

BA Opponent Review

Vendula Havlikova

Depicting Post-Colonial Attitudes to Imperialism in Film

Objectives & Choice of Matter

Perhaps at odds with her cause, the Author chose a piece of Work that was already written, during the well-entrenched colonial period, that Forster wrote his epic in. David Lean's treatment of the text in the adapted Screenplay, does make a compelling piece for critical analysis given his work in *A Bridge Over The River Kwai* and in some extent, yet one is given to think that that author would have been better of, deconstructing Post-colonial work that had been conceived in its entirety in the same period, perhaps with Attenborough's *Gandhi* or the more contemporary Ismail Merchant's *Heat and Dust*.

Theoretical Background

While the author does a fair job, linking the theory and in defining *Imperialism* on as well its impact on media and popular cultures one wonders if the author perhaps has the jumped the gun here and perhaps been inconclusive with her grasp of Post-Colonialist theories and their treatments of the past.

Critique and Depiction of Attitudes to Imperialism in the Film Itself

Forster's original lampooned and tore apart colonial rhetoric, but yet that was the larger hidden message in the book, he could ill-afford to be so overt at a time when the Monarchy still ran strong. Yet Lean on the other hand, seems to have deliberately avoided a need for the hidden sarcasm, the underlying play on the Raj, the Author's critique of Lean's cinematography is exemplary, there is lack of commentary about Lean's leniencies.

In the second part of her analysis of the film the Author focuses on the *Britons v/s Indians* where she critiques Lean's character portrayals and depiction of the native population. What the Author does pick up on immediately is the contrast in the endings, of the book and the movie. While Forster dithers to pick a happy ending, continuing in the "*can never be friends*" tone, he certainly does allude to a time, when Indians will exercise more power (Aziz talking about driving the Englishmen away from the country in the end of the novel) or at least to the limitations of British nationalism. Lean on the other hand chooses to end the movie on a more reconciliatory note, with Fielding and Aziz meeting again, a whole scene the author missed a chance to deconstruct at length.

Grade and Defense

In my opinion the author has displayed a sufficient grasp of the underlying theory and perspectives required to successfully deconstruct the film, in a Post-Colonial critique for the BA level, and I would recommend the thesis be graded with a 'Very Good' or 'Velmi Dobre'.

Possible questions or areas I believe the author would need to address, during her defence would include a more complete analysis of why Lean, chose to perhaps romanticize, British Rule in comparison to Forster's chilling rhetoric and a question about the Author's own understanding of Post-colonialist theories (through the works of other writers, critics and theorists) and their treatment of Imperialism.

Sincerely,



Mgr, Hrishabh Sandilya, MCom.

