is of considerable importance to the economic structuring of the

globe: along with the fall of Communism and the revolutions of 1989, the SEA is both a product of globalisation and a vehicle for its promotion. Curiously France's business interests have not been furthered on an international level by the implementation of the SEA. While, in principle, the Single European Act appeared to work in tandem with France's desire to strengthen the competitiveness of the nation's industries, the reality has failed to live up to French expectations. Small gains were made as a result of the Act - such as the EUREKA programme for the creation of a European audiovisual territory. With regard to France's international ambitions, the SEA proved to be frustrating rather than rewarding. It can be said that France has developed a global perspective in terms of its industrial policies, 'championing' certain enterprises abroad. The same cannot be said of the Single European Act which did not, much to France's disappointment, encourage or protect the activities of European enterprises beyond the European territory.

On a national level, the SEA demanded the deregulation of the business terrain by member states to produce a single European market. These requirements effectively marked the end of France's golden age. The liberalisation of certain economic sectors the SEA required to ensure competitiveness means that France has had to relinquish control over areas which it had traditionally safeguarded or which had been considered as public services (Kassim 1997: 172). This process has entailed removing many of the monopolies which existed in France to safeguard the success of French businesses. Since deregulatory policies came into force the domestic flight market has been opened up to European carriers other than Air France, which dominated this sector until 1996, and the telecommunications monopoly

disappeared with deregulation in 1998. The effect of this practice has not been entirely negative: in reducing the government's business responsibilities it has lessened the government's financial burden. In other areas the nation is passed over by the new links forged directly between regions, newly privatised enterprises and the EU. European integration has thus necessitated a shift in the French state's conception of its position vis-à-vis the nation. The state retains its mandate to protect French interests outside France and to give the nation structure and unity but it is no longer able to continue with its interventionist activities:

...there is widespread consensus that the state is no longer the sole master of its territory, that its role is to encourage and co-ordinate rather than to direct and control (Kassim 1997: 176).

This does not mean, however, that France is no longer a major player in Europe. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that France continues to hold substantial sway within this arena: France's stance on the importance of culture has determined the European perspective on this issue. At the Uruguay Round of GATT in 1993 mentioned above, the French protectionist position on the audiovisual market was adopted as the European position: over 4000 European producers of visual media entreated the negotiators to refrain from including film-making and television production in the proposed liberalisation measures (Schlesinger 1997: 371 and 375).

Conclusions

In view of the above analyses offered by various commentators, one could argue that globalisation and the emergence of transnational blocs pose a threat to the importance of nations. It is questionable, however, whether this threat is real or merely perceived and whether a real threat could in fact severely diminish the status and authority of nations. As Anthony Smith has remarked, the nation is both ubiquitous and pervasive; it has come to determine the way in which the globe is structured in terms of units of power and geography. In their text entitled 'Globalisation, Europe, France' the Parti Socialiste echoed the resolve of European nations to preserve this global structure: while the federal dimension of the EC demands the transfer of sovereign power, individual nation states have no intention of disappearing (*Le Monde* 29.2.96: 6). Within the context of Europe there are indeed a number of national factors which at present prevent the formation of a truly pan-European identity.

Although Europeanness can be defined by its oppositional position vis-à-vis America, a point exemplified by the GATT discussions of 1993, the evolution of a solid, distinctive self-image is hindered by the existing national divisions within Europe. European integration, which would be greatly furthered by the development of a strong Community-wide cultural identity, is hindered by national fragmentation both in terms of its cultural production, notably televisual production, and economically. Nations are reluctant to relinquish, and quick to defend, their individuality - again the French can be cited in reference to their cultural protectionism which takes the form of 'l'exception culturelle'(Rigaud 1995). It is this diversity which is difficult to subsume into the European equivalent of 'La France une et indivisible'. As Philip Schlesinger comments:

The question of pluralism arises at a number of levels. First, there is the most obvious one of the nation-state, still the key locus of political

identification. Official, state-endorsed national identity is unquestionably not going to fade away and will remain a dominant feature of Union Europe's plural character. To complicate the picture further, however, there are other levels and layers of collective identity that need to be taken into account, namely nationality, language and ethnicity (Schlesinger 1997: 381).

Clearly it would appear impossible to create European homogeneity out of national, regional and linguistic diversity. This situation can apparently be resolved through a thorough rethinking of industrial strategy but for now it is 'an obstacle to uniform market growth and a source of increased transaction costs' (Schlesinger 1997).

In the light of this information one can assume that the creation of a European identity will be an arduous task. Earlier in this chapter, it was established that societies possess many collective identifications, national identity being the strongest of all. The nationalist sentiment which arises from this sense of identity is not always used to positive effect. But there is nothing to suggest that an ill-defined global or European identity could eradicate this historically enduring collective national identity. It would seem impossible to erase such a powerful conceptual, political, territorial and cultural formation despite the undoubtedly far-ranging impact of an internationalised economy and transnational networks of communication.

In terms of the French nation, globalisation and Europeanisation have necessitated significant modifications to France's external relations and modes of operating internally. In the past, France may have been able to promote a sense of self-importance and national cohesion through the oppositional discourses it created with other nations or entities much in the same way that Europe appears to define itself against America. In the 1870s France drew on its colonial links, with Morocco in this instance, to provide the certainty and

reassurance it required after its military defeat. Later, in the 1930s, France was once again undermined, this time by domestic problems - a precarious economy, high unemployment, scandals, parliamentary instability - and it turned to its dominant colonial position to engender a sense of 'security, power and indestructibility' through its superior relation to the 'uncivilised' Other.⁵ In the 1960s de Gaulle created a largely unfounded sense of optimism and buoyancy concerning France's position in world politics through a series of flamboyant acts.

These examples highlight two issues. Firstly, the crisis of identity currently suffered by the French is a recurring problem rather than a phenomenon unique to the 1990s. This present crisis arises from a need to come to terms with France's reduced global importance. The French national horizon has obviously shrunk from a 'France of 100 million Frenchmen' of the colonial period; while de Gaulle may have masked this reality temporarily, France is a middle-ranking European power rather than a player on the scale of the USA. Secondly, in the wake of the Single European Act, France has had to accept that the European Community cannot be used exclusively for national gain; European integration involves compromise and reduced state intervention in the name of the common market. This has been a difficult process for the French government who have traditionally protected their national industries at home and promoted them abroad. Moreover, the lack of social provision provided by the EC has meant that France is still troubled by the expense of social costs along with the economic measures introduced to meet the requirements of the Maastricht Treaty. For these reasons the French people have come to view Europe and the process of integration in a negative light:

...the popular perception in France is that Europe is the root cause of these austerities (Kassim 1997: 176)

It is increasingly problematic to anchor French national identity in traditional sites of identification and traditional polarities. Where it was once possible to use the external reference to the colonies to assert their superiority or to draw on their bilateral relationship with Germany to confirm their prominent position in Europe, France is turning to a different, but not new, source for national self-definition. Through the medium of film and the more general growth of the heritage industry in France, one can attest to the shift in sites of collective identity and validation. It is my contention that the past, in the absence of other points of reference, offers the possibility of self-aggrandisement and reassurance. A positive self-image can be constructed through the representation of cultural history in the shape of the *film de patrimoine*. While it is dangerous to make simplistic connections between the social and political coordinates of the 1980s and 1990s and the emergence of the *film de patrimoine*, it can be said that the disintegration of old certainties have rendered the past, particularly nostalgic evocations of France's illustrious past, an attractive conceptual space of identity. In addition, this space of identity is also a successful, exportable cinematic product. For example, *Cyrano de Bergerac* appeared at number 18 in *The Guardian's* Readers' Poll of the Best Films in 1995 and Claude Berri, director of *Tchao Pantin* (1983), *Jean de Florette* and *Manon des Sources* (1985-6), *Uranus* (1990), *Germinal* (1993) and lastly *Lucie Aubrac* (1997), was described as 'a French director much loved by British audiences' in the London Film Festival Guide for 1997⁶.

Thus it can be claimed that in the search for legitimacy, the past has come to the fore as one of the remaining loci available to the French for this very purpose. As discussed in chapter one, the heritage industry tends to neutralise the past, stripping it of its complexities and contradictions. It is this form of unproblematic history which lends itself to mainstream cinematic reinterpretation. Film-makers such as Jacques Audiard may choose to explode the myths of the French national past in films such as *Un Héros très discret* (1995) which undermines accepted, glorious accounts of Resistance activity in World War Two. The more popular films of quality cinema, however, choose to romanticise the past even in their renderings of more recent history: Berri's *Lucie Aubrac* (1997) is another example of faultless but ultimately bland quality film-making which does not enter into a critical dialogue with the past but is rather another prestigious composite of French identity. Once again Berri presents a literary adaptation chronicling a romance against the backdrop of history using prominent French actors. The use of stars, the involvement of a heritage film-director and a production company responsible for *Le Hussard sur le toit*, *Jean de Florette* and *Cyrano de Bergerac* bring together the elements of French national life which certain French film producers and cultural policy makers want to package for national and international consumption. *Lucie Aubrac*, therefore, does not problematise France's involvement in World War Two but rather contributes to the collective myths, portraying the French experience from the perspective of the Resistance and not from that of collaboration.

Thus the past in this type of *film de patrimoine* not only creates a national, if not mythologised, space for identity but also for a space for national cinema.

Why the *film de patrimoine* can be termed national cinema and why the French state and film-industry are obliged to nurture products emblematic of the nation and of national cinema are precisely the questions examined in chapter four.

¹ G. Mauco (1932) *Les Etrangers en France* Paris A. Colin: p. 558

² The female incarnation of France is about to undergo changes. It is currently modelled on the actress Catherine Deneuve. Mayors in France have recently selected a new French woman on which to base the statue. Candidates included models Estelle Halliday and Laetitia Casta.

³ In their article 'Europe as a multilevel problem' in K. von Benda-Beckmann and M. Verkutyn's *Nationalism, ethnicity and cultural identity in Europe* (1995), J. Berting and W.F. Heinemeijer outline the elements of European cultural and social history which should be acknowledged by the Community. The commonality of cultural heritages in Europe features strongly in the Community's original list drawn up in Vienna in 1986. These elements went on to be included in the Helsinki Final Act.

⁴ M. Maclean (1997) 'Privatisation, dirigisme and the Global Economy,' in *Modern and Contemporary France* volume 5 number 2, May: p. 226.

⁵ Marie-Helene Hertaud-Wright (1998) 'The French colonial film of the 1930s: Identity in crisis?' in M. Esposito (ed.) *Picturing the Nation: Images of French National Identity* Portsmouth: University of Portsmouth Press.

⁶ Sandra Hebron (1997) *The London Film Festival Guide 1997*, p. 6.

Chapter Four: National cinema(s) and the case of the French film industry

Having provided a broad conceptual and historical context in the last three chapters, I will narrow the focus in this chapter. It is now possible to consider the main hypothesis of this doctoral thesis, that is whether one can interpret the contemporary French *film de patrimoine* as a form of French national cinema. To this end, this chapter will be divided into two sections, the first dealing with the general notion of national cinema, in particular in relation to art-house film production/art cinema. The second section will deal with this concept in relation to French cinema. It is imperative to include art cinema in this analysis as this form has become synonymous with the idea of European national cinema and thus determines the status and reception of the French *film de patrimoine* abroad. Moreover art cinema has assumed a central role in the European nations' attempts to create an indigenous film industry and viewing culture (Neale 1981: 11). The British context will be referred to in this chapter given that both the British film industry and British film academics provide ample illustration and considerable critical analysis of the concept and practice of national cinema.

Firstly one should clarify the discursive parameters of national cinema. Clearly, the focus of this thesis is French cinema and its relation to the dominant referent, Hollywood. This, however, is not always a fair representation of films from outside the European or English-speaking world. It is vital to define this position for, as Alison Butler has pointed out,

...some films neither imitate nor oppose some or all of the codes of Hollywood cinema: they simply give priority instead to more localized approaches to cultural codification...The notion of formal codes that are isolable from contents and contexts becomes unsustainable...and its

becomes necessary to think cinema in terms of geographically specific, historically accrued modes of making sense (Butler 1993: 19).

Thus, the conclusions offered at the end of this chapter are particular in terms of location. They are also particular in terms of time, that is, the 1980s and 1990s. It is necessary to discuss the formal codes and conventions in relation to a moment in time for they are not fixed but temporally variable, causing the characteristics and strategies of opposition in European cinema to shift accordingly.

With regards to critical material, the texts discussed in the following pages relate mainly to European cinema with the notable exception of Tom O'Regan's recent publication, *Australian National Cinema*. This text provides a useful foil to other arguments around this subject which are marked by a certain Eurocentricism. It is also a challenging comparative text in its own right: while not an obvious contrast to make with French cinema, Australian cinema finds itself in an equivalent, if slightly more disadvantaged, position in local and global markets. Through O'Regan's text it will be possible to isolate discourses and dynamics common to national cinemas in general and also, more particularly, to those problematised by linguistic specificity or size.

1. Defining National cinema

1.1. What is national cinema?

In response to the question 'what is national cinema?' one could take a very broad view and state that, in the first instance, film-making can be characterised as an industry, an art, a cultural industry and finally a national industry. All these elements are central to the idea of national cinema, particularly French national cinema; they are united in a specific constellation

which pertains to conceptions of culture, commerce and national cultural identity. It is the function of cinema as a national industry which is the most interesting in this context. Cinema can be considered a national industry in that domestic cinematic production can be targeted for national consumption or, conversely, intended to function as a national product for export. Bollywood is an example of cinema becoming a national product, creating hugely successful films for mainly national, rather than international, consumption. Although Indian films are exported to Indian communities abroad, the scale of export is hardly comparable to that of Hollywood. The dominance of indigenous products in the Indian home market is clearly indicated by the box-office figures: the audience for national cinema is four times greater than that for American mainstream films (Crofts 1993: 56). If we compare this to figures for indigenous audiences for other national cinemas it is evident how unusual Indian cinema is in this respect: Australian films only accounted for between five and twenty percent of the national box-office takings in the 1980s (O'Regan 1996: 47). From table one below it is clear that European film producing nations are in a similar if not worse situation to Australia, with indigenous films receiving very small percentages of the national audience. In contrast, Hollywood is a good example of films which are fortunate enough to operate on both levels, that is as material for national audiences and also as exportable, commercial products. American film is thus a giant force on two fronts, able to dwarf other nations' products domestically and internationally by virtue of easy distribution and exhibition in other film-producing nations.

Table 1: Box-office share of US, domestic, European and other films in the European market in 1992 (%) (source: *Budgets and Markets*, 1996)

	US	DOMESTIC	OTHER EUROPE	OTHER
France	58	35	4	3
Italy	69	19	11	1
Germany	83	10	6	1
Spain	77	9	13	1
UK	84	14	1	1
Holland	79	13	3	5
Belgium	73	4	19	4
Denmark	78	15	3	4
Greece	93	2	3	2
Portugal	85	1	9	5
Ireland	88	8	4	0

1.2. The Loci of national cinema

We have already encountered both the strength of feeling and also the fluidity in definition surrounding the idea of the nation and national identity. In the preceding chapter the nation was summarised as a conceptual entity formed by a multiplicity of discourses centred on civic values, regional allegiances, linguistic difference and traditional links of kinship and religion. Its existence is preserved by institutional structures of government and its physicality given shape by its geographical delimitation. I argue that cinema also has a part to play in the conceptualisation of the nation. Benedict Anderson remarked that printing was a vital agency in creating a link of identification between the

anonymous members of a nation (Anderson 1983). It can be said that cinema can achieve a similar effect but through a visual rather than written medium. In the late twentieth century, when we can talk of the reduction of space and time through the instantaneity of technology and the compression of scattered communities into one non-physical global village, cinema can elevate the nation from an abstract concept and help its members to accept and imagine it. Thus, as illustrated in the chapters of textual analysis, cinema can provide a history through its narratives, a physical, geographical sense of the national space through its imagery, and an iconography through its preferred visual signifiers. It has surpassed the novel and the newspaper by creating a picture of the national community, a repository of common beliefs, shared memories and visual signifiers; it also upholds and perpetuates the fiction of the nation, that is, to use Hobsbawm's vocabulary, the invented traditions and narratives which lend the nation its historical coherence. It is, in Andrew Higson's words, 'an institution with a nationalising function' (Higson 1989: 43). Cinema thus provides a conceptual lynch-pin,

...a common civic culture for a disparate population...A domestic film industry - like other cultural industries - helps to foster a sense of citizenship and social identities. It creates and presents a common cultural or political core of events and values (O'Regan 1996: 19).

When we speak of national cinema, then, it is necessary to consider it as part of this discourse of the nation. In addition, it is necessary to overlay another series of cinematic issues onto this already multi-layered set of meanings. In fusing with the nation, cinema produces a third equally problematic area of debate, that of national cinema.

In response to the question 'where does national cinema reside?', one could draw a distinct parallel with the idea of the nation here: the nation resides in the

imaginary of its members, in its symbols, in its institutions, its territorial dimensions and in its linguistic specificity. Similarly, national cinema's meaning is generated in many different sites; it resides in its consumers and critics, in a country's generic images and narratives, in its producers and in its supporting official bodies. In this last category we can include not only institutions which fund cinema production but also those which catalogue and monitor the nation's industry such as the archivists and researchers at the British Film Institute and the Centre National de la Cinématographie. Along with audiences and film-makers, these organisations documenting film can play a part in defining the canon and parameters of national cinema through the act of selecting and thereby privileging materials.

1.3. Images of the nation

National cinema can therefore be defined through spectatorship, academic writing, visual cultural traditions, legislation, domestic film industry (particularly a non-English language industry) and its economy. The contribution of these last three areas will be investigated below, with an analysis of the precise nature of French national iconography and narrative conventions following in chapters six, seven and eight. It is critical to include the study of actual filmic texts in this discussion for they not only articulate national distinctiveness through a generic national style or narrative convention but they can also actively construct the nation:

Films then are means of interrogating the public and civic culture. They inspect, evaluate, describe and project society, its lifeways and its psychic dispositions (neuroses, fears, etc.). Films investigate contemporary public issues, they render social divisions and the incommensurate purpose of people. They register disturbing social and cultural truths, and foster alternative identities within the country (O'Regan 1996: 21).

Hence cinema appears to function as a national text in two ways - it can create a positive, unified picture of the nation and, conversely, it can expose the flipside to this image, revealing social complexity and fragmentation. While films such as *My Beautiful Laundrette* (Stephen Frears, 1985) or *High Hopes* (Mike Leigh, 1988) perform the latter function, directly dealing with questions of ethnicity, identity, sexuality, class and wealth, other less obviously critical forms of film-making provide indirect, subtextual commentaries on the present. The bourgeois heritage film is one such filmic form where inferences about the instability of the nation can be drawn from an aesthetic veneer of implied unity: in his 1991 article 'Re-presenting the National Past; Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film', Andrew Higson observes that the heritage film is as much a commentary on the present day as it is a detailed, loving recreation of the past:

...in the displaced form of the costume drama, the heritage film creates an important space for playing out contemporary anxieties and fantasies of national identity, sexuality, class and power...Such films may produce a pointed critique of the limits of the present social and moral formation. After all, the nostalgic perspective always involves a dialogue between the imagined past and a vision of the present; it never simply talks about the past (Higson 1991: 118).

Thus the aestheticisation and fetishisation of the past may indeed present a neutralised, escapist version of it, a point which has furnished commentators of the heritage film with critical ammunition (see chapter two and references to Craig (1991) in particular).

However, as windows onto the contemporary, the costume drama/period film can provide a useful insight into a number of areas of social, political and cultural interaction; through the representations offered by this mode of film-making we can assess the various issues pertinent to a society at a given moment. For example, who is included or, more importantly, who is excluded

from this representation? Is this representation working to strengthen or challenge a hegemonic view of society? What meaning, if any, can be extracted from the pleasures of the narrative or the choice of setting or actor? In short, we can read a film of this genre at a number of subtextual levels, extracting a multiplicity of discourses in circulation in a given society. It is my contention that the *film de patrimoine* can be interpreted in this way: the textual and aesthetic composition of this genre arise from anxieties, political debates and industrial strategies. The underlying issues also affect the marketing and distribution of a film: for example, fears about the survival of French audio-visual products in Europe, along with resistance to the influx of American products into France, play a role in the defiant mode of marketing a big-budget literary adaptation. Hence claims to expense - *Le Hussard sur le toit* was proclaimed to be the most expensive film in French cinema history - and claims to national ownership of successful films with a French connection - *The Fifth Element* has been stamped French by the industry, the trade press and the CNC, thereby boosting figures for French cinema in 1997.

In chapters six, seven and eight these issues will be examined in relation to specific filmic texts of the 1980s and 1990s. Taking *Le Hussard sur le toit*, *Jean de Florette* and *Ridicule* as diverse examples of *films de patrimoine*, I will consider their correlation with national cinema, with its economic, institutional and textual discourses. I will also consider the constructions of national distinctiveness and the projection of the national territory with specific reference to the rural, local space.

2. National defiance and Hollywood dominance

Conceptions of Hollywood as the enemy of national cinema are understandable in the light of the situation mentioned above. While America has long been the referent for European cinematic endeavour and subordination, this was not always the case. In the early years of the twentieth century America bought twelve films a week from France who, along with Italy, also provided the Latin American continent with the bulk of their films (Crisp 1997: 372). Between 1914 and 1928 America was able gradually to oust France from its position as a successful film-producing nation: in 1914 ninety percent of films shown around the world were French but by 1928 Hollywood had achieved a point of international prominence in the world cinematic market, accounting for eighty-five percent of films shown world-wide (Crofts 1993: 50). Given the hiatus or slowing down in film production in Europe during the two World Wars America was able to step in and fill the gap, strengthening its hold over the international market. Since this time the majority of national cinemas have been fighting, usually to little effect, with the truly global machine of Hollywood film. This is illustrated by the number of European films shown internationally: in the mid 1990s European films were only able to secure 2 percent of the global film market (for theatrical releases alone) (Vincendeau 1998: 446).

Subsequently it is fair to comment that there is undoubtedly a dynamic of competition and disadvantage underlying the production of national cinema. This is particularly the case for the history of French cinema which, according to Terry Lovell, can be regarded as 'a history of crises'.¹ France has subsequently developed a somewhat contradictory attitude to non-indigenous film products which can be defined as oppositional and at the same time

mimetic: there is a drive to build a distinctly French industry in the shadow of Hollywood's dominance coupled with a desire to replicate the Hollywood formula for success. From this attitude it is possible to make the first important and striking point about national cinema: the 'national' in this phrase does not stand alone. This geographical and conceptual qualifier indicates that cinemas designated as specific to their country of origin function within the context of other referents. In the case of national cinema there is one major referent against which the national defines itself: Hollywood cinema. As O'Regan comments:

Just as the 'international' makes no sense without nations, so, in cinema terms 'national' makes no sense without 'le défi américain' (O'Regan 1996: 50).

Hollywood is considered to be the international benchmark for cinematic production; given its true universality, or rather its hold over the global market, it is not treated as a national cinema. Moreover, Hollywood is not always treated as foreign or alien by non-American audiences: as Andrew Higson has commented:

Hollywood is not only the most internationally powerful cinema - it has also, of course, for many years been an integral and naturalised part of the national culture, or the popular imagination, of most countries in which cinema is an established entertainment form...Hollywood has become one of those cultural traditions which feed into the so-called national cinemas of, for instance, the western European nations (Higson 1989: 39).

Here it is important to note that the term 'Hollywood' pointedly refers to popular American films or classic Hollywood film rather than films which comment on or are indicative of American culture or national life. This latter category is exemplified on the whole by smaller, 'independent' or auteurist films representative of Generation X (seen in the films of Richard Linklater)², of the

criminal, ethnic underworld (as portrayed by Martin Scorsese), of the African-American community (in Spike Lee's films) or of societal disaffection of the middle classes, for example, in Ang Lee's *The Ice Storm* (1997)). There are, of course, exceptions to the independent/mainstream, national/global dichotomy in the shape of films such as *Wag the Dog* (Barry Levinson, 1997), *Amistad* (Steven Spielberg, 1997) or the oeuvre of Oliver Stone which comment on American contemporary political and cultural life and history within the format of big-budget, high-grossing entertainment features.

3. Culture and Commerce: two formations of value

National cinema, then, imparts a very specific meaning. It denotes that which is not Hollywood and, therefore, that which is culturally specific and consumed by marginal and/or national audiences - marginal in relation to audiences for the popular entertainment offered by Hollywood. It is a loaded term which can be read either positively, in terms of its difference and the high cultural alternative it offers, or sometimes negatively, in terms of its disadvantageous position vis-à-vis its globally successful referent which, in this instance, means limited market penetration and box-office takings. Tom O'Regan outlines these two vocabularies of difference and disadvantage in what he calls 'formations of value' whereby culture (in the shape of national cinema) and commerce (in the shape of popular Hollywood film) are sometimes diametrically opposed, but more usually combined to justify the existence and promotion of certain kinds of film-making.

3.1. Cinema as culture: art cinema

While value is the key concept in both vocabularies, value in the first discourse is placed on the cultural quotient of a film. Thus, taking the example of French films chosen for exhibition in Britain, French national cinema, through this optic of qualitative rather than quantitative export, can be perceived as art cinema and is therefore read as a privileged form synonymous with quality and high cultural value (O'Regan 1996: 111-144). The types of cinema generally included under this rubric are prestigious art, experimental and Other (African or Latin American) cinema - in short, the type of films which tend to be shown on the specialised festival circuit and art-house cinemas rather than on the more profitable exhibition circuit (O'Regan 1996). It is their difference from mainstream Hollywood film-making that gives them value.

Differentiation is certainly the defining feature of art cinema not only in terms of the oppositional nature of its form but also in the composition of its audience and the pleasures they draw from viewing. Referring to Bourdieu and in particular to the results of his research into cinema-going and cultural capital, it is possible to make certain assertions about the social positioning of art cinema and the distinction it imparts. Art cinema represents, in Bourdieu's words,

...maximum 'cultural profit' for minimum economic cost, which implies renunciation of all ostentatious expense and all gratifications other than those given by the symbolic appropriation of the work... They [certified or apprentice intellectuals] expect the symbolic profit of their practice from the work itself, from its rarity and from their discourse about it... through which they will endeavour to appropriate its distinctive value (Bourdieu 1989: 270).

Thus, value is conferred on the audience for art cinema by the differentiation implicit in the discourses and practices taking place around it - the act of viewing an art film in art cinemas (as opposed to more mainstream sites of

exhibition) and the act of critical appreciation by the audience and the press tend to focus on a text's difference from other popular forms of cinema, reinforcing the juxtaposition between art and entertainment and between the audiences for these two forms of cinema. From an analysis of films seen by the French carried out by Bourdieu, these oppositions are clear, with secondary teachers preferring films which require 'a large cultural investment' and industrial and commercial workers choosing to see successful, spectacular, historical or comedy films (Bourdieu 1989: 271). The high-cultural status of art cinema is also apparent in the appreciation of other visual forms of art: in one particular survey, where respondents were asked to appraise a photograph of a heavily made-up woman, responses from junior executives upwards were informed by the aesthetics of art cinema, relating the photograph to the films of Dreyer, Bergman, Welles and Eisenstein (Bourdieu 1989: 45-46).

It is the ability to identify aesthetic/literary references, especially references to high cultural texts, which marks out the audience for art cinema. Certain types of knowledge about the cinema are greater indicators of those searching for cultural capital than frequency of visits to the cinema: the ability to name directors, as opposed to actors, is more common amongst graduates of higher education (22 percent in contrast to 5 percent amongst those with an elementary school diploma) (Bourdieu 1989: 27). Distinction gleaned from cinema is derived from the recognition of text or work of art, from the perception of it as an object of value and uniqueness as well as its relationship with a body of works (Bourdieu 1989: 26). This kind of knowledge is relevant in the context of art cinema given that the mark of the director is often of more importance than that of the actors who are often non-professionals. The act of

being able to identify the group to which a film belongs is also pertinent here for it is the director's personal mode of expression which links together individual films into a corpus of stylistically recognisable work. Bourdieu's findings are echoed by Whisky discussed in chapter two in relation to E.M. Forster films: in a market place where education is no longer a guarantee of professional success and financial stability, the attraction of the heritage film for those who have invested time in higher education lies in its confirmation of one's superior acculturation.

This close alliance of cinema and high culture perhaps stems from the fact that art cinema debate borrows heavily from literary discourses: in the absence of theoretical arguments pertaining to this type of cinema alone and indeed of any clear definitions, art cinema has been examined using tools appropriated from literary theories. John Ellis highlights the lack of precise definitions in his discussion of state attitudes to cinema where the terms 'quality film', 'national cinema', 'prestige', 'cultural activity', 'artistic merit' and 'art cinema' are used frequently and interchangeably and yet are 'charged with meaning and strangely vacuous' (Ellis 1978: 15). Early in this century the close alliance of cinema and literature was certainly evident; Higson describes the relationship between cinema and established written forms of art as 'parasitic' (Higson 1995: 15). This is not altogether surprising when one considers the high literary form of the art film: as Neale remarks:

If cinema has tended massively to exist hitherto as an institution for the perpetuation of the novelistic, then it has historically been the case that it is within the institutional space of Art Cinema that film has most closely approximated that version of the novelistic that we associate with writers like Eliot, Mann, James and Tolstoy, shading at times into the hesitations of the modernist novel (Faulkner, Dostoievski, the nouveau roman), while Hollywood has tended to produce and reproduce the version of the novelistic we associate with the genres of popular fiction (Neale 1981: 15).

Neale's comment is equally applicable to the proclivities of directors in Hollywood today. While adaptations of high literary classics are largely the preserve of European film-makers or perhaps auteurist directors such as Scorsese (see *The Age of Innocence* (1993)), popular fiction continues to be made into films as successful as the John Grisham and Michael Crichton adaptations and also films such *L.A. Confidential* (Curtis Hansen, 1997), *Get Shorty* (Barry Sonnenfeld, 1995) and *Jackie Brown* (Quentin Tarantino, 1997).

The link between European cinematic distinctiveness, literature and the director is a crucial one to make for European art cinema which tends to be considered the cinema of auteurs, thus a cinema which is unified by the hallmark of the director's personal vision and style in the narrative's structure and aesthetic choices. The auteur has a crucial role to play in the comprehension and circulation of a film: in his essay 'The art cinema as a mode of film practice', David Bordwell contends that the auteur lends to his/her film the overarching element of cohesion in filmic texts which are difficult to categorise and lack an overarching objectivity and temporal and spatial continuity (Bordwell 1979). As mentioned above, the auteur is an agency of textual unification as well as a vital tool for the marketing of his/her films.

For the context of this thesis, another more relevant reason can be found for the literary leanings of the art film: to differentiate itself from the Hollywood mainstream a product from other markets anchors itself in both high art and culturally specific traditions as well as wider discourses on these subjects (Neale 1981: 17). Here it is possible to see the synergistic relationship of art cinema and national cinema whereby both classifications rely on the national cultural identity for their distinctiveness: to be categorised 'art cinema' or

'national cinema' films tend to deviate from Hollywood conventions, inscribing an individualistic, usually highly visible authorial or even national voice into the aesthetics and narrative. Therefore, in the formation of national cinema and art cinema, the nation's sites of culture are a necessary point of departure, providing a film with an image culture and supporting body of discourses and policies to justify and aid its production.

3.1.1. The heritage film and art cinema

In the British context, the heritage film, interestingly termed the 'national whore' by Elsaesser (Elsaesser 1994: 26), exemplifies the marriage of art cinema and national cinema which is characterised by the legitimisation of one class-bound world view as a representation of Englishness. The inscription of one particular social and cultural formation as the personification of the nation is encountered in other visual forms such as television. As Rupert Murdoch has commented:

"Much of what passes for quality on British television is no more than a reflection of the values of the narrow elite which controls it and has always thought that its tastes are synonymous with quality" (quoted in Brunsdon 1997: 143).

The heritage film and associated television production are indeed classed as archetypes of British quality and British identity viewed from the perspective of national stereotypes: the troubling issues at the heart of many heritage productions and the cultural particularism and social exclusion they appear to reinforce are not depicted in negative terms but rather as indicative of British restraint and a sense of decorum. Therefore they do not undermine the representation of the nation nor the British method of representing the nation for a domestic and a foreign audience, that is predominantly through the

heritage film - on the contrary, they plunder the domain of legitimate culture to secure their position as markers of quality:

...they incorporate already established taste codes of literature, theatre, interior decoration, interpersonal relationships and nature. Formally unchallenging, while nonetheless replete with visual strategies to signify 'art', their only specifically televisual demand is that the viewer switch on at the right time and watch. Just like the National Trust and advertisements for wholemeal bread, they produce a certain image of England and Englishness which is untroubled by contemporary division and guaranteed aesthetic legitimacy (Brunsdon 1997: 143).

This effect can be termed the double nation-narration following the logic offered by Susan Hayward on this point (Hayward 1993: 9). In her outline of national cinema, she asserts that narration is a mode of self-understanding for society whereby cinema engages (intentionally or otherwise) in constructing the myth of the nation or seeks to bolster the nation through the 'reinscription of one existing cultural artefact into a filmic text' (Hayward 1993). The latter half of Hayward's description, that is the use of film to reinforce national fictions, is interesting in this context given that Hayward is specifically referring to literary adaptations which take a national text and, through the medium of cinema, reinforce the nation's heritage on screen. The end product is not usually, as Brunsdon points out, challenging viewing but then the intention of the filmic text is not to provide radical representations of society but rather to give two-fold national meaning to a written text by means of its translation from word to image. Although there are recent examples of literary adaptations which did not entirely fit this model, in that they are not presenting an unproblematic, largely fictional construction of the past - such as *La Reine Margot* and *Le Hussard sur le toit* which have been read as subtextual contemporary commentaries about Bosnia and Aids respectively³ - France has a strong history of inscribing the

nation's heritage on film to the point where Hayward categorises it as 'the major tradition of classical-narrative cinema' (Hayward 1993).

3.1.2. Textual inscription of difference: the characteristics of art cinema

The question of art cinema as national cinema is essentially a culturally, geographically and historically specific issue, as the example of the French literary adaptation illustrates. Art cinema may be used to draw together the multiplicity of non-Hollywood cinematic output under one convenient heading, but each country possesses its own cinematic traditions, movements and style of policy-making, in turn producing films which are recognisably European but also particular to one individual nation.

Specificities aside, it is possible to make a general statement about the composition of art cinema. Where Hollywood classical cinema favours 'character-centred causality, question-and-answer logic, problem-solving routines, deadline plot structures', in short a 'problem solving model' of cinema, movements such as the French New Wave, New German Cinema, Italian Neo-Realism or individual film-makers such as Ingmar Bergman are characterised by their deviation from the Hollywood norm in a number of ways (Elsaesser 1994: 24). These deviations may not be as clearly visible today given the cross-fertilisation of styles in contemporary Hollywood and European cinema. One can nonetheless assert that the distinctiveness of art cinema is multi-layered; it resides in varying degrees in the narrative's construction, the production, exhibition, viewing and critique of a film. In terms of the narrative structure and aesthetic form, the art film's primary feature are its

...loose, ambiguous narratives, characters in search of meaning rather than action, overt directorial expression, a heightened sense of realism (including depictions of sexuality), and a slower pace (Vincendeau 1998: 441).

In the light of these textual differences and the high-cultural intertextuality involved in the construction and comprehension of the art film, it is also possible to assert that the art cinema audience also differs from the mainstream audience, in terms of its level of education and viewing expectations (Monk 1999); this audience is generally composed of educated individuals who are aware of a film's cultural framework and anticipate the challenges it presents. With regard to the institutional differences governing the exhibition of the art film, art cinema is mainly shown on specialised circuits, predominantly in art-house cinemas and at festivals.

3.2. Cinema as commerce: Hollywood

In the opposite formation of value, it is Hollywood which is privileged over the allegedly elitist forms of national cinema. Several reasons are offered to justify this view. From one perspective, national cinema is believed to be linked too closely with the institutional and the traditional: given that cinema has to rely on government funding in most countries in the form of subventions, tax break mechanisms, awards or prizes, there is a correlation between national cinema and the political and cultural elite and also the hegemonic view of national identity advanced by these groups (O'Regan 1996: 131). Not only is national cinema underpinned by official organs, thereby elevating it out of the arena of popular consumption by virtue of its institutional, high cultural affiliations, but also a considerable gap between the audience and the national is occasioned by the presence of Hollywood.

O'Regan claims that national cinemas, such as Australian cinema, cannot be successful at the box-office because of the well-established link between American cinema and local audiences who have developed American expectations (O'Regan 1996: 117). This point of view is supported elsewhere in a discussion of the cross-influences of American and European cinema which is anchored in the premise that:

...film-makers and their audiences grew up together, as it were, and that they share a common film experience which shapes their social experience, but even more so, their aesthetic preferences (Elsaesser 1987: 166).

Elsaesser considers this problem of what he terms the 'legitimation gap' experienced by German film-makers in the 1960s and the 1970s in their attempts to attract an indigenous audience to a state-supported cinema. Following his logic, the film-maker is caught at the intersection of two equally problematic objectives - firstly creating projects which will be approved by government funding bodies and secondly finding a national audience (Elsaesser 1989: 42). This is a difficulty which affects directors working in this field: the double burden of state and public mean that they are ultimately informed by three agendas or 'other-directed' (Elsaesser 1987: 166) - their own artistic project, the aims of the public funding bodies and the tastes of the audience.

Where American cinema has forged a bond with audiences through its supposedly class-less, entertaining narratives which abide by the institutional modes of representation, national cinemas, generally associated with more esoteric and troubling narratives lacking closure, have not been able to nurture an equivalent relationship. The act of choosing to watch Hollywood cinema over national cinema could then be interpreted not only as the victory of

enjoyable, self-contained, resolved narratives or action movies over the slower paced European films but, also as a 'symbolic resistance to the paternalism of the national cultural establishment' (Schroder and Skovmond quoted in O'Regan 1996: 134). Furthermore, this gap between film and audience - alternatively translated as oppositional viewing strategies - could be due in part to the alleged irrelevance of national cinema: in the opinion of many critics national cinema cannot relate to the present day where 'notions of national identity that a national cinema depended on, seem doomed in the wake of global culture' (O'Regan 1996: 132). Clearly, the cultural capital displayed for cinematic consumption cannot hope to paper over these fissures.

Conclusions

Discursive binaries: critical impediment or useful analytic parameters?

From the above discussion it is apparent that the study of national cinema is characterised by dichotomies. The most obvious dichotomy is that of Hollywood/ Europe which is cited so often that it appears to be 'the founding myth of the discipline' (Elsaesser 1994: 24). One could follow Elsaesser's rationale and conclude that

...the norm/deviancy argument could be seen as repeating, at the level of film theory, the hegemony of Hollywood at the cultural and economic level, since all film styles merely reconfirm the power of the dominant by their very strategies of displacing and circumventing it (Elsaesser 1994: 24).

One could attempt to sidestep this binary by adopting a different view of national cinema. One could expand the canon of national cinema to include forms of film-making which are popular in domestic markets. This approach would signal a break with traditional representations of national cinema,

especially in France where the emphasis has been firmly placed on high culture (Hayward 1993: 7). Thus the 'cultural' versus the 'commercial value' argument could be bypassed, moving the debate away from Hollywood/entertainment/norm versus national/art/marginal equation. In breaking with traditional views, a dynamic picture of national cinematic production could be created, avoiding the 'mausoleumification' of a specific, high cultural conception of cinema (Hayward 1993: 7).

One such strategy is outlined by Nataša Durovicová who maintains that this impasse may be overcome through a consideration of popular forms - rather than high cultural forms - as national cinema (Durovicová 1994). Taking the Dyer/Vincendeau publication, *Popular European Cinema*, as an example of this move away from 'the patently loaded conceptual cluster' of US entertainment versus foreign art film, Durovicova concludes that the main achievement of this text lies in the way it opens up the idea of European cinema, showing the heterogeneity in production which the standardising conceptual cluster otherwise hides (Durovicová 1994: 4).

While it is a worthwhile project to study the popular preferences of European audiences, emphasising what is viewed by domestic audiences can only go some way to changing ideas of European cinema shaped by the tradition of exhibiting largely auteur or other high quality, high cultural films abroad. There is a slight seachange to be noted in the area of exhibition: the 1997 London Film Festival included only two costume dramas/literary adaptations in a programme of nineteen French films, choosing instead to showcase a wider palette of film makers and film forms and thereby giving rise to a new definition of French cinema⁴. The festival space can indeed

undermine the vocabulary which posits Hollywood as a cinema of value, operating not as a direct competitor with Hollywood but, rather, through its alternative formation of value, displacing mainstream cinema from its dominant position in the evaluative hierarchy (O'Regan 1996: 62). The festival circuit can, then, destabilise the centre from the margins whilst simultaneously facilitating the international circulation of lesser known films.

However, as already mentioned above, the festival space is one which has historically reinforced the privileged status of art cinema, conferring value on art cinema and conflating this concept with that of national cinema:

The festival circulation of director as auteur and the close proximity of self-expression and personal vision to national and intersubjective vision, ensures that the kind of attention the festival and related circuits confer upon a film generates a certain kind of public reputation (O'Regan 1996: 64).

Hence, the festival space is caught in a dichotomous position where the auteur is elevated to the function of international marker for national art cinema and national artistic concerns and where organisers attempt to expand the idea of the festival space beyond the established parameters of European art cinema.

Thus we can see that the binaries of national cinema are clearly problematic. One could indeed view the act of considering the Hollywood/Europe divide as replicating existing configurations of value and dominance/subordination. Moreover, criticism in this area has tended in the past to narrow the field of enquiry, adopting a prescriptive role in the construction of national cinemas and their textual canons by positing the high quality art film as the quintessential national text (Higson 1989). As we have seen in the context of festival cinema, these binaries seem firmly entrenched in

exhibition practices abroad, making it difficult to undermine the juxtaposition of cultural value and entertainment.

However, it is necessary to reclaim the binary in the context of the French *film de patrimoine* of the last two decades. This form of film-making employs both vocabularies as a strategy against Hollywood dominance, utilising the polarities of 'art' and 'commerce' to bolster the economy and the prominence of the indigenous film industry. The *films de patrimoine* studied in this thesis occupy an unusual position in that their content appears to conform to a cultural mode of production but their budgets, distribution, exhibition and marketing suggest the contrary, that is an industrial mode of production. In addition, the films studied in chapters six, seven and eight have an extra dimension - their funding by the state. The marriage of national, high-cultural specificity to industrial modes of film-making via the financial intervention of the state confuses issues of reception and critique: where European art films may be aesthetically rather than financially driven and can expect to attract a certain audience, the mixing of culture, industry and politics in the French *film de patrimoine* requires the parameters of viewing and circulation to be redrawn. Given that films such as *Le Hussard sur le toit* are designed to be national in their scope, their intended audience in France is broad; this is illustrated by the circulation of these films on the mainstream exhibition circuit. Here the national is conveyed through the medium of cultural intertextuality, drawing on cinematic and literary tradition to reinforce the iconography of national identity and create a paradigmatic image culture.

Thus, given the costume drama's deployment of cultural and industrial (that is, pertaining to the film industry) discourses and practices, there is a need to

examine the dichotomy of Hollywood and Europe, art and entertainment. It is necessary to look at the challenge Hollywood presents for French cinema in order to understand the logic of the contemporary counter-strategy of displacing the former through national culture. The binary, then, has a certain relevance here which will become more apparent in the next chapter which focuses on the industrial conditions of French film-making in the last two decades and on the funding policies conceived to promote a national, popular genre.

¹ Terry Lovell (1972) 'Sociology of aesthetic structures and contextualism' in McQuail (ed.) *Sociology of Mass Communications* Middlesex: Penguin, p. 345.

² 'Generation X' is taken to mean a strata of disaffected twenty-somethings who have rejected conventional life-styles and work patterns which they believe to be meaningless. Novels such as Douglas Coupland's *Generation X* and *Shampoo Planet*, Richard Linklater's films *Dazed and Confused*, *Suburbia* and *Slackers* and Kevin Smith's *Clerks* and *Mallrats* capture this undercurrent of anomie.

³ *La Reine Margot*, as mentioned elsewhere, has moved the boundaries of the heritage genre through its willingness to deal with history without the gentility usually associated with the adaptation of classic literary texts. The darker aspects of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre are depicted in realistic detail, that is we are shown blood, gore and death in a manner far from the Disneyfication associated with the Forster films in Britain, and the less palatable characters of the protagonists are delineated quite clearly, exposing murderous instincts, jealousy, incest and adultery. While *Le Hussard sur le toit* centres on a less explosive love story and relies less heavily on realism, there are also disturbing elements such as the unspecified plague and scaremongering.

⁴ *Lucie Aubrac* by Claude Berri and *Artemisia* by Agnès Merlet constitute the only period costume dramas in this year's selection. The other nineteen films include *Western*, *L'Autre Côté de la mer*, *La vie de Jesus*, *Gadjo Dilo*, *Genealogies d'un crime*, *Sinon, oui*, *Bernie*, *Marius et Jeanette*, *Clubbed to Death*, *For Ever Mozart*, *J'irai au paradis parce-que l'enfer c'est ici*, *La Moindre des choses*, *Dobermann*, *Le ciel est à nous*, *Love etc.*, *Docteur Chance* and *La Femme Défendue*.

Chapter Five: Contemporary French cinema and the position of *the film de patrimoine* in the 1980s and the 1990s

The ultimate focus of this thesis is the *film de patrimoine*. In order to provide the relevant forum for the discussion of this filmic form I have considered the significance of the past in contemporary society and in cinema in chapters one and two. I have also examined questions of identity construction, the production and projection of French national identity and the issue of national cinema. The final area to be investigated before undertaking textual analysis is the state of French cinema today. Here I explore how various forces shape this area, looking at government policy, the influence of television, patterns of cinema-going, changes in the cinematic infrastructure and the ever-present phantom of American cinema. Moreover, I will consider the position of the *film de patrimoine* within this particular context, assessing how this cinematic form has evolved in response to the conditions of the film industry in the 1980s and 1990s.

1. Overview of French cinema in the 1980s and 1990s: defining trends

Britain and France recently achieved virtual parity in their film production figures: in 1997 both countries produced over 100 feature films. This figure, however, conceals the enormous differences existing between these two European film industries. While both industries have historically had to contend with the domination of Hollywood in their home markets, there are significant differences between the way in which indigenous cinema is perceived, produced and promoted. At the level of perception, the main difference lies in the state's attitude towards cinema: the French state has developed cultural

policies to protect film and provided considerable funds for many aspects of film-making in France (such as training for the business side of film-making in the shape of the Media Business School, funds for scriptwriters and for the subtitling of films). Until the National Lottery payout in 1997, British Screen had been the only small government-funded agency promoting film production in Britain since the dismantling of all other bodies in 1985. Admittedly, the National Lottery funding has considerably raised the profile of British films abroad: *The Full Monty*, which received a percentage of this payout, has to date been hugely successful internationally, garnering awards across the globe.

In terms of funding and frequency of cinema-going, France is in a privileged position in Europe. Relative to the performance and general condition of all other film-producing countries in Europe, French cinema appears to be fairly healthy, as illustrated by the level of general cinema-going in France, if not by the box-office figures for indigenous as opposed to American films: it stands alone in Europe as the only country where cinema admissions per capita have never fallen below two a year. The support the industry receives from state-led initiatives is similarly unparalleled in Europe. The official budget for French cinema, for example, amounted to 2.5 billion francs (over £200 million) compared with £26 million in Britain for 1996. The figure of £26 million does not include the large payout the British film industry recently received from the National Lottery funds but it nonetheless shows the consistently high level of funding enjoyed by modern French cinema.

Moreover, the French state has provided another benefactor for feature film production: television. Television channels, whilst a major source of competition in the audio-visual market, are required by law to actively support the cinema through prescribed levels of investment. Currently investments made by

Canal +, the largest contributor, along with other channels stand at 4.5 per cent of their annual revenue, accounting for 46 per cent of total investments in French cinema. The financing of *Le Hussard sur le toit* perfectly illustrates the extent of television's involvement in feature film production. Out of the film's budget of 176 million francs, 114 million were provided by Canal + in the form of prefinancing, 20 by France 2, 15 by Sofinergie, 25 by presales, 4 by Rhône-Alpes fund for regional cinema, 3 by the *avances sur recettes* system - whereby funding for a film, particularly 'difficult' films which may not otherwise go into production, is provided on the basis of repayment from the box-office receipts - and 7 by the sale of video rights with the remaining 20 million francs supplied by distributors. Canal + is a particularly dynamic player in this area, funding its own feature film company - Le Studio Canal + - and script development schemes as well as fulfilling standard requirements such as the acquisition of a set number of films for broadcast each year. In addition, due to quotas set by the government, the total programme schedule for television channels in France can only contain up to a third of non-French films. As a comparison, Channel Five, the fifth station in Britain, was not subjected to such conditions in terms of its investment or its scheduling.

Clearly, at the level of financial input, the film industry receives considerable support. The same cannot be said of the support received at the point of reception. Domestic films have been declining in popularity for some time. The last ten years have witnessed a worrying trend - namely the decline in audiences for home-grown products (see figure 1 in appendix). From achieving over fifty per cent in 1982, entries for domestic films plummeted to an all-time low of less than 28 per cent in 1994. In 1984 indigenous film products could still attract larger audiences than US products but in 1986 the roles were reversed.

Since this crucial cross-over point the US has retained the stronger position with France regaining a little lost ground in the last three years. According to the figures published in the 1997 copy of *Les Chiffres Clés du CNC*, the proportion of the market held by French films rose up to 35 per cent with the US still maintaining the lion share (around 55 per cent). The other ten per cent can be attributed to European/world cinema.

In addition to the drop in audiences for indigenous films, the 1990s witnessed a concurrent decline in the size of the French audience. 1987 to 1996 was a particularly difficult period for the industry (see figure 2 in appendix). Since the late 1950s France has experienced an immense reduction in audience size, decreasing from 417 million cinema-goers per year in 1957, which has become '[l'] année mythique' in French cinema, to a low point of 110 in 1994 (Le Peron 1982: 19). The period between 1982 and 1987 proved to be a particularly low point for the industry: in this five year period French cinema's audience as well as level of financial return decreased by one third leading Prédal to label the 1980 to 1991 period as 'un état de crise' (Prédal 1996: 448 and 445). Moreover, the pattern of cinema going has changed with a rise in people going to the cinema irregularly, usually twice a year and more often than not to see a Hollywood blockbuster. In contrast, French films account for only less than one per cent of box office takings in America.

Given the prevailing climate in the film industry, characterised by low audience interest in indigenous products and a drop in more general audience figures, there has been an attendant rise in the size of film budgets which has been partly encouraged by government funding practices. Funding has been directed towards the production of 'big' films capable of drawing in this irregular audience by competing with the attractions offered by American films. Thus the

avances sur recettes system of loans has mainly been assigned to the funding of quality costume dramas in the hope of winning back the audiences.¹ From the statistics in figure 3 (page 222) the growth of big budget films in France is clear. Films costing 50 million francs upwards have been on the increase since 1986. With the exception of a few cases where small-budget films such as *Trois hommes et un couffin* (Coline Serreau, 1985) or *La Haine* (Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995) have achieved considerable box-office success, there seems to be a correlation between big budgets and big audiences which may explain the general trend towards medium to large budget films: the number of films made for less than 20 million francs has effectively fallen by 50 per cent while those costing over 20 have more than doubled and, in the case of films over 50 million, quadrupled in the last ten years. The number of superproductions (that is, films with budgets exceeding 100 million francs which display high production values, make use of stars/well-known directors and are widely exhibited in France) is still on the increase as indicated by the release of *Le bossu* (Philip de Broca 1997), *Les visiteurs 2* (Jean-Marie Poiré, 1997) and *Une chance sur deux* (Patrice Leconte, 1997) in 1997. As examples of the audiences these films can bring in, *Germinal*, at a cost of 180 million francs, along with *Les Visiteurs*, at a cost of 50 million francs, were responsible for bringing in half of the total cinema admissions for the whole of 1993 (20 million admissions). Therefore, the small budget film has been marginalised in a market place where both the French audience, French cinemas and the government are concerned with a film's media impact, impressive costs and high production values.

2. Funding French culture: state mechanisms and cultural policy

2.1. Conceptions of cinema: the state and the industry

The fact that French cinema can rely on box-office takings for only eleven per cent of its overall resources illustrates the extent of its reliance on state generated subsidies and private resources (Béghin 1997: 80). The state is an ample provider, distributing funds and obliging and encouraging other sectors to invest in film production. The challenges facing the film industry in the 1980s prompted the state, already highly protectionist and interventionist in this respect, to increase resources available to cinema. The Mitterrand government was particularly sensitive to the problems faced by film-makers and built up an already existing network of support for industry which currently provides assistance from the stage of script development through to the screening of French films on television. Under Mitterrand's impetus European initiatives such as MEDIA, EFDO, EURIMAGES and EUREKA were conceived and put into action.

The state can justify the considerable funds made available to the film industry thanks to a particular conception of cinema's role in national life. Cinema is accorded a special status by French policy makers who attribute it a singular position; cinema is seen as the amalgamation of art and economics, national tradition and technological innovation. Given its position as the visual representative of the nation, cinema has been closely allied to the state: as Susan Hayward has indicated

France's culture is an affair of the State and central amongst France's political/cultural artefacts is the cinema (Hayward 1993: 40).

The extent of the symbiotic relationship between cinema and state is highlighted by the fact that without the funding and protective measures guaranteed by the government the film industry would find itself in the dire

position of other European cinemas. Italy and England, for example, suffered a seventy per cent decrease in the size of their cinema audiences between 1970 and 1984 (Prédal 1996: 449). In France even with the level of subsidy currently on offer individual films rarely pay back advances received from state sources in accordance with the *avance sur recettes* system: since its inception in 1960 up until 1988 only 106 of the 1116 projects funded have repaid their advances completely (Hayward 1993: 46). Perhaps, as Susan Hayward has indicated, cinema in France cannot thrive under the tutelage of the state due to the nature of the relationship that exists between them: the state seeks to defend and promote cinema but it does so in a manner befitting an official institution and not an art form (Hayward 1993: 46-49).

The industry is not an institution in the traditional sense of the social, economic and political institutions that serve to construct and represent France as a nation. It is an art and an industry and, therefore, no normal institution. The paradox remains that the state has tried to normalise it, but it is not a state institution, it is not nationalised (Hayward 1993: 47).

While cinema is indeed an industry unlike any other, one can make a case for its ability to produce an iconography and a visual history of the nation in tandem with other nation-building agencies. However, it is also the case that heterogeneity and creativity do not necessarily find their outlet in a state-administered funding system which is governed by selectivity. Although it ultimately seeks to improve the performance of French cinema, the process of selection (seen in the *avance sur recettes* and the selective distribution aid) implicit in the system acts as a barrier to variety in production. Jack Lang's period in office can be used to illustrate this point for it can be said that there was a distinct bias towards the funding of the *film de patrimoine* rather than auteur films. Lang's policies did not initiate this trend: presidents of the *Avance sur recettes* commission began to implement changes in 1979 and 1980

whereby the *avance* was no longer allocated to the director at the pre-production stage but rather at the production (Prédal 1996: 454). Thus the *avance* in effect moved to safer ground away from its previous, riskier position - as an incentive to lure a producer to a project in search of funding - towards the more certain terrain of film productions at an advanced stage with assured budgets. The 1980s saw the accentuation and broadening of this trend; the government and many elements in the film industry alike began to favour high-cost, large scale film-making.

2.2. Funding structures

To protect and nurture the film industry and the national identity it is believed to convey, the state has developed an extensive system of subsidy for cinema. At the heart of this system lies the CNC (Centre national de la Cinématographie), a government body under the control of the Ministère de la Culture. This system consists of both public and private funding for many aspects of the film industry such as production, distribution and the exhibition of films in France and abroad. Since its creation in 1946 as the successor to the *Comité d'organisation de l'industrie cinématographique* (COIC), the CNC has been entrusted with overseeing existing mechanisms and introducing modifications to allow for changes in the PAF (paysage audiovisuel français) such as the arrival of new television channels in the 1980s, which signalled a fresh round of assault for the already fragile film industry.

Arguably the greatest changes to the funding system were implemented under the Socialist government between 1981 and 1993 (with a brief hiatus between 1986 and 1988 in which the right were in power). As the minister for culture, and in his second term of office, for culture, communication and

education, Jack Lang commissioned a report on existing policies and the state of the industry on taking up office. Following the subsequent Bredin report Lang drew up a package of reforms designed to revivify French cinema with an increased level of financial input, especially from the televisual sector (see list of Lang's reforms at the end of this chapter).

It is perhaps appropriate that Lang undertook broad reforms in the 1980s given the unprecedented changes occurring at this time. Where in the past French cinema had been marginalised by the prevalence of Anglophone products, first with the advent of sound and then the influx of American films after World War II, the changes of the last decade arose from a different source, namely the opening up of the audiovisual market in France. This led to a transformation of viewing habits which put indigenous cinema at an even greater disadvantage. During Lang's period video and television, particularly private channels, such as Canal + which transmits films to a fee-paying audience, and, in the context of cinema exhibition, the multiplex, which triggered new patterns of distribution biased towards blockbuster productions, became French cinema's new enemies. To counteract the effects of these changes Lang envisaged a new relationship between the cinema and three major sectors, that is television, private enterprise and the state, whereby each provided cinema with subsidies in various forms. He also looked beyond the question of film production to the other agencies contributing to the overall popularity and development of cinema - namely, educational projects,² training and research institutes and libraries. Thus the state not only aided the cinema at the point of exhibition, with the levying of a tax on ticket sales as it had done in the past, but, thanks to Lang's breadth of vision, the film industry benefited

from a commitment to support the various points of film's production and reception.

While there are organisations which fund scriptwriting, project development and feature film development such as La Maison des Ecrivains, Procirep and La Fondation Gan, cinema is supported in the main by the *compte de soutien* which draws its funds from three principal sources: the special tax on cinema tickets, the *taxe audiovisuelle* on television broadcasts and, since 1993, the tax levied on the sale and hiring of videos (International Film Finance 1997). This *compte de soutien* targets production, exhibition and distribution in nine different ways through aid to the maintenance and building of cinemas in rundown areas, aid to assist individuals to construct and run cinemas, aid to promote French films abroad, discretionary aid to makers of short films, aid to co-productions, discretionary aid to production in the form of *avance sur recettes*, automatic aid for production and distribution, and, since reforms in 1985, aid for script rewriting and aid for script development.

Aid from the CNC is primarily allocated either automatically or selectively (*soutien automatique* and *aide sélective* or *avance sur recettes*) to two areas of the film industry: production and distribution. *Soutien automatique* is available to all productions and is generated by a tax on box-office receipts which is then directed towards the financing of subsequent films. Although, as its title suggests, it is conceived to favour all productions it does not, in fact, work to the benefit of up and coming film-makers: the *soutien automatique* could be construed as an obstacle to cinematic variety and innovation given that it tends to help directors with a good track record (Hayward 1993: 46). Currently this *soutien* is being used in another manner which also indirectly discriminates against new directors: rather than funding new productions the allocations from

the *soutien* are expended to cover the losses incurred by the previous films influenced by the recent trend for high-budget but not always high return projects (Hayward 1993). The *avance sur recettes* system is also not without its flaws. This is a system of loans paid to productions to cover 5 per cent of the total cost of the film. Again it seems that new directors and low-budget projects have fallen by the wayside in the era of the superproduction. Where the *avance* once functioned as a support for small-scale, creative enterprises - this system played a vital role in the emergence of the New Wave, allowing unprecedented numbers of first-time and young film-makers to produce films and penetrate an old, stagnant market - it is now channelled into larger productions (Hayward 1993).

Hence it can be said that both the selective forms of aid for production and distribution exhibit a certain bias: while first time film-makers and 'difficult' films receive a certain degree of financial assistance from the *avance sur recettes*, one of the objectives of the *avance* commission is to

..help the production of films which have to take the risk of high budgets in order to give expression to confirmed cultural ambitions

and the purpose of selective distribution aid is to '...encourage the distribution of a large variety of quality films' (CNC 1997: 11 and 15). In the context of this thesis the state-generated notion of expensive, quality films with cultural aspirations is certainly worthy of note for this typifies the *film de patrimoine* of the last two decades.

3. La nouvelle qualité française: the past on display in state-funded popular cinema

Given the varied tasks it carries out the CNC finds itself in a difficult position, criticised on the one hand for funding high cultural products (that is, non-profit-making films) and on the other films which are commercially orientated (Creton 1994: 101). Jack Lang's cinema reforms of 1982 certainly hinged on a particular concept of national cinema whereby film is re-established as a hugely popular medium - an ideology which united the previously disparate ideas of commercial French cinema and great French films (Le Peron 1982: 19). This is evident in *fiche douze* of the reform. Lang hoped to cross-fertilise these two concepts to entice back the audiences in numbers witnessed in the 1950s. Clearly this policy could only be practicable if the majority of the French population could have access to a wider selection of films or indeed to a cinema which was not always the case in small towns in the 1970s. Thus Lang's reform had to incorporate the conceptual - the new 'cinéma-spectacle-populaire' - and the physical - larger circulation of 'big' films in the provinces and a greater number of cinemas. After returning to office Lang masterminded a new plan of action in 1989 which brought in new funds for challenging, 'difficult' artistic productions at one end of the cinematic spectrum but at the same time privileged super-productions at the other. This new plan attests to Lang's unstinting commitment to 'cinéma-spectacle-populaire':

De plus le ministère veut favoriser les productions ambitieuses, à budget élevé, susceptibles de retenir dans les salles un large public et de constituer ainsi des 'locomotives' de la fréquentation. C'est l'essentiel de son programme. Visiblement, Lang est fortement impressionné par les réussites de *Jean de Florette*, *L'Ours*, *Le Grand Bleu* et *Camille Claudel*, pour lui plus aisément renouvelables que les 'coups' heureux mais imprévisibles de *Trois Hommes et un couffin* ou *La vie est un long fleuve tranquille* (Prédal 1996: 457).

As Prédal indicates superproductions were targeted for increased levels of funding; one hundred million Francs from the IFCIC (Institut pour le financement du cinéma et des industries culturelles) in the form of a new fund and the *avance sur recettes* funds were mobilised for the production of ten to fifteen big budget films per year. *Jean de Florette* had benefited from two *avances* in the 1985/86 round of fund allocation totalling 2.5 million francs and proved to be a worthy candidate within the parameters of Lang's vision of French cinema, achieving over seven million entries at the box-office. Both Berri and the funding body benefited from these transactions: the high audience figures for this film clearly accomplished Lang's objective of bringing the French back to the cinema and Berri's film was accorded a certain status by virtue of the Ministry of Culture's financial backing. Thus, as the example of Berri shows, those projects seeking official funding can be seen as also seeking 'un 'label' culturel' to lend them cultural legitimacy (De la Bretèque 1993: 21).

Lang was evidently not alone in correlating budget and success at the box-office. Industry-wide figures for the 1980s and 1990s indicate a general shift towards bigger budgets for film production. The table of budget costs (figure 3) illustrates this trend. There are several obvious reasons to explain this rise - the increase in costs for actors, equipment, location shooting, costumes, *charges sociales* - but it can also be attributed to the notion that big budgets equal big audiences. As Laurent Creton concludes in his analysis of the economy of the French film industry:

...le cinéma français doit produire plus de films ambitieux par an, dont plusieurs à gros budget, pour que se dégagent les quelques succès nécessaires pour maintenir sa part du marché (Creton 1996: 238).

Here it is important to underline that the cinema needs to hold its own in relation to American film as well as in relation to television, a medium which can

provide competitive, cheaper and, in the case of some regions underserved by cinemas, more accessible entertainment. In order to rival the attractions of television certain directors have ironically, given the fierce battle they wage with American films, employed Hollywood-style tactics of scale. Scale is one means of creating a contrast between the television screen and the cinema screen: through the sheer scale of production and promotional strategies a film such as *Germinal* or *Le Hussard sur le toit* can become *un film événement*. While in Britain the heritage film is not essentially different from BBC costume dramas in terms of production values, cast or cost, the French superproduction, as its name implies, uses the lever of grandeur to disengage itself from the televisual product.³ A *film événement* within the costume vein can be defined as financially and industrially rather than aesthetically driven for it does not usually entail innovation: where *Le Cinquième élément* (Luc Besson, 1997) marks an advance in visual technology, *Jean de Florette* marks regression - a return to the past and to traditional cinematic formulas. Thus *un film événement* appears to be in tune with Langian ideology, an ideology which may seem out of line with the performance of French film products in their indigenous market. In view of the falling cinema audiences the rise in budgets may seem illogical and risky. While the impressive budget size is perhaps one of the major attractions of the superproduction, it nonetheless becomes more difficult to justify this level of expense: high production costs mean that it is effectively harder to achieve a substantial rate of return in the current climate, necessitating increasingly large box-office entries from a shorter period of exhibition. Justification for this high risk/return equation is provided by the combined performance of big budget films which, when taken as a whole, are one of the most successful cinematic products.

From a producer's perspective, which as we have seen from Susan Hayward's analysis, is all important in the current funding climate, hopes of winning back large audiences and asserting national cinema were pinned on the production of a certain kind of 'quality' film. René Cleitmann, the producer of *Le Hussard sur le toit*, illustrates the intentions underpinning the superproduction, claiming that the film was conceived as 'quasiment en mission d'intérêt national' as

...le défenseur de la différence française face au formatage américain des images et des récits...la principale arme dans l'offensive du cinéma français pour retrouver une part décente dans son propre pays (*Le Monde*, 21 September 1995).

From the vocabulary Cleitmann uses here it is apparent that he equates the superproduction with the idea of national cinema. This attitude mirrors that of the state in its attempts to bolster a specifically national type of production which represents and validates the nation through a particular visual and narrative style, a foregrounding of history or historical figures, the use of stars and a production team already associated with heritage-/superproductions. Collectively these elements function as a conceptual cluster imparting a sense of the national through a medium which, although a medium of entertainment, is allied with an overtly defensive form of national identity. It is Cleitman's vocabulary of difference and resistance, especially in relation to Hollywood, which characterises any discussion of national cinema. As discussed in chapter four, national cinema can, after all, be defined as a form of domestic resistance to the overwhelming presence of American film as well as a means of fixing images of the nation and the national character (Higson 1989). This is particularly the case in Europe, where, as Andrew Higson has commented:

The discourses of 'art', 'culture' and 'quality', and of 'national identity' and 'nationhood', have historically been mobilised against Hollywood's mass

entertainment film, and used to justify various nationally specific economic systems of support and protection (Higson 1989: 41).

4. Distribution and circuits

From the figures for audiences for French and American films, it is clear that the latter are preferred by French cinema-goers. Domestic audiences are not alone in their preference for American films. In considering the general condition of the French film industry it is necessary to introduce the performance of French cinema in the international, particularly the American, market into the equation. France has improved its record in America in the last decade thanks in part to initiatives such as the Sarasota French film festival where the attendance of the American distributors and exhibitors is effectively subsidised in a bid to sell French films. Despite the improved levels of export to foreign markets (28 French films were exported to the US in 1988 compared to 65 in 1994 according to the CNC statistics for 1997) and the comparative strength of French products in relation to other European cinemas, French films still only account for less than four per cent of box office receipts in Europe and less than one per cent in America, which remains to all intents and purposes an impenetrable market. In Europe they fare far better, usually ranking in third place, behind America in first position and a given country's national cinema in second. In July 1997, for example, cinema admissions in Britain, though dominated as usual by US products which accounted for 88.09 per cent, illustrated the relatively strong position occupied by French films: of the 8.63 per cent of admissions for European films, French films alone accounted for 7.9 per cent. Britain is by far the least successful market for French films in Europe: the franco-phone and Eastern European countries are receptive to French products, with Switzerland

buying 74 films and Belgium 55 of the 115 French films released in 1994 (Renouard 1995: 22).

It is worth looking beyond the CNC statistics at the market for French films in the USA and at the types of films exported. Firstly, in terms of the demand for French films, one can affirm that the American market for this product has effectively dwindled. In the early 1980s the passage of French films across the Atlantic was facilitated by the Classics section, a division set up jointly by five American majors in the wake of the success of two American-produced films set in France - *Tess* and *La Cage aux folles* (Hayward 1993: 384). This venture was short-lived, disappearing in 1985. This decline has continued: the major US distributors of French cinema (Sony Classics, Miramax, Orion, Warner) indicate that, where Sony used to distribute eight films a year, it now only takes on one or two (Tirard 1995: 20). Equally, the division of Miramax specialising in the exhibition of French films has a very limited palette of films each year, averaging between two and five (Tirard 1995).

In terms of the films these companies select, there is a noticeable tendency towards a certain concept of French film-making: in tandem with the bias apparent in the distribution of funding in France, that is for quality, big-budget films, it is also the case that the types of French films exported to America are of a very specific genre - the heritage genre. Films imported in the last few years include *Indochine*, *Jean de Florette*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Camille Claudel*, *Germinal*, *La Reine Margot* and *Le Hussard sur le toit*. This can be explained by two factors. In the first instance, France has a recognised tradition of quality literary adaptations/costume dramas which are large enough in scale and universal enough in their subject matter to entice a foreign audience. Where the auteur film is criticised for its length, intimacy and lack of pace or the comedy for

its inability to transcend the national boundary, the heritage film can function in spite of its marks of origin. Its production values are conceived to compete with Hollywood-style attractions and thus move the definition of French film away from that determined by the classical auteur film. Secondly, American distributors are aware that the French heritage film does not undermine the American market in a way that other products might: there is a reluctance to distribute the French original of American remakes such as *Neuf Mois* or *Trois Hommes et un couffin* for fear of limiting the financial return of the remake. The heritage film, then, does not present direct competition for American cinema. Even the original French versions of heritage films, such as *Le Retour de Martin Guerre* (Daniel Vigne, 1982), cannot compete with the attractions of their remakes. Daniel Vigne's film can be said to appeal to a more limited national or art house market: it has the trappings of a heritage film - attention to period detail and luscious photography - but ultimately its cast is local (Nathalie Baye and Gérard Depardieu before his rise to international recognition in the 1980s) and, despite the rigorous attempts made to reconstruct the past, there is a great desire for historical accuracy rather than for prettification. *Sommersby* (Jon Amiel, 1993), on the other hand, is characterised by its international stars (Richard Gere and Jodie Foster), grand scale and relocation to the Southern States of America, thus giving the film greater interest and relevance for the American and then anglophone market. Obviously French cinema's success in English language markets is already limited by its specificity - language or cultural references, for example - thereby minimising its potential audience. Miramax has attempted to overcome the linguistic obstacle in trailers for French film by employing a particular marketing strategy as the head of the French division explains:

On tente de masquer l'origine étrangère du film. Pour *Le Hussard sur le toit*, par exemple, nous avons monté une bande-annonce dans

laquelle il n'y avait pas un seul dialogue. Bien sûr, on précise que c'est un film du réalisateur de *Cyrano*, mais on n'insiste absolument pas sur le fait qu'il s'agit d'un film en langue étrangère et donc sous-titré (Tirard, 1995: 21).

There is considerable irony in this strategy: as discussed below, *Le Hussard sur le toit* was seen by its producers to be a quintessentially French film, encapsulating the qualities of French culture and film-making to produce an overtly national film. Masking this national identity therefore runs contrary to the intentions of its makers but illustrates that national identity is not always a strong selling point outside the national or the European territory.

Another reason for the privileging of quality productions in American distribution practice lies in the niche the French heritage film occupies. With the exception of auteurist costume films such as *The Age of Innocence*, the heritage film is not an American genre (Tirard 1995). There is, therefore, no conflict of interests with the American industry. The position of French/European films within this niche has both advantages and disadvantages. While America does not specialise in this particular area of production, creating a small space in the market for non-American films, it can be argued that the widespread influence of popular American cinema, however, has disadvantaged the European film: as Daniel Marquet, the head of sales at Studio Canal+, has commented:

“...toute la génération des 20/30 ans a été bercée par la culture anglo-saxonne plutôt que francophone. C'est donc la totalité de l'environnement socio-culturelle, la musique, l'habillement, l'alimentation qui a subi et continue de subir cette énorme domination. Le cinéma n'est qu'une partie de l'influence globale de la culture anglo-saxonne. C'est à partir de là que peut s'expliquer le recul du cinéma français dans son environnement européen”(Renouard 1995: 24).

This view of French visual culture eclipsed by the prevalence of American popular culture is put forward to explain the preference for fast-paced action films over French products. The widespread influence of Anglo-American culture through the many channels mentioned above is such that it favours the continued

consumption of American cinema as well as a particular mode of consumption, that is the multiplex context to be discussed below in section 5. Therefore, the dominance of this kind of cinema ensures its own proliferation and the marginalisation of other forms of cinema where the formal and narrative conventions of American films are not employed. In terms of ideal products sought by distributors, French productions *à l'américaine* are desirable for they can attract larger audiences than the auteur productions associated with French film-making . The success of *La Haine* in the US and in other territories has been attributed to the pace generated by appropriation of American values in a French production, resulting in a film which is not marred by its national origins (Jacques-Eric Strauss, head of Président Films, quoted in Renouard 1995: 24).

There is also the question of a film's perceived status in a foreign market which greatly affects its financial success. In most cases, even that of blockbusters such as *Cyrano de Bergerac*, French films are primarily exhibited on the art house circuit, limiting the number of copies in circulation and also the potential audience. There is a tendency to consider French films as non-commercial products which require alternative modes of distribution and circulation.

5. The multiplex and its effects on exhibition and distribution

The lack of diversity in distribution is also a problem apparent in France. It can be said that this problem became especially acute in the 1980s when the multiplex effectively introduced a vicious circle of exhibition which has acted to the detriment of smaller, low budget (comparative to typical American-style budget) films. Films are exhibited for shorter and shorter periods: in the 1950s a film could easily be in circulation for a total of four years as opposed to a matter

of weeks, if not one week, in the case of a large number of contemporary films (Creton 1994: 187). This reduction in the life of the average film can be explained by the dual objective - 'profiter de l'impact publicitaire et assurer la meilleure occupation des salles' (Creton 1994: 188). Although the multiplex has indeed led to an increase in audience numbers it has done so by maximising the audience intake for a few big, well-promoted films. While there are now more screens in France (500 more screens in 35 'new generation' cinemas), the variety of films in circulation has not grown but has decreased due to a greater number of screens showing the same films (*Le Film Francais* 1997: 18). This strategy tends to favour mainstream, high-profile American films which are tied in with merchandising contracts to ensure the product's visibility and profitability from sources other than exhibition.

6. Television

Finally, and most importantly, it is necessary to consider the impact of television on French cinema. Television, along with video, has been denounced for triggering the crisis in French cinema in the 1980s. French cinema, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, has been described as a history of crises and in this respect the growth of television has become yet another challenge for cinema to face. Even the Bredin report commissioned by Jack Lang points to this culprit in its assessment of the condition of the French film industry:

...television was accused of plundering cinema's heritage and showing an inordinately large number of films and yet paying for these films a sum that was in no way proportionate to the size of the audience. The report estimated - from 1980 figures - that these films procured for 220 million Francs, were seen by 4 billion viewers and took up about 40 per cent of transmission time, whereas cinema registered only 170 million spectators for the same period (Degand 1991: 201).

However, cinema has a complex relationship with television for, on the one hand, audiences have been lured away from the big screen by the small screen and, on the other, the economy of cinema is dependent on television: in 1993, for example, of the 100 film projects 'd'initiative française' approved by the CNC television 80 were produced in collaboration with Canal+ and 61 were financed by at least one channel (Jeancolas 1995: 90-91). Thus there is antagonism and partnership, the latter enforced by the state to benefit the cinema. For example, while the accessibility of films in the home through channels such as Canal+ does shorten the lifespan of films at the cinema, television companies provide 46 per cent of total investments in film, facilitating the production of films. Given the increase in the number of television channels and the quotas of indigenous films they must show, a film is more likely to be shown on television, thereby accruing its value (Toubiana 1987: 8)⁴. This conflictual and yet beneficial situation defines contemporary cinema:

'C'est sur ce paradoxe que se bâtit désormais cette 'nouvelle économie'...Alors même que l'économie cinématographique, prise dans sa conception traditionnelle, donne des signes d'inquiétude (affaiblissement du rôle des distributeurs, crise de l'exploitation), jamais le cinéma n'a été, comme aujourd'hui, autant convoité par le capital financier et industriel' (Toubiana 1987).

While, as discussed below, television has had an impact on the types of films produced, it would be unfair to simply cast the televisual sector as the source of cinema's ills. The film industry paved the way for the eventual exodus of the cinema-goer during the 1970s. Three factors facilitated this shift: the nature of the cinematic product, the dearth of scenarios and the proliferation of the X-rated film. Susan Hayward pointed out that cinema in the 1970s was characterised by 'weak cultural productions' and 'impenetrable production of the 'cinema of research' bequeathed by the New Wave' (Hayward 1993: 55-56). The

weakness of the former can be attributed to the influence of the latter in view of their rejection of the scriptwriter, leading to a lack of decent scripts (Hayward 1993). In addition, the proliferation of pornographic films produced in this period, which accounted for virtually half of all films made, further accentuated the decline of the cinema as the locus of mainstream public entertainment, reducing the choice of the consumer even further.

It is possible to appreciate the attraction of a newly energised and expanded televisual sector in the light of these factors. The deregulation bill, passed in 1982, marked the beginning of a new era in the audiovisual sector, introducing change at an unprecedented rate: in contrast to the first twenty five years of regular broadcasting, where the television channels available grew from one to two in 1964 and then to three in 1972, the advent of TV5 in 1983 and then Canal +, M6 and La Cinq en masse in 1985 heralded great transformation (Prédal 1996: 458). In addition, permission to privatise TF1 was granted in 1987 and Arte, a Franco-German arts channel, began transmitting in 1992 replacing the defunct La Cinq. Hence, the choice of audiovisual products within the domestic context exploded during this period.

The dominance of television as the primary source of visual entertainment has in part been counterbalanced by the intervention of the state to the effect that television channels are legally obliged to invest in film production and broadcast set quotas of French films (of the total number of films shown on French television 50 per cent have to be indigenous). Deregulation's potentially injurious consequences were mitigated by television channels' greatly increased contributions to the *compte de soutien* which had been fairly small due to the government-imposed levy in operation since the 1960s. The new *taxe audiovisuelle* introduced in 1986 was intended to boost the funds for film by

levying a tax on television channels' annual turnover. The imposition of this tax is indicative of Lang's desire to increase film's independence from the state. In his *Plan Cinéma* of 1989 Lang proposed three measures with this aim in mind: encouraging channels to co-produce films (especially films not destined for prime-time transmission), widening the market for televisual product and obliging broadcasters to adopt a greater palette of film producers and products (Niney 1989: 36).

The degree of television's financial input into film production has led René Prédal to claim that, after the periods of 'le cinéma des producteurs' in the 1950s and cinema 'des commissions et des subventions' between 1965 and 1985, we have been in a phase of 'le cinéma de la télévision' since 1986 (Prédal 1996: 460). The mode of financing a film would certainly seem to uphold this hypothesis: with half of the films produced every year relying on television's contribution in the form of co-production or the buying of the television rights to a film prior to production, the state's intervention is secondary (Prédal 1996: 460-461). Although, as mentioned above, exhibition no longer provides the greatest revenue for a film, the pre-buying of such large numbers of films may have adverse effects on the life of a film on the cinematic circuit; it can be said that the longevity of a film at the point of exhibition is severely curtailed by its transmission on television within two years of its release. In the early days of television only one film per week was broadcast thus causing negligible damage to cinema audiences (Hayward 1993: 57). Clearly in an age where television has facilitated the circulation of films through another medium (in 1993 918 films were broadcast in comparison with only 485 in 1984), coupled with the inflated film budgets, cinema does inevitably suffer (Creton 1994: 75).

Aesthetically one could argue that the central position of broadcasting companies in production and then exhibition of films on the small screen has led to the televisualisation of cinema. If television plays such a crucial role in film-making it is then not surprising that the feature film is increasingly tailored to meet the criteria for television viewing in terms of soundtrack, pacing and narrative (Hayward 1993: 61). One could go as far as to say that the participation of television acts as a barrier to cinematic creation:

...elle [la télévision] acte comme un filtre, donc comme un frein ou un régulateur et il est aujourd'hui pour un créateur plus difficile de convaincre une chaîne de télévision que la Commission d'Avance sur recettes. Pour un producteur, la facilité est de multiplier les sources de financement avec des projets mous, sans arête vive, sans paris audacieux, sans expression et avec le moins possible de création (Prédal 1996: 461).

This leads to a point where the value of a film lies within parameters set by television. Thus a film to be made with a broadcasting co-producer appears to demand the following qualities: suitability for television screening - that is, for an older audience than cinema's audience - , profitability, strong media presence on cinematic release (so as to ensure high audience ratings when it is shown on television) and finally star quota. Although not conceived as films made for television, there is a recent tendency to produce films for a short period of general release and then to screen them in the prime film slot after the evening news (Jeancolas 1995: 91). Moreover, in terms of finding investors for the production of films, it has been pointed out that the participation of television channels in a project is also a deciding factor for other potential investors: if a film is not co-produced by a broadcasting company it may also follow that the television rights will not be bought and therefore the film will not be promoted on television before its cinematic release, limiting its success, then the SOFICAS, for example, are less likely to provide backing (Niney 1989: 35).

Conclusions

During the mid 1980s the PAF (*Paysage audiovisuel français*) was marked by both dynamism and decline. Immense change and diversification occurred as a result of the deregulation of television. The new television channels, especially the film-oriented Canal +, along with the video recorder, offered the audience greater choice in domestic viewing and subsequently lessened their appetite for the consumption of films in a public context. Audiences for cinema in general decreased significantly in 1986 and 1987 but, although this downward trend was followed by an upturn, the viewing public for indigenous products drifted towards American films in greater numbers. In addition, in a bid to curb public spending, the government reduced its budget for cinema.

In assessing Jack Lang's response to this situation, it is possible to criticise his policies, particularly with regard to his attitude to video recorders and video products. While it may well have appeared to undermine the position of French films in the video rental or sales market, the video recorder was unduly stigmatised - the number of video recorders imported from Japan was heavily restricted. Far from limiting the potential damage the video market could inflict this particular policy has exacerbated the problem: rather than buying or renting videos the French have mainly recorded films from television (Hayward 1993: 390). Given that revenue from the video release for feature films has become a significant percentage of the overall revenue for films - rising from 3.6 per cent in 1980 to 44 per cent in 1997 for American films (*Capital* 1997: 78) - the French approach to video has been counterproductive, eventually forcing the government to impose a tax on blank cassettes (Hayward 1993: 390). Other structures established by Lang have proved to be more successful and have remained largely unaltered by the change of government. Under the new centre-

right government slight modifications have been introduced - films can now be shown on television 30 months after their theatrical release and the number of films permitted for broadcast by terrestrial channels has risen to 242 (*International Film Finance* 1997).

In terms of Jack Lang's positive impact on cinema, it can be said that, although the plans Lang drew up for cinema in his second period of office were not as dynamic and ambitious as the first, when viewed in their totality they demonstrate an awareness of change which can be used to the good of the film industry. They are a clear indication of Lang's willingness to embrace transformation at the same time as channelling the wealth of this new audio-visual sector into cinema's coffers. Financially speaking, it is evident that Lang increased the funds available to cinema whilst also creating a film industry indebted to the state but not financed by it alone. Thus, the *avance sur recettes* fund has grown in size under the Lang administration, with the total amount awarded rising from 27.7 million francs in 1981 to 132.8 million in 1994 (CNC 1997). The revitalisation of this subsidy account results from the considerable contribution of television channels; previously it had remained fairly static because of the low return from the special tax on cinema tickets, that is, because of the decreasing audience. This is an explicit illustration of Lang's attempt to transfer the financial responsibility for cinema from the state to television channels and other bodies (SOFICAS and IFCIC). Accordingly, the state's contribution to the CNC decreased by 30 million Francs in 1994 although its overall budget rose by 6.8 per cent for this period (*International Film Finance* 1997).

However, it is debatable whether the increased levels of funding benefit a greater number of film-makers given that the average budget of a film has

risen considerably. Broadcasters also have an agenda when choosing projects to co-produce - programming schedules. This effectively means that although the government has tried to encourage broadcasters to invest in a spectrum of film productions, broadcasters are nonetheless motivated by the demands of television viewing.

The *film de patrimoine* interacts with these factors in a variety of ways. Firstly, the superproduction met Lang's criteria for popular cinematic spectacle for French audiences. It can be seen as an explicitly national film genre which has national aspirations, that is, to compete with an American dominated film market. It has the hallmarks of national cinema, that is the labels of art, culture and quality through its association with official, canonical culture and state funding. Secondly, it meets with broadcasters' criteria for the prime-time slot: stars, narrative and pacing. Thirdly, it corresponds to international distributors' requirements for anglophone audiences who have a specific conception of France shaped firstly by the 1960s auteur film and then the heritage film of the 1980s which was very successful in America and Britain. Heritage stars are a significant factor in the superproduction's fate abroad: their transatlantic performances enhance the saleability of French films, creating a level of international intertextuality. Hence, concentrating on the female stars, Sophie Marceau in *Braveheart* (Mel Gibson, 1995), Juliette Binoche in *Wuthering Heights*⁵ (Peter Kosminsky, 1992) and Charlotte Gainsbourg in *Jane Eyre* heighten their media profile in anglophone countries through the heritage-style production, while Emmanuelle Béart's appearance in *Mission: Impossible* (Brian de Palma, 1996) widened her international status through a role far removed from of Manon in the Berri adaptation.⁶ With regard to male stars, Depardieu is clearly the most well-known

outside France for his performances in many heritage films as well as for his role in *Green Card* (Peter Weir, 1990), *1492: Conquest of Paradise* (Ridley Scott, 1992) and the remake of *Mon Père ce héros* (Steve Miner, 1994).

It is interesting to consider the financial success of *films de patrimoine*. As a staple in French production, they do not consistently fare well at the box office: although *Le Bossu* has been successful, other recent examples such as *Un amour de sorcière* (René Manzor, 1997) or even *Beaumarchais* and *Lucie Aubrac* will not be able to recoup their costs for many years. *Beaumarchais* is not expected to do this for at least ten years (Béghin 1997: 82). *Films de patrimoine*, like other genres, continue to be made despite this lack of box-office success thanks to a system of financial subsidy. The national importance of cinema as an art and an industry has created a false economy where the failures can be made in greater numbers than successes: the high levels of funding available to film means that the financial failure of individual films can be mitigated by the box-office takings of a few films which are siphoned back into the general cinema fund. The mechanics of this system are illustrated by the fact that in 1996 only 8 to 10 films of the 104 films made will cover their costs (Béghin 1997: 82).

Thus it is possible for France to produce intentionally national forms of cinema, such as the *film de patrimoine*, which are not consistently financially viable projects but significant as statements of cultural identity and distinction. In the current marketplace they function as cinematic assertions of the nation and the national film industry and appear to concretise Lang's hopes of creating popular and grand scale French entertainment. The *film de patrimoine* is underpinned by the state's conception of national cinematic output which places value on consumption for quality films. There is, then, a specific concept of national cinema encapsulated within the *film de patrimoine* which stems from two

sources - the unfavourable conditions of the market place and a belief that cinema is capable of representing the nation. In this chapter we have seen how the physical, financial entity of national cinema has been challenged, undermined and remodelled in the 1980s. In the following three chapters we will consider the textual repercussions of national cinema, examining how the *film de patrimoine* constructs and articulates France through its aesthetics, characterisation and use of space.

**Changes to the *Paysage Audiovisuel Français* implemented by Jack Lang,
Minister of Culture (1981-86 and 1988-93)**

- increase in *avance sur recettes* budget.
- transformation of IDHEC (Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques) into FEMIS (Fondation européenne pour les métiers de l'image et du son).
- establishment of seven regional training programmes for film.
- founding of ADRS (Agence pour le développement regional du cinema) - two fold mandate:
 - a. to increase number of cinemas through a programme of building and renovation.
 - b. to aid the distribution of films to the regions.
- break up of Gaumont-Pathé monopoly.
- restructuring of the Cinémathèque.
- legal obligation of television to invest in film production.
- new fund for quality films.
- new fund to aid independents with distribution.
- increase in direct aid for 'high art' films.
- founding of centres for professional training in regions.
- founding of IFCIC (Institut pour le financement du cinéma et des industries culturelles) (1982).
- founding of SOFICA (Société pour le financement du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel) (1985).
- introduction of new tax on television channels' turnover to boost funds for cinema.

(Source: from information provided by the CNC, Prédal (1995), Hayward (1996) and Creton (1994))

¹ The *avance sur recettes* system, as discussed in section B 'Funding structures', provides loans to film-makers at the pre-production of films. The loan amounts to five per cent of the total cost of the film.

² Here there is crossover between Lang's plans for the heightened visibility of cinema generally in society and the *film événement*: Lang made financial provision for the distribution of Berri's *Germinal* to schools in France thereby promoting the idea of film as national culture which can be deployed to enhance the comprehension of literary texts.

³ Here one could draw a comparison between versions of national identity. Where Frenchness has been associated with grandeur and monuments since the court at Versailles, Englishness as portrayed in the heritage film is more intimate, anchored in the rituals and social interaction of a small group.

⁴ France has maintained a stiff level of quotas for the percentage of French films to be broadcast on French television channels.

⁵ For a detailed discussion of Juliette Binoche's star quality and representation of French femininity see chapter eight.

⁶ Emmanuelle Béart stars in Jacques Weber's film adaptation of Molière's *Don Juan* set in seventeenth century Spain. Awaiting release.

Chapter Six: *Jean de Florette*: Textual Analysis

It is crucial to examine Claude Berri's 1986 film in the context of this thesis for a number of reasons. *Jean de Florette* marked a new departure for the costume drama in France; it can be considered as the first example of a *film de patrimoine*. Although costume dramas have been a constant feature of film production on varying scales, with larger productions predominating in the 1940s and 1950s and smaller feature films and television productions persisting through to the present day, Berri's first instalment of the Pagnol diptych ushered in a new approach to this genre. While this film can be said to have reinvigorated a tradition of film-making in France known as *la tradition de la qualité*, the particular combination of elements - the concept of popular cinema, the canonical source-text, the stars, the high budgets, the extremely high profile release and promotion of the film, the use of natural locations to evoke nostalgia for a lost France - mark the contemporaneity of this mode of film production. Part of its specifically modern approach lies in the representation and significance of the past. As discussed in chapter two in his key article 'Representing the National Past', Andrew Higson suggested that the heritage film provides a sufficiently distanced narrative space within which the anxieties of the present can be articulated (Higson 1991). Thus British heritage films of the 1980s can be interpreted as commentaries on multiculturalism, the fear of the disintegration of a certain social order, the rise of materialism and, in Phil Powrie's view, a loss of origins (Powrie 1997). Similarly, on reading *Jean de Florette* through this hypothesis one can contend that this narrative's temporal disengagement from the present facilitates the expression of French society's

concerns. Hence, *Jean de Florette*, as an example of the *film de patrimoine*, offers an insight into the state of this particular nation at this particular moment. Firstly, it frames the nation's nostalgic territory, presenting the landscape of Provence as the locus of the nation's idealised rural past. Secondly it highlights such diverse issues as the marginalisation of outsiders in society, questions of inheritance and the ethos of individual material gain. Thirdly, in illustration of the discourses of national cinema outlined in chapters four and five, this film is indicative of a certain protectionist attitude to national cinema; it underlines the French film industry's will to affirm itself through the retrospective movement of the text.

It is also worth noting that *Jean de Florette* has been re-released this year (1999) and is being exhibited in London, perhaps attesting to the popularity and longevity of this film outside France in the art house market.

1. Opening sequence: hooks for a contemporary audience

The first few minutes of *Jean de Florette* impart considerable information about the positioning of the audience vis-à-vis the film's relationship with national culture and the nostalgia aroused by the physical and temporal setting. The Pagnol connection is strongly emphasised at the start of the film, with the mention of the source text and Pagnol's membership of *L'Académie Française* early on in the opening credits. Hence, the film is anchored from the outset by the associations triggered by Pagnol which are discussed in greater detail below. It is the journey depicted at the start of the film which is particularly significant for the audience. The journey is essentially Ugolin Soubeyran's return from military service to his home. However, we only realise this when he

steps out of the car and walks towards Papet's house towards the end of the sequence. Up until this point the journey has been an anonymous one; we have not been aware of Ugolin's existence nor of his relevance to the narrative.

The opening shot is the misty Provençal landscape seen through a car windscreen. The camera adopts the position of a passenger in the car looking out. Given that the camera seems to be showing our perspective as audience, literally looking over our shoulders to the view of the mountains in front of us, it can be suggested that the audience is implicated directly in this journey, travelling in parallel with Ugolin. While he returns to his real home within the diegesis, the audience is involved in a more mythical excursion; the movement shown here is essentially nostalgic, transporting the spectator back to the past. The movement shown here is symbolic; we are moving from darkness to light, that is from the negativity of the present to the safety and security of the past, from the urban to the rural, from the mundane to the visually and geographically exotic.

The past on display for our consumption and identification is strongly shaped by romanticism and nostalgia, composed of many almost stereotypical elements - the crowing of the cock as daylight approaches, the winding country roads, the cobbled streets of the village and the typically southern solidity of its buildings, the grandeur of the valley and the mountains. This scene is evocative on a number of levels. It is a representation of the past as lived by recent generations; France, as mentioned in chapter one, only made the transition from rural to urban nation only relatively late and thus the experience of rural existence may only be separated from many spectators by only one or two generations. The spectator may also have childhood recollections of this

journey to the Midi to visit grandparents or to the family second residence in the country, a common occurrence in France.¹ Moreover, the journey south has contemporary resonance given the huge exodus by the urban French population each summer to the Midi.² In the light of these levels of identification the opening sequence can be accused of cinematic tourism and, despite the cruelty of nature and the rural community depicted in the film, the overriding image of Provence as rural idyll established at the start ultimately persists.³

There is great emphasis on the geographical setting in the opening sequence. This is particularly clear in the long pan which follows the shot of Ugolin emerging from the car. In the course of one long take the camera pans slowly from left to right, sweeping across the top of the valley and gradually lowering its focus onto the trees and roads until it reaches Papet's house set against the mountains. At this point we have caught up with Ugolin who is simultaneously approaching this location on foot. The long pan has not, however, been Ugolin's perspective on the landscape; on one level it can be construed as a classical establishing shot, taking the focus of the film from the universal (the general landscape of Provence) to the specific (the home of Ugolin where the drama will unfold). On another level it can be suggested that this shot is reinforcing the spectator's position as nostalgic traveller given that the camera is involved in a heritage moment whereby it seems to echo the typical eye movement of an anonymous, disembodied spectator as s/he scans the panorama from a typical tourist vantage point. This perspective has the effect of drawing the audience into direct nostalgic contemplation of the view. From this point onwards it appears that we are located outside the narrative looking in on events from this initial distanced perspective of longing and visual

appreciation. This is particularly evident when considering the heritage nature of many long shots which, as discussed below, frame archetypal Provençal markers and vistas for their evocative quality or sheer beauty rather than their narrative importance.

2. Heritage encoding

The opening sequence introduces many of the key elements which, when taken as a whole, codify *Jean de Florette* as an example of a *film de patrimoine*. Berri's preferences in terms of locations and shooting style lead one to make a direct comparison with the aesthetic of the British heritage film. While the country house and the gentle pastoral settings of Southern England and Tuscany have come to typify the heritage aesthetic, the aesthetic focus of *Jean de Florette* is both less formal and less moneyed; Berri's camera tends to train languidly on the wildness and expansiveness of the Provençal landscape, creating an aesthetic specific to French cinema. This can be seen in other recent Pagnol adaptations such as Yves Robert's *Le Château de ma Mère* and *La Gloire de mon Père*, in Jean-Paul Rappeneau's *Le Hussard sur le toit*, *Le Bossu* and Bertrand Tavernier's *La Fille de D'Artagnan*. In these films as in *Jean de Florette* certain sites particular to French culture and to the southern French landscape are privileged through the camera work and their positioning within the overall form of the film. These sites are the village, the bar, the mountains and, particularly in the Pagnol films, the house at the centre of the narrative. These sites allow other typical features of representation to come into play, forming a conceptual cluster which visually enunciates the idea of a lost and exotic Provence. Following Gravari-Barbas' theory examined in chapter

one, these local sites have been invested with accrued significance in recent times as a result of the disintegration of the rural community and the high mobility of the urban population (Gravari-Barbas 1996). Hence, the loci of communal life and tradition, here expressed through the village setting and Jean's house, can be read as geographical and historical points of reference, providing visual interaction with the past and the sense of community and historical cohesion it imparts.

2.1. The stereotypical images of Provence: character and spheres of action

In his article 'Images of Provence' François de la Bretèque outlines the many stereotypes which characterise films set in the South of France. As a region which has inspired greater numbers of films than any other in France, the Midi has been reduced in filmic terms to the representation of Provence thereby excluding the South West and Corsica. The representation of the Midi has been further arrested in recent times by the tendency to focus on one of the two contradictory traditions of writing and film-making associated with this region. De la Bretèque contends that the comic-maritime vein predominates over the tragic-rural vein (De la Bretèque 1990: 59). The Pagnol adaptations of the 1980s and 1990s, however, illustrate the popularity of the latter; films set around the ports of Marseille, for example, may well have prevailed in the 1930s and 1940s under the impetus of Pagnol's own adaptations of his literary works. Today, *Jean de Florette* and the films which followed in its wake attest to a dominant, nostalgic rural image of Provence with smaller films such as *Marius et Jeannette* (Robert Guediguian, 1997) or *A la place du coeur* (Robert

Guediguian, 1999) and *Un, deux, trois soleil* (Bertrand Blier, 1993) portraying the contemporary urban side of the equation.

De la Bretèque also observes that the characters, occupations, spheres of actions and events appearing in a film set in Provence are also firmly established. Thus films such as *Le Boulanger de Valorgues* (Henri Verneuil, 1952) or *Manon des Sources* (Marcel Pagnol, 1951) contain the typical range of Provençal characters - the loud Southerner, the taciturn peasant, the patriarch, the farmhand, the young virgin, the outsider, the bad guy, the witch and the *enfant sauvage* (De la Bretèque 1990). These characters are seen engaged in traditional rural activities (farming in all its forms, particularly harvesting and planting) or in other artisanal occupations such as baking or milling flour. They inhabit a world which consists primarily of the emblematic sites of the Provençal village - the café, the fountain, the square, the market.

2.2. The use of character to heritage effect in *Jean de Florette*

Although many of the films that de la Bretèque discusses in his analysis were made in the 1930s and 1940s his observations are relevant to Berri's *Jean de Florette*. This relevance can be attributed not only to the common original author and to the temporal setting of the text - the 1930s - which would create an obvious link but also to Berri's treatment of the secondary characters. The emphasis on Papet, Ugolin and Jean has resulted in the reduced narrative importance of secondary characters, particularly of the women in the text who, as Phil Powrie points out, have been silenced to heighten the sense of melodrama amongst the three male leads (Powrie 1997: 55). This leads to the superficial representation of the inhabitants of Jean's village whereby they

function on a metonymical level in an equally metonymical space; they have been diminished to the role of visual markers of Provence who no longer exercise a narrative function. This runs against Pagnol's own preferences as a writer and a director:

La 'galerie' de personnages constituait un des éléments essentiels des films de Pagnol. Tous avaient droit à la représentation, dessinant ainsi, trait par trait, les contours d'une collectivité à la fois soudée, et prise dans ses contradictions, son drame interne (Toubiana 1986: 51).

They are only relevant in relation to Jean and the unfolding of his story and not seen independently of this. In Berri's film they have become a heritage feature, furnishing the tableau-like long shots of the countryside with authentic human activity. Thus they are indicative of a heritage aesthetic in more ways than one, providing authenticity and excess of signification. Firstly, they can be likened to a living display of lost agricultural life-styles in a heritage museum/park. We see the background characters involved in various processes which strongly connote the past and man's lost connection with the land such as harvesting grapes, sowing seeds, pruning olive trees and carrying water. We also see other figures who are emblematic of their rural environment such as the peasant riding by on a donkey, a woman cooking and serving her male relatives in the farmhouse, the farmer going to market, the baker in his shop. The shots featuring these symbolic, nostalgia-inducing activities lend the film a certain regional credibility. Secondly, they provide *Jean de Florette* with a visual texture and local colour through their appearance usually grouped together in crowd scenes in the village or in the fields. Berri's tendency to condense the secondary characters to emblematic, undifferentiated figures seen collectively indicates a deployment of extras as heritage detail as well as the articulation of a rudimentary notion of group identity. Hence, the inhabitants of Les Bastides

Blanches are portrayed in public spaces, for example in the village square, in the bar or in their space of work (the fields, in the bar or the bakery), rather than in their personal spaces thereby providing a human heritage backdrop against which the personal narrative of Jean, Ugolin and Papet finds sharp definition.

3. Images of *patrimoine*

3.1. The house and garden

On analysing *Jean de Florette* it becomes apparent that only four main spaces are utilised by Berri, namely Jean's house and gardens, the Soubeyrans' property, the village and the vistas of the region. This utilisation of space builds up a sense of place and identity, with each locus forming a layer of identification which cumulatively express the idea of Provence. Jean's house articulates a stereotypical image of Provence from the angle of an individual space. The solid, shuttered stone farmhouse is an image commonly associated with this area. The bastide is a typical element in the established iconography that circulates in French and also, to a certain extent, in British culture. Pagnol's work, especially his autobiographical novels, placed the bastide at the centre of the highly nostalgic narrative and of Southern living. The first instalment of the autobiography is aptly named *Le Château de ma Mère* in reference to the house. Adapted from the first two novels in the Pagnol series, Yves Robert's films are centred on the holidays spent at the summer house and showcase this particular location in a nostalgic, reverential manner. In Britain this image surfaces in a number of areas - in Peter Mayle's hugely successful books (his accounts of living in Provence - *A Year in Provence* (1989), *Toujours Provence* (1991) and *Encore Provence* (1999) and subsequent television adaptation of

the first book by the BBC in 1993 - as well as the fictional *Hotel Pastis* (1993), in advertising such as the Stella Artois television advertisements, where Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* is used to heighten the Berri connection. It is also a more generic signifier for Mediterranean countries, featuring in advertisements for cars and food.

The house in *Jean de Florette* is a key image. It contains within it the idea of inheritance and tradition, idealism and loss which are articulated through Jean's relationship with it. Jean's vision of his existence in the house combines the past and the future - his desire to cultivate a traditional rural lifestyle informed by modern science and official knowledge - in a manner reminiscent of the heritage couplet outlined by Corner and Harvey and discussed in chapter one. Corner and Harvey comment that

...if the spirit of enterprise offers itself as the motor of change, innovation, and development, the spirit of heritage offers the reassurance of continuity with a shared past. (Corner and Harvey 1991: 72).

His vision of utopia is predicated on a very idealistic view of rural self-sufficiency which combines the past and present: he claims that

"...le seul bonheur possible c'est d'être un homme de la nature. Je suis venu ici pour cultiver l'authentique. Je veux manger des légumes de mon jardin, recueillir l'huile de mes oliviers, gober les oeufs frais de mes poules, m'enivrer du vin de ma vigne"

He foresees the realisation of his own version of utopia through the application of modern farming methods to a very traditional context. Not only does the house embody discourses related to heritage culture but it is also very much represented in a heritage style: it is often seen in medium to long shot, positioned in the centre of the frame surrounded by the gardens and the mountains, thus very securely anchoring the house in its geographical context.

Jean is also strongly connected to the house and its environment. For example, in one long take which seemingly spans one whole day we see Jean engaged in clearing the garden. The camera pans to the right through the trees and plants and finds Jean working in the distance. As the camera continues to move to the right the light and shadows change, suggesting the progression of time, and it finally rests on a shot of the house at twilight with smoke rising out of this chimney. This scene appears to present Jean as an organic part of this particular landscape, interacting with his environment and imbuing this space with his identity.

Papet and Ugolin's homes and land are accorded less attention in the film. Papet's house, however, is an important location for it is here that we see the cold plotting of the Soubeyrans. Indeed the two locations function in opposition to each other: while Jean's associative location in the first half of the film is his garden where he is happily involved in the spring-time process of planting and tending crops, the Soubeyrans, by contrast are presented in the dark interior of Papet's house hatching their scheme. Thus, Jean's optimism and delight find their visual echo in the beauty of his external surroundings. When Jean's project starts to fail his associative location changes; from this point onwards Jean is mainly seen either carrying water or brooding in his house. The garden is no longer the terrestrial paradise he discovered on his arrival but rather a very material display of his impending failure. Jean's unravelling is visually heightened by the use of the weather which casts the garden as a scene of disaster of operatic dimensions. Where the garden was once lush and green in the spring-time, the extreme summer temperatures results in the devastation of Jean's garden and Jean's increasing bewilderment

and sense of betrayal. The blindingly bright sand storm and night of lightening transform the garden into a visually alien space. For the former a filter is used creating a hallucinatory vision of the garden; upon opening the door to the garden Jean is disorientated by the vicious light which changes the rural space outside into a forbidding desert. For the latter the garden is shot from above in the dark which has the effect of dwarfing Jean and underlining his small tragedy in relation to the wider concept of nature. In both cases the perspectives adopted to shoot the garden disrupt the gentle idyll created by Berri's eye-level slow pans and lingering long shots.

3.2. The Village and Markers of the Regional Space

Above it was suggested that only four spaces are utilised in Berri's film. Along with the prominent locations of Jean's house and garden and then, in descending order of importance, the personal spaces of the Soubeyrans, the other two geographical spaces shown in *Jean de Florette* are the village and the general panoramas of the Provençal mountains where we see the villagers at work. Unlike the main protagonists who are also depicted in their personal space, the inhabitants of Les Bastides Blanches are mainly depicted in two areas - in the village and on the land. These two areas impart a sense of the generic. Where Jean's space is the embodiment of his, and by implication the spectator's, nostalgia for an individual connection with a lost way of life, the village and the mountain vistas generate meaning at a far more general level, creating a distinctive sense of place (here, the region) through the use of established markers. Although one could accuse Berri of producing a picture of Provence by including stereotypical images and characters, it could equally be

argued that this recourse to the general for the narrative backdrop intensifies the unfolding of Jean's personal tragedy. In portraying the grandeur of the landscape, the unchanging cycle of seasons and exposing the fundamental flaws in human nature, Berri locates and delimits the fate of a man, underlined by the choice of Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* as Jean's theme, against Destiny and the wider fate of the human race as opposed to the individual. The generic aspects of the film allow Berri to relate his story in bold and simple terms such as nature, community and timeless human emotions (greed, grief, longing and envy) lending the film a certain universality and timelessness.

The representation of the village of Les Bastides Blanches provides the greatest illustration of Berri's tendency to create a generic image of Provence. The village is the main point of interaction between the primary and secondary male characters where they either discuss Jean in the bar or, more rarely, see him walking with his family through the village. Given that the breadth of the source text has been condensed in *Jean de Florette* to highlight Jean's particular setting and story, the village and its inhabitants are also reduced to their emblematic qualities. Thus the elements of the village depicted on screen are those which symbolise the French rural community and way of life. The village is not depicted in its entirety; we mainly see it from the central perspective afforded by the square which, as de la Bretèque comments, is 'a synthesis of a number of places' (De la Bretèque 1990: 67). This is the place where we find the game of boules, the fountain, the plane trees and even the old straw seated chair reminiscent of a Van Gogh painting. We also see two internal spaces - the bakery briefly and the bar on several occasions. Although the bakery is clearly a marker of the Provençal world with films such as *La*

Femme du boulanger (1938) and *Le Boulanger de Valorgues* (1952), *Jean de Florette* does not exploit this particular avenue and instead concentrates on the bar as the main area of action and village intrigue. It is a pivotal location where we find the men of the village, uniformly dressed in their black Sunday best, drinking and discussing local business. Here the camera focuses on the small details which impart a sense of the way of life in Provence; for example, we see Papet in close-up slowly pouring Pastis over a sugar cube in his glass. The simple rhythm of life is also underlined by this location where the locals convene for a drink on a Sunday after working all week long on the land. The snatches of dialogue reinforce the film's regional specificity; the Midi accent is apparent here and, given Jean's standard spoken French, highlights his difference from the local community. Again, there is little differentiation or individualisation of the assorted men in these bar scenes; they merely serve the purpose of adding heritage texture to the film and conveying the idea of community. Moreover, one can draw out cultural associations suggested by the scenes in the bar which resemble paintings by Cézanne (see 'the Cardplayer' series of paintings (1890-96) and 'the Smoker' (1891-92)).

The shots of the mountains also function in a number of ways. Firstly they have painterly connections; the panoramic views of the countryside around les Bastides Blanches recall paintings of Mont Saint Victoire by Cézanne. Secondly, they establish the geographical parameters of the film and, through the preferred camera movements, angles and length of take, indicate the value attributed to the physical setting. From the opening sequence alone it is clear that Berri imbues the mountains around Aubagne with a sense of nostalgic longing. In one long take the camera slowly pans from left to right from a high

vantage point, sweeping across the valley at dawn and eventually finding Ugolin on his ascent to his house. The screen time preceding Ugolin's appearance would seem to be a heritage moment where the lingering long shots and tracking shots of the landscapes are not directly motivated by the narrative. Instead, the landscape is offered for our lengthy contemplation much in the same manner as the opening sequence of *Howards End* where the camera lovingly trails Vanessa Redgrave walking through the long grass around the house at twilight before shifting its focus to events taking place inside. While the treatment of the settings is similar in terms of the slow moving, steady and even reverential camera work, the object of this attention is very different in *Jean de Florette* as discussed in section 3.1. The country house set in its own grounds of the British heritage film finds its equivalent in the old stone farmhouse set against the rugged backdrop of the Provençal mountains. Both British and French audiences can relate to these contexts not only through the retrospective movement of nostalgia but also through present day leisure activities such as days out at National Trust properties or holidays in Provence. This type of leisure time pursuit highlights the contemporary pleasures to be gained from revisiting the past as presented by the heritage industry and indeed the heritage film. There are clearly nationally specific facets to the heritage consumer's relationship with the national past displayed in museums or at the cinema. In terms of cinema, a French audience's relationship with the concept of the past generated by the idea of Provence is coloured by the post-war rural exodus. Thus *Jean de Florette* and other Pagnol adaptations reveal a world distanced from the present not only by its sheer exoticism and grand physical scale but also by its very pastness - that is in its depiction of a pre-lapsarian

world which has not yet experienced the dislocating effects brought about by the mutation of the society from agricultural to urban. While the life-styles and settings in *Jean de Florette* patently belong to the past they are nonetheless close by virtue of the temporal proximity of the exodus for contemporary spectators and of their interaction with the heritage/leisure industry. Berri facilitates a nostalgic excursion into this lost world through his use of a classical iconography of Provence complete with a sound track capturing the cicadas, the birds, the sounds of carts travelling on stony ground and the movement of grass. Cumulatively these features lend the film a picturesque quality, each lingering shot of the mountains or Jean's house creating a living tableau of Provence. It is perhaps telling that Berri, on reading *L'Eau des Collines*, considered the novel to be a grand fresco of the region.⁴

4. The Window as framing device

Julianne Pidduck has proposed that the window can be interpreted as a symbol of female repression in the British Jane Austen adaptations of the 1990s (Pidduck 1998). A similar form of visual framing occurs in *Jean de Florette* in the shape of a recurring view out of Jean's bedroom window. Here, however, it appears to express three sets of emotions. Firstly, one can contend that the window crystallises the emotions which determine the unfolding of the tragedy rather than the desires of a particular gender. The first shot seen from this perspective arises at the start of the film, with the anonymous guard positioned at this window watching over Florette's house and garden. The window frames a view of the verdant garden and Papet and Ugolin blocking up the spring. After Jean arrives at the house he and Aimé survey their inheritance appreciatively

from this same window and this time the view provides an idealised rural shot of the Provençal landscape. Towards the end of the film Jean is seen looking out of the window in the middle of the night desperately waiting for rain. Finally Manon is seen looking through this window at the arrival of Ugolin, Papet and the lawyer who have come to discuss the selling of Jean's house. The point of view in this final shot through the window is clearly Manon's given the positioning of the camera at a child's eye level. These shots from the window are indicative of the emotions which drive the film and indeed the sequel - greed, happiness inspired by a return to one's roots, despair and then Manon's mixture of fear and resentment which will become a desire to avenge her father's death in *Manon des Sources*. Hence, the window shot catalogues the process of acquisition and loss of the rural idyll. Secondly, the window can be interpreted as a heritage feature which provides a neat framing of the picturesque view outside creating the symmetry and appearance of a living tableau of Provence.⁵ The presentation of the landscape in such a manner suggests mediation, a distancing of the spectator and the object of contemplation which leads to the third structure of feeling the window shot suggests. The window can be regarded as the physical framing of our nostalgia, similar to looking at old photographs; it visually relates our loss as spectator, our temporal and experiential detachment from a harsh and yet ultimately perfect natural world. Therefore the landscape on display is the manifestation of a longing for the lost rural community.

The position of the spectator has already been touched on in this chapter. The idea has been posited that the film positions the spectator as a heritage tourist; the framing provided by the window, the pans and tracks

across the valley, the lingering long and medium shots of the house set in its garden all place positive emphasis on the physical environment in a manner typical of a heritage film. Such instances of enforced contemplation suspend the narrative for the benefit of aesthetic, nostalgic pleasure. It is at such points that the spectator finds a voice in the character of Jean. When he arrives at his house and assesses its beauty, commenting 'C'est le paradis...C'est un paradis terrestre' and then later referring by contrast to 'l'enfer des villes', the visual evidence would lead us to agree with this opinion, that of Jean as the idealist,

However, these are not the only positions the spectator is accorded in this film. Given that watching and mediated involvement in the narrative are key themes in *Jean de Florette* the spectator negotiates many positions. This is exemplified by the opening sequence, where the spectator is directly implicated in the contemplation of the surroundings which are framed by the car windscreen. The perspective we adopt in this scene is eventually revealed to be that of Ugolin which weakens our immediate connection with the scene. This act of looking is repeated throughout the film by the window shots (where we see sights and events through the guard, Jean, Aimé and Manon's eyes) and also by the voyeurs in the film, Papet and Ugolin, who keep a watchful eye on Jean and his family. Both characters are depicted in the role of voyeurs, lurking behind trees, watching and gathering information about Jean's imminent induced downfall. This position vis-à-vis Jean is reinforced by the behaviour of the inhabitants of Les Bastides Blanches who fixedly eye Jean with silent suspicion when he passes through the village. The act of viewing Jean through the mediated position of the voyeur in the film emphasises his status as an outsider, as an oddity who embodies the strangeness and fear inspired by

modernity and official knowledge in a very traditional and structured social setting.

5. *Jean de Florette*, Stars and the Media

Part of *Jean de Florette*'s appeal for cinema-goers lay in the actors chosen to play the main roles. According to a survey by SOFRES, the actors provided the second main incentive for going to see the film (Frodon and Loiseau 1987: 217). Yves Montand and Gérard Depardieu are clearly the stars of the film; Daniel Auteuil had not yet become a prominent screen actor by this stage. The three principal actors were widely used to promote the film prior to its release with interviews on television, on radio (a whole day of interviews on *France Inter*) and in the press. Montand was the most prolific in this sense, appearing in a profile on TF1 entitled 'Yves Montand à la rencontre de Pagnol' (Frodon and Loiseau 1987: 215). The film was screened at pre-release premieres throughout France, most notably in Aubagne at the Pagnol cinema and in Paris where it was attended by Jack Lang and his successor, Philippe de Villiers, which is indicative of the support received from the Ministry of Culture for Berri's concept of high budget, state-funded popular cinema (Frodon and Loiseau 1987: 216). This promotional strategy clearly succeeded: *Jean de Florette* was seen by one million French cinema-goers in its first week of exhibition, outperforming *Rambo* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* at the box office (Zimmer 1988: 67).

Depardieu is perhaps the more important star in this film for a number of reasons. In terms of stature and international recognition he has been described as the contemporary equivalent of Maurice Chevalier and Jean

Gabin (Vincendeau 1993: 343). Where Montand is indicative of the old school of French male stars who largely appeared in dramas, comedies or mixtures of the two,⁶ Depardieu functions across genre and across gender (Vincendeau 1993: 344). In the construction of a new cultural identity in the post-68 era in theatre and later in cinema, Depardieu has been a prominent figure, embodying ambiguous sexuality, unstable masculinity and social marginality often from the position of a 'loubard', that is a small-time criminal from the suburbs.⁷ There is a resonance of real life in Depardieu's roles given his emergence from a working-class background into petty crime before finding his vocation as an actor. This is clearly not the role that Depardieu assumes in *Jean de Florette* which is more in line with his secondary career of vigneron; in this film his populist origins are on display but he is a character closely aligned with high culture (opera, classical music, literature) as well as with modern science. He desires a return to his roots from an informed rather than traditional position, again recalling Harvey and Corner's heritage couplet which unites tradition and modernity as a strategy to face an uncertain future. This couplet can be seen to express Jean's Frenchness given that cultivated urbanism and ruralism articulated in the Paris versus province (or indeed in this case Provence) form a binary upon which French national identity is often based. Where a French audience can appreciate the nuances of urban and local identities on display in *Jean de Florette* carried in the accents, locations and narrative themes, a foreign spectator is more likely to perceive Jean as typically French, 'an icon of Frenchness erasing class/ and or regional difference' (Vincendeau 1993: 361). He is then a useful promotional tool for films distributed outside France which cannot escape their national provenance given their linguistic specificity and

usual exhibition on the art-house circuit. This function of Frenchness is illustrated by his appearance in subsequent *films de patrimoine* (*Tous les matins du monde*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Le Colonel Chabert*, *Germinal*, *Camille Claudel*, *Uranus* and briefly in *Le Hussard sur le toit*). He therefore holds value for audiences and film-makers: for the former he is an attraction by virtue of his star status and for the latter he is an assurance of quality necessary for investors in such high budget films.

It is this assurance of quality that is crucial to high budget French film-making in the climate of the 1980s and 1990s. In satisfying the demands of the two major forces in the film market - American products (as ever) and, more recently, television - the single or multiple use of stars is an essential element; as Vincendeau points out it is common to see two stars in contemporary cultural superproductions.⁸ To secure funding and then small and big screen audiences and the sale of video rights, increasingly high budget *films de patrimoine*, which is the most conspicuous example of the drive to protect national cinema through a cinema of expensive, cultural attractions, require guarantees. This is achieved in part by the presence of the star or stars.

6. Jean de Florette and the 1980s

As has been suggested many times in the course of this thesis the British heritage film utilises the space of the past in order to reflect on contemporary issues. While it is my contention that the *film de patrimoine* does differ from the heritage film in significant ways, it is worth considering whether the film under discussion does engage with concerns particular to the 1980s in France. In a critique of the heritage film published in Britain, greed emerged as one of the

issues expressed through the mise-en-scène (Craig 1991). *Jean de Florette* does indeed revolve around the idea of acquisition and loss not only on a material level but also in terms of the loss of idealism. The materialist drive associated with the 1980s finds an accurate reflection in the characters of Papet and Ugolin who strive to possess Jean's land at all costs. Although Ugolin sometimes softens in the face of Jean's increasing pathos, they form a brutal pair, willing to kill the old man for his land at the start of the film and then bring about Jean's downfall not only by blocking up his spring but also by alienating him from the community from within. The scale of their materialist drive is illustrated by Papet's wish to rebuild the old family orchard, creating a 1000 tree 'cathedral' and Ugolin's dream of growing field upon field of carnations which we see stretching before him in a moment of fantasy projection. Their brutality is made greater by Jean's own modest intentions - to be financially independent through the cultivation of his land and the rearing of rabbits, an aim which it would have been possible to realise if the Soubeyrans had not intervened.

This contrast between materialism and idealism is intensified by Jean's attitude to the land. Jean is clearly driven by a desire to bond with his environment through a close daily connection with the earth. As mentioned above Jean also refers to 'l'enfer des villes' which contrasts sharply with his rural haven. Berri underlines this contrast rather bluntly with the scene which follows Jean's comment where we see a typical view of the village square complete with a game of boules on a Sunday afternoon. Jean attempts to live harmoniously with his environment from a modern perspective instead of relying on traditional modes of self-sufficiency. Despite Papet and Ugolin's

ridiculing of Jean for his unusual ideas about the sowing and positioning of crops and his reliance on books, Jean's initial harvest attests to the successful marriage of a utopian desire with ecological awareness and scientific knowledge. It is this marriage of approaches which marks out Jean's approach as specifically modern and potentially New Age.

The main themes in *Jean de Florette* find their synthesis in three male protagonists. Thus, Jean and the Soubeyrans act out neatly juxtaposed ideas and ideals such as the future versus the past, official knowledge versus accepted wisdom, utopian return to the land versus harsh ruralism. This configuration of characters also outlines the divide between outsider and the community, raising issues of centre and periphery and social alienation. These issues would have had resonance for a French audience at the time of the film's release given the downward turn in fortunes which set in during Mitterrand's first five years of presidency. Where the year after the 1981 elections was marked by a sense of euphoria, the period thereafter became increasingly turbulent and 'l'allégresse fait place peu à peu au désenchantement'.⁹ From 1982 onwards economic, political and social rifts opened among the French population as a result of many shifts in domestic policy as well as international events which damaged France's reputation internationally.¹⁰ The most relevant factor in this context is immigration, for this issue has serious implications for concepts of national identity and social exclusion and inclusion. In 1985 immigrants in France accounted for approximately 8 per cent of the total population and naturalised or first-generation French accounted for 3 per cent.¹¹ Although the majority of this community had arrived in France before 1981 much political debate on this

subject took place in 1985.¹² While right-wing groups are partly to blame for the heightened visibility of this issue, linking the rise in criminality in France to the presence of immigrant communities, these communities are also marked out by their differences from the ethnically French population, that is, by religion, higher birth rates and levels of unemployment. The state's attitude to immigrant communities in terms of citizenship, rights, and benefits has also highlighted this issue and raised the question of French national identity and the demands placed upon individuals adopting it, that is to assimilate or to retain one's cultural and religious identity. The question of immigration is very much on the contemporary French political and social agenda as illustrated by la Loi Debré (1997) which once again highlights the disparity between French nationals and the immigrant community. The reforms on immigration drafted by Jean-Louis Debré in effect impede the entry of immigrants into France while also clamping down on immigrants already on French territory. This law, which increased the power of the police (for example, authorising greater searches on vehicles and in companies thought to be harbouring immigrant labour) while reducing the power of judges to free imprisoned immigrants, draws a crucial distinction between the French and those simply born in France, indicating that the latter status does not license the entry of relatives into the country.¹³

France was faced with similar difficulties to Britain in this period, both forced to recognise the obsolescence of traditional concepts of national identity in an increasingly multiracial society. A reaction to this situation is the British heritage film which can be regarded as visual, if not narrative, affirmation of tradition and permanence. In *Jean de Florette* we find images which correspond to this longing for the stability and security of the past in the form of

the house and its context. Already imbued with nostalgia by intertextual references (Pagnol and his position in national culture, advertising, experience of rural exodus and tourism), these sites are patrimonialised by Berri. There is a tension, however, created by the storyline; Jean's marginalisation by the villagers based on his hometown, his education and his physical deformity undercuts the heritage elements of continuity, resulting in a conflict between aesthetics and narrative. Jean's story can be seen to function as an allegory which uses the distance provided by the past to comment on features of contemporary society.

Another feature which marks the contemporaneity of the film is the significance attached to land. As discussed in chapter one there has been a tendency in France to 'patrimonialise' land, particularly urban space, in the last two decades (Gravari-Barbas 1996: 55). To illustrate this point one could give the example of gastronomy which is closely linked to both culture and the land in France, the image of France as home of high quality cuisine being a nationally coded value. *Les produits du terroir* provide an example of consumer goods which are symbolic of regional identity. Due to high levels of mobility amongst the population it is difficult to develop a rooted sense of social identity, a situation which has resulted in a drive to extract an idea of continuity from the immediate physical space utilised by a community in the past. Thus, as mentioned in the start of this chapter, space is attributed the role of 'ciment identitaire' for a group and local institutions or key features such as schools or forges are considered as sites of minor heritage (Gravari-Barbas 1996: 65). Taken on a broader level, the imagery of Provence can be said to function in a similar manner, providing visual sites for national identification. Through Berri's

choice of locations and the camera work used to showcase them, the sites of typical Provençal living invite nostalgic contemplation. These regional sites are elevated to the level of the symbolic, representing an attachment to the nation and to a version of its rural past through a set of very specific physical markers. This tendency to root ideas of authentic French identity in the country also surfaces in contemporary films; see for example *Le Bonheur est dans le pré* (Etienne Chatiliez, 1995) which juxtaposes urban living and emotional corruption with rural living and happiness. The rural setting of Condom, while not as impressive as Provence, still contains the typical features - the stone country house set in lush gardens with views to the hills beyond. This image of the rural home has been reiterated in contemporary cinema and is very resonant for many French people who engage with narratives of return to the land as exemplified by *Jean de Florette* on the level of fantasy and nostalgia, perceiving the symbolic value of the rural family house as the site of a better past, or perhaps, in Phil Powrie's view, of 'the certainty of an hierarchical rural social order' (Powrie 1997: 61). It may also resonate for those who see the reflection of their own 'retour à la terre', an alternative life-style popular in the wake of 1968.

7. The Pagnol connection

It cannot be disputed that Marcel Pagnol provides a strong attraction for a French audience; the connections to Pagnol's writing and film-making and thereby to the position both he and the world he depicted are accorded in national culture endowed Berri's film with considerable substance and cultural capital. French cinema-goers were clearly attracted by the Pagnol connection:

in response to the question 'what drove you to go and see *Jean de Florette*?', 68 per cent of respondents in a SOFRES survey answered that the fact that the film was adapted from a Pagnol novel strongly influenced their decision (Frodon and Loiseau 1987: 217). However, it is telling that fidelity to the source text did not provide a principal pleasure for cinema-goers interviewed in this survey. In fact this criterion appeared to be the least important attraction offered by the film; the question 'which elements did you like most in *Jean de Florette*?' indicated that 82 per cent liked the images and the landscapes the most, followed by the actors at 72 per cent, the dialogue at 53 per cent, the mise-en-scène at 48 per cent, the music at 41 per cent and fidelity to Pagnol's novel at 26 per cent (Frodon and Loiseau 1987: 218). Thus *L'Eau des Collines*, while initially motivating cinema-goers, did not prove to be the outstanding attraction.

There are several reasons which may explain the overriding importance of landscapes and stars in *Jean de Florette*. Firstly, the central theme in Pagnol's text no longer holds such importance for a contemporary audience: the issue of water does not mobilise the audience's emotions as it once might have. Secondly, the Pagnol element is minimised in the film by Berri's imposition of a two-tiered hierarchy of characterisation whereby one narrative strand has been isolated and inflated to the detriment of a broader social picture created by Pagnol in his own films. While Pagnol was fascinated by community, environment and personal narrative in equal measure, this balanced configuration has been lost in Berri's film given that many characters in *Jean de Florette* have been reduced to mere ciphers for the idea of community. Where Berri attempts to depict the universal through the very specific, that is through the character of Jean, Pagnol's perspective on film-

making appears to be informed by a desire to portray the Provençal environment and a group of its inhabitants through a wider lens. Moreover, the film falls prey to the tension between narrative and aesthetic discussed in chapter two in reference to the heritage film, resulting in the dilution and distancing of the tragedy to the advantage of the visual elements. The style of Berri and Pagnol's film-making are clearly at odds given that films such as *Jofroi* (Marcel Pagnol, 1934) and *Angèle* (Marcel Pagnol, 1934) are regarded as examples of Pagnol's neo-realism, using amateur casts and naturalistic locations¹⁴, and Berri's *Jean de Florette* is a production characterised by its narrow narrative focus, its stars, high costs and a faithful attention to period reconstruction. In a manner befitting a culture which craves an ever greater connection to a nostalgically remembered or even remodelled past, Berri does not approach and interpret Pagnol's text from the latter's perspective as a regional film-maker but rather reproduces the physical environment of the past from a contemporary perspective.

¹ In 1990 there were 2, 822, 295 *résidences secondaires* in France of which 84.9 percent were owned rather than rented. Ownership can be broken down by occupation as follows: executives and liberal professions 24.1 percent, craftsmen and businessmen 16.1 percent, middle management 10.7 percent, employees 7.1 percent, manual workers 4.7 percent and farmers 4.2 percent. *Résidences secondaires* accounted for over 70 percent of the total number of beds used by tourists in France (12, 071,000 of 17,238,000). Figures taken from *Quid 1998* pages 1323 and 1742.

² Of the 157,800,000 holidays enjoyed by the French in France in 1995, 106,300,000 were spent in Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur. Compare to 18,800,000 in Rhône-Alpes, 12,500,000 in the Ile-de-France, 11,400,000 in the Loire, 10,400,000 in Brittany, 9,900,000 in Languedoc-Rousillon, 9,600,000 in Aquitaine and 8,400,000 in the Mediterranean Pyrenees. Moreover, compare to the number of French going on holiday outside France: 11,900,000 went to another European country, 1,400,000 to Africa, 900,000 to the Far East and 1,400,000 to the American continent in contrast to the 157,800,000 holidays spent in France. Figures from *Quid 1998* page 1743.

³ Guy Austin has commented on the picture-postcard version of France presented in *Jean de Florette*. Berri, he observes, creates a 'touristic, facile picture of Provence' (Austin 1996: 161).

⁴ Press Release from Cannon films for *Jean de Florette*.

⁵ The window is also used to frame key moments in the narrative and is used in other genres (that is, not only in the heritage film). Here, as an example, one could cite one of the seminal moments in cinema - the deep focus shot in *Citizen Kane* where we see Charles as a child through the window. The view is presented from his mother's perspective as she is discussing

sending him away. In this sequence we see Charles playing in the garden with his sledge and it marks view marks the brutal loss of his childhood.

⁶ In this context Vincendeau lists Louis de Funès, Bourvil, Fernandel, Raimu, Bach and George Milton (Vincendeau 1993: 344).

⁷ In reference to Depardieu's sexuality one can cite *Les Valseuses* (1973), *Inspecteur La Bavure* (1980) and *Tenue de soirée* (1986).

⁸ It is common to see two stars in *films de patrimoine*. Vincendeau points to Montand and Depardieu in *Jean de Florette*, Depardieu and Deneuve in *Fort Saganne*, Depardieu and Adjani in *Camille Claudel*, Depardieu and Marielle in *Tous les matins du monde* (Vincendeau 1995: 360). In the later films de patrimoine multiple stars are in evidence, indicating the continuing pressure to provide attractions and guarantees. Hence we see Depardieu and Ardant in *Le Colonel Chabert*, Adjani, Perez and Anglade in *La Reine Margot*, Ardant, Rochefort and Berling in *Ridicule*, Binoche, Cluzet, Depardieu, Yanne in *Le Hussard sur le toit* and Auteuil, Perez, Noiret, in *Le Bossu*.

⁹ Ambrosi, A and Ambrosi, C (1991) *La France: 1870-1990* (Barcelona, Bonn, Milan, Paris:Masson) page 372.

¹⁰ The major events which took place in France in this period are the devaluation of the franc twice in the space of nine months, decentralisation, strikes caused by unfavourable changes in unemployment laws and the suspension of inflation-linked pay increases, the rise in unemployment, the drop in the standard of living, terrorism on Corsica and mainland France, insurrection in New Caledonia, the Greenpeace affair. These events are discussed in depth in Ambrosi (1991).

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 395.

¹² *Ibid*.

¹³ The recent case of the sans-papiers living in Charles de Gaulle airport for eleven years while waiting for an exit permit to leave France also highlights the problematic situation of immigrants, especially those who are relying on the clemency of the state.

¹⁴ *International Dictionary of Films and Film-making 2* (1997) Detroit, London, New York and Toronto: Saint James Press.

Chapter Seven: *Ridicule*: Textual Analysis

The production of *films de patrimoine* has been prolific in France in the last two decades for reasons which have been outlined generally in chapters one to four and more specifically in chapter five. Starting with the benchmark for this type of film-making, *Jean de Florette*, which was released in 1986 along with *Manon des Sources*, France has produced at least one if not two major costume dramas in this vein every year.¹ At the beginning of this chapter of textual analysis, it is necessary to outline the rationale for selecting this particular film. *Ridicule* by Patrice Leconte was released in 1996 in France. It would have been possible to choose *Beaumarchais l'insolent* for analysis given that it was released in the same year as *Ridicule* but the latter, though two places below *Beaumarchais* in the top twenty films at the French box office in 1996, is more interesting both in terms of its aesthetics, its narrative, its characterisation and its possible allegorical significance. *Ridicule* can be viewed as a highly schematic film; its main premise - that the ridiculer is ultimately the ridiculed as is the courtly milieu which feeds on the dynamics of humiliation and dominance - appears to structure and to generate meaning throughout the film. The scene by scene breakdown in the appendix will be used to illustrate this point effectively. Indeed, the film's form and narrative are informed and shaped by the polarity of court and province, ridicule and honesty, language and silence, formal environments and nature, the pre-Revolutionary self-obsession of the aristocracy and democracy, all of which point to the corruption of the court. These binaries have a very clear impact on framing, mise-en-scène and

camera movement.

It is also interesting in the light of the value it was attributed by the academy and the film industry in France. *Ridicule* was nominated for twelve Césars in 1996, winning four for best film, best director, best costume and best art direction. It was also put forward as France's contender for best foreign film at the Oscars in 1997. Thus it is a film which can be seen to function as *cinéma de patrimoine* in a number of ways; it puts the nation's social history and landscape on display through its narrative and choice of aesthetic presentation and it also functions as an example of national cinema through its position of recognised cinematic quality in the indigenous and international cinema market.

Finally, the characters of Madame de Blayac and Mathilde in *Ridicule* raise the question of the representation of femininity in the *film de patrimoine*. Where masculinity has been addressed by Phil Powrie in his examination of the 'nostalgia film', femininity has not been explored before (Powrie 1997). Here I would like to demonstrate the way in which these two female characters embody the evolution of the role of women in contemporary French society.

1. Ridicule: the term and its social implications

The term 'ridicule' is used selectively in the course of this film and its meaning can be said to reinforce the themes underpinning the narrative. It is used on nine occasions, largely in the instances of interaction between Baron Grégoire Ponceludon de Malavoy and the other central characters in the court. It is a potent concept which publicly perpetuates the perverse hierarchy of value

specific to courtly life. Based on the memoirs of the Marquise de Boigne, this film suggests that the notion of ridiculing oneself or one's opponent in the court is central to the lives of the Parisian aristocracy living under Louis XVI. Indeed, verbal dexterity, coupled with deceit, determines precarious allegiances, shifting configurations of power and proximity to the King. The position and reputation of individuals such as the Abbé de Vilecourt are contingent on their eloquent performance and scathing wit which can either secure their membership of an élite circle or result in their social alienation.

The profound and lasting effect of being ridiculed is exemplified in the opening scene of the film where the Chevalier de Milletail urinates on an elderly and infirm Monsieur de Blayac in retaliation for the social humiliation he suffered at the old man's hand years before: de Blayac christened Milletail 'le Marquis de Patatras' after a fall at a ball. This scene not only indicates that *Ridicule* may not follow the pattern of the heritage film which tends to sanitise its environment and shy away from graphic detail (in this scene we are shown an extreme close-up of Milletail's penis as he urinates), but it also emphasises the cruelty of the aristocracy in dealing such a blow and also in the measures deemed necessary to exonerate themselves. In addition, this scene alludes to the inevitability of this behaviour given that the film begins with Milletail's act of vengeance and the last scenes of courtly life in the film are centred on tripping Ponceludon de Malavoy, the main character, at a ball organised for the purpose of his public ridiculing. It is Milletail who then deals the terrible blow, naming Ponceludon 'le Marquis des Antipodes'. This suggests that ridicule provides a rhythm for the life of players in the pre-Revolutionary court. While the visual

binary of nature and court life determines the *mise-en-scène*, the film's narrative is structured around, on the one hand, the preparation and machinations necessary for the successful presentation of one's repartee and wittiness and then, on the other hand, the eventual formative public events such as card games, dinner parties and walks with the King where one's worth is decided by one's verbal agility. It is, of course, one of the greatest ironies that the King is unable to grasp the finer points of verbal duelling and yet admission to his *côterie* is dependent on the very thing he cannot entirely comprehend or appreciate.

The film's audience is attracted to, but ultimately distanced from, these players because of the significance attributed to such a base and cruel pursuit. Representative of their social class, Madame de Blayac and the Abbé de Vilecourt are at once captivating, flamboyant characters, full of complexity and recognisable human flaws such as vanity and dishonesty, and yet repulsive because of their misuse of power: instead of using their influence to further causes such as Ponceludon's plans to rid the Dombes of malaria by draining the swamps, and by implication any cause concerning the French population beyond the walls of Versailles, this circle exhibits extreme social myopia. The persistent ridiculing of Baron de Guéret and his eventual suicide provides a blatant, palpable example of the negativity associated with courtly life and those who support its corrupt system of values.

2. Structural Oppositions

2.1. Narrative structure

As mentioned above, *Ridicule* functions by means of oppositions constructed by the film's stylistic devices as well as its narrative form. A close examination of the sequence of scenes illustrates the use of structure to emphasise thematic content (see scene breakdown in appendix). A rhythm of oppositions is set in motion from the beginning of the film, with scenes one to nine alternating between the court and the countryside. This is repeated at four further points in the film. Not only is the order of the scenes responsible for this contrast but the filmic and musical texture and tone of the scenes also contribute to this juxtaposition. For example, the opening takes place in Monsieur de Blayac's house. There is little interior light, there is low non-diegetic music played on a recorder and the dominant editing style is shot countershot. After the credits, the narrative shifts to an external scene set in the Dombes where the prevailing tone, accented by the dull lighting and the lack of music, is one of misery and poverty. The camera is very mobile and the scenes appear to have been shot with a Steadicam. The third scene is more mobile again; bright aerial long-shots of Ponceludon riding to Paris through the countryside are accompanied by loud non-diegetic music. He is positioned in the centre of the shot. The fourth scene shifts back to de Blayac's house, focusing on Madame at her toilette. Again there is little internal light, the camera is static as is Madame. She is also positioned in the centre of the frame. Finally, scene five returns to the Ponceludon thread of the narrative, continuing to show his journey on horseback to Paris. Again, there is full, bright

light, the camera is mobile. The scenes alternate between stasis and movement, with the former attributed to the court and the latter to the country. This sequence not only leads to a point where the two apparently separate narratives fuse but also establishes the visual identity (preferred use of camera movement, angles, lighting and music) for these main characters. In addition, this juxtaposition of relative immobility and dynamism marks the French costume drama's point of departure from the British heritage film. While there are stereotypical heritage elements as discussed below, this dynamism - in the form of hand-held camera work, the Steadicam, tracking shots not used to valorise a heritage mise-en-scène and the physical mobility of certain designated characters - can be isolated as a feature of contemporary French *films de patrimoine*. *Le Hussard sur le toit*, *La Fille de D'Artagnan* and *Le Bossu* display this feature and can be said to form a distinctive body of contemporary costume dramas informed by a tradition of epic period films set on a grand scale and centred around adventure. *Ridicule* does not provide adventure in the classical sense but it does contain a few key elements taken from this formula such as the long journeys on horseback, romance and the duel at dawn.

2.2. Environmental Oppositions: the spatial expression of morality

Ridicule is a fine example of the way in which narrative content can be articulated through a visual and spatial grammar. In this particular film, the polarity of court and countryside is not only connected to binary iconographies but also to two sets of values. Although the courtly setting furnishes the film with ample visual pleasures, the brutality thinly concealed beneath the veneer

of refinement is thrown into sharp relief by the representation of the world beyond Versailles of which Ponceludon, the interloper, is a reminder. The middle section of the film where Ponceludon becomes Madame de Blayac's lover sees Ponceludon's decency and honesty diminished and his quest to secure the support of the King eclipsed as he is increasingly seduced by the court. This has the effect of casting provincial, rural life, where individuals contend with the practicalities of everyday existence rather than the verbal frivolities, as the superior component in the positive/negative, country/court equation.

This is highlighted in a multitude of ways throughout the film. Scenes 52 and 53 provide a good example of this equation, neatly juxtaposing the Abbé de Vilecourt and Ponceludon's local priest through a stark shift in tone and environment. Scene 52 culminates in a shot of Ponceludon and the local priest sitting outside the house, where a young boy has just died from malaria, set against a dark landscape. The use of a natural location and minimal natural light, with Ponceludon and the priest filmed in long shot, stress the misery of the locals and the futility of both characters' efforts to improve the situation. This is suggested by the relationship between the two figures and their setting; the figures are dwarfed by the scale of their surroundings in this shot, underlining the smallness and powerlessness of humans to act or instigate change within the larger context of Nature. This scene is followed by a wipe and then scene 53 which opens with a close up of the Abbé energetically and theatrically expounding his theory of the existence of God for an aristocratic audience. The lighting here is much stronger and clearer. This scene ends with

a lingering image of the Abbé seen in long shot in the aftermath of his downfall. Both religious officials experience failure, the former from the genuine suffering of his congregation and the latter as a result of his unbridled sycophancy, thereby contrasting compassion and artifice.

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the character of Jean in *Jean de Florette* verbalises the idea that the country is innately imbued with purity and value although the often caricatural and limited representation of Provençal inhabitants does not provide balanced visual confirmation of this. The positive/negative polarity of courtly, urban life versus rural life is echoed in other *films de patrimoine* such as *Tous les matins du monde* (1992) directed by Alain Corneau where the main character, Monsieur de Sainte Colombe, rejects the trappings of the court, preferring to retreat from what he perceives as superficiality and live for his music in virtual poverty outside Paris. This polarity is visually reinforced by the juxtaposition of the baroque Marin Marais, the film's narrator who recounts his experiences as a student of the viol de gambe, and the unaffected Monsieur de Sainte Colombe, a teacher and an expert of this instrument.² Unlike the Provençal films - that is the Pagnol adaptations by Berri and Robert and Rappeneau's *Le Hussard sur le toit* which make use of the ruggedness, the scale and the exoticism of the regional landscape - the countryside depicted in *Ridicule* and *Tous les matins du monde* is not as wild or impressive and is accordingly shot in a different style. While the epic scale of the narrative in *Le Hussard sur le toit*, that is the high degree of movement and the diverse tensions provided by the thriller subplot and the romantic element, is equalled by the lingering wide-angle shots of rural Provence, the subtleties of

Leconte's dialogues and social relations are visually mirrored by a tighter focus on smaller, less imposing physical spheres of action which are nonetheless evocative of a certain image of France. Thus we see negatively charged yet beautifully appointed interiors of the court and the positively charged exteriors of Bellegarde's house. This latter milieu is closer to those seen in British heritage films; the pastoral, lush countryside settings are largely centred around Bellegarde's countryhouse and are evocative of the sites which are associated with a generic French landscape, that is one punctuated with chateaux, gardens and woodland. This geographical polarity is indicative of the contemporary tendency to conceptualise the past as a rural space. Examined in chapter one in the context of heritage culture and the rise of the past as a symbolic space, the past, which is held to be a haven, an intrinsically better place than the present, is classically projected through bucolic imagery illustrated by the common recourse to the country house or small country village setting in many films and television series. The more traditional bourgeois heritage mode of film-making analysed in chapter two clearly draws on the country house imagery quite considerably. A highly popular British television series located in the more recent past, *Heartbeat* (Yorkshire TV, 1992-) makes use of the small rural community setting and the sense of security and quaintness it imparts in contrast to modern life. A by-product of this programme has been the growth of a localised heritage culture in the village where it is set in the manner of the heritage consumerism which followed the screening of the BBC adaptation of *Middlemarch* on television.

There is another level of topographical contrast in *Ridicule* - that of the

pastoral of Bellegarde's chateau and environs and of Ponceludon's malaria-ridden swamps. The disparity between these two areas is highlighted by Ponceludon's initial ride to Versailles where the scenery gradually improves as his journey progresses and then the reverse movement as he returns to the Dombes in the latter half of the film. The movement to and from this disadvantaged region is strongly underlined by the use of light: Ponceludon's château, a slightly forbidding, Gothic building, is set against dark sky surrounded by wild trees whereas Bellegarde's property is bathed in soft but bright light to emphasis its lushness. When Mathilde and Ponceludon are shot at Bellegarde's château there are often branches or trees in the foreground, obscuring our view of them and affirming the natural setting. This is at odds with the scene set in the formal, symmetrical gardens of Versailles: while the camera in scene 31 tracks both characters who are engaged in left to right/right to left horizontal movement within the shot, similar to that seen in the pastoral scenes, the content of the shots is organised to complement the formal use of space. Thus Mathilde and Ponceludon are neatly framed by large urns positioned at the extreme left and right of the frame, with a low, neat bed of flowers in their immediate foreground. Their movement in this scene appears to be determined by the arrangement of the mise-en-scène, mapping, through a visual grammar, a geographical spectrum with the rigidity of Versailles at one end and the bucolic at the other.

It is interesting to consider the use of the bucolic space in *Ridicule* in the light of Julianne Pidduck's analysis of the British adaptations of Jane Austen's novels in the 1990s. In her recent essay, Pidduck maintains that the walk and

the window can be read through a feminist optic, with the woman at the window imparting the repressed desires of the female characters while the country walk signifies dynamic social interaction. Therefore, the gendered interiors connote 'the claustrophobic weight of history, oppressive patriarchal laws of inheritance, the strict codes of comportment' and the walk is indicative of 'more spontaneous and meaningful human interaction, romance or contemplation' (Pidduck 1999: 385). Below I will consider the use of interior and exterior space in relation to the characters of Mathilde and Madame de Blayac. Here, in the context of the rural space, it is possible to read the country walk in *Ridicule* not solely in terms of gender but also in terms of wider social questions of freedom and equality. The juxtaposition of the country walk and the court-bound walk suggests a binary of restrictive social codes and relative freedom. We see Madame de Blayac in a rare exterior shot on a walk with the King at court where Ponceludon engineers his entrée into the royal circle through a display of impromptu wit. In contrast Mathilde de Bellegarde's preferred exterior environment, where she is seen on walks with Ponceludon or engaged in experimentation, is representative of her dynamic interaction with spheres of action not usually open to her gender. It can be said that in *Ridicule* the emblematic spaces attributed to the two main female characters differ from those outlined by Pidduck. As indicated below, Madame de Blayac resolutely ignores the world outside the window; it is her seated position at her desk which is far more informative of her limited sphere of action and of aspirations. Mathilde, however, occupies the natural world, whether by the well or on a walk, both of which exemplify her progressive gender role.

2.3. Oppositional Characterisation: Madame de Blayac and Mathilde de Bellegarde

Mathilde and Madame de Blayac can be regarded as polarities in *Ridicule*. Grégoire Ponceludon de Malavoy appears to occupy the ground between them, vacillating between the two worlds these characters represent. In order to appraise the extent to which these two women can be seen to articulate two specific worlds and two diverse notions of Frenchness, it is worth considering the question of their representation within a wider critical framework. The oppositional nature of their characterisation is highly reminiscent of the representation of women in film noir which provides a model for analysis here. In classic film noir there tends to be a clear division between the *femme fatale* and the good woman (usually, the victim of crime or the girlfriend/wife of the male protagonist). While the *femme fatale* is generally inscribed as independent, aggressive, sexualised - that is, the object of the male gaze - and central to the narrative, the good woman is usually passive and nurturing, a marginal figure in the film who is situated outside the main spheres of action (Place 1998). The *femme fatale*'s centrality to the narrative is illustrated by her positioning within shots; she is usually centre frame or in the foreground. Her sexuality is also conveyed through the camera's tendency to film her from the perspective of the male onlooker which fragments her body, breaking it down into isolated sexually connotative parts (Place 1998: 54-55). Moreover, the *femme fatale* is encoded as sexual, powerful and duplicitous through her performative qualities, that is, dress, jewellery and make-up. Ultimately, the

femme fatale experiences a loss of movement; the film noir narrative is structured around the eventual removal of her power as she is the embodiment of man's fear of woman's sexual strength (Place 1998: 48). In contrast, the good woman is an idealised and maternalised image of femininity. She represents the redemptive quality associated with femininity, offering the male protagonist an entry into an alternative secure world (Place 1998: 60). Her associative mise-en-scène differs greatly from the *femme fatale*; she is often depicted in a pastoral environment, underlining the nature/artifice dichotomy.

In order to add a contemporary dimension to the analysis of gender representation one can also reflect on the evolution of popular characterisations of femininity in film and television since the 1970s, assessing the way in which feminism and postfeminism inflect the construction of Mathilde and Madame de Blayac in *Ridicule*. As Charlotte Brunsdon has pointed out, there has been a discernible shift in the portrayal of women whereby the real independent woman of the 1970s was replaced by the Cosmo girl of the 1980s and then the postmodern 'girly' figure in the 1990s (Brunsdon 1997). While all three constructions are arguably informed by the demands of 1970s feminism, that is financial independence, the right to satisfaction outside of the home and the recognition that sexuality is a separate issue from reproduction, each formation is inflected by its own particular Zeitgeist (Brunsdon 1997: 81-86). The 1970s woman was constructed in opposition to the notion of being desirable and was therefore positioned as a subject rather than an object within the narrative. The 1980s character exhibited femininity and the intention of entering traditionally male dominated spheres, hence the apparent incompatibility of the

hero/heroine position occupied by the protagonists in the television series 'Widows' analysed by Brunsdon (Brunsdon 1997: 71). Films of the 1990s, however, display females enjoying the performance of gender which was notably absent in earlier decades. Thus, femininity in 1990s representations is informed by the masquerade of womanhood (dress and make-up) as well as the element of female desire (Brunsdon 1997). This evolution is illustrated respectively by the films *Alice doesn't live here anymore* (Martin Scorsese, 1974), *Working Girl* (Mike Nichols, 1980) and *Pretty Woman* (Garry Marshall, 1990) and the television series *Widows*. At the end of the 1990s we can cite the examples of Meg Ryan in *You Got Mail* (Nora Ephron, 1998), Julia Roberts in *Notting Hill* (Roger Michell, 1999) or Nicole Kidman in *Eyes Wide Shut* (Stanley Kubrick, 1998) who encapsulate a form of femininity which is anchored in the physicality and performance of being a woman as well as in a desire for independent success and fulfilment within the sphere of relationships and motherhood.

In the light of these arguments, one can observe that the polarity of Mathilde and Madame de Blayac expresses very specific formulations of femininity which build on the archetypes established by classic film noir while nonetheless relating directly to notions of regressive and progressive Frenchness. Here, regressive can be said to indicate pre-Revolutionary France and progressive to indicate post-Revolutionary; the film can also be read as an allegorical commentary on contemporary society whereby the old order signifies right-wing ideals and the projected new order signifies postmodern perspectives on identity and social structuring. Madame de Blayac is representative of the

old corrupt order and perceives her own power to reside in the influence she can wield in court through her sexual favours. She can be seen to connote the artifice built into the very social fabric of the court. She corresponds strongly to the *femme fatale* character in terms of personality traits, iconography and framing. From the moment she appears on screen we are aware of her combination of sexuality and duplicity which is played out through her stylised performance of femininity. In scene four two maids are shown blowing a white powder onto the full length of the naked and motionless Madame de Blayac as part of her toilette. She is then seen seated at her dressing table arranging her clothes. In keeping with Laura Mulvey's assessment of women in traditional mainstream American cinema, Madame de Blayac is 'isolated, glamorous, on display, sexualised' (Mulvey 1993: 48). In both instances she is preparing for the court, altering her 'natural' physical state (skin colour and shape). Her clothes also point to her masquerade of eroticism and power; she is mainly seen wearing strong coloured dresses (black and red in particular) which inscribe her dangerous elements. Her studied, deliberate public appearance stands in contrast to her private look but they nonetheless share the unifying feature of sex: in the scenes where Madame de Blayac is awaiting the arrival of a lover or indeed in bed with a lover she is casually dressed in an open-necked long white gown which suggests the one-dimensional relationships she has with men and also the dishevelment of sexual abandon.

In terms of an associative mise-en-scène, de Blayac is a character largely portrayed seated in interior courtly spaces which have been shot in low key (through a lack of interior light or through the use of candles). Again this is

in sharp contrast to Mathilde, adding weight to the oppositional nature of their narrative relationship. While *Ridicule*'s painterly mode is evident in the framing of Mathilde who is often set against impressionistic greenery, the framing of Madame de Blayac is no less painterly but far from pastoral: she is repeatedly seen seated in her bedroom either at her dressing table (being seated at the mirror is another classic film noir inference of duplicity) or at her occasional table in shots which have been symmetrically composed to offset the character's stasis and social entrapment. It is significant that even the sexual congress between de Blayac and Ponceludon takes place on a table. The sense of confinement and alienation suggested by the mise-en-scène relates as much to her gender as to her social rank and its attitude vis-à-vis society as a whole. Although there are clear differences in historical periods and social contexts, it is interesting to draw a comparison between the Austen films/television productions and *Ridicule* given the shared contemporaneity of representations of the past and of gender. In terms of gender, in the 1990s adaptations Jane Austen's characters are limited by the position of women in society and thus the window through which they longingly gaze is a symbol of unfulfilled desires for emancipation and involvement in the outside world. In *Ridicule* Madame de Blayac may be a powerful, aristocratic figure but, in the moments between the frenzied plotting and orchestrated social events which punctuate her life, she engages in similar genteel pastimes to Austen's women - talking, playing cards and dominoes and receiving visitors. The major difference between Madame de Blayac and the women who populate *Pride and Prejudice* (1995), *Emma* (1996) and *Northanger Abbey* (1987), however, lies in

de Blayac's lack of interest in the outside world: she does not yearn for meaningful interaction outside the walls of her château - instead she resolutely ignores its existence and is often seated with her back to the window. In this respect she differs from the *femme fatale* whose initial mobility in the male world differentiates her from her nurturing, redemptive opposite. Her physical passivity is perhaps a reflection of the fixity of social structures in aristocratic circles in pre-Revolutionary France.

In terms of her expectations and aims, Madame de Blayac does not fit in with Brunsdon's three decade dissection of female representation. Madame de Blayac predates this chronology, pointing to earlier decades when women were not professionally active and therefore not financially independent. Unlike Mathilde, who ultimately rejects the marriage of convenience to the old and rich suitor Monsieur de Montalieri despite the financial support it could have provided for her experimentation, Madame de Blayac has clearly married for position and wealth. The outlet for her ambition is the playing of elaborate games at court and it is the power she wields in this area that lead to her downfall:

In film noir we observe both the social action of myth which damns the sexual woman and all who become enmeshed by her, and a particularly potent stylistic presentation of the sexual strength of woman which man fears (Place 1998: 48).

Outwardly Mathilde appears to correspond to the figure of the nurturing woman. She is associated with nature through her preferred environment and rejects the masquerade of femininity demanded by court life. She is indeed marginal to the main arena of action for most of the film in the manner of the

good woman. She also possesses the required 'good' qualities such as integrity, perseverance and stability which prove to be of greater value to Ponceludon than Madame de Blayac's introduction to the King. However, Mathilde does not conform entirely to the paradigm set out by Place discussed above. Mathilde is a multifaceted character who is clearly inflected by the late 1990s. She will not accept the mutual exclusivity of femininity and competence. She can be seen as the New Woman who is engaged in issues of ecology and social equality in a similar fashion to Jean, the New Man in *Jean de Florette* who seeks to deploy modern scientific knowledge to facilitate an eco-friendly life-style. It can be suggested that Mathilde not only represents the future for women but also for France; as a child of Rousseau and Voltaire, she embodies the ideals of the Enlightenment, rejecting repressive social structures, and acts as an agent of change. This can be most readily seen, on the one hand, in her scientific work and, on the other, in her caring attitude towards the deaf-mute Paul and her willingness to tackle the draining of the Dombes without the support of the court. Mathilde therefore represents movement and progress and it is in this way that she differs from the model of the nurturing woman. This is expressed visually in a number of ways. Firstly, Mathilde is a mobile character and the preferred camera style in her scenes is accordingly mobile - tracks, pans and jerky hand-held shots. She is rarely seen seated or static; indeed her immobility is reserved for her moments of interaction with court life such as the sitting for the portrait with Montalieri and then her pointed visit to a recital at the court in order to break off her engagement with him. Secondly, it is apparent from the pastoral context in which she is predominantly seen that there is a

strong association between this character and nature. Mathilde is often shot against an impressionistic, natural background: when introduced as a character she is seen in conversation with her father in close-up set against a backdrop of lush flowers which fill the frame. In her conversations with Ponceludon, the close-up shot countershot sequences display Mathilde again set against a blurred background, this time of trees. Even in the court gardens the conversation between Mathilde and Ponceludon is preceded by a track through the top of a bed of lilies with a hand-held camera, as if to visually introduce Mathilde through the association of natural beauty. This shot is then repeated midway through the scene, with the camera unsteadily following the sweep of Mathilde's skirts through the flowers. These scenes are very painterly, in keeping with the aesthetics favoured by the heritage genre. Ponceludon later reinforces Mathilde's close affinity with nature, saying 'Vous me faites penser à une petite abeille qui transporte son pollen' as she returns home with the pollen from the lilies in the court gardens on her skirts. Even in the laboratory, where Mathilde attempts the cross-fertilisation of her lilies with the pollen, this impressionistic, floral backdrop is apparent. The visual and thematic relationship between Mathilde and nature is reinforced by a pure heritage moment where the narrative is suspended and Mathilde is seen in close-up cutting roses from a bush, bathed in sunlight (beginning of scene 28). This shot clashes significantly with the preceding scene involving Ponceludon and the genealogist: the genealogist's office is filmed in low key and is testament to the excesses of mise-en-scène in the heritage film with hundreds of books filling the small space. There is also an atmosphere of conflict illustrated by the

positioning of the characters; they are very markedly separated by the genealogist's desk, indicating the variance in interests and morality. The following contrasting shot of Mathilde, however, works by means of contrast to suggest harmony, nature and femininity.

Thus, one can suggest that Mathilde is indicative of a modern form of femininity which is informed on the one hand by classic characteristics and a contemporary agenda on the other. While she is clearly associated with the pastoral and can hence be seen as a 'natural' woman she does not entirely correspond to Brunsdon's paradigm of female representation in the 1990s in that she rejects the performance of gender and is clearly uncomfortable when she is subjected to the gaze of the male onlooker at court and more specifically when she is asked to pose for a portrait. The contemporaneity of her portrayal is illustrated by her strong ambition and refusal to compromise her ideals for the sake of social acceptance (here this is expressed by the institution of marriage). This does not, however, identify her as the monster career woman seen in the 1980s in *Working Girl* or *Fatal Attraction* or the aggressive man-eater in *The Last Seduction* (John Dahl, 1993). Her drive and competence do not demand the sublimation of her femininity and the adoption of masculine modes of behaviour as illustrated by the Sigourney Weaver character in *Working Girl*. Instead, Mathilde is uncompromising and, crucially, uncontrived. This links her to the 'natural woman' formerly embodied by Brigitte Bardot. In comparison to other formulations of French femininity it can be said that Mathilde differs from the classic image of Frenchness. While Bardot was associated with 'the natural woman', she was defined by her sexuality. Mathilde also differs from Catherine

Deneuve who transmits the nationally coded values of chic and sexuality and Jeanne Moreau who is regarded as eroticised but also cerebral.³

The character of Ponceludon de Malavoy can be seen to mediate the two extreme positions held by Madame de Blayac and Mathilde. In his intermediary role, Ponceludon can be seen as representative of a society on the brink of transition. Originating from the provinces, Ponceludon's journey and adventures can be read allegorically as the evolution of French identity at the end of the eighteenth century. He emerges from 'la France profonde' with good intentions and a sense of urgency. He vacillates between the two women and hence two moral codes and two temporal realms. As discussed above, Madame de Blayac is representative of pre-Revolutionary French society on the brink of violent disintegration which is at once degenerate and highly attractive. Mathilde, conversely, embodies the possibility for a future informed by science and social and, rather unrealistically, sexual equality. Ponceludon highlights the impracticability of both states - France cannot continue with this huge disparity between privileged Parisian court life and disadvantaged provincial life nor can the way forward be forged by a small group of well-meaning, enlightened individuals such as the Bellegardes. While he is beguiled by the court and his fervour is dimmed by his desire for Madame de Blayac, Ponceludon breaks with the past, as suggested by the closing intertitle which refers to him as 'Citoyen Ponceludon', synthesising his own humanism with ideals espoused by revolutionary France. Ponceludon is also an enabler of change in that it is only through her relationship with Ponceludon that Mathilde can actualise the application of her work and moral code. Thus, when taken as a whole,

Ponceludon illustrates the passage of French society from the old to the new, emphasising the merging of provincial identity into an expanding national identity. There is a very contemporary edge to Ponceludon's character. His flexibility and ambition seems indicative of the 1980s' spirit of entrepreneurialism. His attraction to surface rather than substance and the subsequent obfuscation of his objectives while at the court upholds this impression. His malleability and ability to become social chameleon in order to gain the King's support stand in contrast to Mathilde who appears to be far more rigidly moral.

It is rare for a heritage film or a *film de patrimoine* to be centred on female characters alone. Even a production such as *Carrington*, seemingly constructed around the life of this female painter, depends on her relationship with the writer Lytton Strachey and does not engage with her life and her emotions with any depth. Similarly *Marquise* (Véra Belmont, 1997), *Camille Claudel* (Bruno Nuytten 1988) and *Artemisia* (Agnès Merlet 1997) are structured from the perspective of the relationships between the female artists in the title roles and a potent male artist thereby minimising the potential feminist revisionism of the films (Pollock 1998: 26). The groundbreaking artist Artemisia Gentileschi is misrepresented in the eponymous film where her rape by a male painter is not mentioned and physical torture as a result of the ensuing court case is played down. Moreover, her successful career and motherhood are not included in the film. In other *films de patrimoine* the role of women is varied but tends towards the minimal and the stereotypical. *Indochine* (Jean-Jacques Annaud, 1991), *La Fille de D'Artagnan* and *La Reine Margot*

have female characters at the centre of the narrative and yet their position within the diegesis is determined by their relationship with a male character or by their precarious status within a wider network of power. In *Indochine* Catherine Deneuve's character and her relationship with her daughter is defined by their relationship with a mutual love interest while D'Artagnan's daughter is seen and acts in relation to her absent, famous father. *La Reine Margot* opens with Margot's politically motivated and loveless marriage to Henri de Navarre which accurately illustrates her position as a pawn in her family's corrupt dealings. In *Tous les matins du monde* (1992) the main female protagonist is essentially tragic, falling ill and finally committing suicide as a result of her rejection by the composer Marin Marais. In the process of adapting the novel for the screen the presence of female characters in *Jean de Florette* was heavily reduced. *Ridicule* and *Le Hussard sur le toit* do, however, have central female protagonists but they are also defined in relation to male protagonists. Where Mathilde is able to apply her scientific knowledge through her marriage to Ponceludon (that is, through the project of draining the Dombes), Pauline de Théus became an agency through her relationship with Angelo.

Despite this tendency to correlate success and happiness with romance, both characters are portrayed as a strong, independently-minded women. This is particularly true of Mathilde who also possesses great integrity. Her opposite in the film, Madame de Blayac, is an alluring and complex figure; her duplicity, cunning and beauty combine to inspire distaste and delight in equal measures. Indeed Madame de Blayac can be read as a representation of the pre-women's

movement woman in French society who is limited by financial dependence and the social conventions of her era. Madame de Blayac captures the French woman in a society on the brink of transition, depicting the narrow parameters of her social interaction as a thinking and acting being. Her life is defined primarily by the performance of conventional, objectified concepts of gender which are played out through her physically seductive appearance and the sexual economy she has created whereby her liaisons allow her to wield power in her milieu. She represents the *femme fatale* who becomes one because her sexuality is the only arena in which she can function as an agency.

Mathilde articulates a new form of femininity which is not anchored in sexuality alone. As an emblem of post-women's movement woman in France, Mathilde can be interpreted as a progressive character who has rejected the performance of gender and embraced and embodied the principles of sexual equality. Her aims are therefore wildly disparate to those of Madame de Blayac; she is educated and wishes to actively pursue her experimentation in the field of science. She is socially conscious and aware of the corruption associated with wealth and station. This does not, however, relegate her to the mode of representation seen in the 1980s in mainstream American cinema where the career-oriented independent woman was notably portrayed as monstrous, unstable, unfeminine in terms of physique and incapable of relating to other women (see Sigourney Weaver in *Working Girl* or Glenn Close in *Fatal Attraction* (Adrian Lyne, 1987)). Instead, Mathilde fuses the primary signs of femininity (that is, her beauty and her close relation to nature which marks her as feminine) with dynamism and agency. Unlike the characters in the two films

mentioned above, Mathilde is also ultimately successful in love.

3. Language as heritage feature

The sophisticated use of language is a central theme and metaphor in *Ridicule*. The social machinations of the aristocracy have engendered a specific use of language whereby it is no longer a method of communication but a means of humiliation. Thus language is equated with deceit, elitism and social myopia. This is clearly illustrated by another contrast constructed by the film: the use of sign language by the deaf mutes. The appearance by the deaf-mutes before an audience at Versailles highlights the emptiness and misuse of language in this particular context. Far from signalling ignorance as the audience initially believes, silence does not imply a lack of culture, knowledge or subtlety: responding to the question 'what does a violin sound like?', the deaf-mute refers to a painting by Watteau and the alternative delight provided by visual rather than verbal art.

Despite this emphasis on the negativity associated with language, the linguistic element also proves to be the central attraction in the film. It is paradoxical that ridicule, the very thing which Leconte and the screen writer, Rémi Waterhouse, strove to depict as a destructive force, also produces a certain pleasure. Language is presented as a potentially dangerous and hollow medium and yet the rich texture of the past is built up through speech as well as imagery. Thus, the opulence and excess commonly associated with the heritage film are manifest not only in the iconography of this film but also in the poetic, formal, archaic language of the court which is particularly valorised as it

is used in the scenes of high tension and dramatic development. This emphasis on language is very much in keeping with the characteristics of the heritage film and also the *film de patrimoine*: both forms of film-making affirm their cultural legitimacy through a reliance on written and visual culture. Therefore, emphasis is placed on the acts of reading and writing; it is usual to see characters in a heritage film/*film de patrimoine* seated at a desk composing or reading a letter. For example, Ponceludon is featured receiving a letter from Madame de Blayac in *Ridicule* and, as discussed in chapter 8, Pauline de Théus is seen adopting this emblematic position in *Le Hussard sur le toit* with the obligatory voice-over divulging the contents of her letter as is Angelo on many occasions. It is also common to include other cultural activities such as the playing of musical instruments (Lucy Honeychurch is shown playing the piano in *A Room with a View*, Marin Marais, Monsieur de Sainte Colombe and his daughters the viole de gambe in *Tous les matins du monde* and Bellegarde the harpsichord in *Ridicule*) or singing (Madeleine and Toinette de Sainte Colombe and Jean de Florette's wife). The *film de patrimoine*, however, appears to place more value on the use of language and there is frequent recourse to poetic meter and rhyme, primarily in the scenes of verbal sparring at court. This particular presentation of language in front of an audience adds to the theatricality of the film which is further enhanced by the use of Charles Berling in the role of Ponceludon, a renowned stage actor relatively unknown in France for his small body of screen work. The allusions to the theatre and the elevated deployment of language identify a strand of costume film-making in France which takes canonical French plays for the screen. Here one could cite *Cyrano de Bergerac*

as an obvious example along with many film versions of works by Molière such *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (1981) and *Les Fourberies de Scapin* (1980).

4. Aesthetics and Spatial Encoding

In considering *Ridicule* within the context of the heritage film, one must examine the factors which have influenced and/or shaped its aesthetics. This is a crucial issue to explore given that critique of the archetypal heritage film of the 1980s and early 1990s often connected aesthetics with the political and economic climate, contending that the heritage aesthetic was a physical manifestation of the materialistic drive and the return of Victorian values which characterised this period (see chapter two for a detailed discussion). Claire Monk has read against the standard critical grain, asserting that the often excessive mise-en-scène in the heritage film can be read as the outward expression of the characters' rich inner lives (Monk 1994). This claim, though an interesting observation, is perhaps difficult to corroborate in the light of the frequently distanced position of the camera vis-à-vis the characters and the marginalisation of the narrative through the moments of non-narrative motivated camera work, such as the slow, long tracking shots, which exhibit the period detail. This latter heritage characteristic is visible to a certain extent in *Ridicule*. There are several scenes which can be perceived as non-narrative-motivated heritage moments. In terms of static camera shots it can be said that the dancing lesson and the following long shot of Paul, the deaf-mute, dancing outside the Bellegarde's chateau in the twilight at the end of scene 25, the shot of Mathilde cutting roses from the bush at the beginning of scene 28 and the

slow track through trees to the right in scene 35 highlight the heritage setting and the pastoral element in the film rather than propelling the narrative forward. In terms of the tracking shots, Leconte employs this standard heritage camera movement on several occasions and, while it can be said that this is part of the distinctive visual texture of this film, at times it appears to place emphasis on the spaces utilised. For example, in scene 55, which features Madame de Blayac and Ponceludon in de Blayac's kitchen, the camera tracks slowly from right to left where the characters are seated at the far end of a table. The camera moves across the table from the right allowing the eye to appreciate the evocative atmosphere provided by candle-light and the visual sumptuousness supplied by the objects on the table. Given that this is a highly structured, oppositional film we see a reverse of this shot in scene 35: as mentioned above there is a long tracking shot to the right through trees in this scene where Mathilde and Ponceludon walk down to the pond to swim. This camera movement is not motivated by the movement of the characters - they remain out of the frame for some moments until the camera tracks far enough to the right to capture them entering the shot. This tracking shot has the effect of visually reinforcing the pastoral setting but again is not strictly motivated by the narrative.

Again it can be said that there is a tension in *Ridicule*, this time created by the collision between such heritage moments and the meaning imparted through the highly formalised structure of the film. It is indeed difficult to attribute narrative meaning to the shots mentioned above in that their inclusion in the film is not explicitly related to the progression of the story. They do,

however, visually underline the spatial and character-based oppositions thereby clarifying the polarities. For example, the tracking shot in the woods which occurs at the beginning of scene 35 marks a distinct visual break from the tone, setting and tension of the preceding scene where Ponceludon engages Madame de Blayac and the Abbé de Vilecourt in public verbal conflict for the first time. This earlier scene is characterised by fast cutting, close-ups, shot countershots between the two factions and finally mobile camera work as Madame de Blayac escapes, building up a sense of suspense within the arena of the court. In scene 34 Ponceludon and Bellegarde are pitched against Madame de Blayac and Abbé de Vilecourt and the two pairs are positioned on opposing sides of the shot surrounded by the circle of indistinct but nonetheless immaculately dressed heritage extras at the outer edges of the frame. This spatial arrangement, in combination with the editing and low key lighting, is at once indicative of the painterly composition of Leconte's film and of the narrative signification he builds up through the physical placement of his characters. The tracking shot which immediately follows this scene marks a shift in mode and context, underscoring the division between the two worlds. It can be said, therefore, that the aesthetics are not solely driven by a desire to showcase the physical signs of the past. In *Ridicule* meaning is generated by the narrative, by the juxtaposition of spaces, by the encoded spaces associated with various characters and the preferred film language.

5. The past

5.1. As a narrative backdrop

One of the major differences which can be discerned between the British heritage film and the *film de patrimoine* is the representation, or indeed inclusion of, history. With the exception of *Chariots of Fire* and more recently *Elizabeth*, the British costume dramas/period films do not tend to deal with historical figures or specific historical periods. Heritage films are usually tightly focused on a middle-class group within their immediate physical and social setting, hence largely overlooking real historical events or broader social context. While *Ridicule* is not an overtly historical film nor a biographical film in the vein of *Danton* (Andrzej Wajda, 1982), it does not follow the pattern of the British heritage film. History is not foregrounded as it is in *La Reine Margot* for example but it is nonetheless present; the Revolution looms in the future of the film, a historical inevitability of which the audience is well aware. It is alluded to by Bellegarde in his exile at the end of the film and also by the intertitle preceding the credits. In addition, society outside this privileged environment is represented by the scenes which take place in the Dombes and by characters such as Ponceludon and the Baron de Guéret who can be seen as emissaries from the disintegrating society beyond Versailles. These two introduce elements of social reality into both the space of the court and also into the narrative; Ponceludon provides information about the terrible standard of living of lower social classes in his region and the Baron illustrates the impoverishment and hardship of his own social milieu.

5.2. The Allegorical use of the past

Andrew Higson has commented that the past in the heritage film can be regarded as a space in which contemporary concerns are expressed (see chapter two). In considering this hypothesis with reference to *Ridicule* one could suggest that the main questions raised by the film can be directly related to modern day France. The idea of ridicule encapsulates corruption, elitism and the abuse of power; it designates a system of undemocratic social practice. The workings of this system are clearly illustrated by the characters of Ponceludon and the Baron de Guéret. Both enter this world in order to fulfil their aims and in the process they suffer ostracism and humiliation. While the Baron cannot eventually tolerate the ritual public denigration, Ponceludon realises the futility of his aims in Paris and returns to the Dombes. Paris and the court have demanded significant personal and moral compromises, culminating in the duel (scene 65) and the death of the cavalry officer. The rejection of these two characters at court can be interpreted as a commentary on the divide that persists between Paris and the provinces whereby power is concentrated in the centre to the detriment of the periphery. The contemporary equivalent of Versailles is the political world based in Paris. The malaria afflicting Ponceludon's region can be read as the physical manifestation of the periphery's social exclusion maintained by the centre. As a cautionary tale about the danger and yet hollowness to be found in rhetoric, *Ridicule* is able to point out the consequences of this imbalance in power - the Revolution - without visually representing it. The past therefore acts as a historical warning,

outlining a trajectory which has allegorical implications for an equally divided modern day France.

¹ 1986 *Jean de Florette*, *Manon des Sources* and *Le Nom de la Rose*
1987 *Sous le soleil de Satan*
1988 *Camille Claudel*
1989 *Valmont*
1990 *La Gloire de Mon Père*, *Le Château de Ma Mère*, *Uranus* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*
1991 *Madame Bovary*, *Tous les matins du monde* and *Van Gogh*
1992 *Indochine*, *L'Amant*
1993 *Germinal*, *L'Odeur de la papaye verte*,
1994 *Le Colonel Chabert*, *La Fille de D'Artagnan*, *Farinelli* and *La Reine Margot*
1995 *Le Hussard sur le toit*
1996 *Beaumarchais L'insolent*, *Ridicule*
1997 *Le Bossu* (the sixth adaptation of this novel), *Un amour de sorcière*
1998 *Lautrec*
Don Juan and *Molière* are in production.

² A lengthy close-up of Marin Marais (Gérard Depardieu) opens *Tous les matins du monde*, presenting a grotesque image of his pale, powdered face topped by an enormous wig with the suggestion of an opulent background at the very edges of the shot. The off-screen voices and diegetic music (that of the court orchestra which Marais is conducting) confirm Marais' prominent position in the court. Monsieur de Sainte Colombe, however, dresses in the fashion of an ascetic, his simple black and white attire resembling that of a member of a strict religious order. In a later scene where visitors from the King request de Sainte Colombe's presence at the court this contrast between decadence, artifice and the purity of plain living is again highlighted not only by the clothes of the characters but also their oppositional position within the shots, with de Sainte Colombe occupying the extreme left of the shot and the King's emissaries the right. Moreover, the suicide of Madeleine de Sainte Colombe as a result of her brutal abandonment by Marin Marais after he is enticed by the opulence of the court echoes that of Baron de Guéret in *Ridicule*, suggesting the emotional bankruptcy of this environment.

³ For discussions of Deneuve and Moreau see 'Catherine Deneuve and French womanhood' by Ginette Vincendeau in P. Cook and P. Dodd (ed) *Women and Film: A Sight and Sound Reader* London: Scarlet Press, and Vincendeau's article on Jeanne Moreau in *Sight and Sound* December 1998.

Chapter Eight: Textual Analysis: *Le Hussard sur le toit*

Of the three films analysed in depth in this thesis *Le Hussard sur le toit* is the most overt example of film-making which is markedly and intentionally French in content and style. The production team responsible for *Le Hussard sur le toit* had a pointedly national agenda in terms of scale of production, circulation and distribution and also in the construction of a particular image of France for domestic and international exhibition. This agenda appears to have been primarily shaped by the French film market's relationship with the global referent of Hollywood. In response to the domination of the latter in the French film market, Jean-Paul Rappeneau and producer René Cleitmann conceived of *Le Hussard sur le toit* as a superproduction which would function as a form of both defence and promotion of national cinema. The citation below outlines the characteristics of *Le Hussard sur le toit*, indicating the scope and costs involved:

...le voici sur nos écrans (300, dans toute la France), le film événement le plus cher de l'histoire du cinéma français (176 millions de francs), le défi relancé par Hachette à la production mondiale, la preuve que nous savons rivaliser avec Hollywood, et réussir de vraies superproductions où l'on n'hésite pas à peindre en doré le blé trop vert, où l'on reconstitue 15,000 mètres carrés de toits provençaux avec des briques spécialement fabriquées pour la circonstance, où l'on crée une centaine de décors, dans quelque 45 lieux de tournage dont le choix a exigé 70,000 kilomètres de repérage, et un millier de costumes, pour une centaine de comédiens.¹

This citation underlines two facets of the high budget *film de patrimoine*. Firstly it highlights the way in which the concept underpinning the film (that is, one of considerable attractions in the form of size and cost) functions as an indirect marketing device, establishing itself through the intentional circulation of a particular image in the media. Secondly, the citation illustrates the classic

feature of a high budget *film de patrimoine* where prominence is not only granted to the number of locations and actors used for filming and the number of screens used for exhibition, but also, importantly for the argument developed in this thesis, to the willingness to re-create the past from a contemporary perspective. Thus, the tendency to artificially enhance the natural and built environment in order to conform to a picture postcard version of Provence illustrated by the production of special roof tiles for the scenes in Manosque and the painting of the wheat (see citation). I will be addressing these two areas of inquiry in this chapter, examining the industrial and promotional discourses supporting the film and the ideas of France and Frenchness on which these discourses draw. I will also explore the contradictory levels of imagery in the film and the relationship between imagery and narrative. Although visual perfection is sought in the re-creation of Provence, resulting in a series of beautiful tableaux, this imagery of nostalgic reflection sits alongside dark, graphic visions of disease and death. It is therefore necessary to investigate the interaction of these two layers of iconography, asking whether one can speak of a heritage tension whereby the patrimonialisation and prettification of the regional space ultimately override the multi-generic narrative.

1. Heritage encoding

1.1. The Provençal landscape and the narrative/aesthetic tension

In chapter one I discussed the tendency to patrimonialise space. The representation of Provence provides a striking example of this process in relation to the national space. The importance attributed to this particular

regional space is underlined by the considerable screen time it is accorded and the way in which it is constructed and depicted. Through the many wide-angle shots of various Provençal panoramas which punctuate the film, Rappeneau creates an impressionistic and sensual picture of Provence; his especially atmospheric use of light and mist transform the physical space into a dreamscape. This is clearly illustrated by the establishing sequence which accompanies the opening credits. In this sequence there are three virtually static shots - a long distance shot of undulating countryside against a blue-black sky and moon, a long distance shot of a rocky landscape and a green valley set against a grey sky and finally a long shot of the horizon at dawn which is coloured by a purple filter. Together the shots depict the landscape at daybreak in a highly romanticised and epic manner, building an image of the space using very broad strokes that is, using predominantly outlines, scale and intense blocks of colour and darkness. The scale is significant here: in this sequence as in many subsequent scenes the sheer expanse and scale of the landscape dwarfs the characters. One could argue that this imbalance in composition suggests an opposition between human existence and nature whereby individuals are ephemeral and geography/physical space signify permanence and solidity.

The preference for diffuse lighting and the occasional use of a colour filter adds an element of romanticism and unreality, emphasising Rappeneau's tendency to stylise rather than depict in a naturalistic manner. This dream-like, hyperreal representation of Provence is further heightened by the preferred times of day for filming and the use of mist which lends a magical, fairy tale quality to certain scenes. Apart from the few sections where direct sunlight is

used (on the rooftops in Manosque, when Pauline and Angelo use the sun to charge the dragons at the river, at the Italian hill encampment and in the final sequence at Théus) much of the protagonists' movement in Provence takes place at dawn and twilight. The effect of the mist is exemplified by Angelo and the nanny's view of Manosque when they reach the outskirts of the hilltop town; the camera zooms into the distance through the trees to reveal the town enveloped in mist which, in the fashion of a fairy-tale, contributes to the representation of Manosque as a site of beauty and nostalgic longing.

Rappeneau's construction of Provence is further distanced from a realistic representation by his mediated view of the region which is largely informed by pictorial art. This is particularly evident in the shots which recreate paintings by Géricault, Millet, Casper Friedrich David, Cézanne, Van Gogh and Vermeer.² Rappeneau assembles filmic tableaux of regional life which simultaneously add cultural weight to the film and fix Provence as a recognised site of national artistic imagination and tradition. The festival scenes in Aix-en-Provence also have a pictorial quality in terms of composition and mood; the costumes, setting, lighting and atmosphere of energy and movement are reminiscent of paintings by Lautrec and Renoir. While references to high culture are common in heritage productions, *Le Hussard sur le toit* takes this particular characteristic to extremes, using pictorial art not only for cultural validation via an intertextual connection but also as the basis for its aesthetic. Given this pictorial dimension there is certainly a tension between the narrative and the aesthetics. In a British heritage film this tension is present but not as visible due to the pace and narrative focus: the slow pace of the narrative and tendency to concentrate on a particular fixed social milieu means that the lingering shots of

the mise-en-scène do not jar as brutally as they do in *Le Hussard sur le toit*. Rappeneau's film centres on the narrative of flight and thus there is a greater contrast between physical movement and the slow, virtually static images of the landscape. The narrative flow is often suspended to maximise the spectator's visual appreciation of the beautifully composed shots of Provence and the surface of the past thereby reinforcing the notion that the film's economy is essentially visual.

1.2. Aix-en-Provence

Aix-en-Provence appears at the beginning and towards the very end of the film, marking the start of Angelo's odyssey across Provence and then the return to normality after the cholera epidemic has abated. The representation of the town is important in that it bears the hallmark of heritage film-making. This can be seen in the camera work and also the sites and events chosen for display. The opening sequence shows people in costumes carrying lanterns running through a back street on their way to a festival (suggested by the fireworks and the background diegetic music). The high angle shot and night-time shooting result in a very atmospheric and painterly image; the coloured lanterns and movement of the people create a composition reminiscent of an Impressionist painting. This is followed by a medium shot of a woman (Carla) dressed in white with a fan in one hand standing by a balustrade, watching fireworks. The costume, the fan, the sound of cicadas and the implied heat (denoted by the fact that she is outside at night) build up another layer of atmosphere, this time one which is specifically and stereotypically Mediterranean. The heritage factor is heightened by the depiction of the street festival where large numbers of

people in period dress are seen dancing in a square and milling around stalls. This setting brings together two key events in heritage cinema - the ball and the market - in a distinctly French setting, namely, a square complete with plane trees and a fountain. This location acts as an establishing shot for Aix as a site of French culture; filmed at first from a distance in wide angle to encompass the richly detailed and well populated *mise-en-scène*, the camera then narrows its focus on the characters fleeing through the crowds and then pulls away again to end the scene with the broader picture.

Despite the thriller element which undercuts the festival scenes and necessitates Angelo's hasty departure, Aix is presented in a positive light, fixing it as a site of civilised Southern living through Rappeneau's recourse to a well-established code of representation. Hence, we are given the standard spatial co-ordinates (the square and the fountain mentioned above, the sanitised cobbled backstreets), cultural points of reference (classical music, dancing, the arts festival which still takes place in Aix every summer) and climatic data which build up into a composite of Provence. The space itself has been sanitised and prettified; even the backstreets of Aix seen when Pauline attempts to piece together Angelo's life are quaint and clean and physically enhanced by a small stretch of river and a bridge. In this way Rappeneau can be said to present Aix in terms of its permanence and civilisation, defining it as the locus of a society which will persist in spite of change. While the rural areas are characterised by anarchy and death and point to the transitory nature of individual life, Aix suggests the idea of the permanence transmitted through social structures. Hence, the action shifts back to Aix once the cholera has abated and society has resumed its usual patterns. This inevitable return to established modes of

social interaction is indicated by Pauline's presence at a ball/dinner where she is seen in full evening dress in a function room heavily endowed with period detail. As she walks through the room, past fellow dinners and the small band, the music fades out and the film is slowed down, implying that Pauline senses the timelessness and immutability of this setting after the upheaval and excitement of the cholera epidemic. The epidemic seems like a dream, an aberration given the fluidity with which social rituals are resumed.

1.3. The country house and the castle

In contrast to the majority of costume dramas, *Le Hussard sur le toit* is a film characterised by high levels of movement. In the case of British heritage films the narrative is built around a certain social milieu and the spaces they occupy, notably the country house. Pauline and Angelo are figures of movement within the film but they do encounter several country house settings which reinforce the idea of patrimonialisation of space through recourse to a specific social setting. Thus Rappeneau provides many instances where he fetishises the imposing residences of the bourgeoisie and landed-classes most notably in his depiction of the three houses Angelo and Pauline encounter and make use of on their journey and the castle where the journey ends.

Rappeneau chooses to portray the interiors and exteriors which can be classified as examples of *patrimoine* using low level or diffuse light. This stylistic choice lends the film authenticity - the use of candle-light in interiors would be the genuine method of lighting for this period - but it also has the effect of transforming these locations into sites of romanticised beauty. For example, in Pauline's aunt's house in Manosque we are given a shadowy

glimpse of the interior of a well-appointed period house filled with portraits, china, glassware and furniture. The candle-light not only emphasises Binoche's ethereal beauty but also creates an atmosphere of veneration and mystique around the setting. In terms of exteriors, the house the nanny returns to is the first example of the French country house. This three storey house is situated behind a high wall and gates. The wide path leading to the house is planted on both sides with small sculpted hedges. This is the extent of the detail we glean given that this scene is filmed at night fall and the camera remains outside the gates. Pauline visits a second country house which is filmed under similar conditions. The grand house of Monsieur Peyrolle is initially seen at a distance, enveloped with mist at ground level. Pauline is seen in silhouette, from behind, as she walks along the path towards the house. The scene casts Pauline as an almost ethereal presence given the mist and the darkness which renders the detail in the garden indistinct. The camera moves forward past Pauline around to the left of the house stopping at an open window which is flanked by acacia plants. This initial movement around and then into the house is reminiscent of the opening scene of *Howards End* where we see Vanessa Redgrave's character walking around the garden at twilight before going inside the brightly lit house. In both cases, as is discussed at length in the chapter on *Ridicule*, the associative setting for women is often the natural world, upholding the common circulated image of femininity which is predicated on notions of the nurturing woman as opposed to artifice and culture exemplified by the *femme fatale* in film noir (see chapter seven where Janey Place's analysis of the woman in film noir is examined). There is another possible reading of femininity offered by this connection with the natural world. In many costume dramas

such as the Jane Austen adaptations of the 1990s, the narrow confines of a woman's life are physically expressed through her associative *mise-en-scène*, namely, the interior, domestic sphere. The outside world, particularly the natural world which is a largely male inhabited space, represents female repression and desire for freedom. It is telling that moments of significant interaction between male and female characters take place outside. Therefore, the association of women with the non-domestic space can also be interpreted as a modern projection of femininity which connotes woman as agent and thinking subject. While the English country house is surrounded by long grass and roses, M. Peyrolle's house bears the marks of a Provençal moneyed residence - its yellow plaster façade, the lush greenery in the garden, the acacia blossom and the heavily furnished interiors. Reinforcing the impression of wealth and class already suggested by the house and the glimpse of domestic staff, the assembled company are heard discussing Hugo and poetry.

The château of Théus provides another example of architectural solidity and permanence, as well as visual beauty, amidst the turmoil caused by the cholera. Firstly, even before the castle is revealed on screen, the countryside around it suggests a certain continuity and detachment from the events which have caused Pauline's flight across Provence; this region has been untouched by the cholera. The painterly shots of the workers making hay and generally working in the fields impart a sense of immunity from change.³ Moreover, we are made aware of the season in these shots; it is autumn and this again implies the unbroken cycle of nature in contrast to the rupture and disorder occurring elsewhere. The castle then appears set against the snowy Alps and is reminiscent of Neuschwanstein in Bavaria. It suddenly comes into shot to the

left of the screen from behind a set of trees and its size and grandeur are emphasised by Pauline and Angelo's dishevelled appearance, lowly mode of transport (a cart) and especially by Pauline's point of view (she is lying in the cart). The feeling of wide-eyed admiration is transmitted through Pauline whose arrival at the castle is a replay of the circumstances of her initial entry into the aristocratic world represented by Théus; through her act of charity as a young girl (nursing an unknown injured man who eventually reveals himself as a Marquis) Pauline was elevated from country girl to Marquise as a reward for her efforts, lending the narrative and the setting a fairy tale quality. This quality is further reinforced by the appearance of the Marquis, the absent and therefore mysterious figure for the majority of the film. Riding out of the mist enveloping the castle and the general vista, the Marquis gradually comes into focus and as he does so the film is slowed down and the soundtrack is pared down to the point where only the sound of the hooves and the breathing of the horse are audible. This visual fixing of the Marquis and the tuning out of peripheral sound increases the impact of his presence on the scene.

The final scene of the film also takes place at the castle and again underlines the way in which this locus can be read as a sign of the uninterrupted progression of time. As Pauline reads Angelo's letter and walks towards the edge of the castle gardens there is a sequence where a long distance shot of Pauline seen from behind looking out at the mountains is followed by a close-up of Pauline where her face is positioned to the right of the screen and the castle to the left and finally followed by the long shot again. This sequence brings together the stereotypical elements which constitute an idea of Frenchness: the human element (the gracefulness of Pauline who

encapsulates both beauty and intellectual prowess)⁴, the natural element (the magnificence of the landscape) and the built element (the enduring image of the solid French château). It also provides a neat final image for the film: the opening shot of the woman at the balustrade in high summer watching the fireworks is mirrored here with a closing shot of Pauline adopting a similar position in a similarly nationally coded place. In the final sequence, however, it is a very different Provence on display - the heat and street-cased activity associated with Mediterranean life-styles has been replaced by an Alpine setting, perhaps indicating the varied faces of Provence as discussed above.

1.4. Heritage stars and secondary characterisation

The casting of the virtually unknown Olivier Martinez in the role of Angelo may seem surprising for a production seeking to project itself as a defender of national cinema; despite his resemblance to the infinitely more bankable Vincent Perez who appeared in *La Reine Margot* and latterly in *Le Bossu* Martinez is in no way positioned to lend the film star quality. The presence of Juliette Binoche and a number of recognised actors in secondary roles counterbalances this deficit of stardom in the male lead. Binoche is a key player in this particular construction of the *film de patrimoine* given her status in French cinema and, to a limited extent, in English-language cinema (*The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (Philip Kaufman, 1987), *Damage* (Louis Malle, 1992) and *Wuthering Heights* (Peter Kosminsky, 1992)). The non-French market would recognise Binoche from her appearance in important French films of the last two decades including Kieslowski's *Three Colours Blue* (1993) for which she received the Volpi Cup for best actress at the Venice film festival in 1993 and a César for best actress at the

1994 awards ceremony, Carax's *Les Amants du Pont Neuf* (1991) and *Mauvais Sang* (1986) and Godard's *Je vous salue, Marie* (1985). Moreover, Binoche has an extracinematic presence thanks to her endorsement of Lancôme beauty products. This extracinematic dimension is illustrated quite clearly by the director: in response to the question of why he had chosen Binoche for the role of Pauline, Rappeneau seemed to be talking about her adverts for Lancôme rather than her acting skills, stating that 'Her unique profile, the luminosity of her face, her camellia-hued skin, move me more than anything else' (Press Dossier for *Le Hussard sur le toit* 1995: 11). There is certainly an element of overlap between the promotional material for *Le Hussard sur le toit* and Lancôme: both the Lancôme campaign for the perfume Poème launched in 1995 and the stills from the film depict a glowing Binoche positioned face-on at the centre of the shot engaging the onlooker in direct eye contact.⁵ Indeed, Binoche's face is treated to Rappeneau's fetishising camera work which in this film is predominantly reserved for the fixing of the Provençal landscape as a site of the nation's *patrimoine* and nostalgia. Rappeneau, however, is merely following a precedent of representation set by directors of Binoche's earlier films. The emphasis on Binoche's face is a recurrent feature of the actress' work; as Ginette Vincendeau comments, 'rarely has an actress's face been so overtly reified' (Vincendeau 1993: 24). Thus, in representing Binoche the camera speed is sometimes reduced or the camera simply lingers on her face foregrounding the idea of her beauty. This can be seen at various points throughout the film, notably in three scenes which are marked by this accent on Binoche's radiant face. Firstly, Pauline is seen searching for Angelo's home in Aix and pauses with an upturned face on the bridge to gaze up at his window. Secondly, Pauline is filmed in a slow

motion close-up in Aix at the end of film walking through a party. Thirdly, a rosy-faced Pauline is seen walking in the grounds of the castle of Théus in the closing sequence.

In analysing the construction of stars one must consider the signs of performance (Dyer 1994). In the case of Binoche in *Le Hussard sur le toit* one could argue that her facial expression and the ambiguity it imparts constitute her primary performance sign given that Rappeneau's camera work largely concentrates on this physical aspect. Binoche's inscrutability as expressed through her face is a recurrent feature of her performance, creating through repetition a suggestion of her coolness and her deep inner life which cannot be articulated. In *Le Hussard sur le toit* as in her other films the personal history of her characters is skeletal and her narrative is determined by absences such as the absent Marquis de Théus or the dead child and husband in *Three Colours: Blue*. The impression of Binoche's rich but unknown inner life is further accented by the sparse dialogue she is usually given in films. In *Le Hussard sur le toit* Pauline provides an outline of the events which lead to her marriage but little about her feelings on this subject. Similarly, in *Three Colours: Blue* Binoche's character Julie cannot discuss the death of her child and husband and her mourning finds expression in her self-imposed isolation. Binoche's face is also the lasting visual impression we take away from her films; in Carax's *Les Amants du Pont Neuf* it is the image of Binoche with an eye patch and in *Three Colours: Blue* it is the blank expression belying enormous suffering. There is also another dimension added to Binoche's representation in *Le Hussard*. In several scenes she is seen in close-up dressed in blue and white lending a religious, virginal facet to her character. This illustrates her complex identity as a star which is

composed of various clashing elements such as sensuality and intellectual abstraction.

In terms of the discourses which enable Binoche to lend *Le Hussard sur le toit* the guarantee of cultural quality, one can argue that her most prominent international roles have linked her to high culture not only through the art-house status of the films themselves abroad but also through the professions she has exercised within the diegeses. She has played a photographer in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, an artist in *Les Amants du Pont Neuf* and an unrecognised composer in *Three Colours: Blue* (Vincendeau 1993b: 24). Binoche's star image is predicated on high cultural affiliations through her work and her performance style which combines intelligence, beauty, sensuality, detachment and a taste for danger. This style differentiates her from other nationally coded and internationally recognised French actresses such as Catherine Deneuve or Brigitte Bardot. While Deneuve and Binoche have both appeared in auteur films and subsumed a spirit of independence into their characters, reflecting the influence of feminism, Binoche is the physical antithesis of the blond Deneuve and Bardot and her private life does not feed her star persona as is the case for the two older actresses. Deneuve and Bardot are positioned at the extremes of the spectrum of female representation with the former encoded as frigid and glamorous and the latter as playful and sexy (Vincendeau n.d.). Binoche's characters, however, have displayed controlled sexuality in that the sexual act in her films has been determined primarily by their desire and objectives rather than those of the male protagonists. She has often been the object of desire but she has neither been

immediately attainable nor fully comprehended by those who desire her, given the scant information commonly given about her characters' lives.

Unlike Deneuve, the air of emotional detachment and mystery in Binoche's characters is not indicative of *froidueur* or aloofness but rather a sign of her performance; her non-verbality belies a rich unexpressed inner life which often finds its outlet in the *mise-en-scène* or in the artistic and physical activities in which she engages. *Three Colours: Blue* exemplifies the former and *Les Amants du Pont-Neuf* the latter where we find Binoche's character Michèle painting and water-skiing amongst other things. Hence, Binoche is not a sexualised star with whom an audience can easily or quickly engage. Her characters have tended to be multifaceted women driven by complex desires. In her earlier films her characters were not shaped by the romantic narratives alone but rather by other external forces such as personal tragedy and affliction lending them a multidimensionality which differentiates Binoche from other leading female stars. While Pauline de Théis is not the most challenging role in Binoche's career she is nonetheless a thinking character who reflects on her immediate and also wider social context, assessing the impact of cholera on her society and the superficiality of her milieu who appear to be unaffected by the decimation it has wrought. In a style in keeping with Binoche's tendency to internalise rather than externalise her emotions this information is imparted in a voice-over as we see Pauline socialising in Aix, suggesting her customary alienation from her surroundings.

In terms of the representation of femininity and a gendered economy of movement in *Le Hussard sur le toit*, Pauline de Théis is depicted as an independently spirited woman, choosing to brave the unknown in the search for

her husband at the start of the film. For the large central section of the film where Pauline is engaged in her search, she is, like Mathilde, an active character. Unfortunately this activity is presented as an exceptional phase in her otherwise static life, as suggested by the way in which this central section is positioned between periods of waiting. The economy of movement of her life is determined primarily by the males; when, in the last scene, Angelo eventually sends a letter to ask her to join him the voice-over informs us that the Marquis' acknowledgement that he 'would have to let her go'. Thus she moves between two men, elevated from a middle-class existence into wealth by the Marquis as a result of her very female acts of nurturing and then it is presumed that Angelo will propel her out of stability and boredom into adventure. It is in this projected new life where she will go beyond the parameters of conventional female social roles and engage in dynamic activity.

The heritage quality is also assured by the secondary characters who appear briefly in the film. These characters are not only important in their functions as regional stereotypes but also in terms of the quota of star quality they impart. The three male characters are played by François Cluzet, Gérard Depardieu and Jean Yanne who respectively play a conscientious village doctor, a local magistrate and a cunning peasant. While their diegetic roles are important in assisting Angelo and thereby propelling the narrative forward and also providing local colour through their stereotypical characterisation, they also serve extradiegetic purpose, lending their prominence as national actors and, in Depardieu's case, international actors to the film. In addition, Depardieu's fleeting presence signals the dimension of heritage intertextuality at work in *Le Hussard sur le toit*; through his notoriety for *Jean de Florette*, *Cyrano de*

Bergerac, *Tous les Matins du Monde* and *Le Colonel Chabert* and his more general position as a national star Depardieu helps to establish *Le Hussard sur le toit*'s generic status. Via Depardieu and the other forms of intertextuality discussed elsewhere in this chapter, the film thus defines itself in relation to its forerunners, building on the reputation and the success of earlier high profile *films de patrimoine*.

In terms of characterisation, there is a distinct hierarchy of representation. Binoche and, to a lesser extent, Martinez occupy the most important position followed by the three male secondary characters and finally the huge number of extras. In contrast to the focused representation of Binoche who projects a distinct set of meanings through her individual star persona, the extras can be regarded as purely background elements in Rappeneau's painterly composition, used to populate the tableaux of Provençal life. As in *Jean de Florette* and *Ridicule*, there are faceless and nameless workers who denote the rural community through their numbers rather than their individual identity. They are mainly depicted en masse, for example, at the meal at the inn where Angelo first seeks Magionnari, in Manosque where the frenzied mob try to lynch Angelo, in the quarantine scenes and in the fields working throughout the film. Those seen individually are largely cholera victims Angelo tries to help and their presence is therefore determined by Angelo's agency rather than the intention to flesh out the sketchy representation of the rural population. Indeed, the agricultural community seen at the start of the film as Angelo begins his search for Maggionari can be regarded as indicative of a living tableau; their walk to the fields at dawn down a path covered by a low canopy of leaves is heavily romanticised by the use of coloured filters and the diffused light coming through

the trees from above which renders the scene highly nostalgic and dream-like. This shot is followed by the movement of the workers from the left to the right of the screen set against a purple sky.⁶ The workers are virtually in silhouette given the low key and they are disembodied by the camera which is positioned at head height thereby only showing their head and shoulders and the work implements they are carrying. This combination of elements reinforces their presence as markers for a working community rather than individuals. Indeed the focus is then pulled past them to rest on the left side of the shot where it lingers on the horizon, suggesting their smallness in relation to the larger physical setting.

The activities the workers are engaged in are also indicative of an idealised notion of agricultural work. They are depicted making hay and drawing water. Their work is sanitised and mediated through pictorial references thereby removing the element of hard labour. This is achieved by showing their activities from a distance rather than through a detailed engagement with their work. Only when the male workers stop to drink from straw covered bottles do we see them in a group close-up. This detachment and style of group representation is retained throughout and is illustrated by the scene at the inn where Angelo searches for Maggionari. When the first female victim succumbs to the cholera the diners are seen rushing, with their backs to the camera, towards the action located at some distance from our main point of focus, Angelo.

In representing a varied selection of groups from different social classes, *Le Hussard sur le toit* diverges from the British heritage film. Despite the very broad strokes Rappeneau uses to paint his background characters, the rural

community, the landed classes and the bourgeoisie are depicted. Moreover, the state of emergency in the region eliminates any nuances in comportment or attitude as all classes are gripped by hysteria and paranoia. This can be seen in the lynching scenes in Manosque and the dinner party which Pauline joins in order to find her husband: in both instances the outsiders (Pauline and Angelo) cause panic given the fear of contamination which they bring. In keeping with the style of representation it is not surprising that the reactions of the inhabitants of Manosque are expressed en masse, through the gathering of large numbers on the streets. In contrast, the reactions of the bourgeoisie find their expression around the dinner table at a dinner party where we see an element of French farce introduced into the film: the initial awe at Pauline's aristocratic presence is suddenly replaced by fear when she reveals where she has come from. This admission leads to the spurt of frenzied movement in the house and high emotions typical of comedy: the maid rushes out to find Monsieur Peyrolle, Angelo bursts in on the proceedings causing the already cowering diners to flee from the room, Peyrolle then rushes in, admits his attachment to Pauline, shoos away the maid who enters the room running, with a pan of burning coals held aloft, followed by the entrance of a large number of police. This scene ends with Pauline and Angelo leaving via the window to continue their adventure elsewhere.

2. Genre, movement and stasis

In film theory the classification of genres has traditionally been informed by a gendered divide. Genres such as the Western or the thriller are typified as male due to their characteristics of movement, agency and dynamism (Pidduck

1997: 179). The male genres are often centred on the journey of the protagonist whereby he travels in and across open space. The male protagonist's freedom to engage in movement has been interpreted as the opportunity to experience transformation (Pidduck 1997: 18). By contrast, the costume drama and the film melodrama are considered to be female genres because they are marked by stasis, and an attention to gesture and interior space (Pidduck 1997). These features create a sense of claustrophobia and atemporality. Given their immobility the female characters do not experience change and can be seen predominantly as 'landmarks and diversions in the all-important, hopelessly self-involved journey of Our Hero' (Pidduck 1997: 181).

Le Hussard sur le toit does not fit comfortably into one gendered narrative economy but rather draws on both stasis and movement incorporating the adventurous journey and the romantic melodrama. It can be said that the distinction between woman as stasis and man as agency is blurred by the interaction of Angelo and Pauline. While he is clearly a mobile character, Angelo's agency is shaped by external forces rather than his own itinerary or direction. On a general level his journey is determined by his desire to prove himself to be a spontaneous, wild and capable man in the eyes of his mother. On the level of the particular journey followed in the film the necessity of flight is triggered by the arrival of the group of rebel Italians and then by his passion for Pauline. Up until their arrival there is a sense that Angelo had settled in Aix: at the start of the film we see Angelo and his compatriot, separately, seated at a table engaged in writing, a key heritage activity which signals their education and social status. With the disruption injected by the characters from the Italian/Austrian sub-plot (that is, the thriller which revolves around liberating

Italy from the grip of Austria) their stasis is forcefully broken and Angelo's journey begins. His journey is initially defined by his search for his friend, Maggionari. Once Maggionari is exposed as an informer Angelo's specific political/personal impetus is lost and it is replaced by his desire to accompany Pauline to Théus. Once this has been accomplished Angelo then exits the film and his movement, which is suggested by his lack of communication with Pauline, is resumed again towards an unknown destination. Thus Angelo's narrative economy is clearly one of movement but it is one which is determined by others. Facilitators of Angelo's journey are chronologically the Italian rebels, Maggionari, the country doctor, the nanny and Pauline. All of these characters require Angelo to move on either through the threat they pose or the help they enlist.

The character of Pauline undergoes a circular journey in the course of the film. She is in a position of stasis, prolonged waiting and of limited knowledge both in Manosque and Théus as she waits for her husband in the former and Angelo in the latter. Her initiative to find her husband and her subsequent movement between these two points stands in stark contrast to the condition of other women in the film. While she comes to depend on Angelo's help in order to reach her objective, Pauline appears to be independent, determined and willing to confront the various obstacles on her path (for example, quarantine and waiting to obtain a pass). The main secondary female character, the nanny, also benefits from Angelo's assistance but is far from realistic, experiencing life through the mediated and romanticised perspective of literature. Binoche's physical opposite, the blond, childlike nanny is associated with the domestic sphere as are the women gathered at the

Peyrolles' dinner party who incarnate one major stereotype of female representation, the hysteric. Pauline transgresses the gendered divide and, although she returns to stasis in Théus, there is a suggestion that her dynamism will be regained. This is not only implied by the letter she receives from Angelo and the voice-over which reveals her husband's decision to allow her to leave but also from the position she adopts in the final shot. Here Pauline mirrors Carla, the wife of the Italian freedom fighter seen in Aix, in the opening sequence; Carla's momentary immobility as she surveys the view before her is swiftly followed by a bout of intense action triggered by Angelo (rushing to Angelo in order to urge him to leave Aix). Similarly, one could contend that Pauline will be reinvigorated by her involvement with Angelo which will permit her to move away from fixity. The movement of the female characters both in this film and in *Ridicule* is indicative of a new form of femininity which is articulated in several recent heritage films.

Location can also be said to articulate ideas of mobility. Aix, as discussed above, is equated with stasis and permanence given that this is the location which marks the state of stability prior to the point of rupture and then reinstatement of the status quo at the end of the film. The castle of Théus is another site which suggests continuity and inertia in the manner of a country house in a heritage film. On a personal level it appears to underline Pauline's emotional stagnation and physical confines: on receiving Angelo's letter in the final scene Pauline is seen walking from the inner courtyard of the castle to its furthest limit. The composition of the shots which follow her movement from one place to the other is indicative of the shift in boundaries that occurs due to the changing landscape of her emotional life; Pauline is initially seen in medium shot,

contained within the vertical structures provided firstly by the cloisters. She is then dwarfed by the tall trees. When she reaches the edge of the castle garden she looks out over the horizontal wall towards the mountains which one could construe as a spatial and temporal symbol indicating her freedom to move out of the past into the future. One could argue that Pauline's present is static because it is dictated by incidental events in her past (nursing an unknown injured man as a teenager). Thus, Théus is very much fixed as a sign of the past while the wilder landscape implies possibility and action.

3. *Le Hussard sur le toit* and protectionism

From the views expressed by its director, producer and distributor it can be said that *Le Hussard sur le toit* was made and released with a national imperative in mind. An indication of the hopes projected onto *Le Hussard sur le toit* as a high-grossing film is the fact that the film was exhibited in 300 cinemas on its release. *Cyrano de Bergerac* had only opened on 160 screens in 1991 and eventually amassed 4.5 million entries in France (Predal 1995: 839). René Cleitmann, an executive producer on many French films including *Le Hussard sur le toit*,⁷ has highlighted the industrial impetus behind grand-scale film-making, expressing his view in conflictual terms. Hence, in his opinion, the high budget *film de patrimoine* is

...le défenseur de la 'différence' française face au formatage américain des images et des récits...la principale arme dans l'offensive du cinéma français pour retrouver une part de marché décente dans son propre pays (*Le Monde* 21 September 1995).

From the vocabulary Cleitmann uses here it is apparent that he equates the particular type of superproduction exemplified by *Le Hussard sur le toit* with the idea of national cinema. It is this vocabulary of difference and resistance,

especially in relation to Hollywood, which characterises any discussion of national cinema. National cinema can, after all, be defined as a form of domestic resistance to the overwhelming presence of American film as well as a means of fixing images of the nation and the national character (see my discussion of national cinema in chapter four). The distributor of *Le Hussard* echoes the national protectionist discourse, claiming that 'il faudrait un *Germinal* ou un *Hussard sur le toit* pour que l'identité française soit préservée' (*Le Film Français* 1995: 24).

The idea of protection through the production of films of scale is a key feature of the French film market today. As outlined in chapters four and five where the question of national cinema and the specificities of French film industry are examined, French cinema finds itself in a similar position to other national cinemas marginalised in the domestic market by the popularity of American films and in other national markets by their linguistic difference. French film-makers such as Rappeneau and ambitious producers such as Cleitmann have attempted to reclaim the indigenous audience through their logic of scale which is the distinguishing feature of many recent *films de patrimoine*. Here one could cite *Jean de Florette* and *Manon des Sources*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *La Reine Margot*, *Le Hussard sur le toit* and *Le Bossu*. In such films scale - excessive costs, excessive attention to period and geographical detail, excessive media coverage, a cast heavily marked by a number of heritage actors - is presented as an attraction. This logic parallels that outlined by Tim Corrigan in his analysis of American cinema where, in order to fulfil its role as a blockbuster, a film of this scale

...must always be 'made' before it is actually made, either through the promise of a particular star or group of stars, rumours of spectacular new

technologies, or astonishing production costs. It must always exist, first and foremost, as an advertisement of promises (Timothy Corrigan 1991: 12).

While there are obvious differences between big-budget American and French films, this quotation equally applies to the film under discussion here. In the case of *Le Hussard sur le toit*, the promise of a certain constellation of stars and staggering production costs are crucial ingredients for a successful marketing strategy. In the place of the spectacular new technologies mentioned by Corrigan, it can be said that it is the tradition of quality film-making associated with costume productions, rather than technological advances, which 'make' the film. The pedigree of the craftsmen involved in the production of costume dramas has gradually become a point of reference as films attempt to draw on the success of previous releases. For example, *Le Hussard sur le toit* shares its music director, set designer, costume designer and screenwriters with *Cyrano de Bergerac*, a film which, crucially for the former, received Césars for its costumes, sound, music and cinematography. Building on this artistic incestuousness with French period productions in the manner exhibited by the British heritage film, the promotional material provided by the distribution company isolates the importance of the costumes and the sets. In the press dossier provided for *Cyrano de Bergerac*, the distribution company stressed that the film

...boasts 2,000 actors and extras, a sumptuous score, 40 fabulous sets created by Ezio Frigerio, an incalculable number of costumes, as well as the fake noses contrived for Gérard Depardieu and changed daily. (Artificial Eye 1990).

Similarly, the press material for *Le Hussard sur le toit* placed value on the development and then construction of the film from a technical perspective:

70,000 kilometres of location scouting - 130 days of shooting spread over 10 departments and 50 parishes - over 100 sets - casting that lasted one full year for 100 parts - a daily technical crew of more than 100 people -

nearly 1,000 costumes specially made - 5,000 square metres of tiles used to recreate the roofs of Manosque (Artificial Eye 1996).

There is a tendency to project the scale of production as an attraction via the press and other media in the form of progress reports in the press or television documentaries on the making of the film. *Jean de Florette* set the trend for this type of media coverage; as discussed in chapter six, the production and then release of the film received a huge amount of exposure on television, in the press and on the radio. High levels of media coverage were also achieved for *Le Hussard*; the day after its release *Le Monde* dedicated its culture section to the film. Short location reports and extracts were shown on all television channels. As with the more conventional blockbusters, attempts were made to tie the film in with related events. Hence, following the logic provided by the surveys following the release of *Jean de Florette* which revealed that Pagnol had spurred 68 per cent of the audience to see the film, the status of Giono was maximised and the centenary of Giono's birth in 1995, associated television programmes and the republication of his works all added momentum to the release of the film. Giono's position and perspective as a writer is significant not only in terms of his individual production which concentrated on the wilder, rural side of Provence but also in terms of his place within the literary group known as 'les rustiques'. This group of writers of the post war period who revitalised myths about the pastoral landscape. Along with de Chateaubriand, Genevoix, Ramuz and Aymé, Giono described a bond with the countryside at a time when a great proportion of the French nation had only recently experienced or were on the point of experiencing the rural exodus.

Apart from the attractions provided by scale, *Le Hussard*'s other possibly appealing elements reside in its dense intertextuality. Rappeneau's painterly

aesthetic produced cinematic recreations of paintings by Géricault and Millet which are discussed above. Given Angelo's selflessness and fearlessness he is reminiscent of another heritage character - Cyrano de Bergerac - despite the differences in performance style and levels of national recognition. Furthermore, Depardieu injects a measure of heritage quality into *Le Hussard* by virtue of presence in successful *films de patrimoine*. Cultural but not generic distinctiveness is also conferred by Binoche, Cluzet and Yanne who, unlike Depardieu, are not known for their appearances in costume dramas but are nonetheless actors of national standing. Through these various discourses of cost and scale, cultural specificity, intertextuality and quality, *Le Hussard sur le toit* thus constitutes a national film which simultaneously bolsters French cinema and reaffirms the nation's culture.

¹ *Les Echos*, 20 September, 1995.

² See note 3.

³ Painterly resonances are evident in these shots and in the sequence which accompanies the opening credits where Angelo begins his quest for Maggionari. These two sequences are reminiscent in style and composition of paintings by Van Gogh, Millet and Cézanne, notably 'Life in the Fields' (1876-77) by the latter. Indeed, Rappeneau's general large sweeping vistas recall Cézanne's treatment of the Provençal landscape in the 1870s and 1880s; see 'Rocks at L'Estaque' (1882) and 'Mountains in Provence' (1879).

⁴ Here it can be said that Pauline is symbolic of the ideal French woman expressed through the figure of Marianne. She captures the elements of femininity and integrity in a 1990s formulation of female national identity.

⁵ There would seem to be a connection between beauty advertising and the actresses appearing in recent *films de patrimoine*; Isabelle Adjani, Anne Brochet and Catherine Deneuve also endorse beauty products in France and can be said to add an extracinematic dimension to *La Reine Margot*, *Tous les matins du monde* and *Indochine* respectively.

⁶ Here one can contrast this nostalgic, idealised depiction of Provence against a much more realistic portrayal of this region and the reality of agricultural labour in *Y-aura-t-il de la neige à Noël?* (1996) or *Sans toit ni loi* (1985).

⁷ As the chairman of Hachette Premiere et compagnie Cleitmann has produced *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Le Hussard sur le toit*, *Tango* (1993), *Monsieur Hire* (1989), *La vie et rien d'autre* (1989), *L'Appât* (1995), *Un coeur qui bat* (1991), *Un drôle d'endroit pour une rencontre* (1988).

Conclusion

In the course of this thesis I have argued that a form of film-making emerged in the 1980s in France which united cultural policy, industrial strategies and public discourses about heritage culture. I have underpinned this hypothesis through a consideration of the value accorded to the past in contemporary culture in chapters one and two, the question of national identity and national cinema in chapters three and four and also an analysis of the state of French cinema in the last two decades in chapter five. In these five opening chapters I have laid the foundations for a new critical approach to this type of film-making with a view to providing a nationally specific perspective. This is a particularly valuable exercise because the *film de patrimoine* tends to be critically appraised in Britain in relation to the British heritage film while in France there is an absence of any overarching critique. The critical framework I have constructed combines industrial and cultural discourses which are predicated on the notion of cinema as a nation-building agency. Viewing the texts through this framework has allowed me to establish the films' position and significance in French national culture. In order to test my hypothesis I examined three filmic texts made in this mode in chapters six, seven and eight, determining the extent of thematic and aesthetic consistency. My conclusions can therefore be organised in terms of the *film de patrimoine*'s relationship with national cinema and the past in the first instance and then addressing the question of generic coherence. While the films I chose to analyse are indicative of a general trend in French film-making, I contend that they form a separate strand within the genre which fuses a

retrospective, idealised view of the national space with ideas of identity and community.

1. The *film de patrimoine* and national cinema

In chapter three I cited Benedict Anderson's approach to the nation which is predicated on the nation as a cultural formation. This approach is particularly useful in the context of this thesis given the focus on cinema. Cinema can be regarded as a cultural form which articulates the nation in two ways. It provides a history, a representation of the national space and cultural points of reference. The depiction of history, whether political or cultural history, plays an essential part in the formation of a nation's identity; an awareness of the past helps to delineate the characteristics of the nation by establishing similarity and difference across a group. It also allows a community to locate itself temporally:

It is only through a sense of history that communities establish their identity, orientate themselves, understand their relationship to the past and to other communities and societies. Without this knowledge of history, we, and our communities, would be utterly adrift on an endless and featureless sea of time (Marwick quoted in Furedi 1992: 62).

It also indirectly reflects the nation's concerns at a given moment. As Tom O'Regan has commented in his analysis of national cinemas:

...films project society, interrogate it, investigate debates and industrial strategies... implicating, negotiating, expressing, reflecting, bonding society in its most particular and its most general. It [national cinema] is a vehicle for social processes, emerging social movements and identities (O'Regan 1996: 17 and 21).

The *film de patrimoine* corresponds to the points raised by Marwick and O'Regan which, combined, highlight the role of films representing history and their role in the formation of national identity. With regard to the fixing of the nation through film, it can be said that the *film de patrimoine* furnishes the

nation with physicality - an issue to be addressed in the section entitled 'Geography' below - by projecting an idealised, rural version of the national landscape peopled by figures who encapsulate the various facets of historical and contemporary French identity. This is not just a function of an individual film but also of the film industry more generally which, through the production of particular nationally distinctive and popular genres such as the comedy, frames the nation in a specific way. Secondly, it can also be observed that the *film de patrimoine* does interrogate present day society, providing a commentary on certain issues through the temporally displaced symbolic representatives and indirectly revealing the contemporary significance of the past through the mise-en-scène and aesthetic preferences.

In the light of this I would like to argue that the *film de patrimoine* can be read as a filmic example of the heritage and enterprise couplet discussed in chapter one, whereby tradition and modernity are fused to aid the transition of society through a period of change. It can be seen as a modern cinematic form displaying an economy of scale and the hallmarks of technological advances in the use of the mobile camera and natural locations. Thus it is differentiated from *la tradition de la qualité* which was marked by a preference for studio-based filming and by the minimal physical movement of characters. The *film de patrimoine* also attests to the state's vision of *cinéma-spectacle-populaire* whereby art, culture and quality are packaged in a high budget and hopefully high audience format for national consumption. The high level of state funding is highlighted by *the avance sur recettes* system which is particularly well disposed towards the production of quality films, the obligatory financial contribution of television channels to film-making and the tax mechanisms in

the shape of SOFICAs. Through the *film de patrimoine* two concepts of national cinema are combined; commerce and culture are fused via the cultural mode of production displayed by the content and high cultural interlegitimation of the films and by the industrial mode denoted by their cost in some cases and their exhibition and distribution. Where the British heritage film is largely shown in art-house cinemas and on the smaller screens of the multiplex, the *film de patrimoine* is given top billing on the mainstream circuit on its release thereby signalling its heightened industrial importance and status as a national product. For example, in 1994 *La Reine Margot*, *Le Colonel Chabert* and *La Fille de D'Artagnan* were shown at 44, 41 and 45 screens in the Paris/péripherique region in comparison with *Mrs Doubtfire* (Chris Columbus, 1993), *Four Weddings and A Funeral* (Mike Newell, 1994) and *Speed* (Jan de Bont, 1994) which were shown at 48, 30 and 48 screens. In 1995 *Le Hussard sur le toit* was exhibited on 50 screens in the same region while *Goldeneye* (Martin Campbell, 1995), *101 Dalmatians* (Stephen Herek, 1995) and *Die Hard with a Vengeance* (John McTiernan, 1995) were exhibited on 51, 37 and 49 screens.¹

While the *film de patrimoine* diverges aesthetically from *la tradition de la qualité*, it is the connections between the two, along with the strong diegetic emphasis on the past, which anchor the *film de patrimoine* in French cultural tradition. One can interpret this current cinematic form as a contemporary articulation of resistance and preservation, a strategy to combat the dominance of American films at the box office and to give coherence to a positive, highly attractive image of the nation. This strategy was deployed in the 1950s when film budgets increased significantly in France in a bid to restore parity between French and American products and is common to national cinemas seeking to

assert their presence on the domestic territory. Revivifying and adapting a classic and successful formula of French cinematic production of the 1940s and 1950s to the specificities of today's film market has resulted in the creation of a new form of national cinema which is inflected by the time of its production in terms of narrative, characterisation and aesthetics (discussed below) and its circulation in public discourses.

In her discussion of French national cinema Susan Hayward suggested that a double nation-narration occurs (Hayward 1996). This involves the reinscription of the original literary text into a filmic form thereby accruing its national cultural value. Where Hayward's approach sets down this process purely in terms of a transferral of value through the act of literary adaptation, I have argued that the *film de patrimoine* narrates and reinscribes the nation on many levels. The film's iconography and characterisation exemplify this process. Clearly, the representation of classic rural sites affirms their central position in the formation of French identity, their role as 'ciment identitaire', and elevates them to visual markers for the nation. As outlined in chapter one and in the textual analysis of *Jean de Florette*, the *maison de campagne* has long been imbued with nostalgia and presented as a symbol of a lost community and the associated discourses about tradition, fixity and continuity. In the *film de patrimoine* this visual site of identification is reinscribed from a contemporary perspective which is informed by ecological concerns and by a heightened sense of separation from the rural environment thereby marking the text with temporal specificity. In terms of characterisation, we also see the heritage and enterprise couplet at work. In *Ridicule*, for example, the pervading oppositional structures position Madame de Blayac's pastness in contrast to Mathilde and

Ponceludon's modernity. While Madame de Blayac is a source of visual pleasure through her associative mise-en-scène and of narrative tension given her various machinations, she is also pivotal in portraying the decadent, morally corrupt period leading up to the French Revolution. She embodies the past which will soon be swept away. Mathilde and Ponceludon, however, represent the possibility for a radically different future which is critically not centred in Paris but in the provinces. Hence, it can be said that the history of the nation and its hypothetical future are delineated through these characters. Taken at the level of allegory, these characters are also indicative of present day France and provide a subtextual commentary on the insularity of the political scene in Paris which fails to relate to the issues affecting the rest of the country. One can effectively argue, therefore, that France is represented and filmically inscribed from two temporal points - the past and the present - suggesting that the *film de patrimoine* performs a double movement in time and in the inscription of the nation.

On a less textual and more industrial level the *film de patrimoine* reaffirms the nation's cinema through the production and exhibition of films which can compete with the global referent of Hollywood cinema at the domestic box-office. Although this has not always been achieved by films made in the last two decades, the *film de patrimoine* is a form of national cinema by virtue of its intention and ability to represent the nation in a manner which distinguishes it very clearly from its US competitors. In Fernand Braudel's analysis of French national identity, it is the *image de marque* which is crucial to the existence of a nation (Braudel 1986). In promoting the idea of a French cinema market differentiation is a vital ingredient. This can be realised

incidentally as in the case of the *polar* or the *cinéma du look* or more intentionally as in the case of *Le Hussard sur le toit* which was conceived with domestic success and heritage export in mind. The *film de patrimoine* can be regarded as a complex response to the question of developing popular French cinema in that it often adopts the logic of scale to compete with US films but it also rejects the aesthetics and pace of mainstream commercial cinema. Tana Wollen commented that the British heritage film was in effect a self-effacing form because the film's temporal setting tends to predate the arrival of modern media (Wollen 1991). It is a disavowal of modern life which is affected by external, international influences; through its temporal movement back to a pre-media age it is a nostalgic reaffirmation of English society. In the *film de patrimoine* we find a similar rejection of Hollywood film-making, which is associated with commerce as opposed to quality and culture, and a double movement back into the past which simultaneously acts as a marker of national cinema's difference and a spatialisation of the nation's anxieties in the present.

2. Thematic and Aesthetic coherence in *the film de patrimoine*

In interpreting the filmic texts in chapters six, seven and eight the textual and thematic characteristics of the *film de patrimoine* have become apparent. The defining features are an emphasis on geography, the articulation of national identity through key characters, particularly women, a high degree of cultural interlegitimation through pictorial art, literature, intertextuality between *films de patrimoine* and stars and the use of history in terms of allegory and backdrop. Through the medium of the past the three individual films studied here have also raised issues which pertain to present day France such as idealism,

ecology, the continuing spectre of the lost rural idyll in contemporary French society, social exclusion, tradition and the chasm between politics and everyday life.

2.1. Geography

In chapter one I suggested that the conceptualisation of the rural space is central to ideas of heritage and *patrimoine*. The national past is often expressed through this particular space; it is depicted as a safe haven from the present where natural beauty and traditional social structures provide a stark contrast to the uncertainties and mutations of contemporary society. As argued in chapter one, the nostalgic valorisation of the rural space has occurred in nations in moments of significant change or threat. Thus, urbanisation and industrialisation triggered an interest in the countryside in the shape of large scale nature tourism in France in the early nineteenth century. This has been a recurring reaction to the expansion of the urban space and shifting demographic patterns; the rural exodus of the post-war period in France and the high mobility of today's working population have given rise to a similar revalorisation of the countryside. Moreover, the spectre of globalisation has accentuated fears about the loss of national distinctiveness and importance. In bypassing the nation as a unit of power, globalisation, as argued in chapter two, has led to a revalorisation of the regional/local space. In addition, the idea of the nation as expressed through the rural space has also come to prominence to shore up notions of national identity and cohesion in times of conflict in the international arena; the advent of war has often triggered a need to reconfirm traditional formulations of identity and its associative loci. It can be said that the

historical specificity of current conceptions of the rural space can be seen in the focus on the local space which has become one of the subjects of the more general phenomenon of patrimonialisation.

While it is fair to say that this tendency has been long established in both French and British society, it must also be stated that the constructions of the nation and its geography are historically specific. Therefore, the *film de patrimoine* displays an iconography which is particular to the concerns and issues of contemporary French society. Here I want to underline the contribution made by the *film de patrimoine* to the visualisation and fixing of the national space. From an individual or local community perspective the nostalgic conception of the countryside can be seen to respond to the desire for stability and firm points of social and cultural references which appear to have diminished in modern urban life. In the *films de patrimoine* analysed in this thesis urban life is cast negatively. This position corresponds to a historical tendency to perceive the city and the country in terms of a negative/positive dichotomy where disintegration and flux are set against nature and harmony. In *Jean de Florette* Jean speaks of 'l'enfer des villes' and in *Ridicule* we see the corruption of Paris set in contrast to the 'real', meaningful interaction which takes place between the characters in the pastoral setting of the Bellegarde's home. Only Aix-en-Provence is positively portrayed in *Le Hussard sur le toit* although the connection between civilisation and superficiality and cruelty is suggested by Pauline and Angelo's encounters with members of Pauline's social class. This is seen at M. Peyrolle's house where they are forced to leave and at the ball after the epidemic has abated where Pauline comments on her contemporaries' ability to resume their lives seemingly unaffected by the huge

loss of life. Despite the fact that *Jean de Florette* depicts the cruelty of nature and peasant culture embodied in Papet and Ugolin, the overriding image of country is one of beauty and tranquillity. Berri's camerawork fetishises the landscape; his sweeping pans and long shots capture and luxuriate in the expansiveness and natural attractions of Provence. There is also a tendency to fuse Jean with his natural surroundings hence strengthening the association of this intrinsically 'good' man with his ecologically sound principles and his environment. This can be seen in particular in the sequence depicting Jean at work in his garden. The camera slowly moves from left to right, following Jean's activities and the passage of time over the course of one whole day. In this way Jean is presented as an integral part of the landscape; he is anchored in the space, time and working patterns of rural existence. Rappeneau displays an even greater degree of romanticism in the way he shoots Provence. He uses pictorial representations of Provence as his primary frame of reference in constructing an image of the area underlining its cultural value as a subject worthy of depiction by many renowned and validated artists. Moreover, the use of colour filters emphasises the artistic rather than realistic depiction of the area.

It is this mode of representing the landscape, and in particular Provence, which can be regarded as the main element of aesthetic coherence in the *film de patrimoine*. In *Jean de Florette* and its sequel *Manon des Sources*, *Le Hussard sur le toit*, *Le Bossu*, *Le Chateau de ma Mère* and *La Gloire de mon Père* the Provençal landscape is prettified to the extent that its representation virtually attains hyperreality. The narrowly focused depiction of the traditional sites of Provençal life reinforces this impression: the emphasis on a few key

sites (the village square, the fountain, the café, the market) lends weight to regional stereotypes and, via the circulation of these films as domestic cultural blockbusters and heritage export, elevates regional iconography to a level of national significance. Even the site of high culture (Aix) is constructed through a similar set of spatial co-ordinates (the square, the fountain, the market/festival scene) and overlaid with references to canonical culture. Thus a genericised image of France is produced from a very localised perspective. This is particularly the case outside France where regional nuance is easily overlooked; for example, in *Cyrano de Bergerac* Cyrano originates from Gascony but the references to this region, the accent and the cuisine are subsumed into a more general notion of Frenchness by the non-French.

Therefore I would like to argue that the representation of the Provençal landscape is indicative of two processes taking place in the *film de patrimoine* displaying a nostalgic iconography of the nation's geography. Firstly, it can be said that the *film de patrimoine* gives the past a physical form; it spatialises this temporality and locates it firmly within a recognisable and meaningful place. Secondly, this filmic form spatialises the nation given that the nation and the rural space are, as I have argued in the course of this thesis, closely interlinked. There is, then, a movement into the past which highlights its value in the construction of national identity. It also points to the heightened symbolism of the rural space as the distance between this projection of a rural existence and present-day urban living increases. It is this emphasis on the bucolic space and its symbolic appropriation which mark the contemporaneity of the films set in the past since the mid 1980s. While films in what can be termed the Provençal cycle such as *Le Hussard sur le toit*, *Jean de Florette*, *Manon des Sources*, *Le*

Chateau de ma Mère, *La Gloire de mon Père* focus on Provence, *Ridicule* is indicative of another use of geography whereby the pastoral space is contrasted with Paris as symbol of negatively charged urban living. This pastoral/Paris structure of meaning can be seen in varying degrees in *Tous les matins du monde*, *Le Bossu*, *Un dimanche à la campagne* (1984) and *La Reine Margot*. *Jean de Florette* also fits in with this structure of sentiment given that Jean delineates the city in terms of its hellish attributes. I would argue that *films de patrimoine* characterised by this nostalgic representation of Provence and/or by the pastoral/Parisian opposition accord with wider discourses and cultural trends in France. This mode of film-making feeds from and into a general interest in the past and in the rural and local past in particular. This interest is not only illustrated by the broadening of the body of *patrimoine* in France but also by the rise in national and international tourism in the South of France and this region's position as *lieu de marque* as well as *lieu de mémoire* for France. Where the key British heritage image resides in a bucolic version of South East England, the French equivalent is provided by the *maison de campagne* in Provence and the evocative panoramas of the region. In Britain this image has acquired a certain notoriety due to Peter Mayle's writing and the subsequent spin-off tourism. In the light of these intersecting factors one could conclude, therefore, that the *film de patrimoine* transmits a pastoral image of the nation, presenting a nostalgic territory as a powerful vector of national distinctiveness.

2.2. Cultural legitimization and intertextuality

In chapter two I argued that intertextuality and interlegitimation are key features of the British heritage film. On assessment of the French *film de patrimoine* one can draw a similar conclusion. The British heritage film largely feeds from references to high cultural artefacts and texts and its narrative usually pertains to a very specific social setting (that is, the upper-middle/upper classes usually in the context of their Home counties residences). The *film de patrimoine*, however, largely operates within wider cultural and narrative parameters outlined below in sections 2.2 and 2.3. In this section I would like to address the way in which the *film de patrimoine* functions within a web of cultural associations. It can be said that the *film de patrimoine* functions as a cultural emissary, asserting French national identity through multi-layered allusions - to pictorial, literary or cinematic works through the text and the mise-en-scène - and its conspicuous quality. Given that the *film de patrimoine* straddles both the cultural and industrial mode of film-making with the latter aiming to foster a space for a successful and exportable national film culture, notions of quality and national cultural value can be regarded as critical factors in the production of the film in terms of the narrative content and the style of the film-making.

With regard to the textual content, place, *patrimoine* and canonical culture are privileged by the temporal and physical setting. As discussed above in 'Geography', Provence and the pastoral/urban nexus are able to convey all three. In considering the Provençal cycle and the way in which it feeds from and into national culture, it can be said that the initial *film de patrimoine*, *Jean de Florette*, has shaped not only the formulation but also expectations of this genre. Its success and that of the Pagnol adaptations contributed to the

prominence of this area and its value as a visual affirmation of French culture, bringing together literature and cinema through the figures of Pagnol, Giono, Berri and Rappeneau. The guarantee of quality and national distinctiveness is further supplied by stars such Gérard Depardieu, Yves Montand, Daniel Auteuil in *Jean de Florette* and Juliette Binoche and a host of brief appearances by Depardieu, Cluzet and Yanne in *Le Hussard sur le toit*. The label of quality filmmaking was reinforced by the media coverage devoted to *Jean de Florette's* production and release and then by its official recognition at the Oscars and Césars. Moreover, the texts touch on questions of regional identity, the idyll of rural life and traditional community. Thus the *film de patrimoine* takes shape at the intersection of a variety of discourses. These overlapping discourses can be categorised as public (in terms of the knowledge about the genre which is in public circulation) official (in terms of the support and recognition it receives from the state and the industry), cultural (in terms of the status of the literary texts, the directors and actors) and collective (in terms of shared nostalgic recollections about the past and the rural space). With regard to official recognition from national and international bodies, the *film de patrimoine* is consistently feted at the Césars and has also received Oscars. *Camille Claudel* received the prize for best film and best direction at the Césars in 1989, as did *Cyrano de Bergerac* in 1991 and *Tous les matins du monde* in 1992. The latter also received Césars for best cinematography, best sound, best costumes, best supporting actress and best music. *Tous les matins du monde* also received the Prix Louis Delluc in 1991. In 1991 *Van Gogh* received the César for best film. *Indochine* was awarded Césars for best actress, best supporting actress, best cinematography, best sound and best set design. It was also awarded best

foreign film at the Oscars. The Prix Georges de Beauregard for the best production of the year went to *Cyrano de Bergerac* in 1990, *Le Château de ma Mère* in 1991 and *Germinal* in 1993. At the 1995 Césars *La Reine Margot* was awarded best actress, best supporting actress, best actor, best cinematography and best costumes. *Ridicule* received Césars for best film, best director, best set design and best costume.

As mentioned in the chapters of textual analysis, pictorial art has played a large part in fashioning a look in the *film de patrimoine*, particularly in the case of *Le Hussard sur le toit*. The look is one defined by primarily by pastness and place. Thus we find filmic reproductions or references to Millet, Géricault, Van Gogh and Vermeer. Moreover, in certain pictorial references we find the characters engaged in another key defining cultural activity within the diegesis - writing and reading. This can be seen most clearly in *Le Hussard sur le toit* where Pauline is depicted writing to Angelo seated at a desk in an exact reproduction of a Vermeer painting. In this film we repeatedly see the act of letter-writing predominantly through Angelo and finally the receiving of a letter in the last sequence which will ensure its romantic resolution. In this way the act of writing validates knowledge and its acquisition. This is evident across the genre. In *Ridicule* Mathilde is engaged in ground-breaking experimentation which is supported by a grounding in science. Ponceludon is also an educated figure who successfully undertakes a considerable engineering project at the end of the film. Bellegarde exhibits his cultural weight through his attitudes to his daughter's upbringing which was informed by the principles of the Enlightenment. Jean de Florette's vision of utopia and his initial success in cultivating his garden are due to his close application of scientific texts about

agriculture. In *Cyrano de Bergerac* and, to a more limited extent, *Ridicule* the spoken word adds another layer of cultural distinctiveness. The high, sophisticated register of the dialogue in *Cyrano* - and even the Alexandrine verse provided for the English subtitles - and the elegant linguistic playfulness seen in *Ridicule* are a pleasurable, nationally specific affirmation of the films' cultural credentials. Language is also closely bound up with ideas of French national identity. There has been a struggle in France in the last three decades to both preserve and impose the French language which is regarded as a transmitter of cultural identity and excellence.² Given the infiltration of English and American English into the French language, official bodies such as the Académie Française have been actively and aggressively campaigning to protect the national language by enforcing its use in the public domain and encouraging the development of its vocabulary. The Académie also regulates the use of foreign terms. These activities have resulted in an amendment to the Constitution in 1992 which states that 'La langue de la République est le français'.

2.3. *Le Film de patrimoine* and the British heritage film

I began this thesis by discussing the British heritage film and the critical attitude to this body of films in this country. The British heritage film was an important point of departure for my analysis of the *film de patrimoine* not only because French costume dramas tend to be appraised by British academics in relation to the British films (Austin 1996, Powrie 1997 and Vincendeau 1995). The heritage film debate raises issues of the films' wider resonance in culture as well as questions of generic consistency. Given my aim to construct a nationally

specific approach to the *film de patrimoine* which would encompass both context and text, the views offered by Higson and Craig in particular provided valuable points of reference. Taking fuel for their arguments from the writings of Patrick Wright, Robert Hewison and the general heritage debate in the British press, Higson and Craig strongly associated the heritage film with a certain moral bankruptcy. The heritage film was construed as the filmic articulation of Conservative ideologies of the 1980s, spawning accusations of materialism and cultural and racial exclusivity. The connection of the heritage film to heritage culture strengthened this critical position; if heritage culture is seen as a misleading, sanitised representation of history which hastened the loss of historical consciousness, the heritage film has been similarly widely regarded with cynicism.

From the research I have conducted here I can conclude that two factors have allowed me to approach the *film de patrimoine* from a more positive critical angle. The absence of a clear left-wing/right-wing split on the issue of *patrimoine* in France and the belief that *patrimoine* is essentially in flux and does not exist a priori indicate that a nationally specific frame of reference is necessary for the interpretation of the *film de patrimoine*. It also indicates that British criticism is strongly inflected by its own cultural and political context. Hence, the theoretical approach I have established here emanates from the French perspective and is markedly different, since it is grounded in the broader scope of representation and narrative in the *film de patrimoine*. I have provided a paradigm for relating the films to cultural discourses. Where the British heritage film has tended to focus on a certain class and their milieu, the *film de patrimoine* is not as class-bound. *The film de patrimoine* may not be

sensitive to ethnicity but it displays a greater range of social groups. In *Jean de Florette* the wider rural community is used to heritage effect, that is, depicted en masse to authenticate the setting, but the central character of Jean is nonetheless from this agricultural background and places much value in this life-style. In *Ridicule* we find Ponceludon, the class interloper, championing the underclass in an aristocratic environment.

Andrew Higson observed that the heritage film is a temporally displaced forum for the discussion of contemporary issues. He argued that the heritage film expressed concerns about loss, inheritance and societal change. I would agree with this comment in relation to the *film de patrimoine*; in the chapters of textual analysis I explored the way in which all three films provided a commentary on the position of women, the loss of the rural idyll, the ecological agenda, social exclusion, and tradition. The *film de patrimoine*, however, not only provides a commentary at the textual level but also in its contribution to the economic and cultural institution of the cinema. The *film de patrimoine* can be regarded as a reflection of strategies in French cinema, supported and promoted by both the industry and the state, to foster a national cinema which affirms and defends the nation. The cost and high levels of media exposure devoted to the *film de patrimoine* signal its difference from the British productions; the former is intended to function on the mainstream circuit in competition with American products.

In terms of stylistic and narrative similarities between the *film de patrimoine* and the heritage film, there is a definite emphasis in both genres on high culture. This affiliation is reinforced through the choice of canonical source texts for filmic adaptation, the representation of high cultural sites, the value

placed on education and cultural activities (reading, writing, playing instruments). The relationship between *films de patrimoine* also heightens this aspect; a strong generic intertextuality (in the shape of acclaimed actors, directors, producers, costume designers) confirms the stamp of cultural quality. The official recognition of the genre by the Césars adds to this legitimation as discussed above in section 2.2.

In terms of stylistic differences displayed by the French films in relation to the British heritage film, the *film de patrimoine* displays its national difference and cultural quality through its aesthetic choices. While the long-shot, long take and tracking shot are strongly in evidence, this genre is more dynamic in terms of camera movement than the British heritage film; in the epic, swashbuckling *films de patrimoine* such as *Le Hussard sur le toit*, *La Fille de D'Artagnan* or *Le Bossu* the characters move a great deal and the camera itself is mobile. Fast cutting is also used in scenes of action. In the case of *Ridicule* the mobility of the camera is used to reinforce the progressive, anti-establishment nature of the characters it depicts (that is, Ponceludon and Mathilde) through the contrast with the immobility of the regressive characters (that is, Madame de Blayac and the Abbé de Vilecourt). *Jean de Florette* displays camera work characteristic of the British heritage film; its long sweeping tracks privilege and luxuriate in the pastoral setting. This prettification and visual appreciation of the landscape is common to both national genres. In the French context, however, this does not suspend the narrative as has been suggested of the British heritage film but is in fact integral to it. The visual style of *film de patrimoine* does not work against the narrative; it forms part of it, fusing space with the characters and the plot to represent the nation. It is also suggestive of the overall nostalgia of the film,

creating a narrative which is effectively out of time and importantly not located in this time, that is, the present. The deliberate, slow visual style highlights the nostalgic drive for pre-industrial society whose temporality is governed by the seasons. In addition, this film's out-of-timeness contributes to the sense that the film is a morality-tale, a story of the downfall of a man as the result of the greed, envy and deceit of others. Moreover, both the preference for slow camera movement and long takes and the combination of mobility and stasis can be regarded as a form of aesthetic differentiation which isolates these films from American mainstream products in the French market. The *films de patrimoine* display the mark of Frenchness through their cultural content and the aesthetic preferences which can be read as synonymous with quality.

2.4. Temporal setting and space

In this final section I would like to address the question of temporal setting and its implications for narrative in the *film de patrimoine* in order to ascertain generic coherence. Time and narrative are closely connected in the *film de patrimoine*. This can be seen overtly through a historical narrative as in *La Reine Margot* where history is very much the driving force of the narrative or *Ridicule* where the French Revolution is not depicted but nonetheless a defining moment which marks the end of this particular world. The presence of history in the foreground or in the background anchors the films in a certain historical period but does not diminish their allegorical significance. Thus, *La Reine Margot*, given its portrayal of genocide and political intrigue, can be read subtextually as a commentary on the Holocaust or on Bosnia. In keeping with my arguments outlined in section 1, it is possible to interpret *Ridicule* from the perspective of symbolic characterisation:

while Ponceludon appears to encapsulate values of the 1980s in his entrepreneurial spirit, Mathilde and Madame de Blayac delineate the evolution of women's position in French society. Jean in *Jean de Florette* is similarly an emblematic figure who personifies the desire for union with a simpler, greener rural past. His story traces the defeat of idealism in the face of materialism thereby giving the film a contemporary resonance. The *film de patrimoine* can therefore be read at the level of its historicity or its contemporaneity. While the *film de patrimoine* functions as national cinema in representing its country's past, the temporal setting also provides a space for a displaced exploration of current issues.

I have also suggested that certain *films de patrimoine* appear to be situated out of time by virtue of their heavy nostalgic drive and by their resemblance to a *conte moral* which gives them a universal, ageless relevance. This effect is in part produced by the slow movement of the camera work which works to integrate the physical space into the narrative and also has the effect of validating the mise-en-scène. This is a common unifying feature of this genre. In *Jean de Florette*, *Tous les matins du monde* and to a certain degree in *Le Hussard sur le toit*, however, atemporality is not momentary; it is the overarching structure determined by the pace, the lighting, the movement of the camera and the positioning of the *lieu de patrimoine* (the *maison de campagne*, the château, the panoramic views of Provence or the less regionally specific pastoral settings) centre frame. Indeed this emphasis on place and its enforced contemplation (that is, dictated by the camera's slow deliberate movement) can be seen as the *film de patrimoine's* predominant structure of feeling. The framed view of the landscape can function in the form of narrative punctuation - in *Jean de Florette*

each shot of Jean's garden from the upstairs window marks the progression of the story from the initial treachery of the Soubeyrans through the fixing of this location as Jean's utopia to the final moment of loss seen from the perspective of Manon. In *Ridicule*, the formal opposition of the pastoral space and the court visually reinforces the film's morality. In the *films de patrimoine* the framed shot of the landscape, however, has a wider resonance beyond the interaction of the characters within the diegesis as illustrated most pointedly by the opening sequence of *Jean de Florette* where the spectator is engaged in a journey of return. Here the nostalgia implied by this evocative journey overrides the time of the film and this movement back to the site of rural origins becomes a symbolic excursion to the physical locus of the past. This past is shaped by the dynamic of *patrimoine* which blurs the boundaries between faithful reconstruction and invention and between collective memory and fiction. Hence the question of time is complicated by this blurring resulting in the *film de patrimoine's* dual temporality: the accuracy and authenticity of the mise-en-scène determine a film's relationship with a definite past but equally the idealisation and sanitisation involved in creating the look of pastness render the past a non-specific fantasy which is essentially the projection for a desire for stability and union with that which has been lost.

In considering the question of time in the *film de patrimoine* it has become clear that the past and the present can be conveyed through the female characters. At the start of this thesis I did not anticipate the centrality of femininity and its representation to time or to the genre. Through the examination of the roles of Mathilde and Madame de Blayac in *Ridicule* and of Pauline de Théus in *Le Hussard sur le toit*, however, it emerged as an

important textual feature. As discussed in chapter seven in particular French heritage films tend not to centre on female protagonists and if they do the female characters are usually defined in relation to men. *Camille Claudel* and *Artemisia* exemplify this tendency. In the two films studied here there is evidence of another form of characterisation and also of the symbolic significance of women. *Ridicule* is the most interesting as it offers two constructions of femininity in the shape of Madame de Blayac and Mathilde which are closely aligned with two diverse political periods in French history, that is pre-Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary France. While one could contend that the idea of France and its political mutations are articulated through the female characters in this film, I am suggesting that the idea of revolution pertains more to the women's movement (the MLF) and the changes it engendered than to the 1789 Revolution. Madame de Blayac represents the conventional pre-1968 version of femininity whereas Mathilde is the liberated woman of the post-1968 era. *Ridicule* can be read as a progressive text in that it constructs a version of femininity which is inflected by contemporary media representations of women and also by concerns of the present day.

* * *

Through the three films analysed in this thesis and the theoretical context I have provided for their critique I have shown that the rural space is a powerful and popular arena of representation in contemporary French films set in the past. While the British heritage film also presents this locus as a national treasure, the French emphasis is qualitatively different: it occupies a central

position in the films studied here, forming an integral part of the narrative. Attention is not diverted away from the narrative to appreciate the physical environment but rather the act of contemplation and nostalgic longing for this space are built into the very structure of the films. The rural space can be regarded as a physical expression of the nation and its past which allows one to make a claim for the *film de patrimoine*'s status as a form of national cinema. The *film de patrimoine* represents the nation on many levels; it provides a visualised national space and history and an affirmation of the nation's cultural landscape. In combining cultural and industrial modes of film-making the *film de patrimoine* asserts culture through a filmic form which is characterised by quality and high market exposure, two elements not usually united in Anglophone cinema. There is clearly diversity within this genre; while generic coherence is supplied by the use of stars, reference to canonical culture, the adaptation of culturally validated literary texts, temporal and physical setting in the past, there are a number of different sub-genres which are not mutually exclusive. There is a historical strand which is darker and grimmer (*Le Colonel Chabert*, *Ridicule* and *La Reine Margot*), an exotic, ex-colonial strand (*L'Amant* and *Indochine*), a biographical strand (*Camille Claudel*, *Artemisia*, *Marquise*, *Van Gogh* and *Tous les matins du monde*) and a swashbuckling strand (*Le Bossu*, *La Fille de D'Artagnan*, and *Le Hussard sur le toit* to a certain degree). I would argue that the most prominent sub-genre is the Provençal cycle which set the standard for the genre with the production of *Jean de Florette*. This film proved to be successful at the box office domestically and internationally. In my opinion its success can in part be attributed to the potency of the rural idyll and the phenomenon of *patrimoine* in contemporary French society. *Jean de Florette*

gave a physical form to a collective nostalgia for the rural space and reinforced the juxtaposition of urban and rural life. This space and the iconography Berri established for Provence encapsulated the idea of France, conveying a story of rural origins which relates to the experience of a large proportion of the French population and also fetishising this space from a contemporary perspective. The Berri films cinematically patrimonialised this space, building on the entrenched urban/pastoral dichotomy to produce a dominant national iconography which has persisted through the last two decades and determined the aesthetics and narrative discourses of a new genre.

¹ Figures taken from *The BFI Handbook 1995* and *The BFI Handbook 1996* respectively London: BFI Publishing.

² In 1972 the state set up a commission to deal with terminology and neologisms. This commission catalogued and often created French terms which could be used instead of the more popular foreign equivalents. For example, *baladeur* instead of Walkman or *logiciel* instead of software. In 1975 the Bas-Loriot law was passed to enforce the use of French in different domains such as in business, advertising and even in instructions for appliances. The most recent law – la loi Toubon – passed in 1994 increased the provisions for the protection of the French language, setting up a new commission to oversee terminology and neologisms. See <http://www.academie-francaise.fr/langue/index.html>.

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Trainspotting (1995/Danny Boyle/GB).
Trois hommes et un couffin (1985/Coline Serreau/France).
Un amour de sorcière (1997/René Manzor/France).
Un amour de Swann (1984/Volker Schlöndorff/France).
Un coeur qui bat (A beating heart) (1991/François Dupeyron/France).
Un dimanche à la campagne (1984/Bertrand Tavernier/France).
Un drôle d'endroit pour une rencontre (A Strange Place to Meet) (1988/François Dupeyron/France).
Un héros très discret (1995/Jacques Audiard/France).
Un, deux, trois soleil (1993/Bertrand Tavernier/France).
Une chance sur deux (1997/Patrice Leconte/France).
Une femme française (1994/Regis Wargnier/France/GB/Germany).
Uranus (1990/Claude Berri/France).
Valmont (1989/Milos Forman/France/GB).
Van Gogh (1991/Maurice Pialat/France).
Volcano (1997/Mick Jackson/US).
Where Angels Fear to Tread (1991/Charles Sturridge/GB).
Wish you were here (1987/David Leland/GB).
Working Girl (1988/Mike Nichols/US).
Wuthering Heights (1992/Peter Kosminsky/GB).

Y-aura-t-il de la neige à Noël? (*Will it snow for Christmas?*) (1996/Sandrine Veysset/France).

You got mail (1998/Nora Ephron/US).

Sources: Film Index International, International Movie Database on-line, *Time Out Film Guide 2000* (1999/ed/John Pym).

APPENDIX

Chart 1: Admissions by percent to films in France by nationality of film (1984-1994)

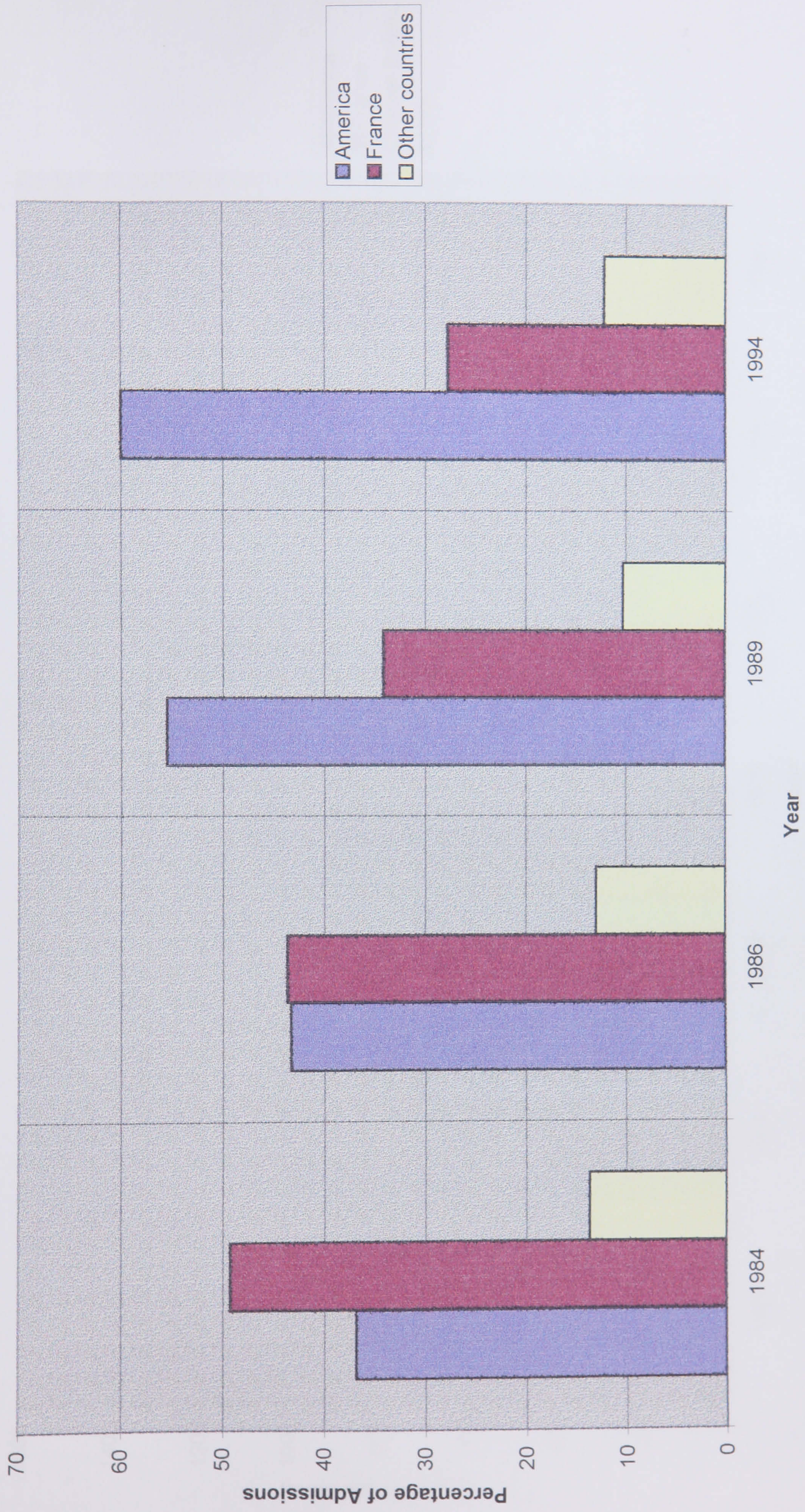


Chart 2: Audience figures for America, France, Great Britain and Italy (1960-1990)

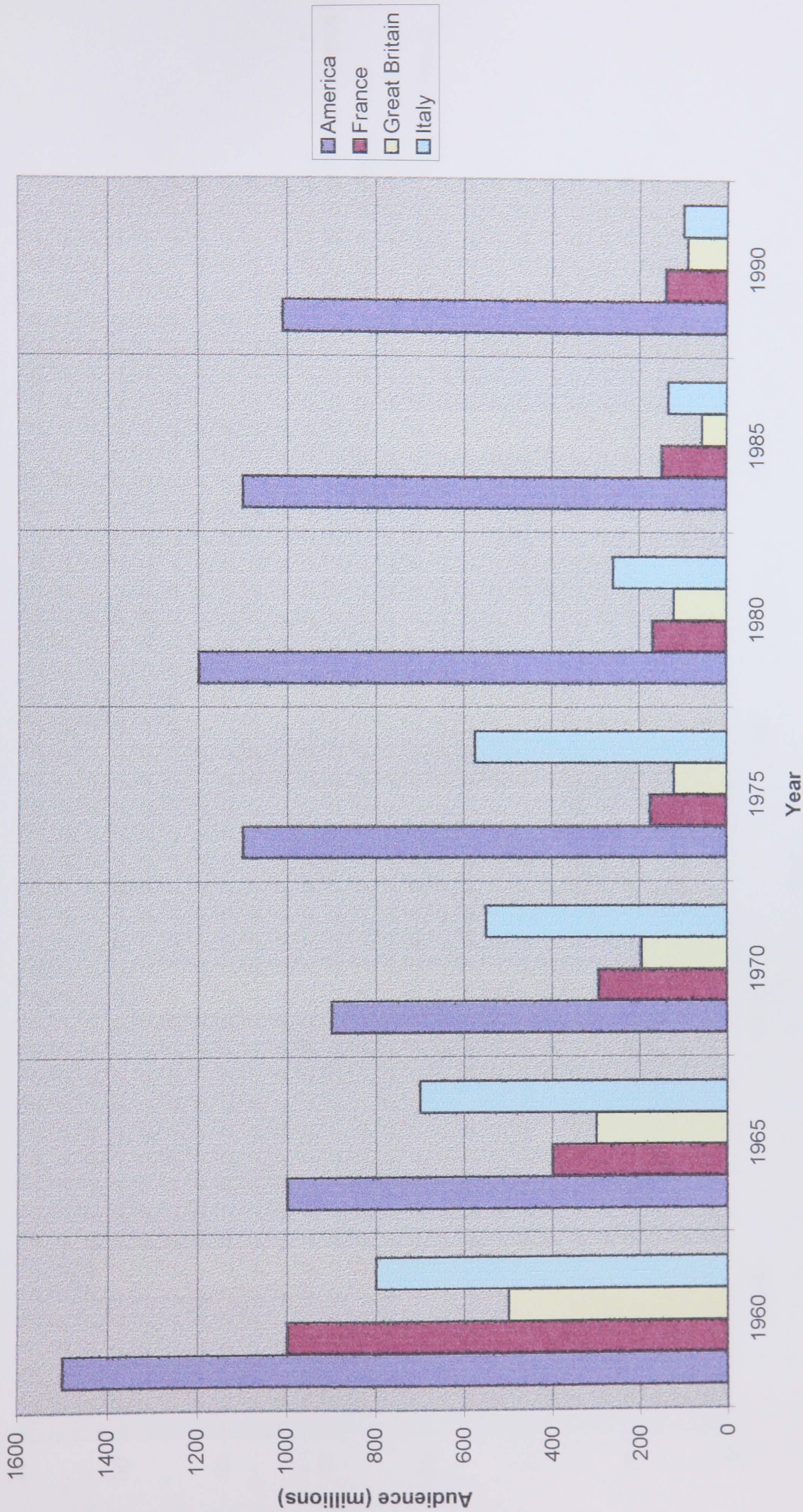
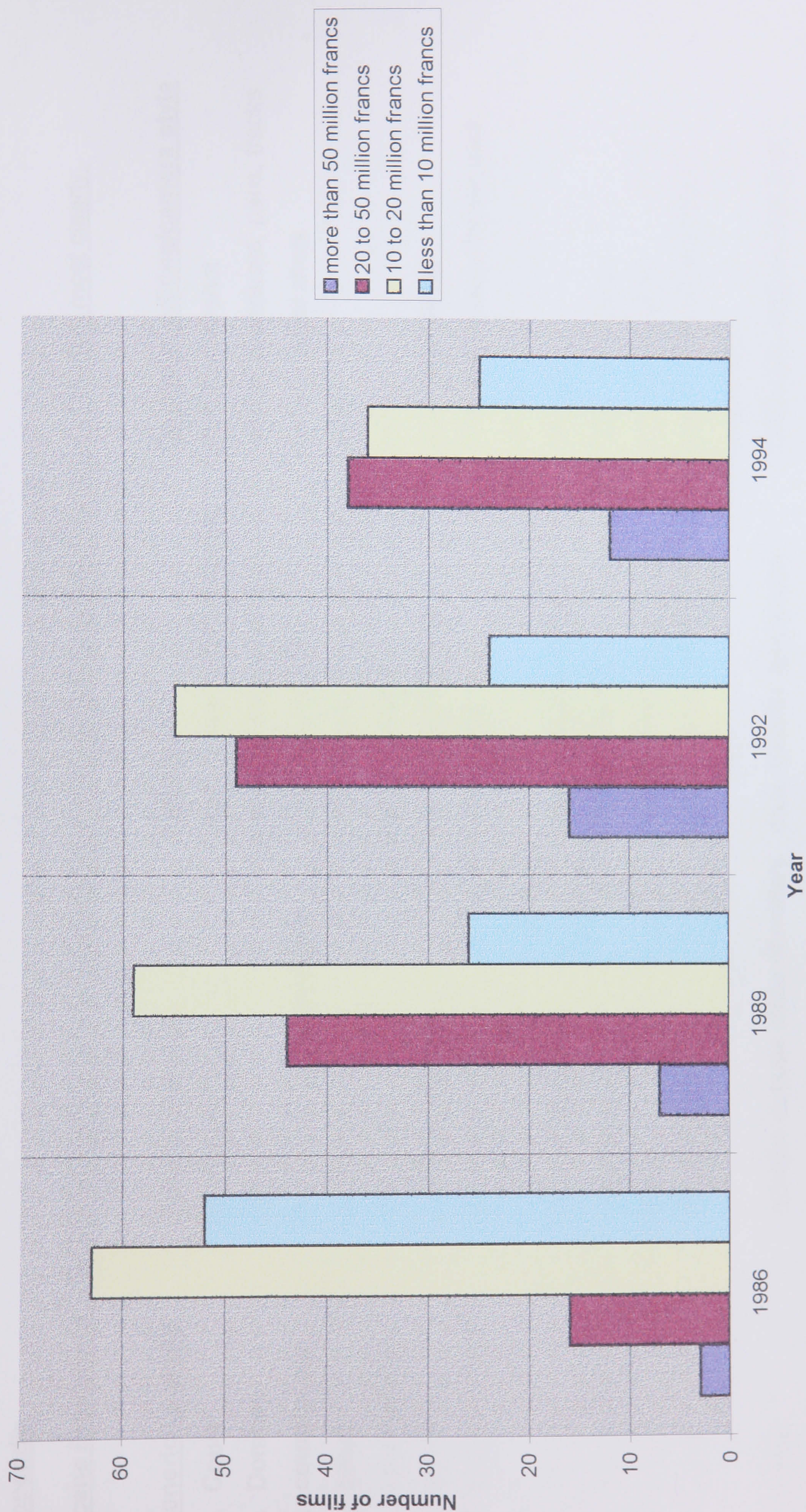


Chart 3: Sizes of budget for French films (1986-1994)



Appendix

Scene Breakdown. The highlighted scene headings indicate the oppositional narrative structure of the film most clearly.

<u>Generic Location</u>	<u>Specific Location</u>	<u>Lighting</u>	<u>Dominant editing/camera style</u>
1. Court	de Blayac's house	very low key, external source	shot countershot
2. Dombes	swamps	natural but subdued light	mobile, Steadicam, pans, tracks
3. countryside	through <i>la France profonde</i>	bright natural light	mobile, aerial shots
4. court	de Blayac's house	diffuse low key, external source	static
5. countryside	near Paris	full natural light	mobile
6. court	de Blayac's house	low key, candle-light	shot countershot
7. exterior court	de Blayac's house	natural light	initial long take and then shot countershot
8. woods	close to Versailles	low key, natural light	fast editing
9. Bellegarde's house	drawing room	dark, candle-light	static, long takes
10. court	library	dark, exterior light source	shot countershot
11. court	official's office	dark, exterior light source	track to left and then shot countershot
12. court	corridor outside office of military engineer	dark, exterior light source	close-ups, shot countershot
13. Bellegarde's house	games room	exterior light source	long take

14. court	salon with de Blayac and de Vilecourt	low key, exterior light source	close-ups, shot fast editing, track	countershot
15. outside court	country house	natural light	close-ups, shot countershot	
16. Bellegarde's house	dressing room	exterior light source	close-ups	
17. court	salon	diffuse exterior light source	fast cutting, close-ups	
18. exterior shot	woods near Bellegarde's	natural light	shot countershot, mobile light	
19. Bellegarde's house	games room	bright light from exterior	extreme close-ups, track	
20. Bellegarde's house	salon	candle-light	slow track, shot countershot	
21. outside Bellegarde's	garden	bright natural light	track, shot countershot in medium close-up	
22. Bellegarde's house	in the laboratory	bright natural light	close-up	
23. court	in lawyer's office	exterior light source	slow track, close-ups	
24. Bellegarde's house	at the well	bright natural light	medium close-ups	
25. Bellegarde's house	salon	bright light	medium close-ups	
<i>'heritage' shot of Paul dancing outside the Bellegarde house</i>				
26. court	in corridor with Gueret	very low key, chiaroscuro	slow track, shot countershot	
27. court	genealogist	low key, exterior light source	shot countershot	
28. <i>'heritage' shot of Mathilde in rose garden</i>				
Bellegarde's house	rose garden/lab	natural light	shot countershot, close-ups	

29. to court	carriage	natural light, exterior source	mobile camera, shot countershot in close-up
30. court	salon	diffuse light from exterior	pans, mobile camera, close-ups
31. court	garden	bright natural light	tracks, medium close-up, close-up
32. Bellegarde's house	in laboratory	low key, exterior light source	slow cutting, pans, close-ups
33. Bellegarde's house	external	natural light	180° pan, static
34. court	corridor/salon	chiaroscuro/exterior light source	mobile close-up
35. Bellegarde's house	external	bright natural light	track, close-up
36. court	genealogist	very low key, expressionistic lighting	close-up, shot countershot
37. court	de Blayac's house	exterior light	fast cutting, close-up, shot countershot, fetishisation of Madame de Blayac
38. Bellegarde's house	well	natural light	mobile camera, short takes, shot countershot
39. court	waiting room	low key, exterior light source	slow tracks, extreme close-ups
40. court	salon	diffuse light	mobile camera, close-ups,
41. court	exterior	dark, natural light	close-ups, track
42. Bellegarde's house	woods	natural light	fast cutting, hand-held camera
43. court	de Blayac's bedroom	exterior light source	shot countershot

44. Bellegarde's house	woods	natural light	slow focus pull to close-up
45. court	de Blayac's bedroom	exterior light source	close-up, long take
46. court	gardens at court	natural light	close-up, shot countershot
47. Bellegarde's house	salon	candle-light, very low key	one long take
48. court	de Blayac's house	candle-light	slow track, mobile camera
49. Bellegarde's house	in stable	natural light	mobile camera
50. countryside	journey to Dombes	natural light	aerial shot
51. court	salon	exterior light	track, mobile camera, close-up
52. Dombes	home of dying child	exterior light	close-up (end with fade)
53. court	salon	diffuse exterior light	mobile camera, close-up, end on long take
54. Dombes/court	exterior/de Blayac's bedroom	twilight/candle-light	close-up
55. court	de Blayac's kitchen	candle-light	track to left, close-ups
56. court	de Blayac's bedroom	exterior light	close-up
57. court	salon	exterior light	mobile camera, close-ups
58. court	de Blayac's bedroom	bright exterior light	shot countershot
59. court	exterior	bright natural light	long take, close-up/long shot
60. court	exterior	bright natural light	long shot, close-up
61. Bellegarde's house	exterior	natural light	shot countershot
62. Bellegarde's house	laboratory	exterior light	close-up, static

63. court	de Blayac's house	exterior light	long take, close-up
64. woods	journey to duel	exterior light	close-up, pan, long shot
65. woods	duel	mist, diffuse light	slow motion, close-ups
66. court	de Blayac's house	exterior light	medium shot to close up
67. journey to court	carriage	exterior light	close-up
68. Bellegarde's house	pond	natural light	slow movement, mobile
69. court		exterior light source	long shot to close up
70. Bellegarde's house	waiting room	candle-light	close-up, shot countershot
71. court	ball	candle-light	crane shot, mobile camera, shot countershot, slow motion

72. England

73. intertitle