

BA Thesis

How postcolonial melancholy manifests in contemporary
British screen productions: two examples examined

Lars Vunderink

S4318331

BA Werkstuk Engelse Letterkunde

First reader: Dr. Margu rite Corporaal

Second reader: Dr. Usha Wilbers

Semester 2

Email: s4318331@ru.nl

ENGELSE TAAL EN CULTUUR

Teacher who will receive this document: Dr. Corporaal, Dr. Wilbers

Title of document: BA Thesis Lars Vunderink

Name of course: BA werkstuk Engelse Letterkunde

Date of submission: 16-06-2019

The work submitted here is the sole responsibility of the undersigned,
who has neither committed plagiarism nor colluded in its production.

Signed

Name of student: Lars Vunderink

Student number: s4318331

Abstract

This thesis looks into how the Victorians viewed the relations the British Empire had with both India and Ireland and compares their views with how these perspectives are portrayed in two contemporary British screen productions: *Victoria & Abdul* (2017) and the episode *Faith, Hope and Charity* (2017) from the second season of the ITV series *Victoria* (2016). It poses the following question: do contemporary cinematic representations of India's and Ireland's relationship accurately portray the way the Irish and Indians were actually viewed in that specific timeframe? Ireland as colony has been selected because its peculiar position in the colonial world has divided scholars in the field of Irish studies and postcolonial studies. India has been selected because it has a far less ambiguous position as a colony of the British Empire. In order to grasp how the Victorians viewed these colonies, writings and cartoons from that era are discussed. Current popular opinion in Britain seems to be positive and even nostalgic towards the idea of having an empire. Research by scholars, such as Paul Gilroy and Wayne Modest & Anouk de Koning, have shown that this nostalgia lies at the heart of much of the 'anxious politics' seen in the Western world today. *The Guardian* even argues that these sentiments have given the world Brexit because of a longing for the greatness Britain held when it was still a global empire. This thesis explores whether these sentiments of postcolonial melancholy have permeated expressions of popular culture such as contemporary screen productions. The theoretical framework this thesis uses in order to analyse this screen productions centres around three concepts: imperial 'othering', postcolonial melancholy and cultural memory. The study has found that although the views portrayed in these productions acknowledge feelings of guilt towards Britain's colonial past, they still shows signs of postcolonial melancholy in some elements, particularly in the matriarchical depictions of Queen Victoria.

Keywords: Postcolonial melancholy, cultural memory, imperial othering, Orientalism, Queen Victoria, the British Empire, postcolonialism, colonialism, contemporary screen productions, India, Ireland, *Victoria & Abdul* (2016), *ITV Series Victoria* (2016)

Table of contents

Introduction	p.1
Chapter 1 From theoretical framework to historical representations	p.8
Chapter 2 Victoria & Abdul	p.20
Chapter 3 Victoria & The Great Irish Potato Famine	p.29
Conclusion, implications and suggestion for further research	p.39
Bibliography	p.43
Appendices	p.50

Introduction

But the Empire as a vital and viable system was not always irrelevant to Irish people or Irish concerns, nationalist or Unionist. Ireland, as part of the metropolitan core of the Empire, supplied many of its soldiers, settlers and administrators. In modern times, Irish people have both sustained and undermined the British imperial system.¹

Over the years scholars in the field of Irish studies and postcolonial studies have been divided about where to locate Ireland in the colonial world.² The conquest of the island by the Anglo-Normans started in the high middle ages³, long before the British Empire came into being and began its colonial ventures into non-western territories. As some critics like Luke Gibbons, David Lloyd and Clair Wills have argued, we cannot simply draw analogies between Ireland's colonial position and other territories under British imperial rule⁴. Ireland was culturally less alien to the British public than other colonies of the British Empire, and the country is more comparable to other Western European societies⁵ than it is to a more exotic colony, such as India. At the same time, in 1801 Ireland legally became a colony within the United Kingdom of Britain and Ireland was brought further into the fold by the Act of Union, therefore it was no longer a separate political entity with its own parliament. To further complicate the picture: the Irish were not just subject to colonial administration from the London government but also enthusiastic partners in many of the British imperial ventures in other colonies.⁶ The Irish were part of the colonial administration in India, as seen in Kipling's *The Taking of*

1 Keith Jeffery, *An Irish empire? Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press: 1996), 1.

2 Joe Cleary, *Outrageous Fortune: Capital and Culture in modern Ireland* (Dublin: Field Day Publication, 2007): 14.

3 Williams, *Political History of Ireland, Showing Its Connexion with England, From the Anglo-Norman Conquest, in 1172, by Henry II., to the Present Time* (n.p.:1843):10.

4 Cleary, *Outrageous Fortune*, 15.

5 Cleary, *Outrageous Fortune*, 20.

6 Cleary, *Outrageous Fortune*, 21.

Lungtungpen, where an Irish private takes part in the raid on an Indian village⁷ and an Irishman such as Thomas Henry Kavanagh could be revered as an imperial hero in Britain for his involvement in the defence of Lucknow during the Indian mutiny of 1857.⁸ Keith Jeffery (1996) calls the fact that Ireland's relationship to and involvement in the British Empire was both imperial and colonial, paradoxical.⁹ Irish nationalists readily identified themselves with anti-colonial struggles and against the British elsewhere in the world¹⁰ and the Indian people also identified with the Irish and were inspired by Irish insurgencies against the British: in 1930 Bengali revolutionaries even tried to re-stage the Easter Rising by using the tactics and methods employed by the Irish.¹¹

While the Irish rarely identified with colonised British India, despite the fact that both countries experienced similar problems such as recurring famines under British government, both groups were often likened by British politicians as well as the media during the Victorian era. Both India and Ireland were classified in the category of 'backwardness', which for many was connected to a mission of imperial reform.¹² Popular media representations were critical of the Catholic Irish in the same way as they denounced the colonized Indians, for they approached both groups with strong ethnic bias. Depictions of the Irish in the cartoons of *Punch Magazine*, a satirical magazine based in London that was founded in 1841 and continued publishing for over 150 years, portray the Irish as a burden to the British. For example, in the *Modern Sisyphus* (1844, *Punch* magazine, appendix 1) Ireland's relationship to Britain is portrayed as the ancient Greek Myth of Sisyphus. Britain, like Sisyphus, is

7 Rudyard Kipling, "The Taking of Lungtungpen" (1889), *Kipling Society*, http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/rg_lungtungpen1.htm

8 Michael Silvestri, *Ireland and India: Nationalism, Empire and Memory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 2.

9 Jeffery, *Irish Empire*, 1.

10 Silvestri, *Ireland and India*, 49.

11 Silvestri, *Ireland and India*, 2.

12 Peter Gray, "Famine and Land in Ireland and India, 1845-1880: James Caird and the Political Economy of Hunger" *The Historical Journal* 49, no. 1 (2006): 194.

doomed to roll up a huge boulder, represented by Ireland, up a mountain, but it will keep rolling down, and Britain will have to keep rolling it up the mountain for eternity. This suggests the futility of caring for the Irish economically, by investing in the country's development, but it also represents the strength of the British. We see a similar treatment of the Irish in *The English Labourer's Burden* (1849, Punch Magazine, appendix 2), where an ape-like Irishman sits on the back of an English labourer. In light of Darwin's theories, this cartoon portrays the Irish as racially inferior simian creatures that are indolent and profit from the strength of the noble and hardworking Englishman.

A similar vision of the Indians as inferior permeates Rudyard Kipling's poem 'The White Man's Burden', in which he calls colonized people "half man, half child."¹³ He claims that it is the duty of the white man to educate, feed and protect the indigenous people. George Trevelyan wrote in 1864 that the Indian populace was far better off under British rule because the British were "governing them in a more systematic and downright manner than they have ever been governed before."¹⁴ James Stuart Mill wrote in 1817, before India was ruled by the British Raj, that he was certain that the Indians were barbarous, uncivilized, and incapable of governing themselves and that England's order and security would ensure India order and prepare the country to eventually enter a higher state of civilisation.¹⁵ It seems that there is more optimism towards the civilizing of Indians than the Irish. Like the illustrations from *Punch Magazine* discussed above portray, any investment into improving the situation of the Irish is seen as a futile effort or an obnoxious burden. These views of British superiority versus the barbarism of the Irish and Indians are in line with the political ideals of Victorian

13 Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden, 1899" in *Empire writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature*, ed. Elleke Boehmer (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1998), 273.

14 George Trevelyan, "The Gulf Between Us, 1864" in *Empire writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature*, ed. Elleke Boehmer (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1998), 9.

15 Eileen P Sullivan, "Liberalism and Imperialism: J. S. Mill's Defense of the British Empire." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 44, no. 4 (1983): 605.

imperialism in the first place. Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914) justified the imperial mission of the British in his *The True Conception of Empire* (1897), calling the British a “great governing race”¹⁶, and claiming “that the British have redeemed districts as large as Europe from the barbarism and the superstition in which they have steeped for centuries”.¹⁷

The imperial past today

Much time has passed since Ireland and India gained their independence from the British and we would assume that contemporary perspectives on colonial rule and feelings of imperial nostalgia would have shifted from pride to shame and guilt, considering all of the heinous crimes committed by the colonizers. The question, in other words, arises how the British view these past imperial relationships with both colonies today. A survey conducted by YouGov in 2014 finds that feelings towards the imperial past tend to be positive among the British public. Most people who participated in the survey (59%) believe that the British empire is something to be proud rather than ashamed of, and a third of British people would actually like it if Britain still had an empire.¹⁸ Paul Gilroy has given an explanation for why this is the case, and he calls these residues of imperial and colonial culture postcolonial melancholia, which constitutes a form of nostalgia. As he argues, Britain remains paralyzed by the inability to really work through the loss of global prestige and economic and political benefits it had when it was an empire.¹⁹ Gilroy does not stand alone in perceiving this trend of imperial nostalgia in today’s Britain. *The Guardian* also refers to these nostalgic feelings to explain why Brexit could occur, branding the Brexit campaign as an act of imperial nationalism,

16 Joseph Chamberlain, “The True Conception of Empire, 1897” in *Empire writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature*, ed. Elleke Boehmer (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1998), 213.

17 Chamberlain, “The True Conception of Empire, 1897”, 214.

18 Will Dahlgreen, “The British Empire is ‘something to be proud of,’” *YouGov*, July 26, 2014, <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2014/07/26/britain-proud-its-empire>

19 Paul Gilroy, “Joined-up Politics and Postcolonial Melancholia” *Theory Culture & Society* 18, no. 2-3 (2001): 162.

stating that “a driving force behind the leave campaign was to ‘take the country back’ and return to its former glories.”²⁰ If imperial nationalism still exists in the public consciousness, are there then also traces of it to be found in contemporary popular culture?

Answering this question, will help fill a niche which is currently not adequately addressed in academia yet. These sentiments of neo-imperialism, or postcolonial melancholia, are common in British news media but little research has been done in universities on the subject. Most studies focus on the history of the British Empire and its effect and impact on contemporary Britain and its ex-territories. (Cain & Hopkins 2002²¹ , Johnson 2003²², Black 2015²³, McPhee & Poddar 2007²⁴). Other academic publications focus on how neo-imperialism is present in the contemporary public consciousness and how it influences the political climate in the West. (Gilroy 2005²⁵, Hage 2016²⁶, Modest & de Koning 2016²⁷, Kiely 2010²⁸) But no studies focus on how these sentiments are reflected in popular culture today, such as in British screen productions depicting Britain's imperial relations in Victorian times, when the empire was at the height of its influence.

20 Kehinde Andrews, “Colonial nostalgia is back in fashion, blinding us to the horrors of empire,” *The Guardian*, August 24, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/aug/24/colonial-nostalgia-horrors-of-empire-britain-olympic>

21 P. J. Cain and A. G Hopkins. *British Imperialism, 1688-2000*. 2nd ed. (Harlow: Longman, 2002)

22 Robert Johnson. *British Imperialism. Histories and Controversies*. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

23 Jeremy Black, *The British Empire: A history and a debate*. (London: Routledge, 2005)

24 Graham McPhee and Prem Poddar. *Empire and After : Englishness in Postcolonial Perspective*. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007)

25 Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial melancholia*. (New York: Columbia University Press: 2005)

26 Ghassan Hage, ‘‘État de Siège: A Dying Domesticating Colonialism?’’ *American Ethnologist* 43, no. 1 (2016)

27 Wayne Modest & Anouk de Koning: “Anxious Politics in the European City: An Introduction” *Patterns of Prejudice* 50, no. 2 (2016)

28 Ray Kiely, *Rethinking Colonialism*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

Aims and purpose

The purpose of this thesis will therefore be to look for evidence of imperial nationalism in the way contemporary British screen productions portray the British Empire's imperial relationships with both India and Ireland. Considering that popular cultural expressions such as film can be seen as a reflection of the current zeitgeist, it will be interesting to see whether the feelings of postcolonial melancholy permeate contemporary British screen productions, or whether feelings of guilt are more dominant in this field. In order to get an understanding of how Ireland is viewed as a colony, this thesis has chosen to contrast it with a country that holds a less ambiguous position as a colony of the British Empire – India. India is considered to be a more 'traditional' kind of colony: exotic, distanced far from the British Isles and more culturally alien to the British. The Victorian era has been chosen as a timeframe to contrast with the present day because it was when the influence and domains of the British Empire were at its peak. Many of the films portraying this period do so as if it was a time of grandeur, not particularly focusing on the ugly side of the imperial enterprise but rather portraying it as if it was a time of grandeur for Britain.

Chapter 1 will provide the theoretical framework for this thesis. First, it will explore how imperial 'othering' was used as a device to justify the imperial mission in Victorian times. This can be used as comparative material to examine how modern popular culture depicts the Empire's relationship with Ireland and India against a framework of 'othering'. Second, it will examine the academic concept of postcolonial nostalgia and discuss how this sentiment permeates the British public consciousness. Studying this material will help us discover if contemporary British screen productions contain these sentiments. Finally, it will discuss how specific narrative frames are selected in order to present a story that establishes a cultural memory that serves an ideological purpose, rather than portray historical events factually. This will allow for an examination of what narrative frame the screen productions

in this study have selected and why.

Two instances of contemporary British film will be studied: for perspectives on India, the 2017 film *Victoria & Abdul* will be discussed in Chapter 2. In this film an elderly queen Victoria befriends an Indian attendant to the disapproval and distaste of her court. For perspectives on the Empire's relationship with Ireland, Chapter 3 will analyse the sixth episode of the second season of the ITV series *Victoria*, which was broadcasted in 2017. In this episode a young queen Victoria persuades the British parliament to find a solution to the crisis caused by the Great Irish Famine.

By examining past and present perspectives on the Irish in the colonial world and contrasting these to the perspectives on India, we may get a better grasp at how Britons currently view Ireland's and India's position. The question guiding this thesis through this line of inquiry is therefore: how do modern cinematic representations of Indian and Irish relationships to the British Empire in the Victorian era differ from the way the Irish and Indians were actually viewed in that specific timeframe? The hypothesis is that even though some feelings of guilt towards Britain's behaviour in its colonial past will be represented in these cinematic representations, there will also be elements present that convey Britain's longing for the 'grandeur' or 'prestige' it held when it was still a global empire.

Chapter 1: From Theoretical Framework to Historical Representations

There will be three academic concepts this thesis will use in order to approach the representations of the Indian and Irish people in literature of the past and present-day screen productions. Firstly it will look at the idea of imperial ‘Othering’ and see how historically the device of ‘othering’ has been deployed to enforce British superiority over colonized people. Subsequently the thesis will explore Paul Gilroy’s academic concept of postcolonial melancholy or imperial nostalgia to see how the longing for British greatness on the world stage affects the way the British public thinks about its imperial past. Finally the concept of cultural memory will be explored as a tool to assess how the nation’s collective memory differs from context to context and how it may influence the public’s perspective on its imperialistic ventures and domination of India and Ireland.

Imperial ‘Othering’ & Orientalism

Ania Loomba (2005) writes that “knowledge is not innocent but profoundly connected with the operations of power.” She claims this Foucauldian insight is what informed Edward Said’s seminal work *Orientalism*, “which points out the extent to which ‘knowledge’ about ‘the Orient’ as it was produced and circulated in Europe was an ideological accompaniment of colonial ‘power.’”²⁹ Said’s work primarily addressed how the West chooses to represent non-Western cultures, and Orientalism implies that the imperial structures of power are maintained due to a dichotomy created, that positions the superior ‘West’ on one side and the backward ‘Orient’ on the other. It is this dynamic, which generated a sense of Oriental backwardness.³⁰ The Oriental is depicted as irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike,

29 Ania Loomba, *Colonialism / Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 2005), 42.

30 Edward Said, *Orientalism*. (London: Penguin 2003), 7.

“different”; thus the European is viewed as rational, virtuous, mature, “normal.”³¹ This framework can indeed be applied to Victorian constructions of imperial relations. At first, the British seemed indifferent to Indian society and culture, Edmund Burke and the Indian historian Ghulam Hussain Khan Tabatabai noticed in the previous century, but soon it was replaced by increased cultural and racial aggression.³² In 1835 Lord Macaulay dismissed Indian learning as worthless, promoting the British in India to create “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect”. Convinced of their superiority, the British sought to entrench it with profound social and cultural reforms wherever they could in India.³³

The Indian was, moreover, often thought of as an ‘Other’, “new caught sullen peoples, half-devil and half-child” as described in Rudyard Kipling’s poem *The White Man’s burden*³⁴. The degrading of a colonized people to childlike and inferior as opposed to the moral and technological superiority of the British as justification for the British’ imperial mission is a strategy frequently found in writings from the Victorian era. In the earlier mentioned *The True Conception of Empire* (1897) Chamberlain writes that British rule can only be justified if it adds to the happiness and prosperity of the colonized people, and he claims it has brought security, peace and comparative prosperity to countries that never knew these blessings before.³⁵ He goes on to describe the British as “the great governing race”³⁶, “who have redeemed district as large as Europe from the barbarism and superstition in which they have

31 Said, *Orientalism*, 40.

32 Pankaj Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire: The Intellectuals who remade Asia*. (New York: Farrar, Strous & Giroux 2012), 35.

33 Mishra, *Ruins of Empire*, 35.

34 Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden, 1899”, 273.

35 Chamberlain, “The True Conception of Empire, 1897”, 213.

36 Chamberlain, “The True Conception of Empire, 1897”, 213.

been steeped for centuries.”³⁷ We see again that the original Indian culture is positioned as barbaric, backward and inferior and Chamberlain goes on to state that the imperial mission involves heavy responsibility on part of the British colonizer, which strikingly aligns with Kipling’s description of the White Man’s burden. When examining contemporary British screen productions it is crucial to see whether these depictions of ‘Othering’ permeate the artform as a justification for Britain’s past imperialist mission in India.

At first glance the Irish do not seem to fit into this framework of Orientalism, considering the fact that Ireland was far less culturally alien to the British public than an exotic eastern colony such as India is. Yet in some ways the Irish were ‘internal aliens’ to the British because on the one hand they were to be assimilated, Anglicized, tamed, cured; on the other hand, they persisted in their strange mannerisms, customs, religious practices.³⁸ Horning (2013) writes that English sources have long compared Gaelic society on the eve of plantation with the Natives of the New World. These sources explicitly treated an undifferentiated Irish population as the ‘other’.³⁹

Visual depictions from the Victorian era confirm that the Irishman was indeed subjected to a great deal of ‘othering’. Cartoons published in *Punch Magazine* convey an image of the Irishmen as a hairy ape-like brute, prone to violence and characterized by the grotesque features of his body. An explanation of why these simian depictions existed can be found in differences in religion: the Irish were catholic and were therefore were seen as being in possession of “dark minds” and enslaved by “chains of medieval superstition”.⁴⁰ The

37 Chamberlain, “The True Conception of Empire, 1897”, 214.

38 Donal Casey, “19th-Century Irish ‘Ape-Man’ Cartoons and the Aesthetic of the Grotesque” (PhD diss., Dublin: Trinity College: 2015), 38.

39 Audrey Horning. “Towards a Colonial Ireland?: the Sixteenth century” in *Ireland in the Virginian Sea: Colonialism in the British Atlantic*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2013), 42.

40 Casey, “Irish Cartoons”, 16.

crudest depictions are of the Fenians, Irish nationalists who were opposed to the British rule. In *Young Ireland in Business for Himself* (1846, Punch Magazine, appendix 3) we see the portrayal of the Young Ireland nationalists as ape-like and ready to commit violence as they are stacking arms. The sign stating ‘Pretty little guns for pretty little children’ indicates that they are naive and childish. There are two ways the Irish were depicted in cartoons: either as the shabbily dressed, scheming Fenian terrorist, or in stark contrast, as a smooth-limbed, demure Hibernia who buries her face in stern and strong Britannia’s protective shoulder⁴¹ as seen in *Two Forces* (1881, Punch Magazine, appendix 4) or *The Fenian-Pest* (1866, Punch Magazine, appendix 5). Ireland’s representation as a vulnerable woman under threat of beast-like Fenians serves as a justification for Britain’s colonisation of the island. In some instances the portrayal of Irish nationalists were infused with Gothic horror, when they were portrayed as vampire bats looking to suck the life blood out of the defenceless Hibernia, as seen in *The Irish Vampire* (1885, Punch Magazine, appendix 6) or even as a grotesque and violent abomination, referencing Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, as seen in John Tenniel’s *The Irish Frankenstein* (1882, Punch Magazine, appendix 7) or Matt Morgan’s *The Irish Frankenstein*. (1869, Tomahawk, appendix 8) Although the Irish were not as exotic and geographically distant as the Indian, the Irish were still considered to be culturally alien and backwards in comparison to the British. Said’s framework of Orientalism therefore also applies to Irish-British imperial relations.

The Irish “were not alone in often being perceived as savages who needed to be subdued. Other colonial peoples such as Indians were widely viewed in a similar manner – albeit, as with the Irish, with occasional complex nuances.”⁴² The examination of cartoons from *Punch Magazine* depicting India or imperial relationships with the country from the

41 Casey, “Irish Cartoons’, 15.

42 Casey, “Irish Cartoons”, 15.

same time period shows that the portrayal of the Indian is a lot less crude than the depictions of the Irishman. Indians are often portrayed as being helpless figures that are in need of Britain's governing hand or as victims of imperial mismanagement. Furthermore, when they are portrayed as violent figures, cartoonists opt for the symbolic representation of a tiger: exotic, violent and dangerous as seen in *The British Lion's Vengeance on the Bengal Tiger* (1857, Punch Magazine, appendix 9) or in *The New Year's Gift* (1858, Punch Magazine, appendix 10), but not as degenerate, ape-like and subhuman like the representations of the Irish Nationalists. There are other beastlike representations of India such as in *Chunee the Second*, (1844, Punch Magazine, appendix 11) where we see India symbolised by Chunee the elephant who had to be put down after being brought to England, because he became increasingly aggressive due to a rotten tusk, but he refused to die. This specific cartoon is not intended to portray India in a degenerate fashion, rather it tries to convey a message that this imperial affair is rather convoluted and one-sided, and India is rather helpless against the muskets of imperial Britain.

Cartoons concerning the famine are also more favourable to Indians than they were to the Irish. Suffering Indians are not portrayed as a burden to the English like the Irish were in *The English Labourer's Burden* (1849, Punch Magazine, appendix 2): lazy ape-like brutes of small stature parasitizing on the hard work of the strong Englishman. In *Disputed Empire!* (1877, Punch Magazine, appendix 12) we see how famine is represented by death and the starving Indians are at the knees of a rather powerfully looking Queen Victoria, while she uses her arm to keep death away from the Indians. *Punch Magazine* was unsympathetic towards Victoria assuming the title of Empress of India and the irony expressed in the cartoon is that the magazine felt that Britain did not have the capacity to respond to famines

happening on the other side of the world.⁴³ *Second Thoughts* (1897, Punch Magazine, appendix 13) also shows us starving Indians in need of relief from Britain, who is symbolised and embodied by the recurring character of John Bull, but we also see imperial mismanagement represented by the secretary of state for India, who only now is officially prepared to receive the contributions for the famine relief. This signals that British Imperialists in India could have intervened at an earlier stage.

Mending the Lesson (1873, Punch Magazine, appendix 14) shows us a John Bull who forcibly removes a basket of food from an Indian woman to appease the British Miss Prudence. The caption reads “Progress: ‘take my dear, don’t interfere with the laws of supply and demand’, to which John Bull responds: “I don’t, Miss Prudence. She demands, and I supply”. The cartoon criticizes the exploitation of the Indian people by the British Empire. This mentioning of the laws of supply and demand is rather reminiscent of the Irish Famine, when whig politicians resisted governmental interference with the free market as “trade would be disturbed”⁴⁴ and food was still being exported out of Ireland⁴⁵, even though the population was starving. It is striking that the actions of the imperial mission in India are questioned in these cartoons, whereas this is not the case for cartoons depicting the Irish from the same time period. *War and Famine* (1900, Punch Magazine, appendix 15) shows that it is the responsibility of the British Empire to guard its subjects against war and famine, but when the Great Famine struck the island of Ireland a mentality of responsibility is not represented in the political cartoons of *Punch Magazine*. The imperial mission in India is sometimes questioned in cartoons like as *The New Year’s Gift* (1858, Punch Magazine, appendix 10), where the

43 William E. Fredeman, “A Charivari for Queen Butterfly: “Punch” on Queen Victoria” *Victorian Poetry* 25, no. 3/4 (1987), 53.

44 George Bernstein, ‘Liberals, the Irish Famine and the Role of the State’ *Irish Historical Studies* 29, no. 110 (1995), 521.

45 James S. Donnelly, *The Great Irish Potatoe Famine*, (Glouchestershire: The History Press 2010), 61.

British are hesitant to take over direct control of the country after the British East India Company failed to resolve the uprising in 1857, because the tiger does not seem to be very tame after the suppression of the mutiny.

The same uprising also gave rise to positive sentiments towards Britain's imperialist ventures. Lord Alfred Tennyson's 1880 poem "The Defense of Lucknow" describes the suppression of Indian rebellion in 1857 as an act of heroism on the part of the British colonizers. The banner of Britain remains raised high among the chaos of the siege laid to the city to the sounds of Scottish bagpipe music⁴⁶. The Englishman is portrayed as a hero who crushes the native mutineers who try to test their rule over their homeland of India. The year 1857 was a turbulent one for British imperialists in India and the events of that summer were represented as 'The Indian Mutiny'. These outbreaks of incendiarism and violence were represented as an aberration of a few fanatics, who did not want to put forbidden meat in their mouths, in order to preserve the British self-image. A.N. Wilson (2006) describes what the Victorian opinion was on the matter: "These maniacs - so the British Historians saw things - were prepared to reverse all the benefits of civilisation which had been brought to them by the East India Company for the sake of returning to the most superstitious adherence to a backward-looking religion."⁴⁷ These tactics of reducing a nation's struggle with the oppressive governing of an imperial power to merely just a few violent outbursts of a fanatical minority is strikingly similar to how the British portrayed Irish nationalists as a violent subhuman minority of Irish society in Victorian visual culture. *Physic For Fenians* (1866, Punch Magazine, appendix 16) draws a comparison between Irish and Indian nationalism and rebellion. England, represented by a large well-dressed doctor, inspects a

46 Lord Alfred Tennyson, "The Defense of Lucknow, 1880" in *Empire writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature*, ed. Elleke Boehmer (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1998), 59-60.

47 A.N. Wilson, *The Victorians*. (London: Hutchinson 2002), p. 206.

poorly dressed, unkempt and ape-like Irishman, and claims he has the cure for such dangerous symptoms of rebellion because he has recently subdued a similar case in India, referring to the Indian Mutiny of 1857. These examples of Victorian visual culture give us a glimpse of the differences and similarities of how both colonized peoples were regarded in that time period and can be used as comparative material to examine how modern popular culture depicts the Empire's relationship with Ireland and India against a framework of 'othering'.

Imperial nostalgia / postcolonial melancholy

In 2005 academic Paul Gilroy wrote the following for *The Guardian*: "The vanished empire is essentially unmourned. The meaning of its loss remains pending. The chronic, nagging pain of its absence feeds a melancholic attachment. This is both to Nazism - the unchanging evil we need to always see ourselves as good - and to a resolutely air-brushed version of colonial history in which gunboat diplomacy was moral uplift, civilising missions were completed, the trains ran on time and the natives appreciated the value of stability."⁴⁸ Gilroy tries to convey the message that the loss of British imperial prestige has left a sense of melancholy in the British public which in turn has caused them to choose a favourable 'airbrushed' narrative frame for their colonial history. Postcolonial melancholia is a term first coined by Gilroy, and this is explored further in his work *Postcolonial Melancholia* (2004). Its premise is perfectly illustrated by the phrase 'put the great back into Great Britain', an idea put forth by former culture secretary Jeremy Hunt during former prime minister David Cameron's promotional campaign 'GREAT' for the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.⁴⁹ Gilroy's theory states that

48 Paul Gilroy, "Why Harry's Disoriented about Empire" *The Guardian*, January 15, 2005, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2005/jan/18/britishidentity.monarchy>

49 James Pamment, "Putting the GREAT Back into Britain: National identity, Public-Private Collaboration & Transfers of Brand Equity in 2012's Global Promotional Campaign" *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 17, (2015), 263.

the longing for the time when Britain was a global power is the cause for much of the criticism of multiculturalism in Britain today, which in turn has given rise to what Modest & de Koning (2017) call ‘anxious politics’, “characterized by heightened anxieties about the fate of the different nation-states that constitute Europe, and based on a projection of the ills currently imagined to face Europe—insecurity, unemployment, lack of housing—on to specific subjects, often racialized Others.”⁵⁰ In a 2011 speech former prime minister David Cameron stated that multiculturalism had “failed”, stating that it had dissolved the British national identity, shared values and collective identity, which in turn “makes it impossible for groups to integrate because there is nothing to integrate into.”⁵¹ Ghassan Hage (2016) argues that the migrant crisis of the last couple of years gave Europe a feeling “of being besieged by the very people whom one is actually colonizing, which is paradoxically, part and parcel of the history of colonialism.”⁵² Hage makes the point that part of the population that wants to shut the borders completely for these migrants seem to have forgotten that the British Empire had ruled and exploited the very countries some of these migrants come from. Gilroy said during a lecture given in Utrecht: “Guilt and self loathing permeate our culture but it seems they cannot be acknowledged. If the bloody, disturbing history of empire does emerge unexpectedly through the screen memory and fantasy of benign imperial humanitarianism, people prefer to imagine themselves to be its victims rather than its beneficiaries and agents.”⁵³ Gilroy makes the point that the British public is in denial over the crimes of their

50 Wayne Modest & Anouk de Koning, “Anxious Politics in the European City: An Introduction” *Patterns of Prejudice* 50, no. 2 (2016), 98.

51 “Multiculturalism: What does it mean?” *BBC*, February 9, 2011.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-12381027>

52 Ghassan Hage, “État de Siège: A Dying Domesticating Colonialism?” *American Ethnologist* 43, no. 1 (2016), 2.

53 Paul Gilroy, “War, Race and Europe’s Postcolonial Melancholia” Lecture. Nicolaïkerk, Utrecht. September 16, 2009.

imperial past. Rather than acknowledging feelings of guilt, they choose to twist the narrative in such a way that they are no longer guilty of the crimes of the past.

The current Brexit-climate of Euroscepticism in the United Kingdom seems to have been sparked by simplifications of complex political situations offered by a rise of populist thought.⁵⁴ The leave campaign stressed one important message: “putting the ‘Great’ back into Great Britain.”⁵⁵ *The Guardian* writes that it is these imperial phantasies of (former) prime minister Theresa May of Britain’s greatness that has given the world the path towards Brexit. On the other hand, the supporters of the remain campaign associated Britain’s greatness with the promotion of British values, such as democracy, human rights, rule of law, rather than the demonstration of British power.⁵⁶ If these imperial fantasies exist in the public consciousness or cultural memory of the British people, then surely some traces of it must exist in cultural expressions such as contemporary film. The films will be examined to see if the imperial relations with India and Ireland have chosen a favourable airbrushed frame in order to maintain an image of imperial prestige or if they acknowledge some feelings of imperial guilt.

Cultural memory

Much of how the British Empire and its relationship with India and Ireland is remembered in the collective memory of the British public has to do with what narrative is selected to be recorded as history. The selective narrative frame is always coloured by emotions and politics

54 Patrick Wintour. “German Ambassador: Second World War Image has Fed Euroscepticism.” *The Guardian*, January 29, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jan/29/german-ambassador-peter-ammon-second-world-war-image-of-britain-has-fed-euroscepticism>

55 “Brexit and UK Foreign Policy: ‘Keeping Britain Great’ or ‘Putting the Great Back In Britain?’” *UCL European Institute* (blog). Nov 3, 2017. <https://ucl-brexit.blog/2017/11/03/brexit-and-uk-foreign-policy-keeping-britain-great-or-putting-the-great-back-into-great-britain/>

56 Gary Young, “Britain’s Imperial Phantasies have given us Brexit” *The Guardian*, February 3, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/03/imperial-fantasies-brexit-theresa-may>

and not just a factual retelling of an event. Ross Poole (2008) writes that “collective memory has some of the qualities of a myth: it provides stories that members of a group share and through which they can identify salient characteristics of the kind of people they believe themselves to be. But it also has some of the qualities of history: it makes claims about the actual past.”⁵⁷ This ties in with the concept of postcolonial melancholy and the ‘anxious politics’ it produces, as certain groups with Britain will chose to construct an identity and narrative where the gruesomeness of the colonial past is not represented truthfully but rather within a framework that suits the characteristics they want their group to possess. The Indian and Irish will select a very different narrative frame in order to emphasize the experiences their peoples endured during the British colonial reign. Astrid Errl (2006) in her study on works of fiction that have described the Indian Mutiny of 1857 has found that “what the past appears to be in a given culture of memory – lived experience, myth, contested terrain, source of certain habits and stereotypes, or even a collective fiction – arises not so much from the remembered events themselves, but from the specific mode of re-presenting these events.”⁵⁸ During the Victorian era, fictional retelling by British authors of the Indian Mutiny often used a monumental mode and amplified aspects of the events in order to demonize the Indian mutineers⁵⁹ and make the British troops more heroic.⁶⁰ This is what Errl calls ‘Victorian Myth-making’, the transforming of the past into myth in order to convey a truth and therefore exert a normative (what shall we do) and formative (who are we) power.⁶¹ This shows us how literary representations of an event are concerned with what ideological

57 Ross Poole, “Memory, history and claims of the past”, *Memory studies* 1, no. 2 (2008): 157-158.

58 Astrid Errl, “Modes of representing the ‘Indian Mutiny’ in British novels” *European Journal of English Studies* 10, no. 2. (2006), 179.

59 Errl, ‘Modes mutiny’, 170.

60 Errl, “Modes Novels”, 167.

61 Errl, “Modes Novels”, 167.

functions they want to fulfil.⁶² Literature can serve as a site of commemoration, where stories of the past are recollected, retold and reflected in varying ways⁶³ but it is not the only site where cultural memory can be formed. This can happen in a large variety of media ranging from documentaries, museums, photographs to personal accounts.⁶⁴

This raises the question of how representations in popular culture, such as screen productions, choose their narrative frameworks and what ideological perspective is chosen in order to present it. In the past the British were anxious to establish their monolithic version of the past,⁶⁵ and it will be interesting to see what version of the past contemporary filmmakers have constructed in the screen productions of *Victoria & Abdul* (2016), and in the episode *Faith, Hope, and Charity* (2017) from the second season of the ITV series *Victoria* (2016). In its analysis of both screen productions this thesis will investigate what narrative frame the filmmakers have selected, and what ideological purpose the frame of choice tries to fulfil. It will explore how the specific events in these fictional retellings are used as a site of commemoration and if there are instances of Victorian myth-making to be found.

62 Erll, "Modes Novels", 165.

63 Astrid Erll & Ann Rigney, "Literature and the production of cultural memory: introduction." *European Journal of English Studies* 10, no. 2, (2006), 112-113.

64 Erll & Rigney, "Cultural memory: introduction", 111.

65 Erll, "Modes Novels", 170.

Chapter 2 Victoria & Abdul

Historical context

India had been under direct control of the British since 1858, after the suppression of the Indian Mutiny and the dissolution of the British East India Trading Company and in 1876 Queen Victoria was made Empress of India with the passing of Royal Titles Bill.⁶⁶ Behind this move was conservative prime minister Benjamin Disraeli, who performed this without consulting the opposition and who we see being criticized for it in *New Crowns for One Ones* (1876, Punch Magazine, appendix 17), where we see Disraeli portrayed as a mischievous and foreign ‘other’ who seeks to corrupt the British Monarch. This cartoon is a play on the story of ‘Aladdin’, in which a magician tries to trick people on the street to exchange his old lamp for a shiny new one and the cartoon implies that Disraeli is like a magician from the ‘backward’ Orient who tries to trick Victoria into a bad deal.⁶⁷ This image of Disraeli as an exotic trickster also has an anti-Semitic tone, as Disraeli was mistrusted and bullied for his Jewish heritage throughout his career, even though he had been baptised as a Christian before his 13th birthday.⁶⁸ Disraeli was criticized for formally making Victoria Empress of India, but she already referred to herself as Empress of India several times, long before the bill had even been passed.⁶⁹ Victoria had visited Ireland four times but she had never set foot in India. Most of her letters concerning foreign affairs were about Europe, but most of her imperial interest were focused on India.⁷⁰ Her fascination for India was kindled mostly by a nostalgia for

66 Miles Taylor, “Queen Victoria and India” *Victorian studies* 46, no. 2 (2004), 264.

67 Kallie Szczepanski, “Colonial India in Cartoons”, *ThoughtCo*. May 23, 2019.

<https://www.thoughtco.com/colonial-india-in-cartoons-195499>

68 Jonathan Freedland, “Disraeli by David Cesarani Review – the Jewish Prime Minister and Antisemitism.” *The Guardian*, June 11, 2016.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jun/11/disraeli-the-novel-politician-by-david-cesarani-review>

69 Taylor, “Victoria and India”, 265.

70 Charles. V. Reed, “British Royals at Home with the Empire”, in *Royal Tourists, colonial subjects and the making of a British World, 1860-1911*. Manchester: Manchester University Press (2016), 5.

Prince Albert, who had demonstrated a keen interest in India.⁷¹ Colonial propaganda presented her as a maternal and justice giving queen, for even though the British world became increasingly more defined along ethnic and racial lines in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century, the British propagated a universalist discourse of imperial citizenship with the mythologised image of the matriarchal queen Victoria at its centre.⁷² This was done in order to give the British Empire's colonial subjects the sense that Victoria was also their queen and she cared for them in a motherly fashion.

In June 1887 Victoria welcomed her first two Indian servants into the royal household, Mohamet Buksh and Abdul Karim, to serve as waiters. She wanted to learn “a few words of Hindustani to speak to my servants. It is a great interest for to me for both the language and the people”. Abdul Karim soon became a favourite of the Queen, and it did not take very long before he was bestowed the title of Munshi Hafiz Abdul Karim - the Queen's official Indian secretary.⁷³ All this was found quite appalling by Victoria's family and the staff of the royal household, which was mostly due to racism. Carolly Erickson writes in *Her Little Majesty* (1997): “The rapid advancement and personal arrogance of the Munshi would inevitably have led to his unpopularity, but the fact of his race made all emotions run hotter against him. Racialism was a scourge of the age; it went hand in hand with belief in the appropriateness of Britain's global dominion. For a dark-skinned Indian to be put very nearly on a level with the queen's white servants was all but intolerable, for him to eat at the same table with them, to share in their daily lives was viewed as an outrage.”⁷⁴

71 Reed, “British Royals, 6.

72 Reed, “British Royals”, 128.

73 A.N. Wilson, *The Victorians*, 504-506.

74 Carolly Erickson, *Her Little Majesty: The Life of Queen Victoria*. (New York: Simon & Schuster 1997), 241

Analysis Victoria & Abdul

Victoria & Abdul is a 2017 British film that centres on the relationship Queen Victoria had with her Indian servant Abdul Karim during the later stages of her life. The conflict in this film comes from the disapproval the household and the royal family have of this relationship. The film is directed by Stephen Frears, and notable cast include: Judi Dench as Queen Victoria, Ali Fazal as Abdul Karim, Eddie Izzard as Bertie, Prince of Wales, Abdeel Ahktar as Mohamet Buksh and Tim Pigott-Smith as Henry Ponsonby.

We see two different kind of approaches Indians could have towards the British Empire embodied in the two major Indian characters, Abdul Karim and Mohamet Buksh. Abdul embodies a passion to serve the English crown. He feels honoured that he has been invited to present the queen with a Mohar, a ceremonial coin. He seeks the affection of the queen and he wishes to teach her the language, history and culture of the people she rules over in India, and as a reward he is bestowed with privileges and titles. “You don’t realize what a great honour it is for us” Abdul says to Mohamet when they are on their way to England. Mohamet does not share in Abdul’s enthusiasm however. His character serves as a mouthpiece for criticism of England’s domination over India and other overseas dominions of its empire. He illustrates this when he says: “these people are the exploiters of a quarter of all mankind. Do you really think they give a hoot about us?” When they are on their arduous journey from India to England on sea, he mentions that his father had fought in the Indian Mutiny, and he calls the British savages for eating pig and later he calls them barbarians for using gelatine, made out of cow bone, to stiffen jellies. This is a reversal of the dichotomy presented by Said’s Orientalism, for Mohamet considers the British to be backward barbarians, implying that he finds his own Indian culture superior. This is also reminiscent of how George Trevelyan wrote in *The Gulf Between Us* (1864) how he found it ridiculous that

Indians could not look up to the English as superiors, merely because they had a habit of eating cow and pig.⁷⁵ Trevelyan's observations are an example of how Indians were 'othered' because of their 'irrational' prejudices, and we can find hints of it in how this film treats the character of Mohamet. "Five thousand miles to present a bloody medal to the oppressor of the entire Indian subcontinent." he complains to Abdul while he displays symptoms of seasickness. Mohamet does not respect the Queen's authority over India, whereas Abdul does. It is interesting to explore the symbolism of the fact that Mohamet's health keeps deteriorating during the course of the film. He is so out of place in England that he physically responds to it and he really wants to leave to return home, but due to the actions performed by Abdul that win the affection of Victoria, he is trapped in England, which ultimately causes his death. The symbolism one can read into this is that the Indians who reject British rule decline, while those who seek its affection, like Abdul, can thrive.

Abdul is really portrayed as naive, almost childlike, because he does not realise that he is upsetting the order, something Mohamet does notice. Abdul does not realize that he has to adhere to certain codes of conduct when serving Victoria, and he ends up kissing her feet, which shocks everyone at the court and enrages his superior. His naivety is also demonstrated when they are in a train on the way to Florence and he reads the sign on the emergency break that reads 'Do Not Pull', which triggers him to pull it. Furthermore, throughout the film Abdul seems to be oblivious to why the court disapproves of his relationship to the queen, and why they detest the fact that he is given privileges and titles. This naivety or an almost childlike innocence enforces the Victorian image spread by the likes of Kipling and Chamberlain, that Indians are like children, and need the governing hand of the British in order to thrive in the world. This image of Indians as her children is further enforced when

75 George Trevelyan, "The Gulf Between Us, 1864" in *Empire writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature*, ed. Elleke Boehmer (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1998), 9.

she lists her achievements in this specific order: “I am eighty-one years of age. I have had nine children, forty-two grandchildren, and almost a billion citizens”, and the list goes on. This enforces the image that she is the mother of all her colonial children in the British Empire. This image is familiar to us, as discussed before, for the imperial government and media tried to fashion her as maternal figure of the British Empire. In the film, this maternal role is further illustrated when the Queen is on her deathbed and she calls Abdul her son: “Goodbye. Take care, my sweet son.” The film tries to depict an image of queen Victoria as a caring maternal figure, who had India’s best interest at heart. This is enforced by the closing image of her massive statue in the gardens of the Taj Mahal, while Abdul kisses her feet. The kissing of the feet symbolises the servitude of Abdul to Queen Victoria, and in turn it creates an image of servitude of India to the British Empire. This is a striking contrast with the opening shots of the film when we see Abdul on his way to his work as a prison clerk, and we witness Indians in chains while a British officer opens the prison door. These seem to be prisoners of the British Empire, symbolising that the Indians are slaves to Britain’s imperial will. The opening and ending feel as if the film is tonally confused about what message it aims to convey. The opening scene tries to convey a message that the British Empire is an oppressive force that takes the Indians freedom away from them, whereas the closing scene depicts an Indian that is gladly willing to serve the matriarchal figurehead of the British Empire.

Racism and the upsetting of the hierarchical structures of Victorian society are the cause of all the conflict in this film. Abdul’s close connection with the queen, and the privileges and titles he receives are found unacceptable by all other British characters in the film, for example prime minister Salisbury, her son Bertie, Prince of Wales and the entire staff of her household. When finding out that Victoria has proclaimed Abdul as her Munshi, a Muslim spiritual teacher, Bertie says: “Has she completely lost her mind?! She’s the head of

the church of England, for God's sake! What's the Archbishop of Canterbury going to say?"

This shows that the Victorian society depicted in this film does not want an oriental religion of an 'other' to corrupt the Protestant monarch. When Victoria decides to give Abdul a knighthood, a move with which she hopes to get Abdul the respect she believes he deserves, her household threatens to resign. They state that they believe that knighting Abdul "degrades the very concept of knighthood" because he comes from "a very low family" and he is "coloured". This illustrates how the Victorians had a very rigid belief in the class system, but more importantly how racist the Victorians were. The entire premise of the British imperial mission was based on the fact that the British race was considered culturally and morally superior to the Indians, and therefore it gives that them the right to rule over them. By giving Abdul titles and privileges he is put on par with English nobility and this would upset the hierarchical structure of Empire, and therefore contradict the imperial ideology that allows them to justify dominance over India in the first place. For this reason, the tableau performed in the midway point of the film horrifies prime minister Salisbury. Abdul plays a sultan of Persia, the king of all kings, and he proclaims that they are all under his power. Abdul is naive so he does not realise the implications of this imagery, but Salisbury comments "I'm trying to keep an empire together and it looks like they're running the place." The film portrays this traditional Victorian viewpoint as the backward one, because it attempts to keep dominating India by enforcing their superiority by maintaining a strict hierarchy based on racial and ethnic bias. The only British character who does not care for this hierarchical system is Queen Victoria, and through her we learn that India does have a rich culture, which is not inferior to the British culture. The film also takes this stand, by portraying the critics of Abdul as racist and rigid believers of a strict hierarchy. The film also tries to frame these critics as bigots, who because of their racism and firm belief in upholding the hierarchical structures

and the imperial ideology of Victorian times, cannot accept Queen Victoria's treatment of Abdul as an equal to the British people.

Where the Indians fall within the Victorian hierarchy of power is displayed in multiple scenes in the film. They belong at the very bottom of the structure that is presented. The other servants despise the Indians, they are beneath them. This is illustrated in the scene in Scotland, when Abdul & Mohamet are intrigued by the Scottish kitchen staff having a party with music, but as soon as Scottish staff see the Indians wishing to partake, they close the door. The message is clear: Indians are not welcome, they are beneath the working classes of Britain. Their position in the hierarchy is also made clear during the scene displaying the dinner and ceremony where they have to present the Mohar to the Queen, for they have to wait in the corridor away from the guests, and away from the other staff. When they are out of that position and are exploring the kitchen, they are treated like disobedient children: "For God's sake just wait were you were told" the master of ceremonies tells them. Abdul disobeys orders twice more, which seems to win the affections of the queen. He is told not to look her in the eye when walking back after presenting the Mohar, but he does. Later he is told not interact with anyone when presenting a jelly and he speaks to the queen and kisses her feet. This disobedience of the strict code of conduct mandated by the Victorian hierarchical system intrigues the queen, and she starts to treat him as if he were from her own class. This portrayal of Victoria seems to promote multiculturalism and equality, which goes against imperial dogma that tries to fashion an image of the British as a superior race, that is therefore burdened with taking care of the naive and childlike indigenous peoples of their colonies.

Unlike other characters in the film, Queen Victoria shows a keen interest in Indian language, traditions, history and culture. When Abdul gives her a first lesson in Urdu, the Muslim version of Hindustani, her son Bertie, (who would later become Edward VII) asks her if she thinks it is "entirely appropriate?" "I am the Empress of India" she responds "what

could be more appropriate than learning Urdu?” The household and the prime minister are also critical of the fact that she has one of her rooms turned into a Durbar room, where Indian objects, portraits and art are on display. This room works as a *lieux de mémoire*, a site of remembrance, which functions as an archive of art and culture.⁷⁶ Victoria has no experience or memory of these artefacts, so she has this archive commissioned so she can celebrate and discover Indian culture. All British characters except for the Queen are disinterested and ignorant of the differences between Hindu and Muslim culture in India, but when they find out she is learning the Muslim variant of Hindustani they are shocked. This is emblematic of contemporary fears in the Western world of Muslims, an anxiety which is at the heart of many right-wing populist movements. The British disapproval of the Queen’s affections towards Indian culture most likely stems from the imperial dogma that British culture is superior to Indian culture, and celebrating or even learning about their culture works as an acknowledgement that the cultures are each other’s equal. In order for empire to succeed the relationship between India and England must not be of respect and mutual admiration but of superiority and dominance of the English over the Indians.

Conclusion

Though this film offers a nuanced view on many aspects and seems to condemn the racism and hierarchical structures of the British Empire, Queen Victoria is still portrayed as matriarch of the British Empire, who is caring and loving of her colonial subjects. This is the same imagery in which she was fashioned in imperial propaganda. The film does acknowledge feelings of imperial guilt towards the imperial ‘othering’ the two Indian characters endure, mostly by depicting the characters who are opposed to the Queen’s

⁷⁶ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoires” *Representations* 26, (1989), 12.

relationship to Abdul as being rigid believers of an hierarchy that is based on racism. Indian culture is viewed as inferior by the British in this film, and a *lieu de mémoire* such as the Durban room, which celebrates and commemorates it, is met with disgust and shock by all the British characters who visit it, except for the Queen. We see here how Said's dichotomy of the 'backward' Orient and the superior west is used as an ideology to justify British dominance over India. Victoria's tolerance and acceptance of other cultures embodies how this film and how the contemporary Britons might feel how the British Empire should have treated its Indian subjects. The narrative frame selected in this fictional retelling is slightly confusing, for it tries to fulfil an ideological purpose that promotes multiculturalism and rejects hierarchical systems based on racism, but it also contributes to the Victorian myth-making by portraying Victoria as a caring matriarch of her colonial subjects. The narrative frame is critical of Britain's imperial sway over India, but at the same time still uses the imagery that was used as a tool by the British Empire to propagate a universalist discourse of imperial citizenship. This seems to be an example of postcolonial melancholy, where the filmmakers have chosen to maintain the iconography of imperial prestige in their portrayal of Queen Victoria. Another clear example of postcolonial melancholy is that Indian subjects who reject their imperial citizenship in this film, like Mohamet, perish whereas those who embrace it, like Abdul, thrive. This gives the impression that the Indians were better off accepting British rule, than resisting it. This film seems to be rather ambivalent in its attitude towards Britain's colonial past.

Chapter 3: Victoria & the Great Irish Potato Famine

Historical context

It is impossible to give an overview of Anglo-Irish relationships in Victorian times without mentioning the Great Irish Potato Famine, of which the effects can still be felt all across the globe. Emily Mark Fitzgerald (2013) writes: “the events of 1845-52 in Ireland known as the ‘Great Famine’ constituted a cataclysm unequalled in Irish history. With more than a million dead from starvation and disease, and more than a million in exodus from Ireland to Britain, North America and Australia, today Ireland remains one of the only European nations whose population is smaller than during the nineteenth century. Precipitated by the potato blight, the Famine was exacerbated by a colonial administration whose failure to alleviate the crisis proved disastrous: the impact of the Famine devastated Irish culture, language, and social demographics, formed the basis for the massive Irish diaspora and paved the eventual road to revolution and Irish independence.”⁷⁷ The trauma endured by the Irish people from this event is part of their cultural memory, and we can see a lot of sites of commemorations being erected in the past two decades with the rapid monumentalisation of the Famine in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Britain, Canada, the United States and Australia, which suggests a renewed global interest in the shared ‘memory’ of the Famine, which has left a deep imprint on Ireland and its diaspora.⁷⁸

One of the ‘shared memories’ that have emerged from the commemoration of the Famine, is portrayed in the Irish film *Black ’47* (2018) where an Irishman blames the British for Ireland’s troubles during the harshest year of the Famine and enacts revenge on them. The film chose a narrative frame reminiscent of John Mitchel’s *The Last Conquest of Ireland*

⁷⁷ Emily Mark-FitzGerald, *Commemorating the Irish Famine*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press (2013), 1.

⁷⁸ Mark-FitzGerald, *Commemorating*, 2.

(Perhaps) (1861), where he had proclaimed the famine as ‘artificial’ as he pointed to the fact that all across Europe potato crops had been struck by potato blight, but only in Ireland did it lead to a catastrophe and this gave rise to what is perhaps his most famous line: “The Almighty, indeed, sent the potato blight but the English created the Famine.”⁷⁹ This is understandably the chosen narrative frame for this event, but it creates a very polarizing dichotomy of the Irish being helpless and the English being evil, and such a black-and-white representation of history seems to be inaccurate.

Some English liberals did not want to intervene with the free market and put the blame of the famine on the ‘innate idleness’ of the Irish.⁸⁰ This shows how some of the English were biased towards the Irish, and saw the effects of the famine as something that the Irish themselves were responsible for. It is also worth noting that prior to the famine a large portion of Ireland’s rural population was already living in extreme poverty. A traveling French aristocrat wrote in 1835 that he had “seen the Indian in his forests and the negro in his irons and I believed in pitying their plight, that I saw the lowest ebb of human misery; but I did not then know the degree of poverty to be found in Ireland. Like the Indian, the Irishman is poor and naked; but he lives in the midst of society which enjoys luxury and honours wealth.”⁸¹ In 1835, John Revons a young radical blamed the landlord-tenant system installed by the English for Ireland’s poverty and the impossibility to escape from it: “From the moment the farmer starts making a profit, the landlord raises the rent. The result is that the farmer is afraid to make improvements.”⁸² This illustrates how the poverty of the Irish was not something they

79 John Mitchel, *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)*, (1861) ed. Patrick Maume, (Dublin: UCD Press, 2015), 219.

80 A.N. Wilson, *The Victorians*, 83.

81 Nicholas Mansergh, *The Irish Question 1840-1921*, 3rd Edition, (London: Unwin University Books, 1975), 43.

82 Mansergh, *Irish Question*, 55.

were actually entirely responsible for, because the landlord-tenant system that the English put in place was so broken, that any attempts of the Irish farmers to improve in their work would be counterproductive because the landlords would immediately capitalize on it. The ‘idleness’ that the English accused the Irish of, seems to have been an effect of how the English governed and oppressed the Irish, and all this happened while the English lived in wealth.

What is important to keep in mind before analysing the episode concerning the Irish Famine in ITV’s *Victoria* is what kind of relationship Queen Victoria had with Ireland, and what her role was during the Great Famine. What is indicative of her attitude towards Ireland is perhaps how much time she actually spent there. She spent almost seven years of her sixty-four year reign in Scotland, but merely five weeks in Ireland.⁸³ Queen Victoria was and is still not particularly loved in Ireland, as Irish nationalists had framed the Famine as a great atrocity committed by the British government, and it was almost inevitable that the blame cast upon the government would attach itself to the Queen.⁸⁴ The widespread belief that she made no financial contribution to assist her starving subjects in Ireland meant that she is widely remembered as ‘the Famine Queen’.⁸⁵ This is a myth propagated by Irish Nationalists,⁸⁶ as she actually made several donations, though not many, during the course of the famine.⁸⁷ This sentiment is perfectly reflected in the 1900 essay *The Famine Queen* by Irish nationalist Maud Gonne, which expressed how appalled she is by what would be the last visit Queen Victoria

83 Hector Bolitho, *Victoria: The Widow and Her Son* (New York: Appleton-Century Co 1934), p. 69.

84 James Loughlin, “*Allegiance and Allusion: Queen Victoria’s Irish Visit of 1849*” *History* 87, no. 288 (2002), 496

85 Jason King, “Christine Kinaely on Queen Victoria “The Famine Queen’s” Visit to Carton House. *National Famine Way*. <http://nationalfamineway.ie/christine-kinealy-the-famine-queen-at-carton-house/>

86 Loughlin, “*Allegiance and Allusion*”, 513.

87 King, “Kinaely on Victoria”

would ever make to Ireland. She claims the famine was “organised”⁸⁸ by the British and claims the Queen “hates”⁸⁹ the Irish population and she bids her therefore to return to “her own land”⁹⁰, a comment with which she denies the English crown’s legitimacy over Ireland. .Gonne claims that the purpose of the visit is to recruit Irishmen to fight in the British Empire’s “criminal wars”⁹¹ and those who do partake, Gonne brands as being “no longer Irishmen.”⁹² It is interesting to note that during Victoria’s first visit to Ireland in 1849, she was delighted at the reception of the Irishmen she encountered because she felt it implied that the Irish were loyal to the crown and constitution.⁹³ But she had only visited urban areas of Ireland and had not seen the devastating effects the famine had on the Irish countryside as the visit was carefully choreographed.⁹⁴

Analysis Faith, Hope & Charity

Faith, Hope & Charity is the sixth episode of the second season of the ITV series *Victoria* (2016). It aired on October the 1st, 2017 and was directed by Jim Loach. The story of this episode centres around the Great Irish Famine and how the English should deal with the issue. In the narrative constructed by this show, Victoria is portrayed as being very involved in the matter. Notable cast include Jenna Coleman as Queen Victoria, Tom Hughes as Prince Albert, Martin Compston as Dr Traill, Nigel Lindsay as Sir Robert Peel, Edward Bennett as Charles

88 Maud Gonne, “The Famine Queen, 1900” in *Irish Writing: An Anthology of Irish Literature in English 1789-1939*, ed. Stephan Regan. (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004), 184.

89 Gonne, “Famine Queen”, 184.

90 Gonne, “Famine Queen”, 185.

91 Gonne, “Famine Queen”, 185.

92 Gonne, “Famine Queen”, 185.

93 Loughlin, “Allegiance and Allusion”, 513.

94 King, “Kinaely on Victoria”

Trevelyan and Leo Suter as Edward Drummond,

Many of the aspects of the ‘othering’ of the Irish discussed previously are present in this episode. The section at the start of the episode that refreshes the audience’s memory on what happened before reminds the audience that an Irish employee has entered the royal household, Miss Cleary, and the palace steward Mr. Penge then tells her that “the royal palace is no place for papists”. Mr. Penge shows his disgust for the Catholic Irish on several occasions during the episode. He ridicules the Gaelic language when he examines a letter addressed to Ms. Cleary, stating that he thought “they spoke English in Ireland” and that the markings look like “hieroglyphics” to him. This is a rather crude remark to make, considering that the Gaelic language and culture were on the wane because of the devastation caused by the famine, which killed many native speakers of the language.⁹⁵ Later in the episode, Miss Cleary asks Mr Penge for an advance payment so she can support her family in Ireland, who are starving and under threat of being evicted from their farm, but he refuses and brands her request “some Hibernian attempt at humour”. He then says “I’m afraid, Miss Cleary, that you, like so many of your compatriots, must learn to live within your means.” This reflects the anti-Irish sentiment that the Irish themselves were responsible for the famine and that they were irresponsible with their resources.

The most obnoxiously anti-Irish character in the episode is Charles Trevelyan, who visits the royal palace to do some suggestions for the new Archbishop of Dublin. Victoria knows none of the suggested names because it was hard to find candidates of the “highest calibre” for the position. This is attributed to the Tithe War, when the catholic Irish refused to pay fees to the established Protestant church of Ireland which they did not belong to, and

95 Mark-FitzGerald, *Commemorating*, 1.

rioted.⁹⁶ This representation implies that the unruliness of Irish is to blame for the fact that candidates of high esteem do not care for the position. The stand that the TV series takes on the matter is represented by Queen Victoria, who acts as the voice of reason in the scene when she asks: “but if the peasants are catholic, then why are they paying money to a church they don’t belong to?” Trevelyan responds with that the Church of Ireland is “a vital bulwark against the forces of anarchy”. He also states that “the Irish, as a race, are prone to exaggeration”, which illustrates that the English saw the Irish as an entirely different race. This is an example of how the English ‘othered’ the Irish. The comparison of anarchy with Catholicism gives the impression that Trevelyan despises and distrusts the Irish and that they need the governing hand of Protestantism and England to have a stable society. This view is further cemented by his comment that “if the church would flounder, then the very foundation of Irish society would crumble” and therefore anarchy would ensue. Victoria was the head of the Church of England and therefore she was the ideological embodiment of the order and stability Protestantism would provide. It is interesting to see that this portrayal of Victoria does not really respond to Trevelyan’s prejudices against the Irish, which gives the impression that she does not share these prejudices and that she is not fond of the idea of oppressing Catholics because of their religion.

The episode opens with shots of a gloomy and dimly lit county Cork in Ireland, where the visuals and their dark characteristics set the tone for how dire the situation in Ireland was. The audio is from a sermon Victoria and Prince Albert are attending, and when we cut to them England is represented as bright and sunny, while Ireland is dark and brooding. This difference in colour scheme is maintained throughout the episode. The sermon being preached is one from the book of Exodus, where God releases a plague of locust on the lands of Egypt,

96 Jay Brown Stewart, *The National Churches of England, Ireland and Scotland, 1801-46*. (Dublin: Oxford University Press, 2001), 21.

which blackens the sky and leaves the land barren. This ties in with John Mitchel's phrase: "the Almighty, indeed, sent the potato blight, but the English created the Famine", and Albert then remarks that "pestilence and plague is part of God's will", implying heavily that the English had that mindset during that era, and also reminding us of the religious divide between Ireland and England. When a group of English parish priests come together in Ireland, including Dr Traill, an Anglican priest who fights for famine relief for all the Irish, one of the priests says he has set up a soup kitchen in his parish "in the spirit of Christian charity": people can only partake if they register as members of the Protestant church of Ireland, and he proudly says his congregation has swelled because of it. Traill says, later in the episode, that "famine has no denomination", for it kills Catholics and Protestants alike and he therefore feels that relief should also have no denomination. He represents the voice of reason and how current society might look back on the situation, wishing that more Englishmen would have been as compassionate. In the end Traill dies of disease himself, probably because he spent so much time feeding the weak and sickly Irish. He sacrifices himself, an Anglican priest, for the well-being of the Catholic Irish. At the end of the episode he gets a burial, which is attended by Catholic priests and the Irish peasants from his parish while we hear traditional Irish vocal lamentation being performed. The colour scheme is very dark, symbolizing that a bright and generous soul has left this world, something a lot of English priests in Ireland during the Famine were not. His character offers a model for how the imperial relations with Ireland should have been, caring and not religiously and ethnically biased. He symbolizes the imperial guilt some British could have towards how the British dealt with the devastation of the Famine.

"Every cloud, or should I say, rotten potato, has a silver lining", another Anglican priest insists in the same scene, clearly rejoicing that the famine is reducing the number of Catholics. The only priest who objects is Traill, who believes that religious denomination

should not influence access to famine relief. Traill states that during the Tithe War the Irish might have displayed “wilful disobedience”, “but this calamity is not of their making”. The other priests disagree and state that the famine “is entirely of their making.” They could scrape off the “black stuff” from the potatoes and boil what is left to make a “nourishing mixture”, or they could eat nettles according to Trevelyan. Albert later claims that the shortages are endemic and “an inevitable results of relying too heavily on one crop”. All these claims imply that the Irish are to blame for their own demise, and further imply that it is not the duty of the English to feed them. An English priest, furious with Traill illustrates this by questioning Traill’s notion “that we ought to feed a gaggle of potato-eating papists because they have brought this misfortune upon themselves through their own improvidence and fecklessness?”

Prime minister Robert Peel has a different and non-racist motivation for why he does not want a governmental intervention in the sustenance crisis. He feels that if he sends help to Ireland “then every factory worker in Manchester will ask why he must spend half his income on bread while the Irish peasant is given charity”. In parliament he states that if they would supply the Irish with food, they would lose the support of the Irish gentry, Irish clergy and the Irish farmer. Furthermore, he claims that it is impossible for the government to support four million people. Peel symbolises the political reasons of why some English politicians did not think it wise to give relief to the Irish people. The most important reason he does not want to relieve the famine is because it would cause a divide in his own party. Traill also points out the ridiculousness of the fact that he saw a lot of food was still being exported from an Irish harbour while the country was starving. This is implied to be the cause of the politicians who refused intervention in the free market system.

Eventually Peel gets persuaded by Victoria to relieve the famine, for which there is no historical evidence. If she had been particularly concerned with the wellbeing of her Irish

subjects during the famine than surely she would have donated more money, and if she really had pushed Peel for governmental intervention, than it most likely would have happened a lot sooner. This portrayal of Victoria is very caring and concerned with the wellbeing of her subjects in Ireland. She holds her crying child in her arms while she tells Robert Peel that “she will not let her people starve”, she will not have it on “her conscience” and she says “I would do anything to protect my children”. This scene creates the imagery of Victoria being the mother of Ireland, and this is rather reminiscent of the days of Empire were Victoria was branded as being this maternal figure for all her subjects within the British Empire. This imagery is an example of how imperial nostalgia has chosen a particular narrative frame for this screen production and also of how the film choses to maintain this cultural memory of Victoria. Queen Victoria is a symbol of imperial prestige and one of the most famous monarchs of all time and the makers have decided to portray her as having a large and positive role in resolving the Irish Famine. They ignored the fact that there is no evidence that she was this caring or involved in the matter, in order to portray her as a caring maternal and interventionist symbol of the British Empire, whose voice of reason and “strength of purpose” managed to persuade the political stubborn Peel and caused him to follow his conscience.

Conclusion

This screen production has some frankness and truth to it. Different kinds of responses towards the Irish are portrayed and they frequently framed as ‘others’. We have characters like Trevelyan, Penge, and the English priests in Ireland who share a distaste towards the Catholicism of the Irish and claim that the Irish themselves are responsible for their demise because they are idle by nature. This is another example of imperial ‘othering’, the Irish are portrayed as backward ‘others’ who want to profit of the strength of the industrious British. This is reminiscent of the portrayal of the Irish in the cartoon *The English Labourer’s Burden*

(1849, Punch Magazine, appendix 2). “But ma’am if the government provides food we would be creating a country of dependents. Why should a man struggle to earn his living while his neighbour lives in idleness?”, Trevelyan says, which also ties in with Peel’s comment that factory workers in Manchester would be displeased if Irish peasants would receive charity, while they spend half their wages on bread.

This film commemorates the famine as a tragic event, in which the English were too late to intervene because of the racial, ethnic and religious bias they had towards the Irish and because of the unwillingness of politicians to act. This can be interpreted as sentiments of postcolonial guilt. Yet by choosing a narrative frame where Victoria is portrayed as a caring maternal figure, a symbolical mother of Ireland, who according to this episode actively tried to get the government to intervene, they uphold Victoria as a maternal symbol of Empire. There is no evidence to support that she had such an active role in this affair and she never seemed to have much of an interest in Ireland, considering she only spent a couple of weeks there. By doing this they chose to contribute to the myth-making of Victoria as the great maternal figure of a British Empire, and completely deny the Irish Nationalist myth of the ‘Famine Queen.’

Conclusion, implications and suggestions for further research

Conclusion

The research question of this thesis was: do contemporary cinematic representations of India's and Ireland's relationship accurately portray the way the Irish and Indians were actually viewed in that specific timeframe? Both works showcase that there was a lot of racial bias towards these people in Britain in Victorian times and are quite frank in displaying how these people were 'othered.' Furthermore, the screen productions examined by this thesis contain examples of postcolonial melancholy but also feelings of guilt towards Britain's colonial past.

Indians are viewed as culturally inferior to the British in *Victoria & Abdul* (2017) by all British characters, except for Queen Victoria. This is because of the imperial ideology that British culture and morals are superior to the Indians. This superiority is what gives the British the right to rule over the Indians, who are naive and childlike, and need the British to guide them. Most characters are racist towards the Indian characters in the story, and object to Abdul receiving privileges and titles. This is because it upsets the rigid hierarchical structure of the Victorian, where Indians reside at the very bottom. This representation of Queen Victoria seems to be the only one who has some respect for Indian culture and history. The Irish in the episode *Faith, Hope, and Charity* (2017) of the ITV series *Victoria* are also viewed as inferior by some of the British characters there, but there is more nuance here. Several perspectives on the Irish and on how to deal with them are portrayed here. There are characters who display religious bigotry and racial bias towards the Irish. Characters like Charles Trevelyan, and the Anglican priests are unwilling to act because they believe that the famine is caused by the sheer idleness of the Irish. Prime minister Peel and Drummond feel they should not intervene because that would not be in line with party policy. Dr Traill and Victoria represents a model for what the imperial ideals should have been during the Famine, the British should have helped all the Irish regardless of their religious denomination. Traill is

the noble Englishman who wants to help the Irish but cannot because of the bigotry of his fellow countrymen. Just as in *Victoria & Abdul* Queen Victoria is portrayed as the one who is most compassionate about the colonized people.

This is where the two different representations of Queen Victoria are similar. In both instances Victoria is symbolized as a maternal figure who cares for the people of Ireland and India respectively. In *Faith, Hope, and Charity* Victoria is portrayed as if she was the one who persuaded the British government to relieve the famine in Ireland. There is no historical evidence to support that she was very caring for her subjects in Ireland or that she played a big role in the famine relief. By choosing this narrative frame of Victoria as a caring maternal figure, a symbolic mother of Ireland, the filmmakers contribute to the myth-making of Victoria as the great maternal figure of the British Empire, and completely deny the Irish Nationalist myth that she did nothing at all for the famine relief, which is how she got the nickname of 'the famine queen.' The Victoria of *Victoria & Abdul* seems to be alone in her willingness to promote equality and multiculturalism in a British society that quite rigidly wants to uphold the Victorian hierarchical structure. Both films are critical of the racism and bigotry that existed within the British Empire, but they both uphold an image of Victoria that was used by the British to solidify their rule over these colonies. *Victoria & Abdul* also takes a rather ambivalent stand towards Britain's imperial past in its treatment of the two Indian characters, the subservient Abdul is able to thrive, whereas Mohamet, who has a more hostile attitude towards the British, dies. The cultural memory that is created by this fictional retelling of Victoria's relationship to Abdul has elements of guilt towards the racial bias and British cultural superiority which was essential to the ideology of Empire, and the film does not regard Indian culture as inferior, and it voices its opinion on the matter through the character of Victoria. The ideological purpose of this narrative is to condemn the cultural and political dominance the British Empire claimed over India, and to promote values of mutual

respect and multiculturalism. However, this message is undermined by using the symbolism of Victoria as Matriarch of the British Empire, and by the treatment of Mohamet. *Faith, Hope & Charity* faces a similar issue. Its narrative frame also acknowledges the ethnic and racial bias that was part of imperial dogma to ‘other’ the Irish and claim British superiority over them, but it too maintains the cultural memory of Queen Victoria as a maternal and caring figure.

These modern British screen productions present the ethnic, racial and religious bias the Victorians had towards the Indian and Irish peoples quite honestly, but their treatment of Queen Victoria as the caring Matriarchal symbol is rather reminiscent of imperial propaganda and this is how feelings of postcolonial melancholy manifests in these productions. The productions both create a polished image of the Queen, so they can remember her as a model for what the imperial ideals should have been.

Implications

The postcolonial identity of Britain that these screen productions construct is one that feels guilty towards the racism and bigotry that was part of the hierarchical system put forth by the ideology of the British Empire, but does not want to distance itself from the imagery that the same ideology constructed for Queen Victoria. The narratives create a fictional version of Victoria that is tolerant and appreciative of other cultures and religions. Victoria represents a model for how contemporary Britons wish the British Empire had functioned. This tells us that shared cultural memory the British have of Queen Victoria is untarnished by the troubles caused by Britain’s colonial past, which implies that she is still an important cultural icon in Britain, and this sentiment seems to be rather nostalgic. It implies that if the British Empire had been more tolerant and egalitarian like Queen Victoria, the Empire might still be in

existence. Even though multiculturalism is criticized in the current political climate, its values are still promoted in popular culture. This is in contrast with the argument that nostalgic tendencies for past British greatness have fuelled recent Euroscepticism. These fictional retellings of historical events are not as monolithic, as writings from the Victorian era would be, for they contain a lot more nuance and acknowledge the ugly side of Britain's colonial past, but they still contribute to the myths established in the Victorian era.

Limitations & suggestions for further research

The scope of this research is quite limited as it only explores two contemporary screen productions that portray the Victorian's view on the British Empire's relationship with its colonies. It also only focusses on narratives that involve Queen Victoria, and therefore the results of this thesis only unveiled sentiments of postcolonial melancholy concerning her role in the British Empire. However this study has proven that popular culture does contain feelings of postcolonial guilt and melancholy and is therefore a site where different kinds of collective memories concerning the British Empire might be found. There is a wide array of screen productions and other expression of popular culture further research could focus on to see how aspects of postcolonial melancholia manifest in certain facets of cultural production. It would be interesting to see how contemporary Britain views the Boer Wars or the scramble for Africa. Some possible questions would be, what specific aspects of imperial grandeur do the British long for? What achievements of the British Empire do they consider something to be proud of? Do the British feel that some aspects of their cultural or technologic exports to the colonies are something the colonies should be grateful for?

Bibliography

Andrews, Kehinde. "Colonial nostalgia is back in fashion, blinding us to the horrors of empire," *The Guardian*, August 24, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/aug/24/colonial-nostalgia-horrors-of-empire-britain-olympic>

BBC "Multiculturalism: What does it mean?" February 9, 2011.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-12381027>

Bernstein, George. "Liberals, the Irish Famine and the Role of the State" *Irish Historical Studies* 29, no. 110 (1995): 513-536.

Black, Jeremy. *The British Empire: A history and a debate*. London: Routledge, 2005.

Bolitho, Hector. *Victoria: The Widow and Her Son*. New York: Appleton Century Co., 1934

Cain, P. J. and Hopkins, A.G. *British Imperialism, 1688-2000*. 2nd ed. Harlow: Longman, 2002.

Casey, Donal. "19th-Century Irish 'Ape-Man' Cartoons and the Aesthetic of the Grotesque" PhD diss., Dublin: Trinity College: Dublin 2015.

Chamberlain, Joseph. "The True Conception of Empire, 1897" in *Empire writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature*, ed. Elleke Boehmer. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1998: 212-215.

Cleary, Joe. *Outrageous Fortune: Capital and Culture in modern Ireland*. Dublin: Field Day Publication, 2007.

Dahlgreen, Will. "The British Empire is 'something to be proud of,'" *YouGov*, July 26, 2014, <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2014/07/26/britain-proud-its-empire>

Donnelly, James S. *The Great Irish Potatoe Famine*. Glouchestershire: The History Press, 2010.

Erickson, Carolly. *Her Little Majesty: The Life of Queen Victoria*. New York: Simon & Schuster 1997.

Erll, Astrid. "Modes of representing the 'Indian Mutiny' in British novels" *European Journal of English Studies* 10, no. 2. (2006), 163-185.

Erll, Astrid and Rigney, Ann. "Literature and the production of cultural memory: introduction." *European Journal of English Studies* 10, no. 2, (2006), 111-115.

Fredeman, William E. "A Charivari for Queen Butterfly: "Punch" on Queen Victoria" *Victorian Poetry* 25, no. 3/4 (1987), 47-73.

Freedland, Jonathan. "Disraeli by David Cesarani Review – the Jewish Prime Minister and Antisemitism." *The Guardian*, June 11, 2016.
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jun/11/disraeli-the-novel-politician-by-david-cesarani-review>

Gilroy, Paul. "Joined-up Politics and Postcolonial Melancholia" *Theory Culture & Society* 18, no. 2-3 (2001), 151-167.

Gilroy, Paul. *Postcolonial melancholia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Gilroy, Paul. "War, Race and Europe's Postcolonial Melancholia" Lecture. Nicolaïkerk, Utrecht. September 16, 2009.

Gilroy, Paul. "Why Harry's Disoriented about Empire" *The Guardian*, January 15, 2005, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2005/jan/18/britishidentity.monarchy>

Gonne, Maude. "The Famine Queen, 1900" in *Irish Writing: An Anthology of Irish Literature in English 1789-1939*, ed. Stephan Regan. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004, 183-185.

Hage, Ghassan. "État de Siège: A Dying Domesticating Colonialism?" *American Ethnologist* 43, no. 1 (2016), 38-49.

Horning, Audrey. "Towards a Colonial Ireland?: the Sixteenth century" in *Ireland in the Virginian Sea: Colonialism in the British Atlantic*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013, 17-100

Jeffery, Keith. *An Irish empire? Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996.

Johnson, Robert. *British Imperialism. Histories and Controversies*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Kiely, Ray. *Rethinking Colonialism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

King, Jason. "Christine Kinealy on Queen Victoria "The Famine Queen's" Visit to Carton House. *National Famine Way*. <http://nationalfamineway.ie/christine-kinealy-the-famine-queen-at-carton-house/>

Kipling, Rudyard. "The Taking of Lungtungpen" (1889), *Kipling Society*, http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/rg_lungtungpen1.htm

Kipling, Rudyard. "The White Man's Burden, 1899" in *Empire writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature*, ed. Elleke Boehmer. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 273-274.

Loughlin, James. "Allegiance and Allusion: Queen Victoria's Irish Visit of 1849" *History* 87, no. 288 (2002), 491-513.

Mansergh, Nicholas. *The Irish Question 1840-1921*, 3rd Edition, (London: Unwin University Books, 1975)

Mark-FitzGerald, Emily. *Commemorating the Irish Famine*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013.

McPhee, Graham and Poddar, Prem. *Empire and After: Englishness in Postcolonial Perspective*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2007.

Mishra, Pankaj. *From the Ruins of Empire: The Intellectuals who remade Asia*. New York: Farrar, Strous & Giroux, 2012.

Mitchel, John. *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)*, (1861) ed. Patrick Maume, Dublin: UCD Press, 2015.

Modest, Wayne & de Koning, Anouk. "Anxious Politics in the European City: An Introduction" *Patterns of Prejudice* 50, no. 2 (2016), 97-108.

Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoires" *Representations* 26 (1989), 7-24.

Pamment, James. "Putting the GREAT Back into Britain: National identity, Public-Private Collaboration & Transfers of Brand Equity in 2012's Global Promotional Campaign" *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 17, (2015), 260-283.

Poole, Ross. "Memory, history and claims of the past", *Memory studies* 1, no.2 (2008), 149-166.

Reed, Charles V. "British Royals at Home with the Empire", in *Royal Tourists, colonial subjects and the making of a British World, 1860-1911*. Manchester: Manchester University Press (2016), 1-34.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. London: Penguin 2003.

Silvestri Michael, *Ireland and India: Nationalism, Empire and Memory*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Stewart, Jay Brown. *The National Churches of England, Ireland and Scotland, 1801-46*. Dublin:

Oxford University Press, 2001.

Sullivan, Eileen P. "Liberalism and Imperialism: J. S. Mill's Defense of the British Empire." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 44, no. 4 (1983): 599-617.

Szczepanski, Kallie. "Colonial India in Cartoons", ThoughtCo. May 23, 2019.

<https://www.thoughtco.com/colonial-india-in-cartoons-195499>

Taylor, Miles. "Queen Victoria and India" *Victorian studies* 46, no. 2 (2004), 264-274.

Trevelyan, George. "The Gulf Between Us, 1864" in *Empire writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature*, ed. Elleke Boehmer. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 3-15.

UCL European Institute. "Brexit and UK Foreign Policy: 'Keeping Britain Great' or 'Putting the Great Back In Britain?'" (blog). Nov 3, 2017. <https://ucl-brexit.blog/2017/11/03/brexit-and-uk-foreign-policy-keeping-britain-great-or-putting-the-great-back-into-great-britain/>

Williams. *Political History of Ireland, Showing Its Connexion with England, From the Anglo-Norman Conquest, in 1172, by Henry II., to the Present Time* (n.p.:1843)

Wilson, A.N. *The Victorians*. London: Hutchinson, 2002.

Wintour, Patrick. "German Ambassador: Second World War Image has Fed Euroscepticism." *The Guardian*, January 29, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jan/29/german-ambassador-peter-ammon-second-world-war-image-of-britain-has-fed-euroscepticism>

Young, Gary. "Britain's Imperial Phantasies have given us Brexit" *The Guardian*, February 3, 2018.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/03/imperial-fantasies-brexit-theresa-may>

Appendices



THE MODERN SISYPHUS.

"Sisyphus is said to be doomed for ever to roll to the top of a great mountain a stone, which continually falls down again."

SISYPHUS . . . SIR R. P—L. THE STONE . . . D. O' C—L. THE FURIES . . . LORD J. R—L, S—L, &c.

Appendix 1: 'The Modern Sisyphus' by Richard Doyle. *Punch Magazine* - March 16th, 1844.



THE ENGLISH LABOURER'S BURDEN ;

OR, THE IRISH OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN.

[See *Sinbad the Sailor*.

Appendix 2: 'The English Labourer's Burden' by unknown author. *Punch Magazine* – February 24th, 1849.



YOUNG IRELAND IN BUSINESS FOR HIMSELF.

Appendix 3: 'Young Ireland in Business For Himself' by John Leech. *Punch Magazine* – August 22^d, 1846.



TWO FORCES.

Appendix 4: 'Two Forces' by John Tenniel, October 29th, 1881.



THE FENIAN-PEST.

HIBERNIA. "O MY DEAR SISTER, WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH THESE TROUBLESOME PEOPLE?"
BRITANNIA. "TRY ISOLATION FIRST, MY DEAR, AND THEN——"

Appendix 5: 'The Fenian-Pest' by John Tenniel. *Punch Magazine* – March 3rd, 1866.



THE IRISH "VAMPIRE."

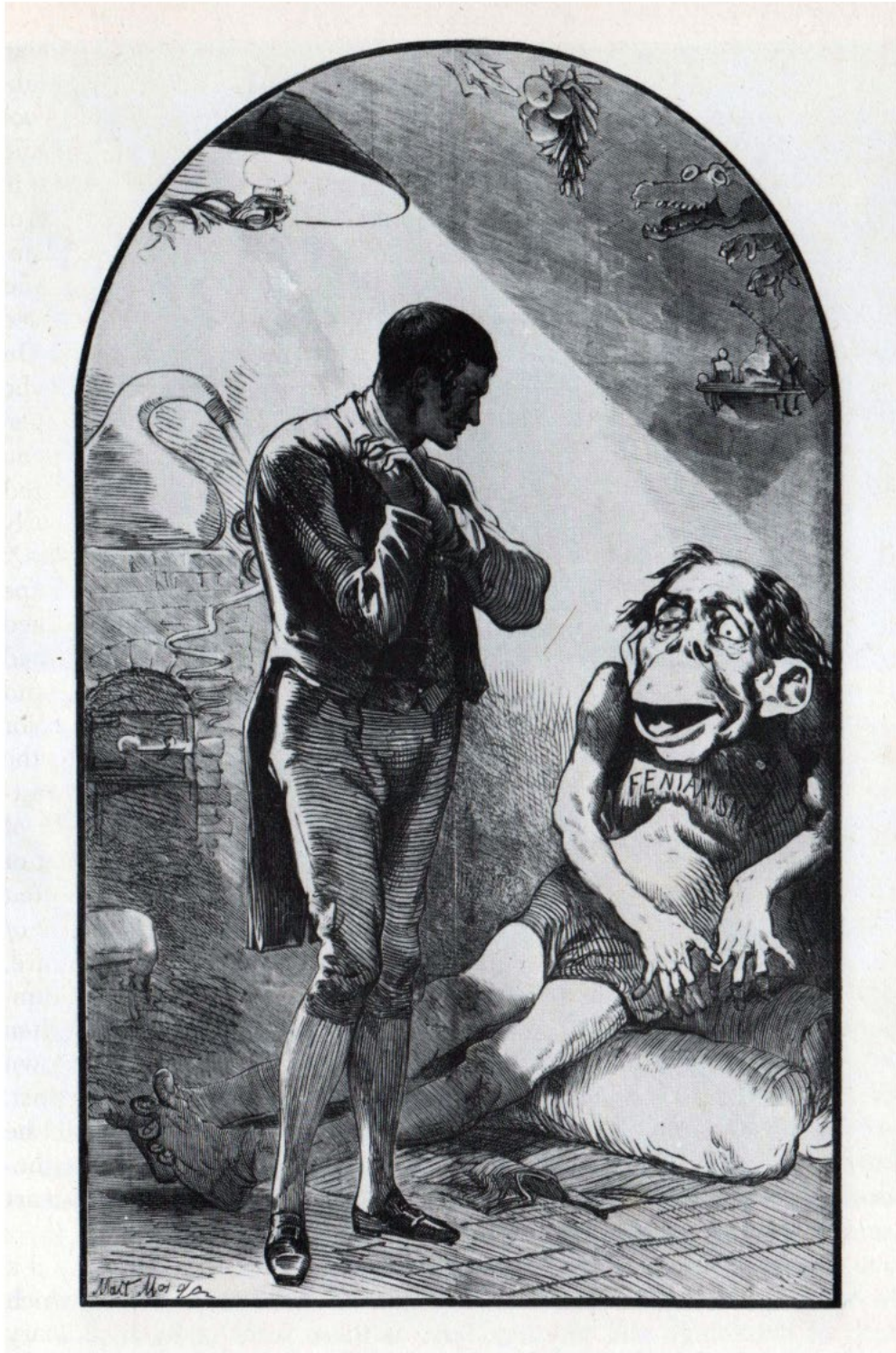
Appendix 6: 'The Irish "Vampire"' by John Tenniel. Punch Magazine – October 24th, 1885.



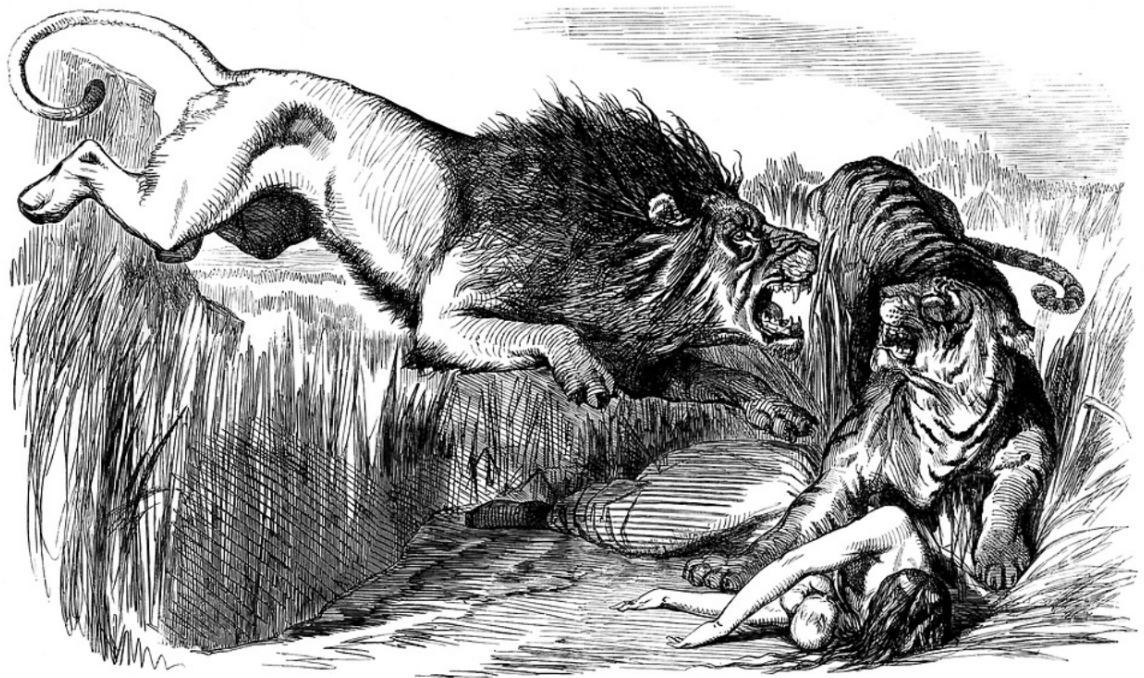
THE IRISH FRANKENSTEIN.

"The baneful and blood-stained Monster * * * yet was it not my Master to the very extent that it was my Creature? * * * Had I not breathed into it my own spirit?" * * * (Extract from the Works of C. S. P.-K-K-L-L, M.P.)

Appendix 7: 'The Irish Frankenstein' by John Tenniel. *Punch Magazine*. May 20th, 1882.



Appendix 8: 'The Irish Frankenstein' by Matt Morgan. *Tomahawk* – December 18th, 1869.



THE BRITISH LION'S VENGEANCE ON THE BENGAL TIGER.

Appendix 9: 'The British Lion's Vengeance on the Bengal Tiger' by John Tenniel. *Punch Magazine* – August 22^d, 1857.



THE NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

PAM (to SIR COLIN). "WELL—UPON MY WORD—EH!—I'M REALLY EXTREMELY OBLIGED TO YOU—BUT—EH!—HOW ABOUT KEEPING THE BRUTE?"

Appendix 10: 'The New Year's Gift' by John Tenniel. *Punch Magazine* – January 2^d, 1858.



CHUNEE THE SECOND;
OR, THE TAME ELEPHANT UNDER A HEAVY DISCHARGE.

Appendix 11: 'Chunee the Second' by John Leech. *Punch Magazine* – May 18th, 1844.



“DISPUTED EMPIRE!”

Appendix 12: ‘Disputed Empire!’ by John Tenniel. *Punch Magazine* – January 9th, 1901.



“SECOND THOUGHTS.”

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (*blantly*). “ALL RIGHT, MR. BULL, ON RE-CONSIDERATION, I FIND WE ARE NOW OFFICIALLY PREPARED TO RECEIVE YOUR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE RELIEF OF THE INDIAN FAMINE.”

(*Vide letter from Lord G-ROE H-M-LT-N, “Times,” January 4, declining, and, in “Times,” January 9, accepting the LORD MAYOR’S Indian Relief Fund.*)

Appendix 13: “Second Thoughts” by John Tenniel. *Punch Magazine* - January 17th 1897.



“ MENDING THE LESSON.”

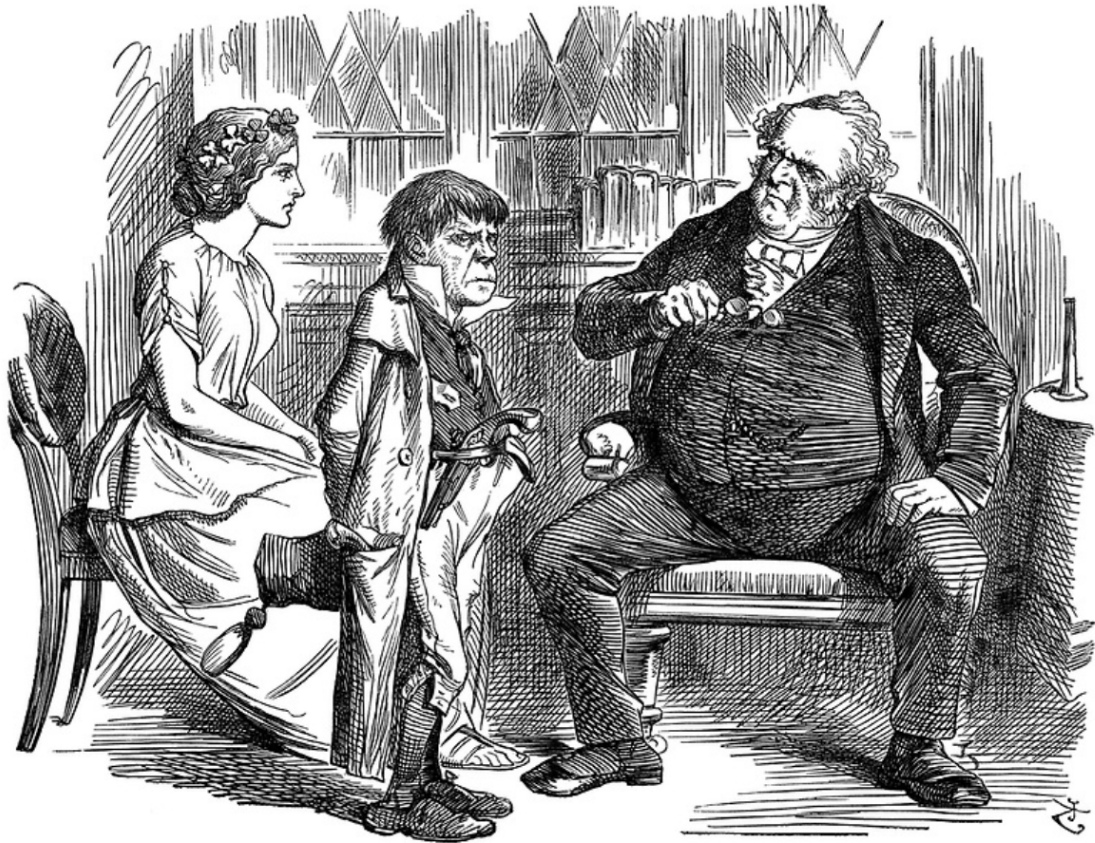
POLITICAL ECONOMY. “ TAKE CARE, MY DEAR JOHN. DON'T INTERFERE WITH THE LAWS OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND.”
JOHN BULL. “ I DON'T, MISS PRUDENCE. SHE DEMANDS AND I SUPPLY.”

Appendix 14: 'Mending the Lesson' by Joseph Swain. *Punch Magazine* - December 20th, 1873.



WAR AND FAMINE.
THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPIRE.

Appendix 15: 'War and Famine' by unknown author. *Punch Magazine* - February 5th, 1900.



PHYSIC FOR FENIANS.

ERIN. "I'M AFRAID, DOCTOR DEAR, HIS SYMPTOMS ARE GETTING DANGEROUS."

DR. BULL. "HA! I SEE! I TREATED A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR CASE TO THIS VERY SUCCESSFULLY IN INDIA; LEAVE HIM TO ME."

Appendix 16: 'Physic for Fenians' by John Tenniel. *Punch Magazine* - December 8th, 1866.



“NEW CROWNS FOR OLD ONES!”

(ALADDIN adapted.)

Appendix 17: ‘New Crowns for old Ones!’ by John Tenniel. *Punch Magazine* - April 15th, 1876.