Representations of Iran in British Documentary, 1920s – 2006

Sara Ganjaei

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**University of East Anglia
School of Film and Television Studies**

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Abstract

The research examines the representations of Iran in British documentaries made between 1920s and 2006. It aims to: a)investigate in British documentary the represented position of Iran in the world and in comparison to Britain, as well as how the positioning has evolved along historical change inside Iran, in the outside world, and in Iran's relation with the outside world and Britain; b) reveal how, as mediated text, documentary film acts as part of the broader representational regimes in a social context in which these positionings are produced through contemporary social and political discourses.

The research looks for the underpinnings of the documentary representations of Iran in the master-narrative of 'Modernity' and its relevant sub-narratives (industrialisation, modernisation, and democracy), as well as the narratives of Modernity's Other (Orientalism and Islamic-fundamentalism). It is shown that the films made about Iran before the Iranian revolution of 1979 are marked by the themes of industrialization and modernization with a focus on the activities of the British oil industry in Iran and/or the efforts of the Pahlavi dynasty to modernize Iran. After the 1979 revolution however, the focus of films shifts from Iran's socio-economic issues to its political ones. Iran and its relations with the outside world are seen increasingly through the prism of the discourses of democracy and Islamic-fundamentalism in the films of this ear.

British media coverage of Iran provides a case study opportunity to examine the evolution over a relatively long period of time of continuous and changing coverage of one country by another. Through studies such as this thesis, focusing on the use of film as a tool in international socio-political representation, the transition from 20th to 21st Century becomes in itself an era for critical interpretation across the social sciences. Through situating the interrelation between the media and international power struggles in a historical perspective, this kind of research can therefore be a valuable source in investigating the power-related functions of the media itself.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Early motivation for this research

This research is a case study in documentary representations of Iran. The reasons I chose this subject, from among many others I could have chosen for my PhD, were motivated by both academic and personal interest. The choice grew in the first place out of the huge shock that I experienced in the very early days of my arrival in the UK, while watching programmes about Iran on British television. This experience brought home to me a vast discrepancy between (at least at that time) what was my understanding of 'Iran', the country where I was born and brought up, and what was presented as 'Iran' on the television screens of a foreign country. At the same time it raised in me a vivid awareness of what I had previously known only at the level of theory: issues of cultural differences and the way we, different peoples, perceive each other. It also made me reflect on the power of the media in general, and then in particular, the influence of documentary film as part of international broadcast media.

Such an illumination however did not by itself create the strong desire to make this the subject of my thesis. At this point as well, I was interested very much in the influence of film in society, and so the role and history of documentary film-making became my main research interest, with British documentary being the focus. Finally, I made the decision to propose this as my thesis subject when I experienced anxieties about the very specific way Iran was being presented on British television (and media generally) at that time 2003-2004). The frequent media coverage of Iran's nuclear programmes was for me a chilling reminder of the build-up to the Iraq war. Iran was being presented to the British audience as a major 'threat' to them and the entire world, in very much the same way as Iraq had been only a short time before in terms of its alleged weapons of mass destruction. Iran was replacing Iraq, it seemed to me, as the new target for political and media attention. Then at least, that was the way things appeared to me.

1.2 Justifying and situating the research: the era of global media influence

Looking back at the issue now, and in the light of the fact that no invasion of Iran took place, my fears might look extreme and unjustifiable, as does my assuming of a direct relationship between what I saw as provocative media coverage of a foreign country and the occurrence of a war. Nevertheless, the potential power of media, and specifically the audio-visual media, to influence decisions as huge and as disastrous as war, has remained a matter of fact to me. That power I believe, like any other form of power in our societies, requires critical scrutiny, if we hope to maintain and improve the basis of democracy not only locally but also internationally. The ways in which the media presents different nations of the world to each other seems to me to be a high priority among the many media functions open to critical scrutiny. Though that has not been a theme of my study, I hope that the body of work I present here can make a modest contribution to that awareness.

In that regard, the case of Iran as it has been presented in the British (audio-visual) media, offers a unique and stimulating case for examination. Having been a strategic ally of America and Western Europe ever since the Second World War, Iran became the number one enemy of Western powers, seemingly as the result of the fundamental changes in its socio-political structures and its international relations following the revolution of 1979. Both as an important ally and then as an equally important enemy, Iran has continuously drawn media attention in Britain, if not always with the same intensity. It is in this sense that British media coverage of Iran can provide a case study opportunity to examine the evolution over a relatively long period of time of continuous and changing coverage of one country by another. Hence in the timeline of recent and separate 'factual' developments in history, the speed of the arrival and growth of the new epoch of global satellite and electronic communication has begun to affect history itself. We are beginning to realise how the socio-political attitude of one country to another can be flashed around the world within minutes in powerful spotlight. Therefore, from a historical perspective, developments, behaviour and events, are available not as manuscript or text alone, as words on paper, but as interdisciplinary, audio-visual interpretations through the multi-modal forging together of news, fact, critique and opinion. Through studies such as this thesis, focusing on the use of film as a tool in

international socio-political representation, the transition from 20th to 21st Century becomes in itself an era for critical interpretation across the social sciences. At this period in history, it seems beyond doubt that the media in all its modalities is an ever-strengthening presence, and in that sense this study is set not only in the era of film and broadcast studies, but implicitly within a new upsurge in power and potential world influence of multi-media communication. Through situating the interrelation between the media and international power struggles in a historical perspective, this kind of research can therefore be a valuable source in investigating the power-related functions of the media itself.

A critical perspective on media products is even more imperative currently, since easier access to them increases through worldwide availability of 'multiplying delivery platforms' such as multi-function mobile screens, as discussed in the work of Turner and Tay (2009), as well as an array of satellite channels. Documentaries, cinematic and televisual information are all becoming global commodities. In such an environment, already being referred to as the era of 'post-broadcasting' (Spigel and Olsson, 2004), documentaries made by one country about another can become universal property through the same channels of accessibility, and thus the nature of representation itself, and its history in film, is open to critical scrutiny from an interdisciplinary perspective. I have taken such a perspective in the present research, through the case of British documentary representations of Iran.

1.3 Film data: selection and scope of sources

Despite the fact that studies on the media representations of Iran have been done, they are in the main not dedicated to film and analyse the coverage of Iran within British broadsheet media (Mohsen, 1991, Richardson, 2004). The present study is as far as I have been able to ascertain, the first one in the field of audio-visual media with a focus on cinematic and televisual documentary representations of Iran.[1] The timeframe of the

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[1] The filmic and televisual representations of Iran in Britain are rarely examined. Indeed a 2008 conference on the topic, *The Visual Representations of Iran,* at the Department of Iranian Studies at St. Andrews University, provided ample evidence of the need for scholarly exploration of this area. From among the 34

research includes the decades of the 1920s to the first decade of the 21st Century. The year 2006 was the point at which I drew a line beneath the otherwise never-ending task of collecting data and material comparable or relatable in some way to the research I was already processing. This does not mean that from 2006 the stream of documentaries about Iran had stopped appearing in British television. It was simply impractical to continue monitoring the output if I was going to have enough time to process that data I had, and to start writing it up. When I first started collecting data on the subject I focused only on the more recent documentaries, from the 1980s onwards, mainly because these were the ones that I had come across, and their contemporary subject matter had strong resonance with me. These films were about events that had happened during my life time, and had most often concerned me, or had had major effects on my life as well as on the lives of millions of others in Iran and beyond. Hence events such as the 1978 revolution, the taking of hostages in the American embassy in Iran, and the Iran-Iraq war were the subjects of documentaries which started off my research. Moreover, these documentaries were the most readily available to access for viewing through the University's own resources and also through ordering from the archive of British Universities Film and Video Council.

However, in the course of the initial research one particular type of film material within documentaries prompted me to begin researching what I later came to discover was the

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speakers only 5 presentations were on the representations of Iran in Western (not particularly British) media, while the rest focused on Iran's representations of itself, by Iranians themselves, and in Iranian visual productions. Documentary representations of Iran were discussed at that conference as part of the broader theoretical debates on cross-cultural representations and the issues surrounding the construction of Other, especially from the perspective of visually evidenced anthropology (Crawford, 2008; Kashani, 2008), or the ethical dilemmas facing the visual ethnographer in seeking consent from those represented (Husmman, 2008).

An important resource published in the field of Iran's visual records is Hamid Naficy's *Iran Media Index* in 1984, a comprehensive, descriptively annotated index of films, filmstrips, television news and newsreels produced in English-speaking countries on the subject of Iran from 1880s to 1982. An overview and analysis of some of the major themes of films and programmes is provided in the introduction. Although an invaluable source for research, this work can not be considered as an example of the detailed and critical analysis of individual films. Similarly, though on a much smaller scale, Iranian archivist Mohammad Tahaminejad, has also provided a brief overview of Western, including British, documentaries on Iran that exist in the Iranian National Film Archive (Tahaminejad, 2006a; Tahaminejad, 2006b; Tahaminejad 2006c). The work does not provide any in-depth analysis of the films.

vital importance of much older documentaries to any examination of the more contemporary ones. This was the realisation that the documentary makers had used nesting of inserts or clips within clips from existing documentaries, often much older ones, into the narrative of contemporary events as a way of supporting the film's argument, or simply as a way of giving the historical background to the issue under discussion. This was particularly true about BBC productions such as the series *People's Century* (BBC, 1997), *Mohammad Reza Shah: The Last Shah of Iran* (BBC, 1996), and *444 Days to Freedom: The Inside Story* (BBC, 1998). The inserts themselves could sometimes contain footage from an even older time. Of course, such use of archive footage in documentary is not unique to the case of Iran, and has been the subject of critical inquiry in documentary studies (Bruzzi 2000). It brings to the fore questions about the 'constructedness' of the original footage, especially when accompanied by an original voice-over. My personal familiarity with the case of Iran, and the inevitable comparison between my perceptions of the events related to Iran and the same events on filmstrips, alerted me to the issue of constructedness of any footage and the ways in which the use of historical footage influences the depiction of the contemporary issues in documentary. Some footage could even be regarded as 'doubly constructed', as they were included in inserts from other films of which they had initially been part of the 'constructed' narratives. Therefore, in the very early stages of the research, the cumulative effect of building upon previous films or film footage to produce current documentaries became apparent to me. I formed a hypothesis that the representations of more recent events in Iran could not be fully understood without taking into account what could potentially be a long history of representing Iran and perhaps a set of related conventions which could have been formed along the way. 'Conventions' here is used in the sense which relates to images or tropes that are used often and so come to be associated with an element of the recurring theme or subject matter, within histories, to the extent that the content of the reference (phrase, image, etc) has become the convention 'conventional' and hence convenient to convey consistency of meaning or significance by the use of the same images or tropes. An example of such a convention is the habit of associating 'traditional' with 'rural' when showing images of Iran (Chapter 6, Tale 6.ii).

To examine the validity of my hypothesis, that for understanding the current representations of Iran I needed to look at the history of such representations, I began searching for and watching documentaries made before the 1980s. My search of British Film Institute (BFI) written and audio-visual archives and other resources revealed a body of films which were not only related to my hypothesis, but were also interesting in their own right. As my initial aim was to examine the evolution of British documentary representations of Iran along historical change, the inclusion of these older films could give the historical perspective of the thesis more depth, as well as providing supporting evidence for the hypothetical cumulative aspect of representation. The timeframe of the data under examination therefore goes back to the earliest possible day to include the oldest examples of British documentaries on Iran which were accessible for viewing. The oldest documentaries viewable were the series of educational films about different aspects of life in Iran made by British Instructional Films during the 1920s, and hence the 1920s as the starting point of the research.

The importance of the earlier documentaries to my research was because of the type of issues covered in them and the way those issues were framed in the films. It became apparent to me that one issue was central to almost all of those early documentaries, and that was the idea of 'progress'. The centrality of the idea of 'progress' might have stemmed from a belief on the part of the pioneers of British documentary that documentary could positively contribute to social progress (Gott, 1923, Rotha, 1973, Grierson, 1946). But the idea of progress also stemmed in the documentaries out of the specific nature of the subjects covered in them. Many of these films were about foreign industrial enterprises in Iran, and as such, the idea of 'progress' was articulated in them in conjunction with the idea of industrialisation. Usually in such films comparisons were made between Iranian society before and after the introduction of enterprises in order to emphasize the changes that happened through industrialisation, not only in the material basis of life in the country, but also in its society and culture. Once I grasped that the themes of industrialisation, modernisation and development were central to the narrative

of these films, it became clear that these themes, along with the concept of 'progress', should therefore be the starting point to develop my theoretical framework. As discussed below, these themes also provided a key for understanding the shifting set of representations around Iran in the 1980s.

1.4 Analysis of themes in documentary discourse: applying theoretical terminology

From early documentaries to later ones and to the present, various narratives of 'modernity' become integrated into what I am calling 'the conventions of representing Iran' in British documentary. If the themes of industrialisation, modernisation and development are taken as the sub-narratives to the master-narrative of modernity, it can be argued that modernity and its sub-narratives are central to documentary representations of Iran throughout. The research therefore looks for the underpinnings of the documentary representations of Iran in the master-narrative of modernity and its relevant sub-narratives. There are definitions within the literature of sociology which I have drawn upon to offer a justification for my use of the term 'modernity' in the context of this thesis. In this respect I select below from Anthony Gidden's explanation of the meaning of this term:

> At its simplest, modernity is a shorthand term for modern society or industrial civilization. Portrayed in more detail, it is associated with (1) a certain set of attitudes towards the world, the idea of the world as open to transformation by human intervention; (2) a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy; (3) a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy. Largely as a result of these characteristics, modernity is vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order. It is a society - more technically, a complex of institutions - which unlike any preceding culture lives in the future rather than the past. (Giddens, 1998: 94)

Different aspects of this definition are appropriate in accordance with the contextual and thematic patterns that appear or are dominant in different periods in the documentary representations of Iran. It is one of my main intentions in this research to show that these thematic patterns correlate with two broad themes of modernity (that I have identified as 'discourses' for the purposes of the thesis as described in the next paragraph) and the historical moments of their prevalence in the (British) public discourse.

The first of the two themes or 'discourses' is one in which it is assumed that modernity is achievable through socio-economic development of human societies. Two sub-discourses of this are: a) industrialisation, an aspect of development that seeks the improvement of the material infrastructures of a country and the welfare of its citizens, and b) modernisation, the aspect of development that widens its scope beyond industrialisation to also include the socio-economic and cultural transformation of a society. The second discourse is one that defines modernity more in terms of the political institutions of a society. I maintain that the common alignments of this second discourse hold that the higher degrees of political and economic freedom in the 'developed world', which in turn result in higher levels of material wealth and technological progress, are the consequence of the democratic political systems. Democracy, in the discourse of political development, is seen as the means to beneficially spreading liberty all over the globe.

Even though the division of chapters in this thesis is not based on specific historical periods, there is a temporal order to the chapters that aligns with the two broad thematic discourses under consideration (socio-economic development and political development in documentary representations of Iran). The thesis focuses on a major historical turning point in Iran's history, which splits the argument into two periods:

 a) The era before the 1979 Iranian revolution, corresponding to the prevalence of the themes of socio-economic development in British documentaries on Iran, and

b) The post-1979 revolution era, corresponding to the prevalence of the themes of political development in those documentaries.

Apart from industrialisation, modernisation and democracy, there are other discourses in documentary films on Iran which are relevant to the wider understanding of modernity, and are taken for my purposes to be what Stuart Hall describes in his wider context as the binary polarity of modernity and its others (Hall, 2009). It can be argued that in earlier British documentary Iran is depicted in terms of what I am calling the 'under-developed', 'non-industrialised' and 'traditional' (non-modernised) other of the West, while in the

more recent documentaries it is represented as the undemocratic other of Western democracy. These representations could also be seen in the light of the historical development in the concept of modernity and the material realities of what defines the modern world, a development from "early modernity" to "late modernity" (Beck, 1992: Giddens, 1990; Lash, 1990). In relation to Britain, at the time of British (colonial) supremacy, Western supremacy over the means of industrial development (technology) and Western hegemony over discourses of development (between the early 20th century to the late 1960s (Rits, 2002), it can be shown that the Iran, as other of the modernity and the modern world, is configured through the dominant discourses of colonialism and imperialism. The 'other' in this light is 'primitive', and in particular cases including that of Iran, it is also 'Oriental', as shown through further elaboration of this term in the discussion of Orientalism in Chapter 3. In later decades of the 20th century when both the Western supremacy of the means of achieving modernity and the hegemonic (Western) definitions of modernity started to meet challenges, and accordingly were replaced by the idea of "plural modernities" (Delanty 2007), the 'other' of the global modernity was configured increasingly in political terms, especially if seen in opposition to the idea of democracy. In the case of Iran this construction is according to my analysis of film documentary data shaped mainly in the discourse of Islamic resurgence and its related themes as discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. Therefore, one of the main themes of the thesis, which I refer to as 'modernity's other', is divided into the discourses of Orientalism and Islamic resurgence (or Islamic Fundamentalism).

1.5   Theoretical framework

As has been proposed in the previous section (1.4), the themes prevalent in British documentaries on Iran are related to the master-narrative of modernity in one way or another. Accordingly, the theoretical framework in this research draws substantially on theories related to modernity. These are theories from different fields of the humanities and social sciences that can help our understanding of what constitutes modernity, through theorizing the dynamics that shape our contemporary world. To explore the

broad socio-cultural context in which the production of cinematic documentaries at the first half of the century took place, I place my discussion in the framework of the theories of 'imperial ideology' that examine the socio-cultural impact of the British Empire on British society in the first half of the 20th Century. Another important branch of theory used in the discussion of socio-cultural context of British documentary on Iran is that of 'Orientalism', insofar as it deals with the ways the Middle East and Islamic societies have been and in some respects continue to be perceived and represented in the West.

For analyzing issues such as industrialisation and development I draw on the sociological theories about development and underdevelopment on a global scale. The most important of these is the modernisation theory, a paradigm that was developed during the 1950s to the 1970s for interpreting socio-political and cultural change in many parts of the world (Lockman, 2004). Modernisation theory is particularly important to this research because of its assumptions about the character and trajectory of historical change which was based on a sharp dichotomy between tradition and modernity, defined as polar opposites. Modernisation theory is therefore helpful in devising analytical tools for interpreting not only the more obvious issues discussed in films such as industrialization and modernization, but also the less explicit concepts used to underpin them, such as 'historical change', 'progress' and 'modernity'.

The concepts of historical change and the progress towards modernity are also investigated in the more recent documentaries (from 1980 onwards) even though issues and subject matters in those documentaries are predominantly focused on political matters of Iran. In order to be able to deal with the more recent issues in documentaries the question of modernity and progress has to be framed inside a different context, historically and theoretically. A more politically oriented theory was necessary that could take into account debates about the Iranian revolution of 1979 and its aftermath. In the last two chapters therefore I draw heavily on the political theories about Islamic Fundamentalism in relation to Iranian society and also Iran's relation with the outside world. The advantage of drawing on the theories of Islamic Fundamentalism is that it provides a broad framework within which not only the more recent representations of Iran and its related issues can be dealt with, but also the general questions of progress and

modernity in more recent times and in relation to local and international political events that affect Iran's relations with Britain.

1.6   The intended outcomes of the thesis

I have chosen to place my analysis of films in the context of contemporary social, political and cultural theories because I would like the outcome of my research to contribute to debates about the relationship between media and international power structures. This desire stems from my personal belief that media can be, and has been, used not only for stirring up animosity between nations to promote causes such as war, but also for the long-term maintenance of international hierarchies of power. Media products can reproduce and naturalise those hierarchies in the way they represent our world to us and our place in this world, as well as the place of others in it.   I believe that such positionings should be subject to critical scrutiny because of their political implications in the real world.

Therefore, in this thesis I aim to do two things: a) I seek to investigate in British documentary the represented position of Iran in the world and in comparison to Britain, as well as how the positioning has evolved along historical change inside Iran, in the outside world, and in Iran's relation with the outside world and Britain; b) I seek to reveal how, as mediated text, documentary film acts as part of the broader representational regimes in a social context in which these positionings are produced through contemporary social and political discourses.

1.7   Methodology

I believe that documentary representations are social constructs that are produced in relation to socially produced meanings such as the concept of modernity and its 'other' (whatever is outside or even in opposition to the concept) as re-created in filmic forms.

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As discourse analysis within the social sciences is underpinned by a strong social constructivist epistemology (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Gergen, 1999), I find it appropriate to use discursive techniques and the theoretical principles of discourse analysis in critically exploring the films I have selected. The analysis of films in this thesis is focused on the constructive effect of discourse and the constructive processes in the text that create representation (and 'text' in relation to documentaries in this thesis means the filmic text, inclusive of the scripted commentary and all other elements of sound and vision - a holistic 'text' as communicated).

The theoretical model discussed above leans towards discourse analysis approaches that are interested in "understanding the ways in which discourses ensure that certain phenomena are created, reified and taken for granted and come to constitute [social] reality" (Phillip and Hardy, 2000: 21). By offering this quotation, I intend to support my use of analytic methods in the film extracts used in my chapters. I am intending always to 'show how' rather than simply make a statement and 'tell' the reader that certain representations I identify work towards a pre-determined 'end product' which in this case will slot into the master narrative of modernity through the themes represented in the part of the film analysed.

There is however another major perspective in discourse analysis adopted here which focuses on how grand or "mega" discourses shape and constrain social reality (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000). I draw on this perspective to show how in the text of documentary, representation is constrained by particular socio-cultural and political discourses that are in one way or another related to the grand narrative of modernity. The discourses of modernity are thus viewed in this thesis not just as a route to the representations of Iran, but as constituent of those representations. Through understanding this relationship between the text and its discursive context I hope to contribute to a deeper understanding of the British social and political discourses that define the modern world and its international hierarchies of power, as well as the corresponding (symbolic) positionings of groups of people (Iranians, British) or societies (Iran, Britain).

1.8   Application of theory and method

In the following sections I firstly explain the methods I have used for the analysis of individual film texts, then the ways I approach the context of my films, and finally how I have organized my chapters. It is worth mentioning here that in devising my analytical tools I have consulted the existing models of analyzing the text of a multimodal production such as a documentary film (Iedema, 2001; Iedema, 2003; Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996; van Leeuwen, 2005; van Leeuwen, 2009; van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001) as well as having correspondence with the authorities in the field (Wodak, 2004; van leeuwen, 2004; Pollak, 2004; Chilton, 2004). I have found no formulations or formulas suitable for the specific context and purpose of my research. I have therefore devised my own model based on the general principles of discourse analysis that includes the detailed analysis of the linguistic features of the spoken word, and in case of a filmic text, the cinematic details that constitute the film language, as well as the interaction between the two.

1.8.1 Analysing a documentary text

In analyzing a documentary my aim is to show the constructive processes in the text that create representation. This is done through examining the ways in which meaning is produced and structured at macro and micro levels of a text. The first step of the analysis includes the introduction of the film and its subject matter to give an overall view of what a film is about and how it fits into the general discussion of the chapter. Next, a more detailed account of the narrative of the film is presented, that is, to explain the beginning, middle and end of a film. The explanation is at times accompanied by a more graphic presentation of the narrative structure in tabulated form. Such tables are among the various forms of tables that I use to clarify my explanations about or interpretations of various sections of the films under discussion. When a table is used to show the narrative structure of a film, it gives an overview of how chunks of narrative are put together to form the various themes and topics in the story. A table that sums up the narrative structure of a film can include all or some parts of the prototype table below.

Formal Structure	Themes or Topics	Sequence (description of shots that can be accompanied by the commentary)
Beginning of the film		
Middle of the film		
End of the film		

Table 1.i: Narrative structure of a film

Table 1.i shows the different levels at which the analysis of a film takes place. That includes the establishing of the themes of the narrative and how they are built in the sequences of the film. The deepest level of the analysis looks at the various sequences and their linguistic and non-linguistic components. This includes the analysis of the language features (linguistic details of the spoken word), the cinematic details (arrangements of shots in a sequence, the type of a shot and camera angles and the content of a shot), and the synchronization of sound (spoken word and other aural components such as music) and image. I seek to understand the meaning these components and their combination seems to have, given the overall context in which they occur, that is in the general narrative of the film and the themes and topics covered in it.

The possible complexities of 'meaning' can be understood fairly immediately in terms of denotation and connotation. In documentary films analyzed in this thesis connotation persistently replaces denotation as a means of 'defining' the words spoken by the commentator, in referring to the image or images synchronized by editing to appear on screen at the moment the spoken words occur. In fact the visual 'discourse' in the films can be viewed as a means to shape and craft the commentary towards a particular interpretation, to provide a particular 'view' of the commentary, that can strongly offer support to the inexplicit beliefs or aims of the film makers/sponsors, to shape the message of the documentary towards a particular conclusion. The representations of Iran are the byproduct of such interpretations and the particular socio-cultural and political discourses that underpin them.

If it is possible to question whether the commentary is neutrally and factually congruous with the image or not, or only arguably so, then it is justifiable for the purpose of my thesis to explore the linguistic content of the commentary in more depth.   For data presentation purposes however, this characteristic of the documentary discourse, being arguably connotational, is not quantifiable.   I believe I have shown in this thesis, however, that it can be qualifiable by example and argument, when correlating speech commentary in real time with the film images, with reference to linguistic factors such as vocabulary selection and syntax, as well as forms of address, whether using passive voice to seem as though there is 'statement of facts' without agency, or an active voice, with agency.   I have tried to show the frequency of this connotational characteristic of the documentary discourse throughout analysis of commentary and image where it applies, in each film selected, and as indexed in the relevant Tables.

Because the connotational meanings in documentaries are best detected in the interaction of the audio-visual and verbal components at a micro level, the most frequently used type of tables in this thesis are the ones that demonstrate these interactions in a selected sequence or shot. For that purpose two types of tables have been devised. One type shows the synchronization of image and commentary in a sequence of shots, as exemplified below. Where possible a still shot from the film is presented under the Image column. In cases where it has not been possible to have a still shot taken from the original film, a description of the image is given.

Image	Commentary

Table 1.ii: A selected sequence of the film

The second type of table is devised to show in a selected sequence the traces of a particular socio-cultural or political discourse. In devising this type of table I draw on the theoretical principle of discourse analysis that the individual texts should be studied for clues to the discourses because discourses are never found in their entirety and only their traces are dispersed in the text (Parker, 1992; van Leeuwen, 1993). Apart from the

analysis of the verbal and the audio-visual language of the film and the interactions of them there are other aspects of analysis that provide clues to the various discourses of modernity as articulated in documentaries. These clues are particular concepts that are taken from discourses and are (re)constructed in the language of film. The tables show such concepts - identified in the tables as Constructs - and the sequences that embody them. These constructs show most directly the ways in which the representations of Iran are both constructed and constrained by socio-political and cultural discourses.

Construct	Sequence (description of shots that can be accompanied by the commentary)

Table 1.iii: A theme of representation

To sum up, the Tables play a crucial role in the analytical model used in this thesis. The Tables have the following functions: for a more graphic and tangible grasp of a film; for the presentation of the macro and micro structures of a film, the way a the narration and themes are formed at different levels; to compress information about the film in a place separate from the text of a chapter where the analysis of the information takes place; for clarifying the relationship between the audio-visual and verbal, the synchronization of image and commentary, the arrangement of shots and sequences. This method helps, I hope, to give some order, place and form to the analysis of the films, while consolidating the themes and premises of each chapter, showing them to be pivotal parts of the thesis as a whole, with specific reference to ways in which representations of Iran have been forged to accommodate the needs of film sponsors.

1.8.2 Contextual analysis

The analytical approach in this thesis is focused more closely on particular texts, while a broader sweep of the discursive and non-discursive elements of their contexts is conducted in two major forms. Firstly, I explore the general context for documentary production in the 20th Century. As already mentioned, in Chapters 2 and 3 I extensively discuss the discourses of Orientalism and imperialism as constituent of the discursive

context for the production of documentaries in Britain up to later decades of the century. In Chapter 2 the historical and institutional factors related to the production of documentary are explained as well as the way the institutional practices of documentary making could have affected the discourse of individual documentaries. The institutional and ideological ties between different venues of filmmaking are also discussed to give a broad picture of the ideological and material environment in which many documentary productions, either cinematic or televisual came to being.

The chapter also investigates the role of the sponsors or the producing bodies of films and the necessities that prompted the production of particular films or group of films, as factors that could ultimately affect the way the subject matters are presented in documentaries. For example, the films sponsored or produced directly by the oil companies seek to promote a particular image of the enterprise that subsequently affects the ways that the issues related to Iran are presented in the films.

The more specific context for the films that are discussed in the analytical chapters is given in each chapter. In the introduction of each chapter I give a brief overview of the themes discussed in the chapter and the particular socio-political discourses that are identified as underpinning them. More detailed discussions of the political and historical events covered in individual films are included in the analysis of them. This includes the situation in Iran at the time, as well as the political situation in the outside world that affected the relationship between Iran and particular Western powers (Britain and America). In the case of the individual films chosen for in-depth analysis, the commissioner/sponsor and/or the producing body is mentioned wherever the promotional policies involved is known.

1.8.3 Chapter breakdown

The analytical chapters of the thesis (Chapters 4 to 8) are organized in a way that each covers the issues related to one particular theme of socio-economic and political development of Iran. For example, the theme of modernization of Iran as represented in British documentary is discussed in relation to the representation of the Pahlavi dynasty as the two are intertwined in the documentaries. Another example is the theme of industrialization of Iran which is linked to Western enterprises in Iran, particularly the British oil industry. Therefore, the theme of industrialization is discussed mainly in films commissioned or produced by the oil industry on the subject of the industry's activities in Iran.

In each chapter at least one film is analysed in-depth, while other examples on the theme of the chapter are discussed briefly. This combination was necessary. While the limitations of the thesis space would not allow for the close analysis of all films related to one theme, it was necessary to mention the examples that I had come across to show the validity of my thematic divisions. Each chapter therefore includes films which are from across more than one decade. However, as mentioned above, after the major historical shift happening in Iran in 1979 the issues of socio-economic development that were prevalent in films dated from the 1920s to 1980 were replaced by a concern about the issues of democracy and Islamic Fundamentalism in films made from 1980 onwards. This meant that the films made prior to 1980 had to be discussed across chapters related to pre-revolutionary Iran (Chapters 4 to 6), while the films of the 1980s onwards had to be discussed in chapters related to post-revolutionary Iran (Chapters 7 and 8).

1.8.4 The selection of films

The selection of films discussed and analysed in depth in the thesis was based on the following considerations. Because in this thesis British documentaries representing Iran are seen as cumulative, in the sense that new is built upon old, I have selected to review a body of documentaries about Iran that show the regeneration of old into new. The historical survey selection of documentaries I rely on has, I believe, provided valid

evidence towards my thesis that the representations of more recent events in Iran could not be fully understood without taking into account a long history of representing Iran and a set of related conventions which have been formed along the way.

As part of my hypothesis I have also stated that the discourse of modernity and its related discourses constitute the master narrative of documentary representations of Iran throughout. For this reason I have chosen to analyse the films that I believe would speak to or illuminate the articulation of the discourses of modernity in documentary form. At their very core all the discourses of modernity draw on sets of dichotomies such as East/West, developed/undeveloped (or developing), modern/traditional, Islamic /Western, fundamentalism/democracy, and so on. These dichotomies are played out in British documentaries on Iran in relation to the represented and the representer. The evolution of these dichotomies from one state to another at different periods allows for interpreting elements of change and continuity in representations of Iran during the time frame of the thesis, as well as the relations between the discourses of socio-economic development and those of political development.

1.9 Overview of the chapters

A documentary film is a particular representation of reality which is influenced by the social, political, economic and cultural dynamics of its time. Chapter 2 of this thesis focuses on those dynamics within the formative period of British documentary making, from the mid-1920s to the 1950s. This is organised firstly by focusing on issues of sponsorship and finance that reveal the documentary's institutional and economic ties with the state and industry. In this way I have tried to reveal how the historical and cultural dynamics of modern Britain, including influences from the British Empire, affected the formation of documentary as an institution of that society. Secondly, the chapter explores how that social position in turn affects documentary's discursive orientation. It thus argues that the specific forms of the discourses of modernity and its other in documentary products are the result of an ideological perspective shared by those

institutions, a belief in British Empire as an enlightened, internationalist empire, a force of good in bringing modernity to other nations.

Chapter 3 explains the discourse of Orientalism as it appears in the documentary representations of Iran. It argues that the consistent utilisation of this discourse in filmic forms affects the British documentary representations of Iran throughout the 20th century and up to the present (2006). The chapter explains the origins of the discourse through its appearance in various social spheres. It examines the ways in which the discourse is utilised, in documentary representations of Iran. The concepts and markers that make up the image of an 'Orientalised Iran' are identified. The specific ideas and concepts that come from the above discourse are categorised and then the filmic units in which they appear in documentaries are identified by bringing in examples from a wide range of documentary films.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 examine the British documentaries about Iran before the 1980s (pre-revolution Iranian society). Documentaries of this period reflect the prevalence of the themes of social and cultural development as the dominant discourses of modernity. Chapter 4 focuses on the history and the geography of the country as constructed in British documentary films, examining apparent approaches and strategies employed in documentary representations of Iranian society. The argument of the chapter tries to demonstrate how the dichotomy of old vs. new is drawn upon as the recurring theme, informing the requirements of modernism. The dichotomy forms the central pillar to the structure of "modern rationalism" and is coupled also with the modernist imperative toward ceaseless change and development (Best and Kellner, 1997), along a predetermined linear path paved with faith in historical progress. The discussion of Chapter 4 centers on the example of a narrative structure that develops on the basis of the paradigm of history as a journey from old to new, from primitiveness to industrial development. In the films analysed in the chapter Iran is represented as among those nations which are still in transition, still struggling to overcome what is, according to film, the debilitating legacy of tradition, and achieve modernity. The title of the film, *Iran*

between Two Worlds, suggests the modernist imperative of old vs. new referred to above, which posits in Lockman's view "a sharp distinction between tradition and modernity conceptually, as two completely different stages along the one and only path of human social evolution" (Lockman, 2004: 139).

Chapters 5 and 6 explore the dichotomy of old/traditional vs. new/modern in relation to the trajectory of development, envisaged as a process whereby less developed countries would shift from traditional patterns of life to become more developed. According to the development paradigm, the transformative power to achieve modernity is embedded in the agency of science and technology (Alhassan, 2008: 18). These principles construct the cornerstone of the two overlapping and interrelated discourses or themes of social development: industrialisation and modernisation. While in the discourse of industrialization, development is taken as basically "synonymous with industrialisation, capital-intensive technology and urbanisation" (ibid), modernization theory considers the lack of not only technology but also modern socio-cultural values within a society as the causes for underdevelopment (Khan, 2000: 162- 164).

The focus of Chapter 5 is the theme of industrialisation in British documentaries on Iran. The films chosen for this analysis are those which were commissioned by the oil industry and/or have oil and the oil industry as their subject matter. The central theme in these films is 'progress' from tradition to modernity through technology, appearing through the metaphor of (speedy) movement and the recurrent visual motifs of cars, airplanes, trains and wheels. They represent the industrialisation of Iran, with British-owned oil corporations at the heart of it, as the holy grail of progress, the magical answer to the country's otherwise incurable backwardness.

Chapter 6 explores the theme of modernisation in documentary representations of Iran. It argues that in depicting Iran's social development, the Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979) is represented as the embodiment of modernity. The films under analysis in this chapter reflect the discourses of modernisation theory whereby traditional societies become modern by rationalizing resource allocation, and by the elimination of cultural,

institutional and organizational roadblocks that do not allow countries to develop. The Pahlavis are shown as trying to draw their 'traditional' society through an evolutionary lineal process to become a country arriving at a stage now parallel with modern and developed societies, a stage based on the image of contemporary Western societies. The cultural change under Pahlavis from the conventional values of the Iranian society to more 'Western' values is celebrated in these films as requirements for acquiring modernity. These necessities can be viewed from the perspective of modernisation theory that placed the ideas, the culture and differing value systems of societies, and not only the material conditions, at the centre of explanations of disparities in development. The recurrent utilization by the films of the motifs of 'urban-ness' also reflects the economic perspective of modernization theory that emphasizes the structural transformation of an economy from agrarian to industrial-commercial (Alhassan, 2008: 18).

The next two chapters discuss films made about Iran in the 1980s onwards (post-revolution Iranian society). There is a visible shift of emphasis in the films of this era compared to previous periods. The prevalence of the themes of social development and the near non-existence of political themes in documentary representations of Iran of pre-1980s gives place to a foray of politically charged programmes about the country. This change in documentary representations of Iran reflects the change in the broader field of media representations of the country, that is in turn a reflection of the change in Britain's, and the West's, relations with Iran, as the result of the Iranian revolution of 1979. The revolution put an end to the pro-West reign of the Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979), replacing it with an Islamic republic which claimed independence from, and opposition to, the West.

Chapter 7 of the thesis therefore focuses on the phenomenon of the revolution itself as perceived in British documentary. From among several programmes on this subject matter, I have chosen one, *1979, God Fights Back* to be discussed in this chapter. *1979, God Fights Back* is an episode of *People's Century*, one of the highly acclaimed, blockbuster television series made in 1995 by the BBC. In itself, the film contains a comprehensive collection of almost all prevalent themes related to the Iranian revolution

and to post-revolutionary Iranian society in Western/British media, which makes it an ideal case for an in depth analysis. I argue that the film itself represents a showcase for how an 'Islamic-revolutionised' image of Iran is constructed through the interaction of the discourses of democracy, Orientalism and Fundamentalism. The importance of *1979, God Fights Back* includes also its particular way of recontextualising older documentary materials, a point to which I will return in discussing continuity and change in documentary representations of Iran, in the conclusion of this thesis.

Chapter 8 explores the construction of Iran as an 'Islamic-revolutionised entity' by following the theme of democracy-vs.-Islamic fundamentalism and its related themes across documentary films on post-revolutionary Iran. These films are further examples of the construction of Iran as an 'Islamic-revolutionised space', created in the context of new topics and themes.

In the concluding remarks to this introduction I would like to express again concern for the power of documentary to be more sensitively acknowledged and more widely and critically challenged. Because audio-visual news and world events media have the power to grab, to hold and to influence our interest in the world at large, documentary is able, if not to out-scoop, then at least to out-scope newspapers for news and exploration of political, socio-economic and cultural issues. I hope to have shown throughout this thesis that such power brings with it a responsibility for documentary to become more self evaluative as it gains a truly global sphere of influence.

Chapter 2

The historical and socio-political context of documentary making in Britain

This chapter attempts to trace the origins of certain conventions in documentary representations of Iran, covering the formative decades of the genre (the 1920s, the 1930s, the 1940s and the 1950s) in Britain. The chapter explains the origins of the production of British documentary in those decades, elaborating the place of the genre in the broader socio-cultural context of its time. It focuses, on the one hand, on the documentary's institutional and economic ties with trade and state, and, on the other hand, on its adaptation of and contribution to the dominant ideologies of the time, specifically the discourses of the 'Empire' and 'Internationalism'.

The chapter firstly examines these ideologies in relation to documentary making in Britain, in order to tease out the issues involved in documentary representation concerning the concept of 'self' and 'others' that are hugely significant in representing Iran in those films.

Secondly, my concern in this chapter is to bring to the foreground the backdrop of 'Empire' as an implicit drive behind the making and commissioning of documentaries about Iran between the 1920s to the 1960s. This is not to say that filmmakers and film sponsors had the same agendas, but that the filmmaker's brief would naturally include and aim to produce the sponsor's requirements, and that the filmmakers' sympathies lay very much within the same cultural paradigms as that of the sponsors, making the sponsor's brief easily translatable into film. Finally, the chapter aims to provide a broad historical context for the textual analysis of sample documentaries in the subsequent chapters.

2.1. Imperialism as the Dominant Ideology

Recent studies of the cultures of imperialism by British scholars have revisited the consensus of more conventional theories of imperialism that argue that imperial enthusiasm disappeared by the end of First World War (Constantine, 1986: 193), and that the Empire was only the preserve of an elite, and thus not part of popular culture (Mackenzie, 1984: 1). The consensus seems to have shifted towards a belief that imperialism was in fact "a central part of the ideology of the British governing class from at least the early 1890s until the 1950s" (Warren, 1986: 233). In the late ninetieth and early 20th Century the Imperial ideology was actually upheld in the form of imperialist propaganda which was run partly by the government but largely by non-governmental propagandist agencies (Constantine, 1986; Warren, 1986). The ideas and influence of these agencies is believed to have been far reaching and extending into many institutions of the society from the educational system, to the armed forces, to uniformed youth movements, and the churches and missionary societies (MacKenzie, 1984: 3).

Even though not all theoreticians agree on the extent of the social penetration of this ideology, and whether or not it was indeed engineered from above, it is widely agreed that there was a generalized imperial vision, a common ground of national conceit in British society which embraced "unique imperial status, [and] cultural and racial superiority" (MacKenzie, 1986: 9). Imperialism indeed was part of a distinctive English nationalism (Dunne cited in Warren, 1986: 233). As a cultural ideology, imperialism found expression in high and low culture, that is to say in literature, theatre and in forms of popular entertainment and leisure activites such as music halls and exhibitions, mass media including print media, cinema and broadcasting (Summerfield, 1986; Springhall, 1986; Bratton, 1986; Shephard, 1986; Mangan, 1986; Richards, 1986). In the following sections of this chapter I will discuss firstly the place of cinema and documentary film in that culture, and subsequently the issues involved in documentary representations of the Empire and its Other.

2.1.2. Dominant ideology and the media

British cinema and broadcasting were among the most self-conscious conveyers of the ideology of imperialism. In the 1930s popular culture was controlled and disseminated by the middle-class whose largely right-wing worldview found an outlet in fiction and the movies, the very entertaining media popular with mass audiences (Richards, 1986:140). The fact that film industry invested heavily in expensive imperial epics indicates that this genre was in high demand and "met with popular approval" (ibid: 141). An idealised image of the Empire, already established through the melodramas of Victorian theatre and other visual media like painting and engraving, found its way to the big screen, even though this romantic image was in sharp contrast to the actual conditions in the Empire (Richards, 1986: 144). It appears that the state, though reluctant to involve itself directly in feature film production, was largely sympathetic and unofficially supportive of the policies of the film industry in depicting the Empire. The involvement of the state in upholding the positive image of the Empire was maintained through exercising influence on feature film producers and also through a strict code of censorship operated by the British Board of Film Censors to prohibit any adversarial view of the British army, British colonial administration, or the white race (ibid: 153-154).

The situation was more or less the same for 'the factual film' which included documentary, educational, and news. Here the official involvement was even more direct compared to feature film. MacKenzie has observed that the newsreel companies like British Movietone and Gaumont-British were strongly conservative, the latter of which had close unofficial connections with Conservative Central Office, and that they were asked by the government in 1935 to make official films (MacKenzie, 1984: 88-89). The conservative approach of such companies to the issues of the day meant that "they avoided controversy, promoted respect for the establishment authority and ideas, as well as presenting a national self-assurance and confidence" (ibid).

Companies such as British Talking News (which had a special Empire News Bulletin), British Paramount News and Pathé News were all interconnected, as well as the

American and British feature film industries and their newsreel subsidiaries. Table 2.i shows the interconnection of these companies as documented in a survey sponsored in 1947 by the Political and Economical Planning for Film Industry (Cumberlege, 1947).

Newreels company	Affiliated company
British Movietone News	20th -Century Fox (American)
British Paramount News	Paramount Picture Inc. (American)
Gaumont-British News	Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, Ltd. (British)
Pathe News	Associated British and Warner Brothers (British-American)
Universal News	British Pictorial Productions Ltd.

Table 2.i: Newsreels companies and their affiliations

The financial inter-relations of these companies were described in the same report thus:

> Gaumont-British and 20th Century Fox are related through the Metropolitan and Bradford Trust, which gives Movietone an entry into some of the Gaumont-British cinemas. The late Mr. Maxwell, who owned Pathé, also had shares in Gaumont-British and Universal News, also has indirect interest in Movietone and Pathé. Paramount appears to remain completely the property of the American Paramount Pictures and to work in conjunction with Olympic Kinematograph Laboratories, an American-owned company (Cumberlege, 1947: 136-7).

Apart from the state, the factual film was targeted by another powerful sector as means for propaganda. In the 1930s trade and industry had already seized on the idea of advertising by film (Low, 1972: 2) begin to notice the potential of documentary film as a means of propagating the status quo of Empire. Empire was a vital source for British trade and industry providing them with resources beneficial to their economic interests. Constantine explains that in the 1920s and the 1930s the idea of extracting economic benefits for Britain from imperial connections, had put 'colonial development policies' on the agenda for all political parties alike, resulting in an increase in imperial propaganda:

> [the agenda] was endorsed consistently by such organizations of industry and commerce as the Federation of British Industries and not infrequently by the Trades Union Congress… [Consequently] the period showed an increase in the amount of propaganda which was pressed upon the British public through a wider range of media the virtues and values of Empire (Constantine, 1986: 192).

Imperialist propaganda was carried out through both governmental and non-governmental bodies with an effect on almost all aspects of British life, from juvenile education, theatre, popular art and media to biscuits tins and other merchandise. The imperial propaganda was, in the words of Eric Stokes, "an unformulated philosophy of life and politics" (quoted in Warren, 1986: 233) and part of a distinctive English nationalism (Dunne quoted in Warren, 1986: 233). The British media, and documentary film in particular, played an eminent role in propagating that worldview, in being a mouthpiece and advertising tool for government and industry. Together the state and industry formed the main sponsorship of British documentary at its inception. In order to understand the relationship between the sponsors and the production of British documentaries in early decades of the 20th Century, the next section sets to explain the function of a governmental department, the Empire Marketing Board, which acted as a mediator through which the governmental and industrial sponsorship of documentary was facilitated.

2.1.3. Empire Marketing Board

As explained before, colonial economic interest was vital to many sections of British industry. To them, and to the Conservative party that backed them, there was no better solution for the economic depression of post-war years than promoting inter-imperial trade. In the high unemployment period of 1920s such an 'imperial solution' to the economic problems of the working class seemed perfectly suited, both as a counter-ideology to socialism and as a way of diverting the possible adversary effects of free trade on British industry, as explained by Constantine:

> Some sections of industry were convinced that the free-trading international system which in 19th century served the interests of a uniquely advantaged British economy … suited Britain ill when other nations industrialised (1986: 196).

These groups therefore proposed a policy of tariff protection which would discriminate against foreign import but facilitate trade exchange among nations of the Empire. When this policy was dismissed by the government of the time (1924) in favour of free-trade,

the supporters, in search of an alternative, proposed that the government "should instead spend money improving the marketing of Empire foodstuffs in Britain… as a non-tariff way of encouraging inter-imperial trade" (ibid:198). The proposal was accepted and the government set up a department called the Empire Marketing Board (EMB) in May 1926, to carry out the plan, appointing Sir Stephen Tallents as its secretary (Sussex, 1975:4). As part of the efforts to develop new techniques in the field of public relations, Tallents formed a Publicity Committee for the purpose of enhancing public opinion of imperial trade. This function of the Board however, was not limited to commercial advertising, but also included publicity for government departments and services. As the first secretary of the board, Sir Stephen Tallents believed that in a mass democracy the public should be educated about the functions of government through public relations services (Crinson, 2004: 209). Tallents firmly believed in the effectiveness of public relations as a means of achieving a constructive impact upon public opinion that could subsequently lead to "public approval, consent and action" (ibid: 204). He thus pursued the task of public relations by means of   marketing, advertising and research, and through all channels and media (ibid: 184).

The full range of available media explored by EMB to carry out its task of publicity and marketing included pamphlets, leaflets, poster films and postcards which were printed to advertise products from around the Empire. Posters like 'Highways of Empire' were printed for hanging on classroom walls (Mackenzie, 1984: 234). Subsequently a press officer was appointed to draw newspapers' attention to EMB activities, and an EMB display, usually "its specially-designed eye-catching pavilion" was mounted in seventy or so different exhibitions (Constantine, 1986: 206). The board also launched a nationwide series of public lectures on topics related to Empire and its affairs to public audience. There was no difficulty for the Board gaining access to broadcasting and from 1928 onwards "brief morning bulletins were broadcast to housewives describing Empire produce in season" (ibid: 207).

Following other media, the potential of film for shaping public opinion, action and consumerism, soon attracted the Board's attention. The Publicity Committee of the EMB

deemed cinema as having the greatest advertising power in the world, as an extract from one of its reports shows:

> The cinema is not merely a form of entertainment but… a powerful instrument of education … and even when it is not used avowedly for purpose of instruction, advertisement or propaganda, it exercises indirectly a great influence in shaping the ideas of the very large numbers to whom it appeals (Cunliffe-Lister quoted in Constantine, 1986: 208).

The Publicity Committee therefore decided that cinema performances of short educational or propaganda films dealing with Empire products should be included in publicity plans. For Tallents, for whom education and propaganda were "inseparably bound up with imperialism" (MacKenzie, 1984: 83), cinema presented a perfect new channel for spreading imperialist ideology. The significance of cinema as a means of education and advertising for the Empire can be best understood in terms of the wide range of audiences it reached:

> The audiences were said to be predominantly women, but the range was wide and included members of literary societies, the YMCA, working –men's clubs, cooperative societies, adult and army schools, training colleges, Women's Institutes, Rotary Clubs, Grocers' Association and meeting in public libraries (Constantine, 1986: 204).

To exploit the full potential of cinema for public relations, therefore, a film unit was founded in the EMB. As we shall see in the next section the film unit of the EMB was going to be the first sponsor of what would later be known as the British Documentary Movement. This was then the climate in which the origins of British documentary appeared, a climate bound up with marketing, advertising and research and focused mainly on promoting the Empire and its commercial interests for Britain. A quote form Mackenzie elaborates this context nicely:

> However unsophisticated the audience, however complex the problems of communication theory, one conclusion is unavoidable. Most of the plots of the adventure films, most of the newsreel, documentary, and actuality material remained incomprehensible except within the matrix of perceptions about the world shared by makers and audience alike. Censorship ensured that no efforts to break that mould were allowed, and indeed there is little indication that they

would have been forthcoming in any case. Not even the 'radical' documentarists could escape the power of the core ideology (MacKenzie, 1984: 91).

In the following sections the relationship between the 'core ideology' and the economic basis of documentary productions will be explored in more depth through discussing the significance of the British Documentary Movement of the 1930s to the 1950s.

2.2. The British Documentary Movement

The British Documentary Movement (hereafter referred to as the BDM) was brought into existence by a group of young British filmmakers, John Grierson in particular. Grierson's film *Drifters* (1929) is believed to be the starting point of the Movement, and Grierson himself is seen as the founder. (Sussex, 1975; Rotha, 1973; Barsam, 1973; Wells 2003).[2] The significance of the BDM for this thesis is that the BDM is claimed to have had a huge impact on the whole idea of documentary making in Britain (Sussex, 1975). The TV documentary model can be seen as close to the documentaries of the 1930s, the 1940s and the 1950s (Barr, 2005). It is also widely accepted that the BDM helped to give documentary in Britain the importance it needed to be accepted and established as a new genre. The lasting effect of the BDM on both the style and content of documentary, at least the mainstream British TV documentary, formed the basis of the functions and the identity that this kind of documentary assumes for itself up to the present time.

To understand those interrelations I am going to explain some facets of the context in which the ideological and economic basis of documentary production in the first half of the 20th Century took place. Firstly, the BDM's approach to the prevalent ideology of its time seems to have been one of conformism. MacKenzie describes the BDM's conformism to the discourse of the 'Empire' as one that "remained intact in all the products of the documentary school in its varied guises from right to left" (MacKenzie, 1984: 86). As an example of the BDM's conventional approach to the 'Empire' I would like to quote an extract from the leader of the BDM, John Grierson:

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[2] However, Lovell and Hillier point out that the underlying social situation was such that something like the BDM would probably have emerged even without Grierson (1972: 10).

> We started in England, but the great thing was that we started with an international front. We started the Imperial Institute, thinking at first of exchanging films between the dominions and the colonies and the mother country, as we called it then. And out of that experience of the Imperial Institute we got ourselves a view which involved the building up of film production all over the Empire… we became like missionaries. We built up in the colonies… in the dominions …this sense of building up all over the world… (quoted in Sussex, 1975: 196)

Grierson's views were also shared by another influential figure, Lord John Reith, the general director of the BBC from 1923 – 1938. Mackenzie believes that the influence of Reith on the content of the BBC lasted to the early 1950s, and made the output of the broadcast "lay firmly with an imperial/royalist right" (MacKenzie, 1986: 187). He claims that the Empire that was projected by the BBC was "the peace Empire, the Empire of internationalism and economic harmony" and against its stereotypic nature, which bore no relation to the colonial reality, it won the approval of the British audience and support of politicians (ibid: 186). The ideological interrelations of cinema and broadcasting, the two media which had the greatest impact on the future of documentary, is summarised in MacKenzie's statement: "This was the Empire of the Empire Marketing Board and of the British film movement which it [the BBC] nurtured" (ibid).

There were interrelations between the BBC and the BDM on other fronts as well. The movement is regarded by some to be a major force in the formation of the concept of Britishness (Higson, 1995). Using factual film as a means of cultural influence makes clear the link between the cultural basis of documentary production and the construction of the communal identity, both nationally and internationally, a link which in turn affects the rhetoric of the representation of 'other'. In constructing such a mediated public sphere (Morley, 2004), the functions of the BDM are similar to those of a national broadcaster. In his essay *Broadcasting and Cinema,* John Caughie explains how a shared cultural background plus a 'small knot of historical coincidence' in which the BBC and the BDM emerged, made the discourses of 'independence' and 'public service' the traditional discourse of both. Although in the case of the BDM the existence of a public service cinema would not be possible in the same way as public service broadcasting

could exist, the idea remained as one of Grierson's dreams: to produce a cinema which was at the service of public social education, and freed from the pressures of both commerce and "the frivolities of 'mass entertainment'" (Caughie, 1986: 191). The later TV documentary showed, on the one hand, the imprint of the BDM productions, and on the other hand, the impact of the BBC radio documentaries, which in their turn were inspired by the works of the BDM, in adopting socio-political directions (Crisell, 1997: 36).

The BDM played its role in the social construction of new identities, a role which was especially notable in the inter-war era, and again compatible with the role of the BBC in the same period. At the heart of the concept of 'public service broadcasting' was the idea of providing a mass audience with a social awareness embodied in instructional, informational and educational programmes. This top-down policy of education was believed by people like Grierson and Reith to help prepare the public for the process of adaptating to the needs of a changing society and the emergence of modern mass democracy which required the formation of new social identities. If the paternalistic connotations of this policy were not immediately apparent in any of the manifestos stated by the members of the BDM, they were, in the case of the BBC, more self–conscious, adapted quite deliberately by its Director General of the time, John Reith.[3]

The social function of the Movement can be better understood taking into account the economic foundations which made the production of documentary possible. What gave the BDM the force and impact of a movement, besides the shared socio-cultural viewpoint of its members, was that it was entirely sponsored in the beginning by the government via the EMB. In 1927, John Grierson was appointed as the film officer in the EMB film unit, in which capacity he completed *Drifters* two years later (Sussex, 1975:5). From this evidence it is clear that the Movement was founded and wholly sponsored by the film unit of the Empire Marketing Board. So the BDM was involved in

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[3] Crisell explains: "the aim of public service broadcasting was to give the public a 'better' service than it asked for. Reith himself was famously explicit on this. 'It is occasionally indicated to us that we are apparently setting out to give the public what we think they need-and not what they want', he wrote 'but few know what they want, and very few what they need' (1924: 34)" (Reith quoted in Crisell, 1997: 29).

the dissemination of imperial ideology, as a main pillar of the effective marketing of a new British national identity. The creation of a body like the Empire Marketing Board and its film unit is a good example of co-operation between governmental and non-governmental sectors to solidify Imperial ideology within the discourse of nationality, using the medium of cinema for official propaganda.

In 1933, the EMB was closed down but its unique system of sponsorship continued in different guises. The film unit was transferred from the EMB to the General Post Office where Tallents was once more appointed as the public relations officer and Grierson as the new film unit officer. In 1940, after the outbreak of the Second World War, the Ministry of Information took over the coordination of all British film production to put them at the service of war propaganda. After the war, the Ministry of Information was transformed into the Central Office of Information with more or less the same function with regard to documentary film. So, throughout the pre-war and outbreak of war period, and up to the late 1950s, Grierson's cinema, like Reith's BBC, was government financed and government sponsored, a service which was, in the words of Caughie, "independent from commerce and dependent on the state" (Caughie, 1986: 190). People in the BDM openly regarded their work as a kind of mediator between the government and people, and saw their work as responding to "a need on the part of governments for communication" (Legg, a BDM member, quoted in Sussex, 1975: 80). The need for communication with the public was soon felt also by the industrial sector to which the BDM responded with the same enthusiasm (ibid). The BDM was thus commissioned by all sectors of British industry to make documentary films for their public relations. Without the institutional base of a public corporation, Grierson's ideal of a public cinema turned into a sponsored cinema which was supported by government and industry, "for public relations more than public service" (Caughie, 1986: 198). Table 2.ii summarizes the development and public-private 'segmentation' of the sponsorship of the BDM throughout its existence.

	Units	Directors/	Function	Commissioners

		Founders		
Governmental sponsorship	EMB 1926, transformed to GPO in 1933, to CFU* in 1940, and to COI** Film Unit in 1952	BDM member(s)***	Film production	**Governmental/ National:** Ministries and government departments, the National Council of Social Services, the Southern Railway, British Gas Association, Imperial Airways, the Orient Line, Electricity, and so on **Industrial:** AIOC, Shell-Mex, Ceylon Tea Propaganda, and so on
Industrial sponsorship	Shell Film Unit 1934	BDM member(s)	Film production	
Private units	Strand Film 1936; Realist Film Unit 1937	BDM member(s)	Film production	
Promotion bodies	Association of Realist Film Producers (A.R.F.P); Film Centre	BDM member(s)	Advising sponsors, supervising production, research, training filmmakers, arranging theatrical and non-theatrical distribution	
Other production groups****	British Instructional Film; Gaumont-British Instructional	Bruce Woolfe-Mary Field team	Film production	Governmental and Industrial commissions, plus business commercials for Co-operative, Cadbury's, Ovaltine, and so on

Table 2.ii: The BDM and the system for sponsorship of documentary film from 1926 to the mid-1950s.[4]

*Crown Film Unit of the Ministry of Information

**Central Office of Information Film Unit

***To avoid unnecessary detail 'BDM member(s)' is used instead of the actual names

**** British Instructional Film and Gaumont-British Instructional (subsidiary of Gaumont-British Picture Corporation) were film companies that produced instructional films planned as commercial undertakings by the Woolfe-Field team. Most of these were strictly for teaching use. But they also made a number of documentaries.

In contrast to this interdependence of state, trade and the BDM, many critics and historians have tended to evaluate the BDM exclusively in terms of its innovative filmmaking, and overall in positive terms regarding its contribution to socio-cultural principles of mass democracy. The members of the Movement saw themselves as radical and left wingers, as a quote from a BDM member, Harry Watt shows:

> The idealism and the belief that we had, whether right or wrong, that we were creating a new art form, and battling against the Establishment and the opposition of the trade – every facet of trade – was tremendously stimulating…" (Watt quoted in Sussex, 1975: 193).

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[4] Information gathered from *The Arts Enquiry, The Factual Film*, 1947.

However, the fact that the BDM was initially funded by an imperial body, the EMB, and later by other official bodies like GPO, Ministry of Information (MOI) and Central Office of Information (COI) which could serve the state machinery of cultural policy making in peace and war, makes it clear that the BDM was implicitly part of the establishment and not quite such a revolutionary body as its members saw it to be.

The members' perception of the BDM however did not conform with the view of Grierson himself. He was outspoken about his own role as a propagandist. Constantine assesses Grierson's role as conforming "to the managerial and educational concepts of public relations and propaganda" (Constantine, 1986: 209). The socio-democratic principles on which Grierson and others wished to educate and inform the public were meaningful only in the framework of the broader context of the dominant ideology of their time, namely, Imperialism. Empire, Mackenzie believes, "was a fact of life in Grierson's world, a source of economic and moral improvement for both home and colonial population" (Mackenzie, 1984: 85). That was perhaps the reason why the broader implications of their output as part of the dominant cultural policies (of the nation-state) were not visible in their own time, even to themselves, as a result of which they thought of themselves as radicals, a reputation which, according to Mackenzie, "most of them cultivated assiduously in memoirs and autobiographies" (ibid: 84).

Although it is widely accepted that the BDM initiated a unique system of sponsorship fed from two sources, the state and industry, as opposed to the traditional film industry, the government as well as the trade and industry had already started using film as a means of reaching objectives long before the formation of the BDM in early 1930s. An inventory of films about Iran made by institutions other than the BDM shows that between 1921 and 1930 at least ten of these films were made, five of which for educational purposes by British Instructional Films, showing various aspects of the country, including caravans, Iranian towns, Persian carpets, and so on. The rest are about oil, or related topics such as The Trans-Persian Railway (1930), all sponsored by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (see Table 2.iii). Examples like this can suggest that it was actually the government, and not the BDM, that initiated the state support of

documentary making. This movement on the part of the government to get involved in documentary making was done through a body associated directly with trade and imperial affairs, the EMB. This, plus the fact that huge industrial organizations such as oil companies got interested in sponsoring films almost immediately after the birth of the genre makes it clear that the relationship between the origins of documentary making in Britain and the economic institutions of an imperial state, was more profound and far beyond the role of BDM. Nevertheless, the BDM played an important part in expanding the system of governmental and industrial sponsorship for documentary.

Having outlined the various threads interwoven between society and the BDM, it is useful to summarise this interaction in three parts. Firstly, in examining the economic basis factors such as sponsorship by government and industry of documentary production should be taken into account. Secondly, the socio-political function of the movement was notable in forming, or rather re-forming, national identity; and, thirdly, the ideological underpinnings of the movement in promoting Empire were the essence and discourse of public service. I will assess how these are brought to bear on the content and discourse of documentaries made about Iran in Britain from the 1930s to the 1960s (and later in TV documentaries up to the 1990s), in the section which examines the role of documentary in creating the image of 'Self' as opposed to 'Other'. In the case of Iran, the creation of that image becomes even more subtly interconnected with economic and political interests, when we are presented by the facts such as the British government being one of the biggest shareholders of British Petroleum (Bamberg, 2000), the sponsor of the majority of the documentaries made about Iran in the first half of the 20th Century. As we shall see later, the kind of rhetoric initiated in such films has continued to be repeated in almost exact terms in both the visual discourse and ideological bent of later documentaries made by the BBC and other British channels. First, I would like to elaborate further the function of the Imperial ideology in relation to industry, in particular the oil industry.

2.3. Industrial sponsors and the dominant ideology

Imperial ideology, as Constantine puts it, "offered for ideological approval the notion of an Empire which was both an economic asset and a civilising mission" in early 20th century Britain (1986: 193). On the one hand the ideology appealed to "perceived economic self-interest" through creating opportunities for individual enterprises and encouraging the values of private property and profit-making to maintain capitalist economies. The self-claimed civilizing mission of imperialism on the other hand, appealed to the "moral instinct of all social classes" (ibid). Accordingly, the preservation of imperial control over India, the Middle East and the colonial Empire remained a priority for all the political parties, putting the 'colonial development policies' on their agenda (ibid). This policy was endorsed by economic institutes who managed to set up bodies like the EMB, to encourage imperial connections in their advertising and marketing activities. The use of film as part of this effort was not only carried out through the public relations service at the EMB but later also through other official bodies and some industrial sectors started setting up their own film centres.

Oil companies were among the most active in starting such units and were the biggest sponsors of documentary film (Sussex, 1975: 174). As mentioned before, the majority of documentaries on Iran up to the late 1930s were sponsored by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) which had a crucial part in Britain's international status up to the mid 1950s. Benefiting from Britain's position as the paramount imperial power in the Middle East at the end of World War I, Anglo-Iranian secured a share of Middle East oil that was larger than any other major company (Bamberg, 2000: 3). Bamberg explains the importance of the company in the nation's security as oil became vital in the economy of Britain.

> Britain had long sought to guarantee its supplies through the ownership of crude oil by British companies, principally Anglo-Persian,[5] in territories within Britain's sphere of influence. Indeed, that had been the British government's chief motive in financing, and taking a majority shareholding, in Anglo-Persian (ibid: 8).

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[5] Anglo-Persian was the original name of the company from 1909 to 1935, when it was changed to Anglo-Iranian. In 1954 it was renamed as British Petroleum (Bamberg, 2000: 2)

It is important for the purposes of this research to emphasize the link between the crucial role of the oil industry in Britain's imperial status and the way the oil industry was represented in documentary films. This argument is fully explored in Chapter 5 of this thesis. Here, I would like to highlight once more the role of filmmakers in the constructing the image of the British oil industry. We have already discussed the faith of Grierson in the Empire as the force of good, and the BDM's conformist approach to the ideology of the day. To narrow this down to the specific case of film sponsorship by the oil industry, here I would like to highlight two other points: first, the Movement's view of the impact of the oil industry on the life of the countries where they operated; and second, the Movement's all-encompassing influence on sponsored filmmaking.

For the BDM members, the oil industry was at the very frontier of the West's civilizing mission in 'undeveloped' countries, embodying the spirit of an 'Enlightened Empire', committed to improving the welfare of the international community. This is evident in words of Grierson, for example in an interview he gave specifically about Shell Oil:

> Shell Oil was the first and greatest of the sponsors because it saw the full implications of its international operations, its full implication in terms of instruction, in terms of social welfare and the preaching and teaching of social welfare. For example, one of the propositions that was first put to us in the early thirties was that they found in the Gulf of Persia that it took two men to lift a bag of cement. Therefore, they were in the nutrition business. So they were in the business not only of creating a new nutritional basis but of teaching nutrition, teaching sanitation, and so on. Well, they worked logically into all kinds of services of an educational or inspirational kind in the communities in which they operated, whether it was in Venezuela, whether it was in the Upper Persian Gulf, or whether it was in the Dutch East Indies (quoted in Sussex, 1975: 61).

This quotation is interesting as I intend to examine the reflection of this particular viewpoint in a film called *Dawn of Iran* (1938) in Chapter 6. Made for AIOC by two senior members of the BDM, Arthur Elton and John Taylor, the film tells the story of how the whole country mushroomed out of the desert overnight, thanks to the discovery of oil underneath it, by the British. Made in 1938, the film presents a history of Iran 16 years prior to that date, during which a piece of land covered by the "ruins of the

past….populated by nomadic tribesmen and deprived of any central government", to quote the film, became a country in the full modern sense, with "cities, roads and public buildings", crowded by "industrial workers" and governed by a sovereign monarchy/administration. The film is just one example of numerous films made by the British oil industry that underscore a sense of benevolent internationalism on the part of the industry, embodied in what is presented as the mutual benefit of the enterprise for both the company and the host country. This however leads to forging the representations of the host country to uphold this particular image of the company, as fully discussed in Chapter 5.

The second point in relation to the BDM and film sponsorship is that the movement succeeded in making its particular trend of documentary the prevalent trend in sponsored filmmaking for both governmental and industrial sectors. As we shall see in the following section, this trend in documentary which can be called 'Griersonian', was maintained by Grierson through two major venues: the setting up of film units to train people for filmmaking, and initiating consultative units to maintain consistency in documentary productions. The most important of these units was the Film Centre, set up in 1937 by Grierson and Arthur Elton as an aid to long-term planning for film sponsors. The role of the Centre in the final shape of films was vital, sometimes even more than the commissioning body. As Stewart Legg (member of the BDM and director of the Film Centre) puts it the sponsor would be told by the Centre:

> We think the best thing to do is this; make this sort of film or that sort of film, or don't make a film at all. If you think our advice is right, we can arrange to have this done. Usually Film Centre will then employ an outside body to do it (quoted in Sussex, 1975: 94).

The influence of the BDM and the Film Centre was particularly strong in case of the film unit of Shell Oil. This unit, which eventually grew into one of the biggest documentary film units in Britian, formed in 1934, and Edgar Anstey, a senior BDM member was recommended by Grierson for running the unit (Sussex, 1975:92). Although the film unit was in Shell premises "the planning of films and the supervision of them was done from

outside by Film Centre" (Legg quoted in Sussex, 1975: 94).

Sir Arthur Elton, a senior member of the BDM, a director of the Film Centre and advisor to the Shell Unit described in an interview this policy of Shell to have their films made through an outside body:

> We [Shell] present in the best possible way aspects of the work we do, never put our name on the films. And we practically never do from that day to this. You will very rarely find the word *Shell* inside a Shell film. There are no advertisements. (I know sometimes there are specific advertising films, which we're not speaking of). And this presentation of its own world has been made year after year from 1936 till today (quoted in Sussex, 1975: 95).

This strategy of Shell was described by Elton as 'a policy of excellence', and was adopted to prevent their films looking like "an ordinary piece of Shell public relations from the inside" (Legg quoted in Sussex, 1975: 93). It resulted in films being regarded as "universal in their application" (ibid), and the image of the Shell Oil group held as being "conditioned in some measure by the distinction and objectivity, and humanity too…" (Anstey, quoted in Sussex, 1975: 178).

This description of Shell's strategy as a "policy of excellence" is paradoxical and could be seen as a double-edged sword. On the one hand it is indeed ethical for a sponsor not to be opportunistic in 'advertising' explicitly their own organisation; on the other hand, however, it is virtually impossible for them to provide totally 'neutral' content. This point is developed on a recurring basis throughout this thesis in relation not only to sponsors such as Shell, but the BDM itself. The claims of neutrality will be examined through an in-depth analysis of the films. I will also argue in the next chapters that the ideas of universalism and internationalism shape one of the central themes of documentaries made on oil/Iran, and together provide a thematic thread running through these documentaries from the 1930s to the 1960s. The issues involved in industrial sponsorship of documentary also affect other aspects of documentary representation, namely the ones concerning the concepts of 'self' and 'other'. Below I examine it as a dual concept to show how the image of Iran is constructed implicitly as 'other' in

relation to a 'self' (Britain as an Empire with a civilising mission) imbued with an unconsciously pervasive and therefore necessarily non-neutral and idealised image of its 'self'. For the discussion of this section I will focus once more on the BDM, this time from a different angle.

2.4. The ideation of the image of 'Self and Other' in documentary

The BDM is believed to have been a major force in the formation of a national nexus and the concept of Britishness (Higson, 1995). The British Empire upon whose economical and institutional support the Movement was totally dependent, was not only an economic asset making the production of films possible, but also an ideological asset, supplying the content of films with the ideological principles necessary for the formation of new constructs of national (and international) identity for Britain. A new wave of critical approaches to the works of the BDM and the production, distribution and exhibition context surrounding their films tends to draw attention to the role played by the movement in creating the image of an 'Enlightened' Empire as part of British national identity. For example, Martin Stollery has viewed the BDM as serving "to smooth a long process of transition from direct imperial domination to a new kind of exploitative relationship between the First world and the Third world" (2000: 151). Stollery views the production context for the BDM output as one which "dictated that the British Empire should ideally be represented as an achievement which was not about conquest and expansionism but about international stability and cooperation" (ibid: 154).[6] The counterpart to the BDM's production context was a plan proposed by Stephen Tallents, the first secretary of the EMB. This plan, called 'The Project of England' was intended to enhance the image of England in the international community, not just within the colonised nations. As Crinson explains, the plan would underlie any venture promoting the implicit and explicit 'goodness of purpose' to be found in British Empire ideology:

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[6] In defining this particular context Stollery observes the factors below: "One of the most immediate threats national projection was pitched against was the expansionist or generally more aggressive propaganda disseminated by the Soviet Union, German and Italy… There were therefore a number of historical factors, some inherited from the exhibition tradition and others stemming from the exigencies of contemporary international relations, which combined to shape and define specifically British practices of exhibiting Empire in the 1920s and 1930s" (2000: 153-4).

During the 1930s, and for some time after, the phrase 'national projection' became widely used to describe a particular form of official propaganda. National projection was a way of representing Britain, outside of the homeland, as a country of enlightened public institutions and modernized industries, a place of democratic freedoms and well-made products, an essentially peace-loving land whose empire was to be transformed, in the words of Leo Amery, secretary of state for the Dominions, into 'a co-operative venture… a society for mutual help'. The propaganda was conveyed by several major enterprises, among them the newly created British Council (1934), the films produced under John Grierson at the Empire Marketing Board and the BBC foreign-language broadcasts (Crinson, 2004:182).

Plans like this aimed at portraying an image of Britain as modern, internationalist and egalitarian. The implication of this for cinema however, meant that this desired image of 'Self' was achieved through the representation of, and direct or indirect references to, the non-Western world. The examples of the outputs of the BDM which are analyzed in the next chapters of this thesis will reveal that the image of the 'Other' (here Iran) is constructed as traditionalist, backward and underdeveloped, against which Britain stands out as modern, advanced and developed. Stollery has observed this particular function of the BDM in the wider context of European modernist cinemas of the 1920s and the 1930s, especially Soviet montage cinema which had the greatest impact on the BDM. According to him internationalism and egalitarianism promoted by these cinemas were based on the underlying principles of Eurocentricism and a belief in Western global supremacy (2000: 150-157).

An interesting point in Stollery's analysis is his scrutiny of the concept of modernity. According to him, Grierson believed the relation between cinema and modernism not only included the aesthetics of film, but also its content. Grierson viewed cinema as a medium which was characteristically modern and thus "could make a decisive intervention into the shaping of Western modernity" (ibid: 156). This link between the construction of European modernity and the medium of film is a focal point in analysing the documentaries made about Iran, both in Griersonian cinema and later in broadcasting. It is argued that these institutions have perpetuated, to this date, an Orientalist reading of history which advocates modernity as an essentially Western heritage, incompatible with non-Western settings. In Griersonian cinema, this is done by

referring to Iran in ways which could be viewed, in hindsight, as more explicitly Orientalist. In later TV documentaries these references become more subtle, and yet, in many cases, bear the influence of the conventions established by the past documentaries. The analysis of sample documentaries in the following chapters aims to bring to light the origins of those conventions in documentary representations of Iran.

2.5. British documentaries on Iran: sponsors and producers

The BDM remains relevant in this section for reasons discussed throughout the chapter. However, England's reputation in documentary making went back a long way before the 1930s and the BDM. In her commentary on the documentary movement, Rachael Low emphasizes that in the 1930s "the film was bursting its theatrical bonds and the documentary movement was only one part of a seething mass of activity outside the commercial feature studios, one effort among many to use film as a genuine form of communication not confined to the set pattern of the picture show" (1979: 1). Charles Barr believes similarly that Grierson

> made an effective takeover of the concept, making everyone identify documentary with him and his associates and the GPO unit and its successors, and even making them believe he invented the word[7] and the genre, BUT documentary was flourishing before him and had many different strands then and subsequently (Barr, 2005).

In her book *Let's Go to the Movies*, first published in 1926, Iris Barry not only uses the word 'documentary', but describes it as "a department of cinematography in which England is still unbeaten" (Barry, 1972: 202).

These observations are true insofar as Iran is concerned, since a number of documentaries were made on Iran well before the 1930s. The oldest found for this research in the BFI archive dates back to 1915. Between that date and early the 1930s documentaries were made on different aspects of Iran by the AIOC and British

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[7] "The term documentary was first used by Grierson in a review of Flaherty's Moana in 1926". This statement is quoted by many, including Hardy, 1946; Wells, 1944; Sussex, 1975; Rotha, 1973 and Barsam, 1973. Grierson himself says: "I suppose I coined the word in the sense that I wasn't aware of its being used by anybody else" (quoted in Sussex, 1975: 3).

Instructional Films (BIF). Yet, the 'Griersonian branch' of documentary remains important for the purpose of this research for three reasons. First, the BIF is viewed as rather apart. Citing examples of the 1930s documentaries MacKenzie comments that they "were all patriotic ventures made by the right-wing documentarists at British Instructional Films, a company which was overtly nationalist and imperialist" (MacKenzi, 1984:86). He then concludes that

> in retrospect, it is clear that the fervent Empire loyalism of Bruce Wolfe at British Instructional Films… is as characteristic of the British documentary movement of the 1920s and 1930s as the carefully masked 'radicalism' of Basil Wright or Paul Rotha (ibid. 87).

Second, the majority of British documentary films on Iran between the 1930s and the 1950s are associated with people who were trained in the Griersonian tradition. They directed, produced, or collaborated in different ways in making those films through various film units initiated by them either independently, or for industrial and governmental sponsors. This was a result of Grierson's policy on setting up film units and training members who in turn set up new units.

> As a result the movement expanded within ten years [1929-1939] from one three-man unit at EMB, to four units employing about sixty experienced technicians, trained in the documentary tradition, as producers, directors and assistants. In this time about three hundred films were produced. (Cumberlege, 1947:5o).

As shown in Table 2.i, the major film units during the decades of the 1930s to the 1950s were run by the senior members of the BDM. In mid-1950s when the governmental sponsorship of documentary declined consequent with the disbanding of the BDM, everyone involved dispersed into film and media elsewhere, including television, which by then was emerging as the new sponsor and the new medium for documentary making. In this way the BDM's influence became a heritage in the ensuing decades of film and television (Caughie, 1980).

The durable impact of the Griersonian cinema on later documentaries is the third reason why its role is highlighted here. This was also the result of Grierson's initiative in setting up a consultative unit, the Film Centre. The Centre's job was "to advise sponsors, supervise producers, make arrangements for distribution, undertake scenario work and

research, open up new markets and in general guide the development of the movement…[it] ensured that a consistent policy and standard were maintained although the films were sponsored by various companies" (Cumberlege, 1947: 56). This policy resulted in what the observers saw as the formation of a 'coherent movement' in British documentary making, and what, in hindsight, meant conformism in outlooks and ideology, as in the case of documentaries made on Iran.

The next chapters will show how that conformism translated into the cinematic language of documentary text. Before that, I would like to bring together what has already been said in this chapter and put it in the particular context of this research. I intend to make a connection between the major players of documentary making and their output on Iran. To try and present this as clearly as possible, Table 2.iii has been drawn to show a list of documentary films, their production year and their commissioners and makers.

Films	Year	Production	Sponsor
Tehran, Capital of Iran	1915	Gaumont/ France	
The Persian Oil Industry: The History of a Great National Enterprise	1925	Topical Press Agency	AIOC
A Persian Caravan: Heart of Asia Series	1928	BIF	
In a Persian Town: Heart of Asia Series	1928	BIF	
Persian Carpet Making: Heart of Asia Series	1928	BIF	
Through the Back Door to India: Heart of Asia Series	1928	BIF	
In the Land of the Shah	1928		AIOC
An Eastern Gate Crasher	1930	BIF	
The Trans-Persian Railway	1930	AIOC	
In Persian Gardens	1931	First-National Pathé	
Pipeline and Crude Oil Storage	1938	Film Centre	
Dawn of Iran	1938	Strand Film	
Oil from the Earth	1938	Shell Film Unit	
Anglo-Iranian Presents a Survey of its Operation in Iran	1939		AIOC
Oil From Khuzestan	1939		AIOC
Road to Russia	1944	MOI	MOI
Tehran	1946	MOI	MOI
Struggle for Oil: This Modern Age	1948		
Carpet through the Ages	1950s	Black Morton and Sons LTD	16 mm sponsored films
Oil Terminal- Kharg	1950s	Richard Costain LTD	16 mm sponsored films
Oil, Wealth of the World	1950	Film Centre, Pathé	

		Documentary Unit	
Oil, A Story of Iran	1951		AIOC
Oil for the 20th Century: The Growth of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company from 1901-1950	1951	Pathé Documentary Unit	AIOC
Persian Oil: A Case for the International Court	1951	BBC news reel	
Persian Oil: Cabinet Meet	1951	BBC news reel	
Persian Oil: Security Council Adjourn	1951	BBC news reel	
Persian Story	1952	Film Producers Guild, Green Park Production	AIOC
Rig 20	1952	Veriety Films, Film Producers Guild	AIOC
The Persian Oil Dispute: A History of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the Oil Dispute	1952	Associated British Pathé	AIOC
Iran Between Two Worlds	1953	Encyclopedia Britannica	
Tehran Riots: First Pictures	1953	BBC news reel	
Tehran: the Shah, Queen Soraya and Dr. Mossadeq	1953	BBC news reel	
Pipeline into Persian	1957		
Earthquake: The Story of an Appeal	1962	BBC	
A King's Revolution	1964	Associated Rediffusion	InterTel Fernseh GmbH (Munich)
Long March	1965	Libertas Film Production	

Table 2.iii: Films of 1910s to 1960s

The film list covers the decades of the 1920s to the 1960s. This includes the early productions of the BBC, which were mainly newsreels, and one film broadcast on ITV, *A King's Revolution*. Through analysing some examples from among these films in the following chapters of this thesis I will show the influence of pre-television documentary on TV documentaries, and also the continuity of themes and ideologies well into the later decades of the 20th Century. In the case of ITV, the continuity of purpose in documentary making was provided by an organisation known as Associated Rediffusion (later Rediffusion London). It was the British ITV contractor for London and parts of the surrounding counties, on weekdays between 1954 (transmissions started in 1955) and 1968. Russ Graham gives a nice synopsis of Rediffusion's birth and development:

> Captain Thomas Brownrigg… the semi-legendary and proudly abrasive general manager of Associated-Rediffusion from 1955, was clear what his station was going to be. Put simply, it would be the BBC Television Service, with adverts. He recruited people from the BBC (although he had little choice, as the BBC was television at that time) and shaped the station-to-be in the BBC's image… Associated Rediffusion was determined to be the long-arm of the 1930s

extending into the 1950s- continuing the dying notion that Britain and its Empire where something important in the world. In 1964, the management had a change of heart…The changes were total- new specially-composed music, a lighter approach… and a very sixties ident. Rediffusion was the face of a swinging, happy London in a bright, shiny new UK. This was the Britain of prosperity and youth rather than Empire (Graham, 2004).

However, examples like *A King's Revolution,* the company's production in 1964, can be taken as a sign that although around that date things might have started to change in the company, as far as documentary was concerned the influence of the BDM was still strongly there. The film was broadcast on ITV in the same year. Discussing the BBC's blockbuster production of the 1990s, *People's Century*, in Chapter 7, I argue that the same influence was carried into the discourse of late 20th and early 21st Century TV documentary. This was done partly through the insertion of bits of older documentaries into new ones. In *People's Century*, these bits from *Dawn of Iran* (1938) and *A King's Revolution* (1964) are used as historical documents in depicting the history of Iran. I argue that these bits are presented as 'neutral visual documentation' that effectively disguises their ideological constructedness, perpetuating in documentary the age-old ideological outlooks.

2.6. The *genre* established

The evidence presented in this chapter, I hope, has shown that the historical and cultural dynamics of modern Britain affected the formation of documentary as an institution of that society. This is not least because of the ways the production (as well as the consumption) of documentary was regulated by the specific needs of the sponsors of documentary and also the conventions of documentary-making itself. The British documentary was therefore established as a genre, the content of which was influenced by the government, and industry, its sponsors, and its discourse shaped by institutional conventions, presumptions and by the practices of documentary-making itself.

In the case of British documenters of Iran the sponsorship was dominated by the British oil industry, AIOC in particular, while the production was supervised by members of the British Documentary Movement. These factors can explain the dominance of the themes of industrialisation and modernisation in British documentaries on Iran in the first half of

the 20th century as we shall see in Chapters 4 to 6. The same factors can also be regarded as shaping the dominant outlook of those films by presenting Britain's role in Iran as a force for good and for the spread of modernity though development and technology. This self-image manoeuvred Iran into a position of non-modern 'other'. These themes are further developed in the subsequent chapters. In Chapter 3 we dig a little deeper below the surface of Empire to discover the tapestry of cultural and imperial romanticism which has fuelled the self-image referred to above.

Chapter 3

Orientalism and documentary representations of Iran

Chapter 2 looked at how the self-image of Britain as a developed and technologically advanced country and a force for good maneuvered Iran into an undeveloped and non-modern Other of Britain in documentary representations of Iran. In continuing from the discussion of Chapter 2, this chapter aims to show some of the representational trends that helped to propagate that image of Iran across decades of documentary making. By looking at a wide range of documentaries made at different times (and) on a variety of subjects, I identify the elements of representation that appear repeatedly in documentaries on Iran across decades.

I then organize those elements under labeled categories that will serve as a short hand for referring to them in textual analysis of documentaries in the following chapters of the thesis. In categorizing these recurrent elements in documentaries I draw on theoretical grounds that critically reassess the Orientalist traditions of depicting the Middle East in the West.

3.1. Representational trends in British documentary on Iran

Across decades of British documentary made about Iran the recurrent images of mosques, minarets, bazaars, veiled women, and traditional arts and crafts are used to indicate an Iranian city or town. In the non-silent films, the sound of *Azaan* (the call to prayer), or a piece of Eastern (not always Iranian) music contributes an Eastern flavor to the setting. The images of deserts, tribes and nomadic life depict the countryside of Iran, and craftsmen and veiled women depict the traditional types of city dwellers. While many such images are prevalent in documentaries made at the first half of the 20th Century and those made in the last two decades of the century, between the 1960s and 1980s, there is less emphasis on craftsmen and veiled women as the traditional types of city dwellers.

The images that take their place are those of 'industrial workers' and 'Westernised women', representing the new man and the new woman of Iran.

The prevalence of such images raises the question of why certain elements of Iranian society should be highlighted repeatedly in documentaries across decades. The answer to this question might be related to the iconicity of the country. Veiled women, domes and minarets, for example, indicate that you are in an Islamic environment. These images can also be seen as 'representational trends' that become prevalent, even customary, in making documentary about certain places, either due to the repeated usage of rare archive footage, or simply because filmmakers draw ideas and inspirations from the works of their colleagues. Whatever the case might be, these images, if taken in relation to each other and other elements of representation in each documentary, reveal layers of meaning beyond mere iconicity, or fashionable trends. They reveal that certain ways of understanding and defining Iran, rather than others, are prevalent in British documentary, especially if examined in the context of the wider discursive landscape in which documentary representation of Iran take place.

Parts of such a landscape were examined in Chapter 2 in discussing the various sources that could have been influential in shaping the image of Iran in British documentary, in its initial stages and later. It was argued that the mainstream ideologies regarding the positive role of the British Empire formed an ideological backbone for BDM which was manifested in both their films and their theoretical views on the role and function of documentary in the modern world. The sponsorship of documentaries on Iran by foreign industrial enterprises, in particular AIOC, was mentioned as another factor shaping documentary viewpoints of the country. The prevalence of the themes of industrialization and modernization in British documentaries on Iran was the natural result of having the industrial sector as the main sponsors of those documentaries, advertising the role of imperial Britain as a force for spreading modernity in the world through the developmental role of its technologies. Such an image of Britain however, maneuvered Iran into the position of a non-modern, underdeveloped 'other' of Britain in British documentary.

Continuing from the theme of 'otherness' of Iran in British documentary, here I aim to examine other discursive threads that overlap with and enunciate the discourses of technological advancement and imperialism in the complex of various concurrent discourses that form the idea of modernity and its 'other' in documentaries on Iran. In order to tease out those discursive threads, I look back at the recurring images that I identified above, asking what other possible layers of meaning, apart from their immediate denotations, can be observed in them. It can rightly be argued that these images are part of the peculiarities that mark the historical and geographical aspects of Iran. However, it is equally justifiable to ask if there are any connotative meanings attached to these types of representations. The image of veiled women in a setting dominated by the symbols of religiosity such as mosques, minarets, and the sound of *Azzan*, besides indicating an Eastern Islamic setting, can suggest that the female population of such a setting is restricted by the laws of Islam. A sense of primitiveness suggested through the depiction of nomadic life can be generalized to an entire country, especially when confirmed through direct verbal statements. Examples like these, suggest that certain ideas about Iran are linked to, and operate within, the framework of certain representational regimes. One way of analyzing such representational regimes is to view them as part of the repertoire of the historical ideas about the Middle East in the West, and the discourse of Orientalism, which I discuss below. My aim is to examine the theoretical debates about Orientalism in relation to the theories of modernity, devising theoretical tools to refer to and interpret some of the long-standing traditions in documentary representations of Iran.

3.2 Orientalism as an academic field and as a discourse

Orientalism is a broad term which has gone through several interpretations over past centuries. Originally, the term applied to the study of the languages, literature, religion, thought, arts and social life of the East in order to make them available to the West. It was a field of study "initially created in the 18th century by Europeans who wanted to understand the native cultures of the people who lived along the Mediterranean in Turkey, North Africa and the Levant" (Fort, 1996: 39). Historically, Orientalism was

conceived in an academic sense and was applied to "anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient" (Said, 1978:2). But from the mid-20th Century onwards Orientalism came to be viewed as more than just a field of study. As an intellectual enterprise Orientalism was historically linked to the power struggles between the West (Europe and later America) and the East (various parts of Asia and Africa at various periods). As the result of such links, the body of knowledge produced by Orientalists was (re)evaluated within interpretive frameworks that take power relations as the starting points of the critical analysis of their subject.

In his book *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, Zachary Lockman states that throughout the 1950s to the 1970s scholars in various fields of study used political economy, gender studies, neo-Marxist approaches and so on to criticize what they saw as defects in methodological habits, and historico-philosophical concepts underpinning the efforts of Orientalist scholars (Lockman, 2004). Such defects had been resulting in "an essentialist conception of the countries, nations and peoples of the Orient under study", and viewing modernity as essentially European and universal (Abdel-Malek, 1963: 103-140). Scholars critical of traditional Orientalism argued that under the influence of Orientalism's philological orientation, the study of the Middle East and Islam was focused on the past rather than on the region's contemporary social, cultural and political transformations (ibid), and thus failed to see the real roots of those transformations, seeking instead to link them to what they saw as essential characteristics of Oriental civilizations (Owen, 1973). In a 1973 conference organized by the Research and Training Committee of the Middle East Studies Association, the University of Chicago political scientist, Leonard Binder, stated that:

> Middle East studies are bested by subjective projections, displacement of facts, ideological distortions, romantic mystification, and religious bias, as well as by a great deal of incompetent scholarship (cited in Lockman, 2004: 178).

Out of a growing sense among the Western scholars that Orientalism as a discipline was intellectually isolated and lacking any methodological tools other than antiquated philology, a systematic critique of Orientalism that had been underway since the 1960s was elaborated in the1970s (Lockman, 2004: 148- 181). But it was, a single intellectual

intervention in the field, by Edward Said, that "generated much debate, opening up new avenues of research, and …entirely new academic fields" (ibid: 181). In his 1973 book *Orientalism* Said tried to show that the defects of Orientalism were not merely due to methodological antiquity, bias, stereotyping or imperialist inclinations on the part of individual scholars, but rather due to it being part of a systematic (and power laden) discourse. This discourse was produced by, and helped to reproduce, certain power relations, in this case power of the West over predominantly Muslim lands of the Middle East. Said explained how a large portion of academic knowledge, literary texts and popular ideas of the Middle East were influenced by this powerful 'Orientalist discourse'. It resulted from this Orientalist discourse that certain pejorative and negative images and ideas were associated with nations or countries perceived as 'Oriental' (Said, 1973).

The problematic assumptions that underpinned the representations of Middle Eastern societies, were also highlighted by other scholars, among whom many criticized or tried to modify Said. For example, S. J. Al-Azm argued that

> Said's criticism of Gibb and others for making broad declarative statements about the character of the Orient, Islam, etc was misplaced. The problem was not that all these assertions were entirely wrong, for they often contain some grain of truth; the problem was that these representations were overly broad, grossly ahistorical, didn't allow for the possibility of change, and were often linked to ongoing European efforts to dominate the Orient (Lockman, 2004: 197).

Ajaz Ahmad, the Marxist critic who criticized Said on accounts of methodological defects and theoretical inconsistencies, nevertheless (re)affirmed, albeit in a different light, some of the principles that Said had identified as driving the discourse of Orientalism. For example, Said asserted that the discourse of Orientalism is "based upon ontological and epistemological differences between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (Said, 2003: xiv). Ahmad, even though being critical of what he saw as Said's usage of essentialised categories such as the 'Orient' and the 'Occident', states that the concept of the "East" or a "unified Orient" was a fabrication originated in post-Renaissance European thought and used as an opposition to the 'West' in an attempt to fabricate a "unified European identity" that existed seamlessly from Ancient Greece to the Enlightenment era and beyond (Ahmad, 1992: 167).

Orientalism as a discourse is thus underpinned by many misleading assumptions about Muslims and Middle East peoples in Western countries. Although there has never been an entirely monolithic Western stance towards Islam, the Orient or colonialism, the power struggle has served to "bolster certain premises and assumptions, certain ways of understanding and defining Islam and the Orient (as well as the West) rather than others." (Lockman, 2004: 74). These premises and assumptions were mainstream, if not entirely hegemonic, in the sense that they were accepted as common sense by the public at large, and colonial policy-makers and administration, and many scholars of Islam (Lockman, 2004, McKenzie, 1995).

3.3 The discourse of Orientalism and documentary representations of Iran

Based on the definition of Orientalism as a mainstream discourse, some aspects of Iran's representations in documentaries can be called 'Orientalist', meaning that some aspects of the culture, society and the country's geographical features are foreground in such a way as to place Iran in the 'Orient', not in its real geographical sense, but as a constructed space which is timeless and unchanging. The problem with situating Iran in this 'Orient' is that in discussing Iranian society and its related issues both historical change and the dynamics that cause it can become obscured, be undermined, or even completely dismissed. I therefore include the critique of the discourse of Orientalism as part of my theoretical framework to deconstruct the Orientalist features of films and reveal the underpinnings of some of the problematic representations of Iran.

Moreover, I assess some of the recurring images and concepts in documentary representations of Iran (identified below) against the ideas about Middle Eastern countries such as Iran that prevail in sociological thought as well as in the wider context of cultural attitude towards, and political engagements with, the Middle East. These images and concepts can be considered Orientalist in the sense that rather than being merely the neutral iconic markers of Iran, they contribute to a depiction of Iran as an inferior Other of the West. Identifying them as Orientalist images and concepts here, I

use them as a short hand throughout the thesis to refer to the similar instances of representation when they come up in the analysis of sample films.

These images and concepts are related to the dichotomy of East/West whereby democratic government, liberal society and technological prowess are characteristics which are essentially Western, while the Middle East is essentially characterized by despotic rulers, suppressed population, doubly oppressed female population, conservative culture and closed societies run according to the strict rules of Islam and tradition. Based on the these binary oppositions the representations of nations deemed as Oriental in literature, academic scholarship and popular culture can therefore be underpinned by the assertion that the Orient is inferior to the West. The West's cultural and physical domination over the East can thus be justified as good, and even necessary, for the East's progress towards modernity. On their own or in their interaction with other components of representation, these Orientalist concepts and images in British documentaries on Iran suggest that Western interest in Iran is in Iran's interest too, therefore, the various components of Iranian society and culture are evaluated based on whether or not they comply with Western interest in Iran, or Western cultural norms.

3.3.1 Islam

One of the broad premises in the discourse of Orientalism is the religion of Islam (Halliday, 1993: 151). Negative views of Islam have been identified as one of the enduring legacies within Orientalist studies that can be traced back to the Christian polemics against Islam in Middle Ages (Daniel, 1966, Tibawi, 1964). As far back as the eleventh and twelfth Centuries, there was scholarly interest in Islam in Europe in order to enable Europeans to know better what they saw as a powerful political and cultural alternative to Christianity (Irwin, 2006). Lockman has observed that both because of the power of Islam as a rival faith and also because of the physical proximity of the domain of Islam to Europe, Islam posed a constant threat to the hegemony of Christianity in Europe. Islam has therefore remained a unique Other of Europe even though Europeans considered many other faiths and peoples as their Other:

It was in part by differentiating themselves from Islam… that European Christians and later their nominally secular descendents defined their own identity. These representations persisted for centuries in popular and high culture and in scholarship, and some of them continue to circulate today. In movies, in television programmes, in newspapers and magazine articles and in books, in children's comic books, indeed across the popular imagination of Western Europe and the United States, images of the Muslims as other, as profoundly different from ourselves, as fanatical, violent, lusty and threatening- images that as we have seen have very old roots- still have emotional resonance for many people and can be drawn on and deployed for political purposes (Lockman, 2004: 37).

From an Orientalist perspective Islam is not merely a religion pervading life in the Middle East but also "an independent variable, an explanatory factor" (Halliday, 1993: 151) which is used to expound on sociological, political, economic, psychological issues in relation to the Middle East (ibid). The Middle Eastern countries are thus explained "by reference to what is presented as the Islamic tradition or 'Islamic society'" (ibid: 151-2). An 'Islamic society' is characterised by its "apparent rejection of modernisation" (ibid: 152) and the irrationality, [and] cruelty of its politics all related to "an atemporal 'Islam'" (ibid). Islam, as situated in the discourse of Orientalism, is therefore "a timeless essence" (Sayyid, 2003: 32), dictating the life and history of Middle Eastern societies. This implies that Islam is a constant barrier to the secularisation, modernisation and democratisation of these societies and thus the major cause of stagnation and lack of progress (Zubaida, 1989, Lockman, 2004). These perspectives are articulated in Western media representations of Iranian history, people and culture (Richardson, 2004; Mohsen, 1991; New, 2001; Progler, 1993; Said, 1981), and are similarly common in documentaries on Iran as will be discussed throughout this thesis.

3.3.2 Oriental Despotism

Viewed from an Orientalist perspective, one of the characteristics that is assumed to be 'essential' to Islam is autocratic rule. Bernard Lewis, a renowned Orientalist, for example, stated that Islamic political tradition had always been essentially autocratic (Lewis, 1954), and fostered subservience to authority (Lewis, 1972). This depiction is in keeping with the concept of 'Oriental despotism' which is another central theme of the discourse of Orientalism (Asad, 1973). The concept of Oriental despotism originated in Renaissance Europe where previously the admired Ottoman Empire came to represent,

what Europeans feared most in their own societies: "the triumph of despotism, of moral corruption and the social degeneration it inevitably produced (Lockman, 2004: 47). The concept served as the very antithesis of modern Western political and social systems in much of the 19th and 20th Century sociological thought (Turner, 1974, 1978). The great dichotomy, however, "defines mutually exclusive and hierarchically ordered cultural formations. Despotism is associated with the Orient, and democracy is considered to be the patrimony of the West" (Sayyid, 2003: 94).

The theoretical and epistemological roots of Orientalist scholarship which created the long-standing and nevertheless ahistorical and inaccurate notions of Oriental despotism elided the real material forces affecting the historical trajectory of Muslim societies (Turner, 1978: 85). In documentary representations of Iran it is often suggested that no other internal or external factor besides the initiatives taken by the king are responsible for the socio-political developments of the country. Titles such as *In the Land of the Shah* (BP, 1928) introduce Iran as a land that belongs to the *shah* (king), while other films like *Dawn of Iran* (BP, 1938), and *The Royal Family of Iran* (British Movitown, 1949) highlight the centrality of the person of the *shah* to the welfare of the country, a role that both Pahlavi kings were keen to project in films. In Chapter 6 of this thesis, I show that the utilisation of the concept of Oriental despot serves to set the autocratic rule of Mohammad Reza Shah in a more acceptable light, stating that Western style democracy is not appropriate for Iran.

3.3.3. People

The deployment of the Oriental despotism model in interpreting the political systems of societies elides the complex and changing relations between rulers and ruled (Asad, 1973). The relationship between the despot and his people is that of one person having power over the masses (Marx, cited in Offner, 1981), implying that Oriental people are servile by nature (Montesquieu, cited in Boer, 1996). In documentary representations of Iran, the construction of the governance of Iran as being conventionally despotic has a derogatory effect on the depiction of the Iranian people. Iranians have been predominantly represented, up to this date, according to what can be called typically

Orientlaist notions of people, "as an object of study, stamped with an otherness… customary, passive, non-participating… and acted upon by others" (Abdel-Malek, 1963: 103-140). I have extensively discussed these representations of Iranians in Chapter 4 in relation to the depiction of the Iranian society, in Chapter 6 in relation to the Pahlavi rule, in Chapter 7 in explaining the role of people in the revolution, and in Chapter 8 where examples of representing post-revolutionary Iran are discussed. Another aspect of the depiction of Iranians as Orientals that is related to the issue of industrialisation is discussed in Chapter 5 in examples of films sponsored by BP.

3.3.4 Women

The concept of Oriental despotism is also directly connected to the construction of the image of women because it is related to concepts such as polygamy, the harem, and "the presumed oppressed position of women under despotism" (Boer, 1996: 43). In British documentary films, Iranian women are perceived as being confined by the limits of a male dominated traditional culture that keeps them socially secluded. The most visible sign of women's social seclusion is the veil, which, in the case of Iranian women, is the black *chador*, a long loose robe covering the body from head to toe. The *chador* is presented as the symbol of sexism, subjugation and repression of women at the hands of Oriental values and social systems. As an instance of this, the film *In a Persian Town* (Instructional Films, 1928) can be mentioned, where the close up of a woman who covers her face under her *chador* is cut to an intertitle that reads: "without eyes". Decades later, the same footage is used in BBC's 1997 *People's Century* to describe women's social position and as part of Iran's general situation in pre-Pahlavi Iran.

In discussing the representations of Muslims in the British media, J. E. Richardson observes that Islam and "illiberal gendered social practices" are tied together and explains the argumentative process that leads to the connection between Islam and these illiberal practices as follows:

> First, the social position of (Muslim) women is described in negative terminology, using either stylistic registers of repression and constraint, or else simply *labelled* as backward, 'un-Western', illiberal and hence undesirable. Second…the iniquitous social position of many (Muslim) women or the negative acts against

women by 'Muslims' are un-controversially ascribed to being carried out by *Islam-* either 'in the name of…' or 'sanctioned by…'" (Richardson, 2004: 89-90).

Positioning women as repressed and constrained or, as Richardson put it, "simply *labelled* as backward, 'un-Western', illiberal and hence undesirable" is very prevalent in documentary representations of Iranian women. It is the intention of this thesis to examine the role of these representations in the context of the broader modernist discourses that take the abolishment of the veil as an 'impediment to progress' (Ahmed: 1992). This point is fully explained in the discussion of modernisation in Chapter 6 and the post-revolutionary society in Chapter 7.

3.3.5 Geography

In British documentaries Iran is usually portrayed in the context of its location within the 'Orient', a place that is culturally backward, peculiar, and unchanging:

> the Orient as a representation in Europe is formed - or deformed - out of a more and more specific sensitivity towards a geographical region called 'the East'….that responds to certain cultural, professional, national, political and economic requirements of the epoch" (ibid: 273).

The construction of the 'Orient' is also related to a strand of Orientalism known as Romantic Orientalism (Stollery, 2000b: 62). In this sense, the 'Orient' can be a place of exotic beauty and sensuality or of religious sacredness that "conveys an atmosphere of mystery and supernatural… an image of the East as both fascinating and luxurious, and at the same time frightful" (Sered, 1996). All these characteristics suggested by the concept of the 'Orient' make it an unfamiliar territory in Western discourse. The image of an undeveloped country marked by a hostile natural landscape can be regarded as a more recent addition to the repertoire of images of the Middle East in the West that fit into the context of the discourse of modernity and development emerging in the first half of the 20th Century.

The depiction of the urban and non-urban settings of Iran fits the description of an Oriental geography. The 'Orientalness' of the country is signaled by certain images or aural signifiers specific to the setting they represent, as discussed below.

3.3.5.1 Urban settings

In British documentaries, the cities and towns of Iran are constructed as urban 'Eastern' spaces characterised by certain features which vary depending on the time of the film's production. From the 1920s to 1950s, the recurrent images of mosques, minarets, bazaars, veiled women, and traditional arts and crafts were used to indicate an Iranian city or town. From the 1960s to 1980s, there is less emphasis on craftsmen and veiled women as the traditional types of city dwellers. The images that take their place are those of 'industrial workers' and 'Westernised women,' representing the new man and the new woman of Iran. From 1987 to the present, however, the images of mosques, bazaars and veiled women became prevalent again in depicting Iranian cities. These later markers help to depict post-revolutionary Iran as an 'Islamic society'. The aural components of an Oriental urban setting have one of two functions. First, they create a link between the city and the people's religious inclinations. The most prevalent of these aural components is the sound of *Azaan* which contributes to the setting a 'religious' flavour. Secondly, these aural components perpetuate the essential divide between the West and the East, whereby the first signifies the modern and the latter the traditional. The visual and aural markers therefore constitute a significant part of the representational tools used in documentaries to present Iranian cities and towns as Oriental (i.e., Eastern and Islamic). I have examined these markers and their representational function in detail throughout the following chapters of the thesis; two examples of these markers are given below.

In a Persian Town a film in the series of educational documentaries made by British Instructional Films (BIF) chooses to take as its subject matter an Iranian city, Yazd, located at the edge of the desert. The film's representational approach to the depiction of the city is summed up by Hamid Naficy, film critic and historian:

> This is a romanticised and exoticised picture of the city which can be interpreted as the imagined picture of the East as it exists in the West. The film has a patriarchal emphasis on strange (unfamiliar) images: mules in narrow winding

lanes, Azaan being heard from a minaret, people at prayer, a woman covering her face from a man in the street, children studying at school (on this image you can hear a poem by Khayyam), a gathering of men inhaling shisha. The sarcastic intertitle following this last shot reads "these people are getting together to make an important decision". The film also presents images of weighing camel fodder, baking bread, wool-spinning and preparing opium for sale. (Cited in Tahaminejad, 2007)[8]

The choice of subject matter makes it easier to contextualise Yazd within the history and geography of the Orient; Thus, images such as people praying, veiled women, and *Azaan* heard from a minaret, are testimonies to the utilisation of the Orientalising markers.

The 2005 BBC production, *This World: Iran's Nuclear Secret,* illustrates the functionality of the above aural and visual markers in British documentary. In this film, the opening sequence introduces the audience to the city of Isfahan, the site of Natanz nuclear plant which is the subject matter of the film. The images used consist of a bazaar, a mosque and some *chadori* women passing by in front of the camera. These images introduce the audience to an 'Iranian city' that is specified by the domination of religion and tradition, one that is fundamentally 'Oriental'. The city is further Orientalised by the use of the iconic images of Isfahan's historical architecture. The use of background music in this film also plays a significant representational function. The musical score consists of two main themes, one electronic Western music and the other classical Iranian. The Western electronic music accompanies images of the nuclear site, while the Iranian classical is used over the footage of the city and its people. This attributes traditionality and religiousness (of the city) to the Oriental and that of modernity (technology) to the Western through the use of background music.

3.3.5.2 Non-urban settings

In many British documentaries representation of non-urban Iran is focused on the primitiveness of life, and is themed around water and its scarcity. As a precious resource, water is not utilised effectively in rural areas because irrigation and pumping systems are centuries old. The narrative manages in this way to at once suggest the backwardness of

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[8] The extract is my translation from the original Farsi text (23/05/2008).

Iran and to dramatise the importance of Western machinery for progress. As part of the non-urban settings, the representations of desert and also tribal and nomadic life in Iran are also very prevalent as explained below. The representational function of non-urban Iran is discussed fully in Chapter 4 in relation to the Iranian society and history, a theme that is then developed further in Chapter 5 in discussing the films sponsored by the British oil industry.

Being one of the most common images for depicting an Oriental setting, the desert conjures up a complex set of often contradictory associations. On the one hand there is the romance and adventure associated with the desert (Stollery, 2000b). On the other hand, the desert stands as an unchanging, infertile landscape, symbolic of the history of the inhabitants of the desert, a history that neither changes nor progresses. The desert is "a place governed by nature, in all its beauty and harshness, rather than by history" (Stollery, 2000b: 61). In documentary representations of Iran, the desert stands only for the latter, functioning as evidence for historical stagnation leading to under-development. I have discussed this theme throughout Chapters 4 to 6. The visual components of desert symbolism in British documentaries on Iran include camels, camel-caravans, caravanserai, and (semi) arid lands (even though this last is not strictly desert, it is often included in the arsenal of images used to depict deserts – sometimes done through the verbal commentary accompanying such images).

One other example in the British Instructional Films (BIF) series in 1928, *A Persian Caravan*, shows the activities of a camel caravan by following it throughout its journey in the Iranian desert. The desert and camel (caravan) are amongst the commonest markers in creating an Oriental geography. In this film, extreme long shots of the desert and the camel caravans are edited with extreme close-ups, close-ups and medium shots of caravan people. Shots depicting people engaged in daily activities of eating, sleeping and praying are combined with intertitles that emphasis the primitiveness of their lives. In some places the editing of particular shots with tongue in cheek intertitles has a derogatory effect on the depiction of men and their lifestyle. For example, a shot of a poor man looking sheepishly at the camera is followed by the intertitle: "a new fashion in

a sleeveless coat where the sleeves were sown up as they are never used". It is this simplistic and yet very detailed presentation of customs and habits that M.J. Harper refers to as coded by "the distancing conventions of ethnographic scientific documentation" (Harper, 1996: 60). Therefore, the choice of subject matter across the series suggests the producers' predisposition towards topics and themes that contextualise Iran in light of Orientalised geographies and histories.

In documentaries representing Iran, desert symbolism sometimes acquires such a prominence that the constructions of urban and rural settings, and even the general landscape and climate, are influenced by that symbolism. For example, in the film *In A Persian Town*, produced by British Instructional Films in 1928, the non-representative town of Yazd, which is at the edge of the otherwise uninhabited central desert of Iran, is used as metonymic for the whole of Iran. This leads to the assumption that the adjectives 'Persian' and 'desert' can always be used interchangeably. In *This World: Iran's Nuclear Secret* (BBC, 2005), the filmmakers' choice of images to accompany the commentary about the history of the crisis is a tracking shot of seemingly arid plains. Through these and similar shots of an eerie landscape (for example, the extreme long-shots of nuclear power stations in the middle of nowhere) the film evokes an air of suspicion, and creates a sinister atmosphere around the issue of Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Images of the desert can also be used to advance political propaganda. In *Oil the Wealth of the World* (British Pathé, 1950), the Middle East is claimed to be a desert with no inhabitants. It is a "no-man's-land" and "everyman's-land," and as such, its natural resources are the wealth of the world and belong to human kind in general. The desert image is thus used to efface the Middle East of its peoples and change it into what Said refers to as "an empty desert waiting to burst into bloom" (1978b: 286) with the aid of Western technology. This is done in order to advance the film's message, namely, that oil is a global property with no national claim over it. The inhabitants of the desert, if any, are implied to be what Said describes as "inconsequential nomads possessing no real claim on the land and therefore no cultural or national reality" (ibid). The denial of

territorial boundaries and national existence of the people of the Middle East is achieved in the film using desert images.

The recurrence of the Orientalist notions of Islam, people, women, the governance and geography of Iran is one reason, among others why documentaries on Iran should be regarded as more attuned to the mainstream views of the Middle East (despite the rare instances of alternative views among them). This inclination has as much to do with the discursive contexts in which those documentaries were produced, the discourses of Orientalism and imperialism (as discussed in Chapter 2), as it has with the sponsorship and production of those documentaries. The sponsorship and production of the majority of those films (by the British oil companies, as well as the governments of Britain and at times Iran), required that the subject of many of those films were related, directly or indirectly, to issues of modernization, industrialization and development. It is necessary therefore to broaden the realm of what has been considered here as the 'discursive context' for documentary representations of Iran to also include theoretical perspectives on modernization and development. These perspectives will be fully discussed in Chapters 4 to 7, but here I briefly discuss them in relation to Orientalism and the interrelations between them and the Orientalist preconceptions about the 'other' (here Iran**).**

3.4 Modernisation theory

'Modernisation' emerged in social sciences in the West during 1950s to 1970s as a paradigm for interpreting socio-political and cultural change in many parts of the world. Lockman has explained the emergence and the utilization of the concept as this:

> This paradigm came to be known as 'modernisation theory', though it was not so much a coherent theory as a collection of approaches which differed in some key respects but were rooted in a common set of assumptions about the character and trajectory of historical change… After the Second World War, this [Weberian] sharp dichotomy between tradition and modernity, defined as polar opposites, was taken up and reworked by leading sociologists, political scientists and other social scientists in the United States who used it to make sense of the dynamics of social, political and cultural changes in Asia, Africa and Latin America. These

social scientists used the term 'modernisation' to denote the process of transition from a traditional society to a modern society. They saw this process as both universal and unilinear… there was only one possible path to becoming modern – that is, like the United States and Western Europe of the 1950s- and that was the destination of all societies, unless they took a wrong turn during the transition and got stuck or sidetracked (Lockman, 2004: 133-134).

Modernization theory had its root in the theories of human evolution that distinguished between traditional societies and modern societies. Traditional societies, that were all non-western, were considered as being essentially static, and unlike the early modern West they lacked "the institutions and internal dynamics which might lead to fundamental social transformation from within" (ibid: 136). The historical development of such countries was therefore stuck in the past. Such essentialist views of human societies in modernisation theory mirrors the Orientalist views of civilisations that assumes that Western civilisation is fundamentally different from and culturally superior to everyone else defined as non-Western (Abdel-Malek, 1963). Whereas the West is seen at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of human evolution, cultures deemed to be Islamic are perceived as part of an Islamic civilization that had passed through the age of youth and maturity and is now in decline.

It is therefore not surprising that modernisation theory and Orientalist views of the Middle East complete each other. The Orientalist assumptions that the superiority of Western civilisation resulted from some unique characteristics exclusive to that civilization and lacking in others, matches the basic principles of modernisation theory: the West is ahead of everywhere else in overcoming tradition and had already achieved modernity while the rest of the world were lagging behind. On the other hand, the Orientalist ideas that Middle Eastern societies are organized around the arbitrary rule of one person (the Oriental despot) affects modernisation theory's principle that Oriental societies lacked social institutions for modernity (Turner cited in Lockman, 2004). Below I shall examine the reflection of such views of historical evolution on the representations of Iran in British documentary.

3.4.1 History of Iran

The history of Iran as represented in British documentary reflects the adoption of Orientalist perspectives of history as explained above. Whether the film's subjects is Reza Shah's ascendance to the thrown, Mohammad Reza Shah's social reforms or the Iranian revolution of 1978, Iran is depicted as static, timeless, and mired in tradition in contrast to the West which is considered modern and dynamic, "a place where history progresses" (Stollery, 2000b: 61). Iran is suggested to possess no internal dynamics for modernity, and should therefore pursue a Western path of development to lead it out of stagnation and towards modernity.

One way of depicting the history of Iran draws particularly on the idea of the rise and fall of civilizations, and emphasizes that the history of Iran was not only in decline, but even in complete stasis before the intervention of Western forces of technology. Common in documentaries up to the 1960s, this particular representation comprises a three part structure which represents 2500 years of the Iranian history in the form of a pre-Islamic era, an Islamic era, and a contemporary era as shown in Table 3.i.

The three part structure	Timeline covered by documentaries from each period	Historical timelines of each period
Pre-Islamic era/ Great Ancient Civilisation	550 BC – 330 BC (220 years)	550 BC – 636 AD (1086 years)
Islamic era/ Islamic Civilisation	1501 AD – 1722 AD (221 years)	636 AD – 20th Century (1264 years)
Contemporary era/ Modern Civilisation	1925 AD – 1964 AD	20th Century

Table 3.i: Formal Structure of the construct of Iranian history

In each of the three parts of the formal structure referred to in Table 3.ii, only a small portion of the historical timeline of the period is covered by these films. These are the Acamandian dynasty (550 BC - 330 BC) for the Pre-Islamic era the Safavid dynasty (1501 AD – 1722 AD) for Islamic era, and the Pahlavi dynasty (1925 – 1978) for the contemporary era. These are introduced as the landmarks of each era, standing for a

significant period of greatness in the country. Such a three-part structure can be seen in films such as *Dawn of Iran* (BP, 1938), *Iran between Two Worlds* (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1953) and *A King's Revolution* (ITV, 1964).

In these films, the Pre-Islamic era is usually described in terms of the Imperial might of the Acamandian dynasty, whose founder Cyrus the Great is presented as the father of the first great empire of the world. Another Acamandian king, Darius the Great, is also mentioned as the person who expanded the Persian Empire after Cyrus. The rule of these kings is said in the films to be the height of the glory and power of the ancient Persia extending to the limits of the known world. The Safavid dynasty is mentioned immediately after Acamandian as the next great period in the history of Iran. Their rule is marked in films as Iran's second golden age, one of rebirth and expansion. These are depicted in films by highlighting the Safavids' mastery of urban engineering through a visual and verbal emphasis on the monumental infrastructures still in Isfahan, such as bridges, mosques, waterways and others. The Pahlavi dynasty follows the Safavids in filmic construction of Iranian history as the third and the contemporary period of greatness of the country. The era is marked in documentary films by an emphasis on the Pahlavis' adoption of a Western approach to development. In different films various aspects of this approach to development, such as industrialisation, modernisation and Westernisation, are highlighted depending on the film's focus. These various aspects and their implications for the general image of Iran are discussed in relation to case study of films in Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7.

The emphasis on these three landmark events by documentary films seems to be influenced by the idea of episodic rise of Iranian Imperial power. This suggests that either nothing of note happened between these junctures of Iranian history, or that these periods of time between 'great dynasties' were periods of decline. I will discuss in Chapter 4 how the use of these landmarks creates the implication that the well-being and status of Iranians was synonymous with the imperial might of the dynasty and/or the personal might of the monarch. This narration of Iranian history is a common construct that is found throughout decades of documentary filmmaking, and is one of the constructs that

this thesis seeks to unpack in its analysis of the representation of Iran in British documentary film.

This particular way of presenting the history of Iran has three general characteristics. Firstly, there is always a reference to a great past which went into decline; secondly, large chunks of Iranian history are omitted; and thirdly, there is a reference to a historical transformation of the country that happened in the 20th century under the Pahlavi dynasty.

The omission of thousands of years of Iranian history between those chosen landmarks is significant in that they are consistently absent in most documentary films. This therefore suggests cyclic periods of decline following each rise. This construct then serves as a basis in the film to argue that Iran should follow a Western mode of development which is presented in these documentaries as linear and progressive. The praise of the Pahlavi dynasty in films seems to be linked to their adoption of Western-style modernisation as a way to break the cycle of historical stagnation that preceded their dynasty. Subsequently the demise of the Pahlavis is interpreted as a rejection of modernity and a 'return to the past,' as discussed in Chapter 7, with reference to the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

As we have seen the concepts and images introduced in this chapter and identified as recurring in documentary representations of Iran, fit into the mid-20th century discourses of development and modernisation. The image of Iran, like the image of any other country in such documentaries, is depicted in terms of old-vs.-new theories of modernisation, and its history is defined in terms of a progress from the old to the new. As Iran is a country which happens to be in an Oriental setting (both geographically as well as conceptually) Orientalist preconceptions about the culture and society of Iran play hand in hand with the theories of modernization to depict the historical development of Iran as being stuck in the past due to debilitating legacies of tradition. As we shall see in the next three chapters, the only way out of this (alleged) historical stagnation, the documentaries suggest, is to follow the West in material and cultural terms.

3.5 Justification for the use of Orientalist constructs

Through allowing the discourse of Orientalism to provide a framework for analysis, this chapter has tried to present an analysis of the British documentaries on Iran in terms of some prevalent representational trends. These trends are identified as a way of showing that a) some layers of representations in documentary films on Iran can be viewed to have been shaped within the traditions of Orientalist discourses on the Middle East; and b) the elements of representation that were categorized in the chapter as Orientalist concepts and images will be used as a shorthand in the following chapters to refer to instances of the articulation of Orientalist views in documentary representations of Iran. I try to show in subsequent chapters that the interaction between the discourse of Orientalism and other discourses of Modernity decide the ways various facets of Modernity, such as industrialisation and modernisation, are seen as relevant or applicable to Iran.

I have depended on the Orientalist scaffolding as my thesis moves from exploration of documentary representation of Iran into real socio-cultural space. In the next chapter I want to show how the meaning and depiction of 'society' is distorted by the particular Western emphasis of history as universally progressive timeline towards Modernity. Within the films examined throughout the thesis, the Orientalising concepts and markers construct Iran as a particular space, part of an Oriental sphere, which is essentially 'primitive' or behind the timeline of the non-Oriental (Western) sphere.

The topography of this 'society' is constructed in film through shots of arid and semi-arid landscape with contextualising commentary about scarcity of water, barrenness, and primitiveness of life. Its inhabitants are presented as mainly rural and nomadic. In the urban areas, this same backward looking space is filled with a religious and traditional culture by the use of markers such as *chadori* women, the sound of *Azaan*, craftsmen, bazaar and so on. The next chapter brings into focus this constructed Orientalist viewpoint of what 'society' is made of by analysing one film: a documentary called *Iran between Two Worlds* (1953), made by Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Chapter 4

Iran as a 'society' and its history as represented in British documentary

By focusing on the history and the geography of Iran as constructed in British documentary films, this chapter examines the approaches and strategies employed in documentary representation of Iranian society. The concept of 'society' as used in this analysis includes elements such as the people, the culture, and the governance and demographic entities including rural and urban settings. In the documentary films to be explored in this chapter, it is argued that Iran as a 'society' or a 'nation' is presented as an entity separate and distinct from societies presumed to be on the road to modernity, a concept which seems in the film to belong to the West. This distinctiveness, I will try to show, is represented as internally characteristic of the 'nature' of Iran itself, its history, its geography, its culture. If this is the case, it follows that the internal dynamics of each of these elements decide the positioning of Iran at a point far behind the West along the fixed trajectory of historical development that leads from tradition to authentic modernity. This analysis uses examples of film to illustrate the effect that this conception of historical development has on the perception of society in the films.

4.1. "Iran between two worlds" explored

The first film under scrutiny in terms of its underlying message of the need to somehow 'modernise' the society by replacing 'old' with 'new' is one of the earliest representations of Iran in British documentary. *In the Land of the Shah* was produced by AIOC in 1926, and opens without spoken commentary on these intertitles:

> Where the East and the West
> meet and mingle.
> Pastoral tribes on trek
> as they have done for
> countless generations.

The shot is followed by long shots of some people of the nomadic tribes of south west Iran crossing the river Karoun. In the background of the shot, AIOC's industrial premises are visible on the other side of river. The film then shows people in some local markets and in the streets, engaging in different trade activities. The intertitles accompanying these images depict an Oriental setting: "The swift rivers are crossed with rafts of goatskin. In bazaars primitive trades still flourish. Masjid-i-Sulaiman: the ruins of a famous temple of the fire worshippers in Southern Persia, whose altar fires were fed from vast subterranean reservoirs of oil". The film then cuts to a sequence illustrating the stages of drilling an oil well.

The opening intertitle thus frames the geographical setting of oil exploration inside the grand narrative of East-vs.-West, which I hope to excavate through interpretation of linguistic and cinematographic messages throughout my exploration of the films presented in this chapter. In such a framework, the East represents static primitiveness while the West represents industrial progress. Consequently, the entirety of Iran, as 'The Land of the Shah', is selected and constructed from within the same framework, despite the images belonging to one location in Iran, which is only mentioned incidentally in the film. As I try to show in detail in Chapter 6 of this thesis, this representational strategy initiated in films of industrial sponsorship, by AIOC in particular, has had a profound and lasting impact not only on the construction of the image of the country but also on all subsequent film and TV descendents in the genre and on the topic. Almost all such British documentary films in the first half of the 20th Century were produced and/or sponsored by the same industry, and so it is unsurprising that they were taken as a paradigm for all subsequent filmic representations of Iran, whereby the country is constantly presented in a framework of dichotomous and hierarchical relations such as 'old and new' and 'traditional and modern'.

The theme of 'old' being replaced by 'new' forms the conceptual framework of filmic representations of Iran at all levels of narration. In *Dawn of Iran* (AIOC, 1938) the title indicates the notion of birth and regeneration. In both *Dawn of Iran* and *Oil: A Story of*

Iran (AIOC, 1938), the opening statement sets the theme of a new beginning for the country: "His Imperial Majesty Reza Shah Pahlavi gave Persia back its original name Iran, ten years after his accession to the throne in 1925". *From a Drop to the Sea* (AIOC, 1950) begins its story with a comparison of the ancient temple of Masjid-i-Soleiman and the British oil industry, concluding that "man had moved from the worship of power to the creation of power". Again the river Karoun symbolises the divide between an unchanging way of life (represented by Iranian nomads) and "a new way of life on the other shore", which in this film is represented by oil rigs. The work force on the rigs and the youth of the local people represent the change and the replacement of the old ways of life by new ones: "These men on the rig are the sons of shepherds, tribesmen and farmers who have learnt the power of steam and gear-winding… laying out on the ancient land the new patterns of the industry".

In this regard, the film *Iran between Two Worlds* (Encyclopedia Britannica Films, 1953), with its very telling title, can provide a useful case study for an in-depth analysis of Iran depicted as an entity caught between 'the old' and 'the new'. This film is particularly suitable for discussing the proposed themes of this chapter, the concept of a 'nation' or a 'society' as constructed in documentary. Unlike other films analysed in this thesis which depict Iran only as one part of the broader context in which they situate their particular subject matter, the central theme of *Iran between Two Worlds* is the depiction of the country itself, its geography, history, politics, economy, people and culture. The film therefore provides a paradigm case study of how the internal dynamics of the country are presented in relation to each other and in relation to the general image of Iran and its historical development. I begin by looking at the narrative structure of this film.

The narrative structure of *Iran between Two Worlds* can be summarized as shown in Table 4.i, which also includes some of the major themes/topics in each section. The introductory sequence is followed by what I have categorised as the body of the film, illustrating three periods of Iranian history (fifth century BC, the sixteenth to seventeenth century, and the present era), the account of three major cities (Tehran, Isfahan and Shiraz), followed by the description of life in rural areas. I start my analysis by

examining the introduction, and then explaining each part of the body both in terms of their individual importance and also their relations and interactions with each other in building the discourse of the film. The discursive framework emerging from these interactions is further clarified by looking at the concluding sequence of the film and its correlation with the introductory sequence.

Structure		Themes/Topics
Introduction		Poetry Geography Neighbours
Body	History	
	Cities	
	Rural life	
Conclusion		Industrial development Future greatness

Table 4.i: Narrative Structure of *Iran between Two Worlds*

The film starts by introducing the country in the following terms:

> All the gardens are covered by rose leaves, all the mountains have put on their holy dress. A thousand years ago the poet *Firdausi* sang the praises of spring among Persia's mountains. Today, the people still look to their mountains for water, precious water for the high arid plains on which most of the people live. But too often, rivers flowing from the snow disappear in the great central deserts of Iran. East and West lie other Muslim lands: Turkey, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan. North, the Soviet Union lies beyond the Alborz Mountains.

The introduction thus opens on a line of poetry, introducing the country in terms of its natural beauty, followed immediately by the name of the poet, and the date of the composition of the poetry, 'a thousand years ago'. This provides the introduced setting, 'Persia' with an air of ancientness, and the possession of a history and a literary heritage which goes back at least a thousand years. In the opening frames of the film, the camera pans on an extreme long shot of Tehran against a background dominated by the majestic presence of the Alborz mountain range, next to which the city appears insignificant. The composition of the shot creates a visual emphasis on the surrounding natural scenery at the expense of the city. I will refer later in this chapter to the undermining of any 'city life' or 'urbanity' of Iran as it occurs in the body of the film. Now, under headings, I

examine the body of the film in three segments: the history of Iran, the cities of Iran, and finally the rural life of Iran. These are my divisions, not the film's, but I maintain that it is in the interaction of these three functional elements that the discourse of the film takes shape.

4.1.1. Depiction of the history of Iran

After the introduction, the film continues with this sentence on screen: "Iran knew greatness in the days when it was known as Persia", starting the segment which presents the history of Iran. The historical periods covered in the film are: a) Darius and Achaemenian, the ancient Iran (5BC), explained in terms of imperial greatness, b) Safavid dynasty (seventeenth century) explained in terms of its great architecture, roads, irrigation systems and bridges, sports, and so on, and c) Pahlavi dynasty (1925 onwards), explained in terms of its modernizing agenda. These periods are considered in the film as three golden ages in the history of Iran, from the pre-Islamic era to the Islamic era and then to the modern era. Before examining the effect that this kind of representation of history has on the formal and ideological structures of the film, I examine each sequence in more depth.

4.1.1.1. Darius and Achaemenes: ancient Iran

This section is mainly explained in terms of the reign of the 'Achaemenean' dynasty, focusing on Darius as a dominant figure in that period. The film continues with an extended explanation of his reign with a visual emphasis on extreme long shots, and through contrasting long shots with close-ups of the ancient site of Persepolis. The sequence is constructed with still images of engravings on the walls of Persepolis, and each image is selected to correspond to the explanation given by the voice-over commentary (Table 4.ii).

Image	Commentary
Pan on extreme long-shot of Persepolis	"Iran knew greatness in the days when it was known as Persia. From this vast throne room, part of the vast renowned capital known as Persepolis, King Darius ruled over the first great empire in history. The 'hall of the hundred columns', the harem for the many royal wives, and a wonderful sculptured stone stairway were among the marvels here".
	"The focus of the sculptures was the life-size carving of Darius himself seated on his throne receiving tribute from the peoples he ruled. Men from Europe, Asia and Africa came in bearing gifts"…
	"This was sort of tax-day, twenty-five centuries ago… Even Egypt was ruled by this Persian king… The tax-collectors were the men of his mighty army, and on these golden tablets Darius inscribed, "I am Darius, King of Kings. Great God Ahura-mazda has given me the rulership of all races. This is my kingdom." Here in gold, was outlined the empire that… extended Persian rule to the limits of the known world". "The Persian armies met defeat in Greece at the battle of Marathon. Under Alexander, the Greeks pursued the Persians back to Persepolis. Through this gateway, Alexander the Great strode in triumph".

Table 4.ii: Pre-Islamic era

The first question arising from examining this sequence is the choice made in the film to describe the glory of ancient Persia based on the reign of King Darius. Considering that Cyrus II was not only the founder of the Achaemenean dynasty but also the ancient Persian Empire, it remains strange that the film chooses to explain the era in terms of Darius's reign and not Cyrus's. The choice is especially curious if we compare this account of the ancient history of Iran with parallel accounts in other films. In films dated both before and after *Iran between Two Worlds* ancient Iranian history centres around the rule of Cyrus rather than Darius, as exemplified in two other cases analysed in depth in this thesis (*Dawn of Iran* (1938) and *A King's Revolution* (1965)).

One possible answer to the question of the film's choice of King Darius might lie in the fact that the only ancient empire not conquered by Cyrus was Egypt, which was conquered during Darius' reign, and subsequently "extended Persian rule to the limits of the known world" as explained in the film. This is further highlighted in the film by presenting some ancient inscriptions about the king's rulership of the entire world: "I am Darius, King of Kings. Great God Ahura-mazda has given me the rulership of all races". This idea of 'the greatest empire of the world' is of central importance to the discourse of the film, to which I return later. Another answer to the above question might be found in observing how both the sequence, and effectively the pre-Islamic era as illustrated by the film, end, in the defeat of the Persian armies by Alexander (Table 4.2). By ending the sequence in this way, the discourse achieves a twin objective.

First, by choosing to make Darius's reign the focus of the pre-Islamic era, the infamous Greco-Persian wars of 499 BC to 449 BC, happening during that reign, can be foregrounded. After the battle of Marathon, the Greco-Persian wars entered their second phase lasting nearly 40 years, which makes that battle more of an important landmark rather than a decisive end to the wars. By highlighting the battle of Marathon in particular, however, the narration of the ancient history of Iran is marked by a defeat by Greeks, evoking the symbolic defeat of the East by the West. There also exists a gap of more than 160 years between the battle of Marathon in 490 BC and the Persian defeat by Alexander in 330 BC. By jumping that gap and making the victory of Alexander appear to have happened in the reign of Darius, at the peak of the Persian Empire as also highlighted by the film, the defeat of the Persian Empire by the Greeks becomes far more poignant.

More importantly, however, the Greco-Persian wars served as the basis for Aristotle, writing *The Politics*, to develop the opposition between the inferior, servile-natured Easterners (Persians and other Asians) and the free men of the West (Greeks) who were superior in mind and spirit. The same binary opposition still serves to make a more general comparison between the West and the East in modern Orientalist discourses (Said, 1979). This last point is also related to the second prong of the twin objective of

the film's discourse. Between the defeat by Alexander in 330 BC and the final defeat of the pre-Islamic Iran by the Arab conquest of 651 AD, there is an intervening gap of nearly a thousand years that the film omits as almost irrelevant in the following manner: "Conquerors of a different kind came a thousand years later when in from the Arabian peninsula swept men with flaming swords and a fiery new faith" (quoted in Table 4.iii). The conclusion of the sequence therefore implies an untrue finality in pre-Islamic Iran's defeat by highlighting Alexander's victory in Persepolis in a way that suggests that victory ended the history of pre-Islamic Iran, with broader connotations of the inevitable victory of 'West' over 'East'.

Consequently, it can therefore be argued that by pasting together these carefully selected, and chronologically disparate chunks of the Pre-Islamic era, the film is trying to eliminate one Achaemenian figure, Cyrus the Great, whose importance surpassed that of Darius in terms of his role not only in founding the Persian Empire but also in shaping the entire ancient world. His impact throughout antiquity has been noted ever since, a point that R. N. Frye has highlighted in these lines:

> There is no doubt that the Cyrus saga arose early among the Persians and was known to the Greeks. The sentiments of esteem or even awe in which Persians held him were transmitted to the Greeks, and it was no accident that Xenophon chose Cyrus to be the model of a ruler for the lessons he wished to impart to his fellow Greeks. In short, the figure of Cyrus has survived throughout history as more than a great man who founded an empire. He became the epitome of the great qualities expected of a ruler in antiquity, and he assumed heroic features as a conqueror who was tolerant and magnanimous as well as brave and daring. His personality as seen by the Greeks influenced them and Alexander the Great, and, as the tradition was transmitted by the Romans, may be considered to influence our thinking even now (Frye, 2008).

It is also to be firmly noted that at the time of the making of the film, in addition to the established greatness and renown of Cyrus himself and his qualities, for more extant evidence we could turn to the famous 'Cyrus cylinder'.[9] Without doubt then, Cyrus was

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[9]Shapour Ghasemi explains that: "The Cyrus the Great Cylinder is the first 'charter of the right of nations' in the world. It is a baked-clay cylinder inscripted in Akkadian with cuneiform script. This cylinder was excavated in 1879 by the Assyro-British archaeologist Hormuzd Rassam in the foundations of the Esagila (the Marduk temple of Babylon) and is kept today in the British Museum in London" (Ghasemi, 2010). The Cyrus Cylinder has been described as the world's first charter of human rights (Robertson and Merrills,

the renowned founder of an empire, and was universally more illustrious than any of his successors. This can be seen also in the light of the Pahlavi nationalist propaganda, which promoted Cyrus as the 'father of Iran' and themselves as his rightful and righteous heirs. It can therefore be concluded that above all it is the imperial yet civilized and benevolent influence of Cyrus on the Greeks, and debatably on Alexander himself, that the film sets out to ignore, or perhaps undermine, in order to endorse its agenda of promoting the historical superiority of Western civilisations over East civilisations.

4.1.1.2. 17th century: Safavid dynasty

The Islamic period in Iranian history is explained in the film through focusing on the reign of Shah Abbas and the achievements of the Safavid dynasty of the seventeenth century (Table 4.iii). This is shown as yet another period of imperial wealth and power that eventually crumbled away. The thousand year gap between the seventh century Arab conquest of Iran and the seventeenth century, however, is explained in terms of the growth of the Islamic faith in a way that suggests Iranians did nothing during those years but build mosques. The emphasis on the concepts of religion as the sole driving force behind the civilization of Iran in this particular era is also evident in the way the Iranians are introduced here, as "the followers of the Prophet Muhammad". The idea of religion as a pervasive essence shaping fixed identities and cultural forms is further developed in other sections of the film which I refer to in due course. Before that, however, there are other details in this sequence that merit further interpretation and explanation.

1996: 7, Lauren, 2003: 11). In 1971 it was translated into all six official U.N. languages and a replica of it is kept at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City.

Image	Commentary
	"Conquerors of a different kind came a thousand years later when in from the Arabian peninsula swept men with flaming swords and a fiery new faith".
	"As this new faith of Islam grew and mellowed, the followers of the Prophet Muhammad built new churches called mosques".
	"The royal blue mosque of Isfahan was completed in the seventeenth century by Shah Abbas. He ruled during Persia's second golden age. Polo was developed in Isfahan and played in the great square while the Shah watched from this porch over the palace gateway".
	"From this palace, Shah Abbas ruled a reborn expanding Persia. He built roads, irrigation systems, and great bridges like this one. But even his empire finally crumbled".

Table 4.iii: Islamic era

One interesting detail in the sequence is that we are told: "the followers of the Prophet Muhammad built new churches called mosques", raising the question of whether some older forms of churches existed in the country before Islam, or whether Islam is perhaps a 'new' but distorted version of Christiantity because of the use of the word 'churches'. Either way, the point can be interpreted as part of the broader tendency to appropriate all history, and read generic history through the lenses of European history. Thus, the period between the seventh and seventeenth centuries of Iranian history can be read as mirroring Europe's 'Middle Ages': people in the Islamic world in these thousand years were doing what Europe was doing at the same time, namely building 'new churches'.

Another interesting point is the way the sequence begins with an emphasis on the 'difference' of the new conquerors, leaving it ambiguous as to who they differ from. It is important to notice in this context the difference in language used to describe

Alexander's conquest as compared to the Islamic takeover. Where the former abounds in pragmatic descriptive verbs such as 'pursuing' the Iranians back to Persepolis and 'striding in' through the gates, the Islamic conquerors are referred to in passionate descriptors such as having "flaming swords and fiery faith", implying that the 'Western' conquest was of a more practical and business-like nature as opposed to the barbaric and bloodthirsty nature of the Islamic conquest.

4.1.1.3. Pahlavi dynasty (1925 onwards)

This section begins by presenting Reza Shah Pahlavi, a ruler whose rise to power, according to the commentator, started a new era in the history of Iran (Table 4.iv). This idea is reinforced by introducing Reza Shah's son as a 'modern (emancipated) ruler' who is shown as living in a palace "typical of the architecture common to *modern* Tehran", a style which is indistinguishable from contemporary Western architecture. To highlight the contrast with the past, the commentary then reverts suddenly to a description of the palaces of the former rulers. The opulence, exoticism and self-indulgence of the old palaces contrast sharply with the more austere lines of the new palace, operating as a visual metaphor for the distinctions between East and West. The architectural metaphor is constructed through editing together extreme close-ups of precious objects in the palace from the sixteenth century. In a sequence showing modern Iran, most of the running time is devoted to detailed focus on these ornaments, allowing for questions regarding the film's approach to depicting the modernity of Iran.
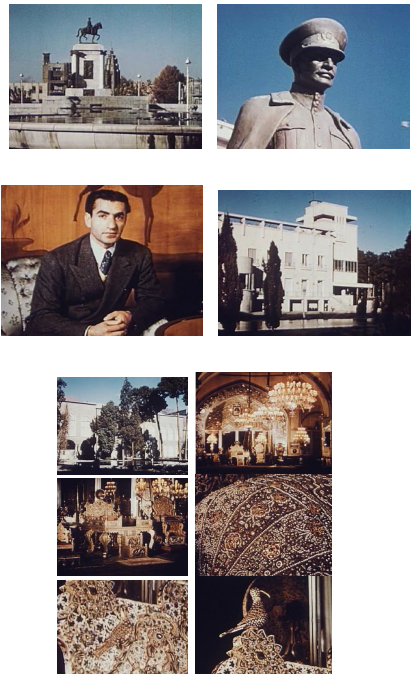
Image	Commentary
	"Centuries later, in 1925, Reza Shah rose to power and a new era began marked by a turning from old customs to Western ways of thought".
	"Under Reza Shah's son, needed law reforms are changing old patterns and bringing hope to people. Young shah's palace is typical of the architecture common to modern Tehran".
	"Former rulers lived in the rose garden palace. In its mirror throne room is one of the world's most fabulous objects, the peacock throne. This golden seat of state was designed so that the occupant sat cross-legged with his back against a bolster crusted with pearls and rubies and gold settings. Built for the great Mughal of India who was captured by Nadir Shah and brought to Persia two hundred years ago. Above is the jewelled peacock from which the throne gets its name".

Table 4.iv: Modern era

Another important point about this sequence is the implication that, unlike the previous golden ages, which the film formulates into a cycle of ups and downs, this 'modern' age is one that heralds a golden age that will never wane. This effect is achieved by the way the sequence finishes with words and pictures of jewels, and an account of Nadir Shah's victory over the Moghuls. This time it is an account of an Iranian conquest, rather than a chronicle of yet another conquest of Iran – a victory that was literally 'golden.' Whilst the previous golden ages ended through foreign invasion, or gradual decline, the modern golden age is envisaged as the dawn of permanent growth and sustainable hope, and by implication, glory.

What the film suggests as the basis of the new success story, however, is limited to a rather vague and very general statement about "a turning from old customs to Western ways of thought". This raises the question of what exactly these "old customs" and their new Western counterparts are, as no further clue is provided by the film. It can be gathered, especially from the two words 'custom' and 'thought', that the "Western ways of thought" can refer to anything from philosophy to culture, to social and political order,

and so on. The entire native way of life is therefore implicitly criticized as lacking the potential to escape from a dead end. Then there is a reference to "needed law reforms" in order to change 'old patterns' and bring about the apparently hoped-for change, yet another implication that the social dynamics, whether manifest in the country's laws or other institutions, are not only incompatible with, but also a barrier to, progress towards modernity.

As mentioned above, the historical progression of the country is also symbolised by contrasting two kinds of architecture: modern Western architecture which is associated with the dynasty's modern approach to governing the country, and native Iranian architecture represented by the traditional residences of previous rulers. Through this symbolism, once more, the narrative establishes the dichotomies of old-vs.-new and tradition-vs.-modernity. The space itself is implied to have been modernised through the replacement of the old by the new. However, there is one traditional element of which the film appears to approve. In its narrative of history, as the story of sequential cycles of rising and falling in power and wealth, the film establishes the role of great men as the ultimate agents of positive historical change. The rule of a strong monarch is the one element of the ancient society that the film does not negate. On the contrary, the film appears to suggest that the consistency of the general rule: a-great-king-equals-a-great-country, is the key to Iran's next era of greatness, under the strong Pahlavi dynasty. So, the governance of the country seems to be one area where change is not necessary for progress towards modernity. Modernisation of the country's governance is achievable solely by the adaptation of the 'Western ways of thoughts' which is best evident in the distance the governing monarch keeps, physically and metaphorically, from the symbolic seat of an Oriental King, the Peacock throne.

4.1.2. Depiction of the cities of Iran
These segments of the film present three major cities of Iran in 1953, starting with the capital, Tehran. Here, as in previous sequences about Darius, Shah Abass and the Pahlavi dynasty, architectural forms dominate the frames. The opening shot, though introducing the geographical setting of Tehran in relation to the Alborz Mountains, frames only a row

of buildings with an imposing figure of a minaret in the foreground (Table 4.v). The city is introduced primarily as a "modern city with roots in the past", a past that is illustrated in the form of a Muslim religious college, and "a woman in an enveloping chador" (Table 4.v). The city is therefore illustrated as an Oriental urban setting using the common markers of *chadori* women, religious sites and Islamic architecture.

Image	Commentary
	"Tehran is the capital of Iran, located in the north, with the Alborz mountains in the background".
	"Tehran is a modern city with roots in the past. The great Muslim religious college set up by Sepahsalar is one of the religious centres of the Islamic world. These young men are studying to become mullahs, religious leaders. Their tranquil cloisters contrast with the busy life of the city".
	"A woman wearing the enveloping *chador* is a reminder that even here in this modern city there are strong links with Eastern tradition".
	"New buildings and modern apartments are among the visible signs of progress in Tehran. At their National University, young Iranians with the growing spirit of national pride are becoming the doctors, teachers, engineers, and leaders of the future".

Table 4.v: Tehran

Modernity in this city, the film appears to suggest at this juncture, is a recent (Western) import, which sits uneasily alongside the continuing preoccupation with religion, and thus the busy city is contrasted directly with the tranquillity of the cloisters to which the students of the religious college aspire. In an attempt to reclaim the city for modernity the film then cuts to the familiar trope of architecture. Similar to the Shah's modern palace,

these modern buildings in their austere rectangular shapes are distinguishable from both the opulence of Oriental palaces and the signature look of Islamic architecture with its various arch forms. In contrast to the native educational institutions that only deal with the religious and the spiritual, these new buildings, we are told, house the new learning institutions offering knowledge in secular disciplines and producing "the doctors, teachers, engineers, and leaders of the future." Once more, the film appears to suggest that Modernity can happen only through disruption and replacement. The binary oppositions of spiritual-vs.-material, religious-vs.-scientific, and traditional-vs.-modern are reinforced here, and the triumph of modernity becomes 'visible' through the metaphoric erosion of the old space.

The next city to be presented is Isfahan. In contrast to Tehran, Isfahan is not characterised as a particularly modern city; all the running time in this sequence is devoted to very detailed explanations of the traditional crafts of the city highlighted in extreme close-ups of the handicrafts, and of the hands of the artisans (Table 4.vi).

Image	Commentary
	"Isfahan is the arts and crafts centre of Iran as it was in the days of Shah Abbass … In the bazzar, the ancient crafts like copper-smithing continue, little changed".
	"Modern machinery has come to Iran but it is still far less difficult to hire a skilled hand craftsman by the day than to find capital to import machinery to do his job. The hands of Isfahan craftsmen turn with especial skill to the creation of fine articles of silver. Machinery will never be able to replace the artist craftsmen like these silversmiths".
	"Their skill is not easily acquired. For fifty years these hands have guided tiny chisels none over the size of a tenth of a finger. This small box is ornamented with figures of legendary heroes, lions, and a scene from a Persia of long ago. The shop windows of Isfahan display other traditional arts. Here are miniature paintings. Themes used today are little changed from those of the time of the great Shah Abbaas. The technique is also little changed. Men sit all day seeming scarcely to move a muscle. His brush: three camel hairs. And this is some of the work he does".
	"The best known product of Isfahan hands is of course the Persian rug. An average rug is made up of at least a million tiny knots every one of which must be tied by hand. The knots make the pile of the rug. "The warp or foundation of the rug consists of cotton threads wound between large wooden rollers. Rug industry wages are low. One of these skilled labourers earns less in a week than an average American labourer earns in two hours. Children's tiny hands tie the most tiny knots of the most delicate designs although employment of children in rug factories is discouraged by new labour laws".
	"As modern industry like this textile mill come to Isfahan, modern workers and mill-owners alike face the problems of adjustment to the machine age."

Table 4.vi: Isfahan

The extreme close-ups of handicrafts fill the whole frame of each shot with luxuriant patterns of the detailed silverwork – these striking visual images evoke the imaginary Orient of opulent and exotic beauty. That vision is continued in the recognisably Oriental images of 'the bazaar' and passing women shrouded in chador, the figures of legendary heroes of ancient 'Persia', and Persian rugs. The emphasis when it comes to the carpets however, is not on the beauty of the artefacts, but on raising issues of child labour – which quickly go on to become metonyms for what in Western terms are unacceptable social standards. The issue of introduction and adjustment to modern machinery is a theme running all the way through this sequence, and is juxtaposed with seemingly random, detailed descriptions of traditional craftwork. This feeds into the recurring theme of the tensions created by the advent of modernity in an Oriental setting.

Shiraz reprises the oppositions between the old and the new, but does it differently. Even though there are references to monuments and palaces, instead of crafts as in Isfahan, the audience is introduced to the cultural heritage of Iran only for it to be suggested later that there is a disconnect between this legacy and modernity (Table 4.vii).

Image	Commentary
	"Shiraz is the capital of the province of Fars from which Persia took its name. The monumental princely gates and the palace of the Ghashighaei. Its history is full of names of philosophers, astronomers and poets. The climate is agreeable here. Oranges grow near reflecting pools in which Muslim poets saw the tranquillity which they saw in their faith. With this monument, Shiraz honours its most beloved son, the poet Saadi. 700 years ago he wrote poetry of such beauty that it is still the basis of the living Persian language of today. The people of Shiraz are amongst the most progressive in Iran".
	"Behind the lines of caravans, still used for transport, stand the outlines of their new grain-elevator".
	"They built a fine new technical institute where young men are learning to use machine tools to reduce Iran's dependence on foreign manufactures. They point with pride to their rapidly expanding school in which young people are being trained to fill the serious shortage of doctors".
	"Some of the students are women, evidence of change disturbing to the conservative Muslim clergy".

Table 4.vii: Shiraz

Although the film goes on to describe the cultural achievements of Shiraz in some detail, there is a suggestion that like Tehran's 'home-grown' learning institutions and Isfahan's traditional crafts, these intellectual 'products' too are Oriental in nature. Although the disciplines of astronomy, philosophy and poetry have been mentioned, they are set in the context of a romantic Orient, constructed through "agreeable weather", "orange trees near reflecting pools", and a literary heritage which only reflects "the tranquillity of [Muslim] faith". The cultural heritage (culminating in literary masterpieces) implies that to be spiritual in nature is to be religious (Saadi the great figure of Persian literature is introduced as a 'Muslim poet', highlighting the centrality, for the commentator, of his

religious affiliations); spirituality is therefore conflated with religion as not apposite for the pursuit of modernity (machinery, which is highlighted as foreign). Modernity, it therefore strongly implies here, is to do with all things secular and mechanical, and is also imported. The commentator's sense of the overwhelming importance of religion in Iranian life is reiterated through the mention of religious conservatism against the education of women - the women themselves are reduced to symbolic indicators of whether or not change has come to the city (the visual symbols of *chadori* women versus female medical students).

4.1.3 Depiction of the rural life of Iran

References to the scarcity of water and desert-like scenery are among the markers and concepts for creating an Oriental rural setting, both at the beginning and at the end of this film. Although modernity may be reaching the cities, we are told, "...about 90% of the people live in villages like Kinareh" (Table 4.viii). Kinareh therefore becomes the prototype both for life in Iran, as well as for the oppressive scenery in which Iranian people spend their primitive lives, dependent on precious, scarce water and centuries-old irrigation systems such as hoists. This links this section back to the very opening lines with which the film begins, mountains providing water for the "high arid plains" on which "most of the people live". The repeated capsizing of great chunks of history (the jump from "three centuries ago" to "today") suggests the immediacy of the past, creating again and again a general picture of a country at a standstill (Table 4.viii).

Kinareh however, is not as archetypal a place as the film tries to imply. For one thing, the country's rural setting is far from homogeneous due to the heterogeneous climactic and geographical settings varying from the mountainous, to the tropical, from semi-arid steppes to humid coastlines. Also, the percentage of rural and urban population of the country at the time has been distorted to forge the film's desirable image of the rural Iran. According to UN statistics, the rural population of Iran was between 72.55% in 1950 to 69.4 in 1955 (UN, 2007), a piece of information that the filmmakers could have accessed at the time of the production of the film in 1953.

Image	Commentary
	"Medical care has not yet reached much of rural Iran. About 90% of the people live in the villages like Kinareh. Kinareh exists because it has water. Water is drawn by this primitive hoist. Three centuries ago, elaborate irrigation systems operated. The land fed twice its present population. Today this hoist only reaches 60 feet. Its capacity: two goatskins: about 8 gallons of water a minute".

"Here the people of the village come to wash their clothes and in this same water they do their dishes. They see nothing wrong with their sheep and goats coming to drink at this same source from which they draw their water to take home for cooking and drinking". |

Table 4.viii: Rural settings, Kinareh

The most important point about this sequence, however, is that it is here for the first time in this film the audience is offered glimpses into the individual and domestic lives of Iranians. This is in contrast with the city episodes where people are general backdrops for the bigger topics of history, architecture, religion and culture. As the film follows a day in the lives of a family in both their domestic and work places, a story of heat, dust and flies unravels. The prototypical domestic life of Iran takes place within a harsh landscape where sickness breeds, poverty is widespread, and food is scarce (Table 4.ix).
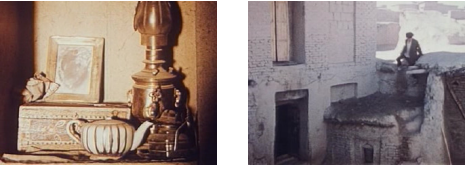
Image	Commentary
	"A girl named Zara carries home on her head the quart of water she's walked half a mile to get. There is no school in Kinareh so Zara has not heard of the dangers of bacteria in drinking water. Kinareh is cold and dusty in winter, hot, much dustier and even more uncomfortable in the summer because of the flies".
	"At home, Zara's mother makes bread from wheat flour that was the family's share of the crop. The landlord owns the field and also the house in which Zara and her family live. Sickness breeds easily here: it comes from dust, flies, unclean drinking water, and... Main food is bread… Meat is scarce so the diet is mostly bread and not much else".
	"Yet for all their troubles, these people are kind and decent, honest, honourable and friendly. Their bedding is the most precious thing they own: they have a copper samovar, a broken teapot, a few cups and saucers, a mirror, and a picture of the Shah. Together with their cooking utensils these things are all that this hard-working family owns. The house has two rooms, a sleeping room upstairs and a cooking room downstairs. This is the only stairway…"

Table 4.ix: A glimpse into the country's domestic life

The abject poverty of the family which is laid bare for the viewer contrasts uncomfortably with the fact that although Iran is a country rich in oil, oil products are still too expensive for the family. This juxtaposition becomes the point for bringing in the theme of oil and industry. The film makes the point that the depicted wretchedness of that one family is "not much worse, nor much better than most of the 16 million people of Iran", or even "most of the people in the Middle East" (Table 4.x). The narrative thus intertwines the grassroots life, problems of rural life, the country, the region, and therefore, by implication, the whole of Iran and the Middle East, with the story of oil.

Image	Commentary
	"Although Iran is rich in oil, oil products are still too expensive for this family, so mother walked 15 miles to gather twigs for her fire. As Zara's father, Mustafa, walks to work, he realises that he is neither much worse off nor better of than his neighbours, not much worse off nor better than most of the 16 million people of Iran. And as he works in the fields with his landlord's oxen, he knows that little has changed in Kinareh in 25 centuries. There is still the old system of land ownership which sometimes requires the tenant to pay 80% of the crop for the privilege of using the landlord's oxen to work the landlord's land. The only change is in Mustafa's clothing and now, in the steel tip on the wooden plough. Like most people of the Middle East, Mustafa wants the benefits of mechanised civilisation".
	"Change is coming as the great natural resources of Iran are developed. The most important resource is oil and Abadan is one of the world's largest refineries, built to serve customers of many nations. Developed by British interest, Iranian oil has been the subject of bitter disputes. With no tradition of mechanical experience, Iranian technicians are developing skills to operate complicated machinery. High industrial wages have attracted men from all over the country to work in the unfamiliar world of technical equipment. Men from the highland tribes, men from the city bazaars, have put on the workman's helmet".
	"This then is a new man of Iran, who looks with hope to the time when with further developments of industry and her great natural resources, Iran may know again some of the glory that it knew when Darius ruled in Persepolis over the mightiest Empire the world had ever known".

Table 4.x: The effect of the oil industry on the life of the ordinary people

The story of Kinareh, which also exemplifies the story of the Middle East according to the film, illustrates the history of the region as coming to a dead end out of which there is no other exit than to retrieve some of the wealth and the power of the past. The film thus concludes in an epic tone, surveying a panorama of history that maps the projected greatness of the new industrialized Iran on to the empire-ruling ancient past of Darius in Persepolis. This is projected not only conceptually but visually through superimposing the columns of Persepolis on to the columns of Abadan's oil refinery. Change is coming, therefore, in the film's conclusion, through the oil industry. This conclusion has been made logical both by contextualising the problems of 'domestic Iran' in terms of

crippling poverty, and also by framing the much needed change in the context of materialistic development based on technological advancement and the exploitation of natural resources.

Based on the evidence from the film presented so far, this film seems to be suggesting that modernity thus cannot be achieved by relying on these 'native' dynamics, as it is a process not based on the development of tradition, but on its elimination. At all levels of the society a disruption of historical continuities is necessary and positive (with the exception of politics and governance by a pro-Western monarch). This conclusion is achievable by presupposing the autonomy and exclusiveness of human societies and essentialised cultures. Not only is the Iranian society deemed 'traditional' with no forward linkage to a modern world, but also the Western ways of thought and action are believed to be at the forefront of the modern world with no backward linkage to any traditional society. The Western societies seem to possess some abstract essence enabling them to achieve modernity, while the opposite seems to be true about Iran. It can therefore be concluded that in depicting the modern world, both the intra-societal interactions (between the past and the present, between the traditional and the modern) and the inter-societal exchanges (international relations) are ignored.

In depicting Iran and its future path to progress, both sets of interactions are undermined through eliminating the political factor from the film's narrative of Iranian society. With regards to the internal dynamics, the governance of the country is not held responsible for the underlying problems of the country which are, as suggested by the film, poverty and the uneven distribution of wealth and other benefits of industrialisation. The blame, as seen, falls on the harsh climate and the historical problem of Oriental backwardness. The society's relationship with the outside world on the other hand is limited to the depiction of foreign industry as being imported to the country, and being represented as the only hope of the country for the future. The most important part of contemporary Iranian history, the nationalisation of the oil industry in 1950, involving the issues of oil industry, international relations, and the political structure of the country, is elided by a passing reference to "a bitter dispute" (Table 4.x).

To understand the real importance of this event, and of its omission from the narrative, a summary of the story behind this 'bitter dispute' is necessary. In 1950, after the failure in the Iranian parliament of AIOC's proposal for a supplementary agreement to the previous oil concession granted to the company, the government of Iran nationalised the industry. In August 1953, after three years of failed attempts to regain control over the oil industry of Iran, a joint Anglo-American coup led to the overthrow of the Iranian Prime Minister that in effect ended the parliamentary democracy in Iran and reinstalled the dictatorship of the Shah. Not taking this event into consideration in a film made in the very same year as this event took place, a film supposedly about the dynamics that shape modern Iran, explicitly demonstrates the film's attempt to depoliticise those factors most relevant in Iran's progress towards modernity, as will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

Conclusion

To summarize, I have tried to show how *Iran between Two Worlds* reveals some of the approaches and strategies employed in British documentary films. The history of the country is presented as a history of decline until very recent times, that is, the 1920s and the rise of the contemporary Pahlavi dynasty. The geographical characteristics of Iran are shown to be those of a harsh landscape imposing hardship and poverty on the majority of people, with very limited capacity for any improvement due to water scarcity. The urbanity of Iran is illustrated in terms of an industrial heritage which is limited to craftsmanship, a cultural heritage that entails religious literature and spiritual philosophy, and a social situation dominated also by hardship and poverty, especially for women and children. Religion, on the other hand, is presented as a pervasive essence influencing everything from architecture to education, to art and social relations. The urban culture is presented as devoid of any secular force or heritage.

Iran is therefore presented as a separate and distinctive entity whose internal dynamics are incapable of developing towards modernity from inside, and whose external dynamics are of no relevance to modernity except for the import of technology and foreign investment. This perspective on the society, coupled with the Orientalist readings of the

history, fix the location of Iran at the primitive end of the trajectory of historical development that necessitates foreign cultural and economic influences to ensure a successful passage from tradition to authentic modernity. Chapter 5 explores Iran's further progress towards Modernity as presented in a number of films made by the British oil industry. The focus of the chapter is on the desirability of Iran's industrialisation in order to facilitate the needs of the oil industry.

Chapter 5

The industrialisation of Iran as seen through British documentary

This chapter examines the approaches and strategies employed in British documentary films on the themes of industrialisation, technology, and more specifically, the oil industry, in relation to representations of Iran. Chosen for analysis in this context are films commissioned or produced by the oil industry, the biggest industrial sector in Iran in the first half of the 20th century. The focus of these films is the impact that industrialisation has had on and in Iran, and the terms in which the overall development of Iran is perceived by the British-owned oil corporations at the heart of this industrialisation. The theme in the films of 'progress' through technology is explored in relation to the influence this concept itself has on the representation of Iran.

Another major theme, the promotion of the idea of 'internationalism' based on the global process of (industrial) development, is then examined insofar as it contributes to the construction of the image of Iran and its (symbolic) place in the modern world of nations as portrayed by the films, either as an equal member, moving towards technological development, or as a reluctant 'other' dragged from the far periphery into centre stage because of its oil.

5.1 The British oil industry and sponsorship of documentary film

The main body of films about the effect of industrial sponsorship on Iran were sponsored by the two oil company giants, British Petroleum[10] and Shell. Their film production activities operated under the umbrella body, 'Shell-Mex and BP', which were "set up to provide joint UK marketing and distribution for the two oil companies, [and] directly sponsored some 100 films from 1932 onwards" (Russell, 2005). As already discussed in Chapter 2, both British Petroleum and Shell Oil were amongst the biggest industrial

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[10] British Petroleum (BP) was originally named Anglo-Persian Oil Company in 1908, and subsequently Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in 1935, and eventually BP in 1954. Throughout this chapter I use only the term BP to avoid confusion.

sponsors of documentary films. Russell explains that the works of the two cannot be rigidly separated, although there were differences in issues of production and sponsorship. BP's work for the screen resulted "mainly from collaboration with a slightly different (and less appreciated) world of commercial documentary production" (Russell, 2009), while Shell Oil founded its own film unit under Edgar Ansety and later also founded film units and archives in the countries where it had operations.

Many Shell films concerned airplanes and cars, and they were indirectly related to oil and oil products, implying that "oil exploration and discovery is a great human innovation and the drive for progress and material and spiritual development of human kind" (Mehrabi, 1997: 337). This is a theme which I will come back to in examining some Shell films. BP on the other hand made a poetic travelogue of places where it operated, as well as a number of environmentalist films in the early 1970s, often in non-industrial directions, as Patrick Russell says, "with the general aim of presenting the multinational corporation's human face" (Russell, 2009). Although it is often argued that these films were not commercial undertakings and their production was a matter of 'prestige' for many companies rather than promotion (Sussex, 1975), this in itself still invites questions about the motivation and the impact of this manner of communication on the part of multinational corporations. As Russell has observed:

> The place of oil in the British and world economies has long been great, if sometimes controversial. How one of the most important industries of the modern world has made use of its major communications medium is a subject well worthy of study (Russell, 2009).

5.2 Shell Films

Shell Films covered a diverse range of subjects from the ethnographic to the scientific. Many covered technological themes directly related to Shell's industrial activity, or promoted aeroplanes and cars, to highlight the company's association with the revolutionized world of 'modern' transport. *Shell Spirit* (1963)*,* for example, is a short 2 minute film that charts a car's journey from the city to the seaside. At the metaphorical level, this film can be interpreted through its various individual symbols – suggesting the

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speedy conquest of nature by man as a broad theme. Nature is represented by a close-up of a flying bird, the disintegration of a dandelion, the sea, some pigs and finally a horse. This last is one of the most potent images of nature being overtaken by man – the cantering horse in the film is overtaken in mere seconds by the movement of the vehicle which is the point of observation. Individual images are obscured by the general impression of speed – the only exception is the Shell logo which lasts longer on the screen, perhaps intended to make an impression on the viewer. Shell the company therefore becomes emblematic of speed, the freedom and power afforded by speed.

Another example of this theme of the conquest of nature by man can be found in *This is Shell* (1970). This film shows Shell's activities and how all these processes are of benefit to the consumer. Here I refer to White's description of the audio-visual impact at the beginning of the film: "the throbbing pulse of churning machines and the sound of tribal drums. Oil tanks and tubing are cut to the clacking of reel-to-reel machines, the tempo increasing with aerial shots of the zig-zagging oil pipe's journey through the jungle" (White, 2003). An optical wipe introduces the second section, also accompanied by drums but this time at a beating-heart tempo. A massive oil drill is plunged deeply into the sea, another metaphor of man's conquest over one of nature's most powerful forces, the sea, with men on tankers working furiously to maintain control.

The film presents the audience with a close-up view of the oil industry. The aerial shots that reveal the awesome power of these oil plants are rendered exciting through fast editing and the synchronization of the music with the movements of machinery and equipment within the shots. This has the effect of engaging the viewer in a rhythmic dance of images, taking them through a journey from the macrocosm to the microcosm – from the generalities of the oil industry to the specificities of Shell at work. The microcosm spans from working with microscopes and diagrams to explosions on oil sites. The slow rhythm of the music as well as of the editing invites the viewer to get to the heart of the Shell world, which is the world of exploration and scientific activity.

The third section of the film starts with a close-up of a washing machine followed by shots of a tractor spraying pesticide on fields. This is then cut abruptly to a close-up that

vividly depicts a pest, dying. The close-up symbolizes man's victory over nature, through oil products and oil-fuelled machinery. This is followed by strings of images of aeroplanes, trains, cars and then extreme long shots of familiar international metropolitan cityscapes interspersed with shots of networks of motorways and cross-ways crowded with traffic. The final shot is one that reflects the most familiar aspect of Shell – a close-up of a hand holding a pipe refueling a car's fuel tank. This whole new world is fuelled by oil, and therefore by Shell.

In the discourse constructed by the examples mentioned above, the world is imagined as a big machine in which all parts are in a systematic relation through the essential characteristic of 'motion'. The central cog of this machinery is the oil industry that feeds the system with its vital fuel. The optimal goal of this system is to provide mankind with smoother, faster, and more accessible forms of motion. This particular discourse of modernity is further highlighted in *Shellarama* (1962) where the divide between the older world of restriction and the new world of fast transport is shown through the metaphoric divide between East and West. As explained in the next section, Iranian women and Iranian architecture constitute, in great part, the 'Eastern world' of the film.

5.2.1 *Shellarama*: Iran as the non-industrial East

Shellarama is a celebration of Shell Petroleum, tracing the manufacture of oil from its discovery to its eventual use as fuel for modern living across the globe. The film starts in the heart of the Nigerian Delta, where a team of Shell employees arrive at the source of an oil reserve. They board an oil rig to begin extracting oil; when it begins to erupt, all are smiling. The rig is revealed to be one of many at the core of Shell's business. From this source, the oil passes through mile after mile of piping as it travels across African desert. Eventually the pipes reach the sea, where the oil is transferred to containers for shipping. Shell's cargo travels in all weathers, including thunderous storms, until it arrives at a refinery, an altogether more sedate, controlled affair. Several Western cities, including London, Paris and Rome, are revealed in stationary tableaux, their streets bare and lifeless. One by one, they spring into energy as Shell-fuelled motorcars, trucks and

bikes travel down their roads and avenues. Expanding from these Western cities to others around the globe, Shell is celebrated in a similar way: numerous cultures and creeds are shown to benefit from Shell Oil as motor vehicles are in use in diverse international locations.[11]

The 'modern world' created by the film is a space governed by scientific activity, mechanical equipment and mega-industrial sites. It is marked by revolutionized human mobility and 'speed' and it offers humankind unlimited freedom and an unprecedented mastery over nature. The last shot of the film takes the viewer, with a speedy but smooth movement, through a seemingly endless road – a metaphor for the limitless possibilities open to the viewer. This narrative of Modernity as freedom, speed and man's triumph over nature is constructed through generic and discursive conventions whereby the above attributions distinguish the West from its 'other'. The opening shots of the film, for example, create an atmosphere of embarking on a traditional adventure journey that proliferates into the use of conventions of the genre to "generate suspense" and "sustain interest in the narrative" (Cave, 2003). The story of oil exploration is therefore constructed as the story of the 'white man' in the search of new opportunities in a hostile unknown environment (black Africa), and the eventual fulfillment of his goal (the discovery of oil).

In another example, the theme of 'modern freedom' is developed through depicting the penetration of modern technology into the 'old world'. Whereas the Shell-fuelled vehicles cram the streets in Western cities (New York, Rome, Paris and London), in Iran (identified by Isfahan's monumental bridge, Si-o-sepol in the background of the depicted street) a medium shot frames two passing cars whose progress towards the camera is juxtaposed by the presence of a camel caravan moving in the opposite direction. The divide between the older world of slow or restricted progress on a journey and the new world of fast transport takes place in a Middle Eastern setting distinguished from Western cities through conventional (Orientalised) iconicity (architecture and camels).

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[11] This synopsis is taken from Screenonline (2003).

It can be said that the modern space depicted in the film is located in a European metropolis which is defined in part through references to an imagined 'Eastern space'. This effect is created through the film's use of complex patterns of association, like the one explained above. In another example the serenity of Eastern religious sites (Blue Mosque of Isfahan/Iran and a Buddhist temple) are compared with Western families enjoying the freedom afforded by their motor cars. The pursuit of religious salvation in the East is contrasted with a modern (Western) salvation that is gained through worldly and materialist pursuit, a theme which is further developed in the symbolic contrast made between Western and Eastern women. The 'freedom' afforded to the Western people is represented through scantily clad women lolling on beaches, riding bicycles, and so on. In utter contrast are the women in the 'Orient' – sedately proceeding towards the mosque to say prayers, they offer their indistinguishable backs to the camera, swathed in the enveloping *chador*. The image of women therefore serves to create the 'Orient', an abstract space signifying 'the religious'. This 'unworldly space' is mute (heavy, slow music) and elusive (faceless humans void of individuality). The contrast between this space and the familiarity of Western urban settings is enforced by cuts from one to the other. The modern word envisaged by the film is thus based on the prospect of the boundless development of human capacities offered by oil, the oil industry and its dependent technologies. This modern world, however, is an exclusive space with non-Western nations at its margins. In depicting the non-Western world, Iranian women, Iranian architecture and religion, are used as markers and concepts creating an Oriental space against whose static state the dynamism of Western modernity is projected.

The construction of the modern world and the place of non-Western nations like Iran in that world, as envisaged in films by industrial sponsors, are themes to be further examined in the following parts of this chapter. Before that I would like to discuss the case of BP's filmmaking and the representations of Iran in its films.

5.3 BP Films

From its formation in 1909 until 1954, BP had a monopoly over Iran's oil, and consequently the vast majority of oil films on Iran were produced by the company. Although the company developed its large-scale film sponsorship mainly after the second World War, according to Russell it was associated with films as early as the 1920s and the 1930s (Russell, 2009). It is not surprising, therefore, to find out that those early films are also mainly about Iran, which was the company's prime site of operation at the time. The study of BP films is therefore one of the most important parts of examining the representation of Iran in British documentary.

By looking at some examples of short films by BP, recognizable patterns of ideas emerge (see Tables 5.i and 5.ii). As the examples below show, the central theme of BP films revolves around the idea of 'progress' from the older ways of life to newer ways through technology. The battle between old and new is emblematised by the replacement of older with more modern types of machinery (the emphasis on concepts of 'new', 'modern' 'replacing' and 'revolutionizing' in the titles and commentary is noticeable). Finally, there is the victory of the new over the old in a contest fuelled by BP.

Thematic structure	Sequence
New machinery	Workshops at Rugby and Derby where the first new diesel engines are being constructed. Test engineer checking new engine. *New* engine is then moved into a new hanger and the construction of the train begins. The engine is lowered in, and next the side plates, and front and back are attached. Lastly the cabs are attached on each end.
Humans creating machinery	Footage of finished LMS engine moving slowly out of the workshop, being cheered by the men who worked on her.
Old vs. new; New machinery takes over the old	The Royal Scot on trial, running the Euston to Glasgow route, driver in cab. Diesel overtakes a stream train. Fireman in cab watching dials. Diesel and steam engines side by side in station.

Table 5.i: *Main-Line Diesel- A New Page in Railway History*

Thematic structures	Sequence
New machinery	Shots of modern tractor designs in use on farm as commentator talks of engineers re-designing *new* tractors in order to produce more power for less energy. The *modern* tractor has many *new* developments such as plough cut outs, and reverse gears. Farmer or landowner in trilby hat looking on, smoking pipe.
Old vs. New	Plough of old design, tractor comes adrift from vehicle when it hits an obstruction in the soil; on the *modern* tractor the driver just needs to lift the integral plough section, back up then drive on.
New taking over the old (through BP)	Various shots of *new* tractor in action: ease of working corners of field, changing implements, mowing close to trees, sawing wood, logs carried away, ploughing. Four tractors ploughing field in formation, accompanied by stirring music. **End logo: 'A BP Film'**.

Table 5.ii: *Tractor Transitions- New Design Revolutionize Agriculture*

As seen here, through choices of topics and recurrent thematic structures the company's films project its image as a modern, forward looking enterprise, and on the frontier of the creation of the new world of the future. This viewpoint is also extended to films that were set in the company's site of activity, Iran. *Oil Review No. 09 (1952): Construction of the Lali Bridge across the Reviver Karoun in Iran* is a 1950s newsreel about the oil industry, the current use of oil, and how oil can be utilised in new ways. It is about the problems of having to cross the river of Karoun, located in oil fields of Iran and the site of BP's operations. As the oil fields on the plains expanded, it became essential to have a permanent road bridge that could cope with the demands of the new industrial activity. The theme of progress through the utilization of new technology is built by the same patterns of ideas as in previous examples (Table 5.iii).

Thematic Structure	Sequence
Harsh nature, Primitive constructions	Long mountain and river pan, man sitting on cliff top, river shots, man walking with bulls near arches and reservoir, various shots of people getting onto rafts to cross river, cable car bridge shown operating, car being lifted and crossing on cable car. Shots of people hanging from a cable car, and walking across the girders with no safety ropes with a swelling river below them.
New construction	Work on bridge's pillars, metal girders being lifted into place, an extended montage of images of people working.
New era, ease of movement	Lorry driving over the bridge followed by people and cattle. The bridge is open for anyone to use.

Table 5.iii: *Construction of the Lali Bridge across the Reviver Karoun*

However, this example is not just the site of the old-vs.-new theme as in the previous examples that were both set in England. Here, the impact of British industry on the development of a foreign country, Iran, is also implicated. There is an emphasis on the harshness of nature and primitive constructions, symbolized by a bridge on an untamed river. It can also be argued, however, that the contrast between the primitiveness of the setting and the sophistication of the British presence becomes a construct in itself, symbolizing the divide between the modern West and the stagnant East. As we shall see below, this construct is one of the key components of the representations of Iran in BP films. For example, in the film *In the Land of the Shah*, sponsored by BP in 1926, Iran is introduced as the 'Land of the Shah'. The title itself invokes the Orientalist concept of the Oriental despot. The rural setting and images of camels and men on mules are Oriental markers used to depict Iran in the film. The story of the development of Iran, on the other hand, is introduced as the story of oil, and is depicted through the sophistication and mighty presence of Abadan's oil refinery, carried out visually through close-ups of the interior of the refinery interspersed with aerial panoramic views of the refinery. In *Oil: A Story of Iran,* produced by the company in 1938 that post-dates *In the Land of the Shah* by twelve years, similar thematic structures and imagery are used. These are some ways in which Oriental tropes are utilised to bolster the impression of the impact of British industry on the modernisation of Iran.

In addition, the industrial development of Iran as depicted in BP's films is also characterised by distinctive concepts and markers. *Persian Story* (BP, 1952), for example, is about the oil fields and the life led by the company's British and Persian employees. It opens on the aerial views of mountains and foothills and cranes down to frame nomads with their herds. After some intervening shots, views appear of people, which are this time set in a modern town. The contrast between the first and the second times the film presents Iran is striking as we see an arid rocky landscape being replaced by images of a modern urban setting (Table 5.iv).

Thematic Structure	Sequence
Iran	Zagros mountains aerials. Goats on hills and mountain, nomads with their herds.
Oil industry	Geologists /Surveyors and local assistants, working in and around campsite. Sign 'Danger - Well Drilling In...'. Derrick and workers drilling. Slow pans of mountains and a bridge, and new buildings. Men inspecting cylindrical tank. Quick shot of old cars. Aerials of various terrain following the pipeline until it reaches Abadan. Aerial of Abadan, including jetties and tankers.
Iran (oil town)	Life outside refinery; traffic, streets, shops, shoppers, cars, motorbikes, market stalls. Large gardens, children dancing and singing at school with teachers. People swimming, playing volleyball, tennis (very quick shots) and horse racing. More LSs of Abadan refinery, sign 'Danger - No Smoking on this Road'. People walking to work/college. Students reading in open area.
Oil industry	Various tanks, pipes and flame LSs of refinery. Rearview of British Justice tanker at dock. Smoking chimneys and Abadan at dusk.

Table 5.iv: *Persian Story* (1952)

This sharp contrast between the sequences that present Iran can be related to the geographical setting where BP operated in Iran. Oil deposits that the British set out to exploit were in south-Western Iran, a region which was sparsely populated and largely inhabited by nomadic peoples, such as the Bakhtiari tribe (Ford, 1954: 16). BP made whole towns from scratch to accommodate its work force. As Bamberg has observed:

It was common in these situations for foreign enterprises to establish self-sufficient company towns in which expatriates lived physically, economically and socially apart from the locals (2000: 16).

These highly urbanised 'oil towns' stood in sharp contrast with nomadic life styles, a contrast that can be found as metonymically standing for the story of the development of Iran in this and other BP documentary films like *Oil from Iran* (1938). This particular representational strategy works through opposition and metonymy. The opposition of nomad imagery with oil towns works as a metonym for Iran pre-BP and Iran post-BP, respectively. From this it is implicit or inferred in the films that Iran has been transformed from a harsh landscape and primitive existence to a modern country, and that the transformation was rapid and was achieved mainly through the British oil industry, as seen in Table 5.iv.

Nomadic imagery is a construct that happens frequently in BP films and has a central function in making the East/West dichotomy work. The construct appears at two levels of representation. At one level, the supposed primitiveness of nomads becomes a metonym for the backwardness of the rest of the country. At another level, the particularities of the nomadic way of life, and to some extent their ethnicity, become metonyms for the demography of the country. The representation of the nomad's habitat, hostile semi-arid and mountainous areas that also happen to host the oil fields of Iran, acts as a metonym for the rest of the country. It is important to emphasise at this point that in many BP films references are made to specific locations where this transformation takes place, namely Abadan and other towns in the Khuzestan province of Iran.

The metonymy, however, is recurrent not only in films contemporary with this example, but in later films also, including TV productions made well into the 1990s. Discussion in the next chapter explores how Iran is constructed in film as a desert without history and civilization. This is seen most strikingly in the film *Dawn of Iran* (BP, 1938), where cities of Iran mushroom overnight into a waiting vacuum, thanks to oil discovery in Iran's soil, by Britain. The story of the development of Iran becomes the story of initiatives taken by Britain in Iran. A variation of this strategy is the use of map imagery

that can be visualised alone or in addition to nomad imagery to introduce Iran. Showing the map of a region is a common visual device in introducing that region in documentary films, especially between 1930 and 1950. The place represented in this way appears as a graphic entity, marked with recognizable, and thus manageable, boundaries. This symbolically visualized place comes within the grasp of our comprehension, the elusiveness of it replaced by a picture, a meaningful sign. Paradoxically, this precise act of pinning down makes the place appear far-away and out of our immediate reach - it is not real, like 'our' own real world surrounding us. It is more of an idea, an image, a sign replete with associated connotations.

Map imagery appears in many BP films. In these films, the introduction depicts Iran through abstraction (maps), or as wilderness (deserts, mountains, inhospitable and undeveloped climes). The films then depict the oil company, showing what can be called the 'internal dynamics' of the industry. These parts are focused on the details of the industry's function. When the films return to the subject of Iran, the contrast with the first set of shots is spectacular. Instead of abstraction or wilderness, the viewer sees an 'oil town', a 'real' setting, familiarized through the focus on everyday human activity and by its urbanity. Finally, the films end with a section depicting what could be called the 'external dynamics' of the oil industry: the crucial role of oil in the modern world. These parts of the films consist of shots of pipelines and tankers transporting oil, and then, usually, examples of modern oil-fuelled transport, aeroplanes taking off, traffic on London streets, ships on the see, and so on (see Table 5.v).

Thematic structures	Sequence
Iran	Maps showing Iran.
Oil industry	Montage of shots showing London street scene, rural scene, lady turning on oil lamp, Western man looking through apparatus during exploration work, assisted by African (?) man in jungle area. Various shots of refinery at Abadan (at that time the largest in the world).
Iran (oil town)	Workers walking into the refinery, housing, the town that has grown up around the refinery, the all-Iranian work force that live there, having come from rural Iran to train in order to work there. Workers in classroom learning English, young men in workshops and labs, diving into swimming pool and cheering on friends.
Oil industry	Long shots of refinery. Pipeline stretching across countryside. Tankers at docks. Montage showing oil cans on production line, traffic scene in London, truck in village, ships at sea, Constellation aircraft taking off.

Table 5.v: *Oil Review No 01: Iran, Diesel Trains and Tractor Transition*

Another example of using the map imagery can be seen in *Oil from Khuzestan* (BP, 1938/43), as shown in Table 5.vi. The abstract introduction of Iran through map imagery and aerial shots of wilderness is put in opposition to the physical presence of real people engaged in daily activities. There is a flashback to the ancient past of the region, showing images of ruined temples, details of carvings on its walls and a local man collecting pitch. The voice-over comments: "miraculous eternal fires from gas fountains … sulphur which is still collected like thousands of years ago…". The associations of ancientness and historical stagnation ('like thousands of years ago') underscores the scene. More importantly, 'oil' is placed in an ancient and mysterious religious atmosphere, evoked by the images of fire-temples, and the remarks about the holy element of fire. The film appears to suggest that it required Western force (in this case, the British oil industry) to push ancient history into modernity. The East is far away, illusory and unfamiliar (images of the Euphrates and ruins from the period of Babylonian empire are equated with the mythological East). The familiar, everyday world of human activity, on the other hand, is located in the West. The film therefore fosters the discourse of Orientalism to create its version of 'modernity', one that is associated with industrial and scientific advancement.

Thematic Structure	Sequence
Iran	Aerials of Khuzistan mountains, and aerials and long shots of oil refinery at Abadan. Map of Iran. Mountains in Iran, long shots of temple walls, man collecting pitch from pool and using it to waterproof a coracle.
Oil industry	Survey team looking for oil. Using dynamite to look for oil. Explosion. Making drilling site accessible - using pick axes to dig earth, building road and houses for the workers. Building concrete foundations for the derrick. Water tank and pipes. Derrick taking shape, men climbing and building. Fitting the drilling bit. Drilling starts. Animation showing drilling process. Various drilling. Fossils, and a geologist looking at them. Lining up borehole with steel casing, men at work. First flush of oil, close-ups. Lorries with loads of pipeline. Laying pipeline, welding, bending pipe etc. Pumping stations. Aerials of Abadan refinery.
Iran (oil town)	Young Iranian men in the classroom, and apprentice shops. Workers going to work. Long shots of nice homes, families and gardens in Abadan. Clinics and hospitals. Busy swimming pool. People carrying piles of bricks on their backs.
Oil industry	Aerials of port/shoreline with ships. Long shots of tanker ships.

Table 5.vi: *Oil from Khuzestan: The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company Presents a Survey of Its Operation in South West Iran* (1948)

There is also another facet to this opposition. The section about the surveying team looking for oil consists of detailed explanations about the geological methods used, accompanied by the images of maps, diagrams, scientists at work in laboratories, and so on. Although this is one of the common cinematic conventions of picturing 'scientific issues' in documentary, the juxtaposition of the last two sequences can evoke the association of Iran with ancientness, mystery, religiously-oriented existence, and Britain with the science-oriented modern world. The thematic structure of the film is therefore the same as previous examples. This structure determines the film's approach to industrial development in parallel with other documentaries produced by the oil industry. As was the case with Shell films, in *Oil from Khuzestan* and other BP films, the progression from the pre-modern world to the modern world is symbolised through metaphoric passages from East to West, facilitated by the scientific and technological initiatives taken by industrial enterprises (in both the East and the West).

5.3.1 *Oil from Khuzestan*: Iran on the path to industrial modernity

In the particular example of *Oil from Khuzestan*, however, there is more to the story of modernity than in Shell or similar BP films. In introducing the sites of BP's operation, Khuzestan, the commentator introduces the place as one of the richest oil fields in the world. It is explained that it took the British 7 years to determine the location of the oil, and 23 years to build the Abadan refinery. The primitive anonymous state of Khuzestan 30 years ago is compared to the present time, with the conclusion that: "today it [Khuzestan] has got one of the biggest refineries in the world, and is part of a worldwide market … to meet the request of the world for oil…". Khuzestan (and by extension Iran) is introduced in ways implying that when combined with British Petroleum it acquired importance in the world. In this way the film introduces what can be called the theme of internationalism, which is brought to life in complex ways with many strands to explore.

First of all, it is suggested that the oil industry is seeking cooperation and mutual benefit for the communities involved (the British company and its Iranian employees). BP's services to its Iranian employees are put into words like this: "For young Iranians the oil industry offers a golden, useful future… there are 17 schools with laboratories… a workshop with Iranian youths in it which started 20 years ago… adult training skills, night classes… by the biggest employer in Abadan, a modern oil town". The sequence following this commentary is devoted to the depiction of the oil town of Abadan. The commentary includes explanations about sanitation, health services, schools and other urban services, brought to the area by BP in conjunction with the Iranian authorities. Shots of restaurants, canteens, cinemas, schools, hospitals and swimming pools accompany the commentary that ends in the statement: "In every way possible, happiness and prosperity of the Iranian people is the concern" (see Table 5.vii).

Image	Commentary
A mother and child smiling coming towards the camera; father getting off his bicycle, going towards them and picking up the child; the family around their garden pool; little child playing with her doll.	"10,000 bungalows have been built with gardens… "
Shots of Abadan at night, flashing neon signs in the streets.	"Much has been done, but Abadan is still growing fast … (explanations about sanitation, health services and other urban services, done in conjunction with Iranian authorities".
The little child with her mother at doctor.	"Today children are checked in health services".
A street with a bus and traffic police, a hospital and a swimming pool.	"The area is divided into states: restaurants, canteens, cinemas are planned for each state. In every way possible, happiness and prosperity of the Iranian people is the concern".
Extreme long shots of huge identical housing estates.	"But material is still a problem… equipment has to be imported".

Table 5.vii: Abadan, a modern oil town

The actual situation in the 'oil town', however, was not quite this rosy. Comments such as "in every way possible, happiness and prosperity of the Iranian people is the concern" in fact overstates the positive impact of BP on Iran and conceals the facts on the ground of the company's relationship with its employees. The problems included wages, social insurance and inadequacy of health services (Ford, 1954: 251-267). The shortage of housing was considered one of the most serious causes of discontent in the Company's areas (ibid). *The Official Report of the Mission of the International Labor Organization: The Conclusions of Labour Conditions in the Oil Industry in Iran* (Geneva, 1950) states that:

> Although thousands of houses have been built and hundreds are still under construction, very large numbers of workers see no hope of securing a house for years to come … It may nevertheless be possible, without depressing the standard of accommodation below a decent level, to construct a larger number of less costly houses which fulfil all reasonable requirements. The problem is so big and so acute that only an urgent effort on a large scale can meet it. (cited in Ford, 1954: 258).

The housing problem appears to be even more acute if the issue of the Company's contract labour is taken into account. A large number of BP's workers (over 7,000 in

Abadan and over 8,000 in the oil fields) were not directly employed by the Company but by a contractor. These workers did not enjoy the same protection under law and by collective agreements as other workers, and did not have their own homes (ibid). The film's claims about the welfare of the Iranian workers of BP contradicts the fact that a large number of them were not so well protected as the Company's senior employees, the majority of whom were British (ibid: 256).

Highlighting BP's contribution to the international community is another way of bringing to life the theme of BP's self-proclaimed internationalist agenda. BP's provision of oil to the 'global' oil markets is discussed in these lines of the film's commentary:

> Now to get the oil away to refinery and the market: This job like hundreds of others is done by Iranians trained by oil the industry. [Export of oil has been] 400 tonnes of oil a year [in 1912], 9,000,000 tonnes by 1938… by the end of the War in 1946, 20,000,000 tonnes a year.

Through its connection to BP, Iran therefore becomes part of the 'international' community. The message of the film is clear: BP is the factor responsible for uniting Iran with the international community by urbanising and industrialising Iran. The film ends with comments about "carrying oil for so many miles where it is needed as in Iran, refineries, laboratories and offices." It puts emphasis on words such as "many other countries" and "many men and women" taking part in huge industrial organisations to build the modern world. In this way Iran is included in the international community which has been given a human face.

The discourse of internationalism as it appears in the film can also be viewed in the context of the broader discourses of the European modernist cinema as discussed in Chapter 2. There it was explained that the internationalism and egalitarianism promoted by these cinemas were based on the underlying principles of Eurocentricism and a belief in Western global supremacy (Stollery, 2000:150-157). These cinemas reflected the prevalent attitude of the colonial European powers that, convinced of their political, economic and cultural superiority, "brought the Afro-Asian world under political tutelage and economic domination, while also proclaiming the civilising influence of European colonial expansion" (Bamberg, 2000: 9). As part of these European modernist

cinemas, British documentary films helped the re-imagining of the British Empire "as an egalitarian 'Commonwealth', harmonized through technological and economic development of its more 'backward' regions" (Stollery, 2000: 5). Although Iran was never a European colony, it was under the influence of European powers throughout the 19th century to the 20th century. It can be argued that in *Oil from Khuzestan* Iran is regarded in the same kind of context, a 'backward' region, but in the process of catching up with the Western world, by the help of a European enterprise.

Considering that the film's production was supervised by the Film Centre, it is possible that the film's adaptation of this particular discourse of egalitarian internationalism was influenced by the BDM. The more fully developed view of the Eurocentricity of global modernity is most easily recognizable in another BDM film. In *Dawn of Iran* (1938), as shown in the next chapter (Chapter 6), a Western enterprise, BP, is presented as the sole means by which Iran is modernising, and modernity is always presented as 'good'. Made around the same time as *Oil from Khuzestan*[12] by a senior member of BDM, John Taylor, the film represents an oil town metonymically as the whole of Iran, thus presenting the history of the growth, flourishing and development of the (British-owned) oil industry as equivalent to Iran's experience.

This, and similar representational strategies initiated in documentary films with a connection to foreign industrial enterprises, especially oil industry, have since determined the particularities of the way Iran is depicted in British documentaries more widely and in the more recent TV programmes. This despite the fact that in most cases the effect of the foreign enterprise on the economic and industrial development of Iran was exaggerated in these films. The idea of developing the local community and connecting it to the 'global community' through trade is illusory in particular, taking into account the purpose and function of foreign industrial enterprises, as Bamberg points out, in his explanation of the reality of supply and demand in the technologically demanding oil industry:

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[12] The older version of *Oil from Khuzestan* was made in 1938.

Requiring sophisticated capital equipment and other supplies not available locally, foreign mining and petroleum operations usually imported most of their requirements. They therefore had few 'backward linkages' to local suppliers. At the same time, most of their output was exported to markets in the developed world, so that they had few 'forward linkages' with local consumers (Bamberg, 2000: 15).

The promotion of BP as supportive of internationalism in the film is contradicted also by the emphasis in the company's manual, that BP was "essentially a British company" (cited in Bamberg, 2000: 14). It was also laid down in the company's Articles of Association that "every director must be a British subject, a restriction that would not be removed until 1978" (cited in Bamberg, 2000: 14), as the result of which "by the 1950s some 2,500 expatriate British staff supervised a labour force of 70- 80,000 Iranians" (ibid: 15). Evaluated against statistics, the film's claims of the mutual benefits of the oil industry, depicted to be most beneficial to the host country's technological advancement through training of its youth, appear to be open to counter evidence.

Oil from Khuzestan therefore centres its narrative about BP and its relation to Iran around the theme of egalitarian internationalism. This theme is based on the promise of creating a new world of nations connected through commerce and industrial activity and harmonised through an all-inclusive and beneficial modernising force. The internationalism that the film promotes can be viewed from the perspective of the 'discourse of development'. The strength of such a discourse, as Gilbert Rist has observed, lies in its insistence that the process of 'development' ostensibly favours the prosperity of countries in both North and South (Rist, 2002). Certainly *Oil from Khuzestan* depicts BP's activity as contributing to both hemispheres. Accordingly, the depiction of Iran differs from other examples of films of industrial sponsorship. Although similar representational strategies are used, the East/West hierarchical dichotomy is suborned to a vision of a world in which the boundaries of the centre and the periphery are becoming blurred through a global process of development.

The idea of development, especially through oil-fuelled economic growth and technological advancement, consistently remains at the centre of films sponsored by BP

and other British oil industries. However, this takes place in a variety of contexts as already explained in the analysis of examples from films of both BP and Shell. Subsequently, different contexts create different representations of not only the oil company, but also its site of operation, in this case, Iran. The films examined so far can be categorised into two groups. First, the films in which British enterprise symbolises technological superiority, locating Britain (and by extension the West), at the centre of the modern world. In these films Iran represents, either symbolically or literally, the East, the non-industrial and technologically backward 'other' of the modern world. The second group consists of films in which the foreign enterprise symbolises a West that seeks to integrate its periphery through the process of development. In these films Iran is presented as part of the developing world, a nation among others attempting to 'catch up' to the perceived modernisation made available through Western models.

In both of these groups of films, a global scheme of development is depicted as the key to the creation of the modern world. Like the Western world, the non-West is included in the scheme though through different representational lenses: a 'distanced other' in the first group of films, and a closer 'familiarised' world in the second group. There are, however, examples of films sponsored by the British oil industry that do not fall into either of these categories. Even though in the same way as the other two groups these examples base the portrayal of the oil industry on themes of internationalism and development, the twin bastions of a modern world that the enterprise epitomises, it is in their particular interpretation of internationalism that these films are distinguished from the first two categories.

5.4. *Oil: The Wealth of the World*: Iran on the margins of the modern world
An example of films different from the majority of documentaries sponsored by the oil industry is *Oil: The Wealth of the World* that was made through Film Centre and Associated British Pathé in 1950. The film starts by introducing oil and its universal usage. Oil is put at the centre of the economic and developmental growth of the modern world in comments such as these:

On oil we base our cities, our health… the aircraft, the food we eat, the clothes we wear… Without oil the wheels of the world will stop.

The themes of internationalism and global development are also suggested in these comments, as well as the choice of the film's title. The emphasis is on the notion of oil as the wealth and the key element in the creation of the modern world, as well as a sense of internationalism suggested particularly through the recurrent use of the key word 'world' (Table 5.viii).

Another important feature of the narrative is the employment of a particular narrative voice, one that can be called the voice of morality. The voice introduces at the very beginning of the film the theme of 'sharing' as the moral undercurrent of the narrative: "Each man needs to share with his neighbour the wealth of the world" (Table 5.viii). The voice of morality thus reaffirms the theme of a modern world that is dependant not only on industrial development but also on international compromise in exploiting the natural resources needed for modern living. The voice of morality with its message of global sharing has an important discursive function to which I will return shortly.

Image	Commentary
	"So many millions but just one earth, each man needs to share with his neighbour the wealth of the world".
	"But the wealth of the world is there, in the sea, the ocean, like this" (here it cuts to scenes from London - a graphic flash with a crash of cymbals).
Scenes from London: Policeman conducting traffic. Travel Agents. Women looking in shop windows. Greengrocers display. Barclays Bank.	"On oil we base our cities, our health…the aircraft, the food we eat, the clothes we wear… the whole civilized system".
	"Without oil the wheels of the world will stop".
Shots of oil derricks. Men at work drilling for oil. Pipes, refineries and tankers. Train carrying tanks of oil.	Explaining scientific details of the sources of supply, methods of extraction, and the various usages of oil.

Table 5.viii: Oil as the wealth of the world

After a sequence illustrating the scientific aspects of the oil industry, the film comes back to the theme of oil for the modern world. The sequence embarks on depicting the devastating effects of World War II on Europe, and the necessity of oil for the reconstruction plans (Table 5.ix). The interesting point in the commentary of this section however is the change of focus from the principle of sharing to the importance and the priority of the needs of a particular group of people, "the new Europe", that "is going to need all the oil it can get" in order to be able to pursue its visions of future (Table 5.ix).

Image	Commentary
Demolition of buildings Industrial landscape. Foundries. Production lines. Women inspecting electrical parts. Machinery. Coal being moved by mechanical digger.	"Europe is rebuilt, but it is slow… we have our plans, our dreams, our vision. The new Europe is going to need all the oil it can get. Oil is turning the wheels of industry".
Automobile industry. Stanes Motors Ltd. Tractors coming off production line. Railway track in Australia.	"The world runs on wheels".

Table 5.ix: Post-war Europe and the vital role of oil

This shift from the egalitarian approach of sharing to a one-sided approach of prioritising is justified by creating a framework for the film's discourse that presses into service two types of narrative voices, the voice of morality, as already explained, and the voice of the educator. The voice of the educator, to quote Barbara Johnston, is a narrative voice that is "often sure they know what they know, or are at least expected to act as if they were." (Johnston, 2002: 17). This characteristic "expression of confidence in the evidence one has for one's claims" (ibid) is evident in almost all the commentator says in the film. When showing men working in farms, for example, the voice-over asks the audience whether they know what the men will gain by working so hard. The commentator's answer to the question is uttered with total confidence: "Simple, to feed the world." (Table 5.x) As another example the persistent use of phrases such as "all we have to do is" or "the best way is" can be mentioned (see Table 5.x). Addressing the audience directly encourages them to share with the commentator the chosen point of view and implicates them in these choices. These phrases also show other characteristics of the educator voice which are "various sorts of simplification and various sorts of speaking for other people that presuppose acknowledged expertise" (Johnston, 2002: 17).

Image	Commentary
Sheep shearing. Man on a motorcycle rounding up sheep. Tree felling. Timber industry. Grain harvest. Combine Harvesters. Planes. Ocean Liners. 270 MILLION TONS 450 MILLION TONS	"Their minds are as open as the country they are working in". "They work so hard, and believe me, they can make it. The bargain? Simple, to feed the world". "Let's see what oil can do all right? Three quarters of ships in the world run on oil". Comparison between usage of oil in 1938 - 270 million tons, and 1948 - 450 million tons. "And now all we have to do is to find it. The best way is to find out where we can find it".

Table 5.x: Usage of oil in the modern world in the voice of educator

As seen in Table 5.x the speaker constantly employs words such as "let's see", "all right?", 'believe me' and 'yes' in addressing the audience, which creates a strong sense of identification with him, a way of drawing the audience in. This intended audience is primarily Western by implication of cultural inclusivity, seen through the use of informal conversional language. The use of the inclusive plural is strategic. The pronoun "we" is used by a Western commentator and in comments juxtaposed with images of Western settings. An example of this is shown in Table 5.xi. The comments about "we" as "a lavish people" are given on an aerial shot of a typical Western city (in the 1950s) with skyscrapers dominating the streets full of cars, followed by shots of people shopping. The theme of internationalism and the principles of sharing the world's natural resources might look at odds with the comments about the priority of the needs of certain groups of the people of the world, unless the film's discourse of internationalism is viewed from the perspective of Eurocentricism, a perspective based on the division of the world into centre and periphery. 'The world' in the language of the film actually refers to those countries of the world which are, in Michael Billig's words, "at the centre of things", and "are part of what is conventionally described as 'the West'" (Billig, 1995: 8). So, as the voice of morality encourages the message of sharing, the authoritarian voice of educator convinces the audience that the world in which sharing should take place consists only of the Western countries where the intended audience is located.

This particular viewpoint of the world subsequently results in near total exclusion of the non-Western world, particularly the Middle East, from the film's sphere of 'the international' and 'the global'. The Middle East is introduced in phrases like "the difficult country", or "a land" on which "a modern civilisation is going to depend" (see Table 5.xi). From the evidence in words and images presented in Table 5.xi it is hard to find another interpretation of a message which starkly strips the Middle East of populations, pretences to civilization, and indeed, its entire history. The sharp contrast between the images of a Western metropolitan city and those of a wilderness that follow (see Table 5.xi) reaffirms the contrast between the modern civilisation where "everybody has been dependent on the world's [biggest oil] reservoir…" and the location of the reservoir "The Middle East [which is only] blazing sun over wilderness". This contrast paves the way for a statement which constitutes the core principle of the film's propaganda: "This [the Middle East] is no man's land, but it is every man's land" (Table 5.xi).
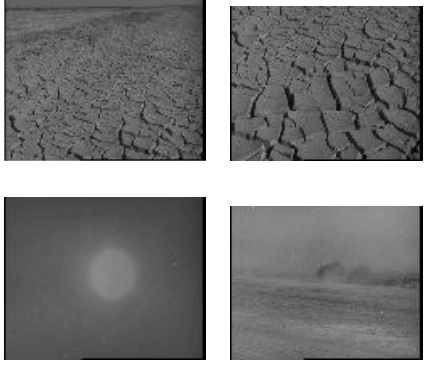
Image	Commentary
Surveyors checking for oil; Drilling; Globe showing oil reservoirs of the world - Middle East and America… Model oil wells popping up on map of America…	"For the most part it is laid out in two main areas, first the Middle East, one of the world's greatest reservoirs. Deep down in the difficult country. That is why production is not yet given as much as it could. That's why too everybody has been dependent on the world's other big reservoir…"
Oil drills located on a lake; various shots of cargo ships, pipes, docks etc; aerial shot of an oil refinery.	Explaining about the Caribbean oil production in Venezuela.
Montage of trains, trucks, cars, industry, factories, traffic jams, petrol tanks being filled, skyscrapers, etc. American woman getting into car with paper bags of shopping.	Narration about American oil consumption. "We are a lavish people, yes…Everyone has to take care how much oil they use. Now the real answer lies on the other side of the globe… a modern civilisation is going to depend on the land where it first began - the Middle East".
	"The Middle East, blazing sun over wilderness. This is no man's land, but it is every man's land".

Table 5.xi: World's oil reservoirs and Western consumption

The 'no-man's land' effect is achieved partly through desert imagery and partly through employing the trope of "visual instruction", a common tool in films that illustrate industrial processes (Wiatr, 2002). Maps to locate the geographical places, diagrams to show the details of operations and statistical details about sources of supply are very common devices in any film related to the oil industry to help the audience get a clear vision of otherwise complicated processes. It can, however, be argued that sequences of

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visual instruction have a representational function too. Here, for example, the ostensibly scientific language of the film creates a topographical image of oil lands that turns them from complex countries with peoples, cultures and civilizations into over-determined abstract entities. The whole of the Middle East is encapsulated in map imagery and branded as the "difficult country" (see Table 5.xii). The contrast between the subject, a white hand on a map accompanied by a Western (British) voice, and the object of study, the map of Middle East, turns the region into a commodity to be categorised and possessed, while the West/Europe remains the living side of the equation, the active possessor (Table 5.xii). No-man's land has become every-man's-land, the possession of "every man" who is located in the West, and audience to this film. What the film refers to as "every man" is thus a very particular group of men – rich, white, (British) industrialists, for the most part.
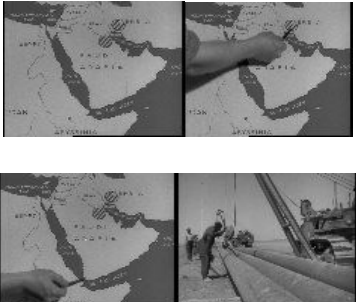
Image	Sequence
	Map of the Middle East - Iran and Gulf states are pointed out on the map. A pipeline from Saudi Arabia to the coast of Syria is being built. Various shots of the pipeline being constructed.

Table 5.xii: Middle East as an abstraction

The desert imagery and inhospitable lands are among the commonest Orientalising markers of Iran and other Middle Eastern societies in films of industrial sponsorship. In this particular example, however, this marker is evolved to the extreme in order to strengthen the propagated message. Even the 'primitive' people and the nomad imagery so familiar in Orientalist representations of desert has been written clean off the map. There is no sign of any human habitation in these oil-lands, they are literally "no man's land". Human activity in this space is associated solely with the oil industry (Table 5.xiii). The ultra-Orientalism of the film thus strips the Middle East of human attributes,

despite the presence of local people (Iranians) in the shots illustrating the activities of the oil industry (BP) in the region (see Table 5.xiii).

Image	Sequence
	Various shots of mountainous landscapes.
	Oil fields. Well being drilled. Men at work on oil drills. High angle shot showing a pipeline zigzagging its way across a vast landscape. Oil refinery of Abadan - various shots of the refinery. Men at work laying railway tracks. Man looks through a surveying device. Bulldozers work to clear the ground. Pipelines.

Table 5.xiii: The Middle East as no-man's land

Interestingly, though, while the Middle East region (conventionally the prime location of the Orient) has been written into oblivion in this context, the binary oppositions between the East and the West are still required to define the industrialised advancement of the West against the assumed primitiveness of the East. The film ends on a sequence showing the primitive state of a group of Chinese workers struggling to supply their army's logistics manually. The Orient of the film thus shifts further east and becomes located in China. The Orientals are now Chinese, not the traditional-head-dress-wearing Arabs or other natives of the Middle East. Table 5.xiv illustrates how the East/West functional opposition is maintained while the Middle East is constructed as a global property, in this specific context (of oil politics).

Construct	Sequence
The West (with its oil dependency).	Long shot of oil tankers in harbour. Men on board at work. Shipbuilding industry in Britain - shots of ship being constructed. Optimistic voiceover about the amount of work there will be for British shipbuilding industry… Close-up of a London bus followed by lots of traffic.
The no-man's-land of natural resources to be exploited by humans, who are exclusively Western.	Various shots of oil rich landscapes. Oil being burnt off on a desert landscape. Two peasants sitting in the landscape "who never guessed the presence of oil nor felt its worth."
The backward stage of pre-industrial human, who is the 'Oriental' man.	Montage of Chinese workers getting supplies to their armies by manually pulling boats up a river. Lots of men with ropes around them struggle up a steep hillside pulling the heavy weight of the boats.

Table 5.xiv: Middle East as global (Western) property

The film ends on the image of a tiny globe dwarfed in the palm of a human hand, the same shot that started the film, with the voice-over reinstating the message of the film:

> So many millions, but only one earth. Each man's need is that of his neighbour. For all there is to share is the wealth of the world.

This visual-verbal metaphor for human compassion that begins and ends the film ironically frames the propaganda of the West's priority claim over the natural resources of the world inside a moral approach. The two incompatible principles of imperialist materialism and those of egalitarian internationalism are easily reconcilable in this framework through a narrative strategy that uses two different narrative voices to influence the viewer's beliefs and preferences. While the voice of morality encourages the message of sharing, the voice of educator establishes the idea that the Western nations are the only ones in need, and worthy, of having oil.

The film's pretence of internationalism is thus nothing more than nationalism in disguise, except in that it goes beyond a single country to include a bloc of countries, 'those at the centre of things'. Taking into consideration the historical moment of the production of the film this perspective becomes more intelligible. In 1950, after BP's proposal of a supplementary agreement to the previous oil concession granted to the company failed to pass in the parliament, the government of Iran nationalised the industry. Rejecting nationalisation, the British referred the matter to the International

Court of Justice. Apart from the two countries involved, the oil dispute involved 'elements of direct and prime importance' to the rest of the world, as Alan Ford observed at the time:

> Iran has long been one of the world's major producers of crude petroleum, and the refinery in Abadan is the world's largest. Its oil and refining capacity are of great international importance, both economically and strategically. Further, the historic rivalry between Britain and Russia for power and influence in Iran, intensified today by the East-West struggle and the current importance of oil, makes the oil dispute an object of the greatest concern to the participants in the 'cold war' (Ford, 1954: vii).

The film therefore should be viewed in the context of a perceived major threat to the economic and strategic interest of not only Britain but the entire Western bloc. The rhetoric of the film is characteristic of a 'discourse of nationalism' at a time of crisis (Billig 1995: 5), when protecting national interest takes precedence over internationalist considerations. Here, though, the idea of national interest is projected onto a bigger whole: 'Europe', 'America', or "a modern civilisation", to quote the film. This gives the narrative the advantage of pretence to internationalism (including more than one country in its message of sharing) while at the same time limiting the boundaries of 'the international' to its selected whole at the expense of the 'outsiders'. This strategy is facilitated by tapping into the reservoir of Orientalism. A host of Orientalist markers and concepts are utilised to either downplay the 'national interest' of non-Western nations in relation to a globally strategic commodity (the case of the Far East), or to strip these nations off any pretence to human civilisation at all, not to mention statehood (the case of the Middle East, Iran in particular).

In concluding this chapter I would just like to emphasise that the films of industrial sponsorship can be the site of extreme 'othering' of the East, Iran in particular, as shown in the particular example of the film *Oil: The Wealth of the World* (1950). Though the themes of internationalism and development are still promoted in the film, the international community constructed by the films is based on the conceptualisation of a centre and its periphery within which the communities, and for the premises of my thesis, Iran and the Middle East in particular, are not only excluded from the centre but

written into oblivion. However, in films sponsored by the British oil industry, generally the industry is portrayed as being at the forefront of a global drive for creating a new world that offers human beings unlimited progress and boundless freedom through the advancement of technology. The industry's activity is represented as the engine of economic growth and technological advancement at the service of the international community and the forces of modernisation that push the boundaries of the modern world further to include the non-Western world.

Like the Western world, the non-West is represented as being involved in the global process of development, although its representation varies contextually; that is, in relation to the representational role given to the West. Subsequently, the image of Iran in these films can vary from symbolising the non-industrial and technologically backward 'other' of the modern world, to its representation as a nation among all other nations that are part of, or in the course of integration with, the modern world. The next phase of Iran's representational progress towards Modernity, which is to say its socio-economic development through modernisation under the leadership of the Pahlavi Dynasty, is the focus of Chapter 6.

Chapter 6

Pahlavi dynasty and modernisation of Iran as represented
in British documentary

This chapter examines representations of the Pahlavi dynasty and their modernisation scheme as depicted in documentary films. It shall be argued that in illustrating this aspect of Iran's development, the Pahlavi dynasty comes to embody the soul of modernity, and Westernisation is recognised by the film as the only possible path to 'authentic modernity'. The focus of the chapter is thus on the effect which this particular perspective, the recognition of the Pahlavis and their Westernisation as Iran's best path to modernity, has had on the representation of Iran and the terms in which the overall development of Iran is therefore perceived in British documentary.

In understanding that perspective, it is necessary to understand the concept of 'modernisation' as used in the context of modernisation theory. As its central concern, modernisation theory asks what constitutes a modern society besides industrialisation. Modernisation in this context incorporates, besides industrial development, the collection of socio-economic and cultural plans designed to get a society to an imagined stage of advancement (Rostow, 1960; Lerner, 1958; Preston, 1996). This stage of advancement was often based, in sociological terms, on the image of contemporary Western societies; that is, advanced, developed and industrial nations. Thus, in a non-Western society, development involves various degrees of Westernisation (Rist, 2002; Simon, 1997; Hoogvelt, 2001).

Based on the paradigm of modernisation as defined within modernisation theory, the first part of the analysis in this chapter looks at the representation of Reza Shah, the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1978), as a Westernised moderniser featured in the film *Dawn of Iran* (Strand Film, 1937/38), while the second part examines the similar representation of his son and successor, Mohammad Reza Shah, in *A King's Revolution* (Associated Rediffusion, 1964). Together, the two films form the basis for

representations of the historical background to the events in contemporary Iran in the 1990s, as presented in *People's Century* (1997) thirty years later. The analysis of *Dawn of Iran* and *A King's Revolution* is therefore constructive not only in relation to the issues discussed in this chapter but also in relation to the overall discursive continuity observable in the filmic representations of Iran.

6.1 *Dawn in the East: The Story of Modern Iran*

Dawn in the East: The Story of Modern Iran[13] is about the modernisation of Iran under Reza Shah. The film, made in 1937 by Strand Film for BP, was produced by Arthur Elton and directed by John Taylor, two senior members of the BDM who were at the time active in, respectively, the Film Centre and the Association of Realist Film Producers. *Dawn of Iran* is thus an example of a film that is the product of the co-operation between the BDM and the sponsoring oil industry. For this reason it is an appropriate case study of the ways in which that co-operation affected the documentary representation of Iran.

The film starts on an intertitle reading of these lines: "On 21st of March 1935, his Imperial Majesty Shah Reza Pahlavi announced to the world that his country would in future be known by its original name, Iran". It is then followed by an extreme long shot of a street in Tehran accompanied by the noises of the city's hustle and bustle and the voice-over explaining the occasion:

> Tehran, 1937. Outside the new railway station crowds are waiting for His Imperial Majesty to open the Northern section of Iran's first railway. The Caspian section of the 800 mile railway is ready. This railway means a lot to Iranians, spending 15 million pounds of their own money on its building. When it is completed in 1938, it will connect Iran with the Persian Gulf, and will allow the produce of the rich north to reach the sea and the markets of the world.

This sequence is then cut to a silent shot of a desert landscape. As the camera pans, the shot frames a flock of grazing sheep on the foreground of a panoramic view of Persepolis, with the commentary telling us:

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[13] This film also appears in BFI archive by another title, *Dawn of Iran,* which I use in this thesis from this point onwards.

But 16 years ago Iranians were a people living in their past. Shepherds grazed their flocks near halls where once emperors lived, by the great palace of Persepolis which Darius Achaemenian had built 2500 yeas before.

The contrast between the content of the two shots foreshadows the account of history which is about to unravel: a country with a great past but in a state of decline during the 16 years prior to the making of the film. The replacement of the proud mood of the first sequence with the doom and gloom prevailing in this shot creates suspense similar to that aroused by a thriller, to find out what it could be that eventually brought about the miraculous transformation of the country in the course of just 16 years.

6.1.1 A country in decline due to the lack of centrally governed nation-state

To answer that question, the film next embarks on presenting an account of Iran's historical background. As discussed earlier in Chapter 3 of this thesis, organizing the entire history of Iran into three large categories of pre-Islamic, Islamic and modern periods is a common model of historical representation in the documentary films of this era. Chapter 5 then showed how the history of Iran is depicted in this standard model as going through cycles of rise and fall from the heights of imperial might to the depths of subjugation at the hands of the armies of invaders, until the arrival of the Pahlavi dynasty in the 20th Century marked the beginning of the new era of greatness for the country.

Dawn of Iran adds a new component to this recurring model. This new component is a selected chunk of history which precedes the modern greatness of Iran, which by the film's calculation starts in 1921 (16 years prior to the making of the film in 1937). Between the last age of greatness in the seventeenth century under Shah Aabbass and the modern greatness starting in 1921 therefore, there is a particular era characterised by an acute state of decline (Table 6.i). Taking into account the dates of Shah Aabbass's reign (1571 – 1629), this era spans close to 300 years. To examine the film's claims about Iran during these three intervening centuries, I discuss Table 6.i and the film sequences it describes in some detail below.

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Construct	Sequence
Pre-Islamic greatness and eventual decline	Images of Persepolis with the voice-over introducing Darius the Achaemenian: "the king who conquered Egypt and whose Empire stretched from the Caucusus to Greece: I am Darius the king, the king of kings, king of lands peopled by all races… A Persian, son of a Persian, an Aryan of an Aryan descent". Accounts of the Sassanid dynasty "who brought Iran to power again" after the fall of Achaemenian. "Through 2000 years, armies of invaders, Romans, Greeks, Arabs, Mongols and Turks swept the country".
Islamic greatness and eventual decline	Images of a mosques followed by the images of Isfahan and its monuments: "But the Iranians always preserved their identity as a nation, absorbing their conquerors and rising again. In the seventeenth century they flourished under the great Safavid emperor Shah Aabbass. The fame of his architecture, mathematicians, poets, craftsmen and mathematicians spread throughout the world".
The state of decline before modern greatness: mid-seventeenth Century to 1921	Images of carpet makers and craftsmen: "16 years ago, all that remained was fine buildings and a few craftsmen and scholars keeping alive the traditions of the past". Images of desert and mountains: "16 years ago the great Empire had disappeared. Iran, once the ruler of the world, was reduced to a country 12 times the size of England. A high table land covered with snow and ice in the winter... The roads of Iran had disappeared". Images of a village in a barren mountainous landscape: "The great cities have decayed. A feudal system oppressed the countryside". Images of a shepherd with his herds; long shot of a goat: "Deprived of a central government, large numbers of people had become nomad tribesmen yearly migrating from grass land to grass land".

Table 6.i: Construction of the history of Iran in *Dawn of Iran*

As shown in Table 6.i, the characteristics of the era of acute decline are illustrated in the context of both urban and non-urban Iranian settings. To begin with, the urban setting of Iran is described as a place where "few buildings, a few craftsmen and scholars keeping alive the traditions of the past", were all that remained from the glorious past. This glorious past of course refers to the last age of Imperial greatness, the Safavid era. As discussed in Chapter 4 this perspective is based on a particular reading of history, perceived as the story of Empire building (Table 4.ii). As was argued there, seeing

history through the narrow prism of Imperial wealth and power acquisition results in elevating the role of individual figures in the historical development of a society at the expense of its other dynamics. Here again, the implication is that nothing noticeable, except for a few buildings and a few craftsman, was achieved after more than two centuries of Iranian history because no powerful leader appeared during this period, and, most importantly, because the "the great Empire had disappeared".

As a result of the disappearance of the Empire, the film appears to suggest, a host of disastrous consequences led to the gradual decline and the eventual demise of the country. This included anything from the vanishing of roads to the crumbling of cities. Even the country's topographical characteristics, a harsh arid landscape depicted by the sequence, seem to follow directly from the fall of the Empire and the subsequent reduction in the size of the nation that was an empire. Most importantly, the film claims, the decay of the big cities and the formation of an oppressive feudal system in the countryside coupled with the lack of any central government caused "a large number of people" to "become" nomad tribesmen. As the film's narrative of 'the story of Modern Iran' develops on the basis of these pieces of background information about the country, it is important to closely examine them as part of the analysis of the film's discourse and the way it represents Iran.

First, I would like to look at the film's claim about 'the great cities' of Iran. Here, as in the films examined fully in Chapter 4, the urban setting of Iran is Orientalised by referring to the urban heritage of the country in terms of craftsmanship, scholasticism and, generally, all things 'past'. In Chapter 4, it was argued that this representational strategy is put at the service of undermining and even totally denying the country's dynamics for development (see section 4.1.2). Here, the same strategy is applied to an extreme rarely seen in other films; that is, to the point of assuming the near extinction of the country's urbanised status. It would have been easily possible for the filmmakers at the time to acquire some basic information about the great cities of Iran such as Shiraz, Tabriz, Esfahan, Kerman and Mashad, being there for centuries, many with a history far surpassing the oldest cities in Europe. Even if the filmmakers were reluctant to do such

basic research about the subject of their film, the actual state of those cities, which bears no resemblance to their filmic account, would have been evident to the filmmakers, had they taken their footage from the actual urban Iran of the time. The lack of representation of Iran's cities can be taken as evidence of an intention to distort and misrepresent Iran's actual 'urban history' to forge a different and negative image of Iran.

Another rather surprising claim in the film is that in pre-Pahlavi Iran, and as the direct result of having no central government, large numbers of Iranians became nomadic tribesmen. In Chapter 5 it was shown how films with industrial sponsorship used nomadic imagery to exaggerate the impact of industry on the development of the country (see section 5.3). That was true in particular about BP, who not only had a place of operation in a mountainous, harsh and sparsely populated rural landscape, but whose oilfields were close to nomad inhabitants, helping to shape its particular representation of the geography of the country and the Iranian way of life in general. Here, this representational approach to Iran's population is taken one step further resulting in a peculiar claim that people could actually 'become' nomadic tribesmen. It is well-documented that people do not become tribespersons; rather they are born into a tribe. Similarly, neither do they choose, nor are they forced into, the nomadic lifestyle. As much as a change of lifestyle from nomadic to a settled one in urban or rural area is probable, the reverse is very uncommon (Todaro and Smith, 2008: 342-346).

The countryside of Iran is yet another part of the pre-Pahlavi Iran which is subjected to descriptive terms normally applied to conditions of abject poverty and utter misery; in this case, it is implied due to a supposedly oppressive feudal system. However, the idea of oppression in this context is an over-simplification of the relationship between the peasants and the land owners. Quoting from Ann Lambton's major work on *Landlord and Peasants in Persia*, Abrahamina explains that:

> In return for a share of the crop, the absentee landowners gave the peasants various forms of assistance: seeds after exceptionally disastrous harvest; financial help to repair the underground canals; and, most important of all, political protection against local nomads, rival villages, and threatening tax-collectors (Abrahamian, 1982: 21).

The countryside also enjoyed sophisticated levels of self-governing organisational management. E. Burgess, an Englishman who worked briefly in the 1830s as a government-appointed supervisor of state-owned lands in western Iran, explained how such community organisations worked, as follows:

> If the large majority are determined to have their *Kadkhuda* [village head] out, not I nor even the Prince, nor the Shah, can prevent their doing so....I give the term election to this business because I have no other word for it, but they do not meet and vote. The thing is arranged among themselves, they meet and talk the matter over and whenever a large majority is in favour of one man, the authorities cannot resist their wish, if they did the people would stand upon their rights and would not pay taxes. If, as not infrequently happens, the governor is a tyrant, he might catch and punish two of the ring-leaders, but he would get no good by this, and all men of sense find better to let the village have its own way (Burgess cited in Abrahamian, 1982: 21).

These social organisations were even more complex in the urban centres (Abrahamian, 1982: 22). The film's take on the issue of a central government in pre-Pahlavi Iran, namely the complete absence of a state apparatus, is discredited by two facts; a) the existence of non-centralised forms of urban and non-urban social organisations in that society, and b) the existence of a monarchy. As observed by critics, although the Qajar dynasty (1795-1925) made a failed attempt to construct a state-wide centralised bureaucracy in nineteenth century Iran, they still had considerable influence in the affairs of the country. They draw this influence by adhering to the role of defenders of the state against external dangers and mediating in internal conflicts, by intervening in and regulating the economy, and ultimately by standing "between communal tension and total social anarchy" (Abrahamian, 1982: 38-49).

Before the formation of the modern nation-state model of governance, local communities in Iran retained their administrative autonomy by implementing traditional, often sophisticated, systems of management that worked efficiently in managing the human, financial and natural resources of the community. Neither did the lack of a centralised administration mean the lack of a central government, nor could such centralised power be a matter of such grave urgency that its absence would bring the entire country to the

verge of extinction. It seems to contradict cultural and political history to try, as the filmmakers have done in this case, to superimpose more recent nation-state governance models onto a social administration model that favours representation and rule of smaller communities by members of that community. Certainly, as a way of investigating the supposed misfortunes of those societies, such superimposition can only be viewed as part of the broader representational strategies and ideological discourses in the film which seem to be used to forge a particular perspective of what distinguishes the new Iran from the old one. I shall attempt to elaborate these frameworks in the following sections.

6.1.2 Iran's modern greatness: from desert sands to urban modernity in 16 years

After counting the miseries of pre-Pahlavi Iran, the narrative of the film proceeds to tell us when and how the change for the better in the country's fortune took place. This juncture of the history is symbolised in filmic form by cutting from a long shot of goats grazing in the desert to a medium shot of crude oil coming out of the ground. The key players who initiated change are introduced as members of "the Western world", following their need for oil into Iran, and the soon to be new *Shah* (king) of the county, "Reza Khan" (Table 6.ii).

Construct	Sequence
The search for and the discovery of oil by the West	Shots of oil burning in massive columns of smoke in oil fields: "The bubbling out of the foothill in the south west, was the sign underground of something that the Western world was searching for, natural crude oil. Far below the surface oil was discovered in commercial quantities".
Reza Shah taking control	Shots of Reza Khan and some men riding on horses: "Out of the chaos of WWI came a new leader, Reza Khan, colonel of an Iranian Cossack regiment. In 1921, Reza Khan with a handful of men marched into Tehran and assumed direction of affairs. He started to rebuild this barren disorganized country".
The country before the Shah and the oil industry	Men working on an oil rig: "Men who had never seen a motor car, never seen anything more mechanical than a wooden plough, started to work in steel and cement, to handle tools and machinery. Rising in six thousand feet from the desert to the table land, tunnelling through the mountains, the railway took shape. Factories, schools and public buildings, whole towns were built".

Table 6.ii: Key players in initiating change

As shown in Table 6.ii, the idea of change for betterment is constructed by introducing, on the one hand, the initiators of the change, and on the other hand, by emphasising the barrenness and the inertia of the entire setting (both by statement and by implication), reaffirming the film's initial claim that no sign of organisation, let alone urbanisation, remained in the country. The combination of the rise of Reza Shah and the discovery of oil in Iran throughout the next sequence continues to be presented as factors that changed chaos into order, together with the emphasis on the barrenness of the land before then (Table 6.iii).

Construct	Sequence
Reza Shah's ascendance to power marked the beginning of Iran's modern life.	Reza Shah taking salute, military fly over, tank parade: "1937, R.S.P. takes the salute of the celebration of his March on Tehran 16 years ago. 25,000 men, a section of Iran's big army march to celebrate 16 years". Roads with lorries on them: "12,000 miles of roads link up scattered towns and villages". Dam with people working on it, images of massive irrigation constructs: "Modern agricultural schemes follow roads. Freshly founded agricultural bank in Tehran organises loans for irrigation, finds money to retain deserts, money for tractors and ploughs… Money to improve Iran's poor".
Western enterprise brings about the requirements for modern life, and the urbaneness itself, to Iran	Aerial shot of area and long shots of Abadan, long shot of BP tanker at sea: "In 16 years, in the South-west, the output of oil was raised from a quarter of a million tonnes to 10 million tonnes. A new town was built by the wells. Linking wells to the sea, pipelines ran 200 miles over mountains and desert to Abadan, the refinery town of oil port. At Abadan, the world's largest and most modern refinery, the crude oil is broken down into … diesel and many other products. From Abadan the oil and petrol is shipped by tankers to all parts of the world. The great importance to Iran is the stream of refined oil and petroleum which returns back to the country. Fuel for tractors, lorries, fuel for locomotives, and industry: sugar beets on plains by the ruins of Persepolis. Cotton and wool factories in Isfahan".
An Oriental (backward and stagnant) setting transformed	Extreme long shots of Tehran; traffic-filled streets manned by traffic police, railways and passengers, ships, locomotives, ships, Tehran University followed by the picture of a ruined ancient temple: "In 16 years the Iranians have learnt to live a new way. The feudal towns have changed into cities. Mules and camels have given way to cars and motor buses. Docks have been laid out on the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf. The people are taking to rail travel. In Tehran, a great national University has been settled." Shots of girls playing ball at school, young children and teenagers at school: "After 1,300 years the women of Iran have been emancipated. They may go out unveiled, free to mix with other men and women and take part in the life of their country… In 16 years 5000 schools have been built. 5,000 schools to train administrators and office runners, 5,000 schools to train teachers and mechanics, 5,000 schools to train doctors and engineers"…
Liveliness is coming back to Iran where it had previously died out	Medium shot of a woman, a child, a man, cut to a powerful river, tilting up to a mighty bridge fore grounded against a blue sky: "This great people which have kept its own soil from many wars and famines, which have kept its identity for over 2,500 years, today face the future with fresh hope and renewed vitality".

Table 6.iii: The oil industry and Western interest

The documentary representation of the oil industry as a key player in the industrial modernisation of Iran has already been discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis. Here, I would like to discuss the role of the other key player, Reza Shah, as represented by the film.

6.1.2.1 Reza Shah as the sole initiator of change

Reza Shah's modernization plans, such as the huge infrastructural constructions (dams and roads in particular), agricultural schemes, and modernizing the economy, social institutions and the army, are presented as the mainstay of the Iranian modernisation. These points are further affirmed in the voice-over commentary that "in 16 years, the Iranians have learnt to live a new way", which refers to the replacement of an agrarian economy (rural towns, mules and camels) with an industrial one (cars and motor vehicles, docks, locomotives). The film's perspective of progress in Iran therefore comprises several aspects of development including industrialisation, modernisation of the infrastructures, socio-economic reform and, to some extent, cultural reform (the change in attitudes toward women).

It is out of the scope of this research to address the film's view of Iran's development based on these reforms. It is so particularly because of the controversy about whether or not they helped or hindered the development of the country and the betterment of its people. However, it is both appropriate and necessary for this research to examine thoroughly the ways the issues of modernisation and development are framed in documentary representations of Iran, as these helped shape the general image of the country to the British, and, as I hope to show in the Chapter 7, they still affect the formation of that image to this very date.

There are two points to be observed in understanding the film's stand on the issue of Iran's development and modernisation. First of all, the film's constant reference to a very particular and exact moment in the history of Iran, "16 years ago", as the beginning of the transformation of the country has a very important discursive function. In conjunction with other representational strategies explained above, time references are frequently

made to persuade the audience that absolutely no change of any significance happened before then, hence the immensity, uniqueness and outstanding nature of the change that followed. The immensity of the task is further underlined by repeating the number of the newly opened schools, and reinforced by a montage of the long shots and extreme long shots of large scale infrastructure such as roads, dams, massive irrigation constructions, and factories. Although the development of these infrastructural elements and the socio-economic reforms under Reza Shah were immense in scale, and at times unique in application (for example the forced abolishment of women's *hejab*), the initiative was hardly his. In fact, attempts at reform and modernisation had started nearly a century before. As examples of those attempts, one can point to Prince Aabbass Mirza's attempt to modernise Iran's army in 1820s or Amir Kabir (Prime minister from 1848-1851), who attempted to

> strengthen the administration by reforming the tax system, asserting central control over the bureaucracy and the provincial governors, encouraging trade and industry, and reducing the influence of the Islamic clergy and foreign powers. He established a new school, the Dar-ol-Fonun, to educate members of the elite in the new sciences and in foreign languages (Metz, 1987).

There were also officials like Malkam Khan, who in 1858 began to suggest in essays that "the weakness of the government and its inability to prevent foreign interference lay in failure to learn the arts of government, industry, science, and administration from the advanced states of Europe" (ibid). Under the influence of the officials such as Malkam, in 1871 the Shah agreed to

> establish a European-style cabinet with administrative responsibilities and a consultative council of senior princes and officials. He granted a concession for railroad construction and other economic projects to a Briton, Baron Julius de Reuter, and visited Russia and Britain himself (ibid).

In general, towards the end of the nineteenth century, and as a result of the growing public anger at the inefficiency of the monarchy and the efforts of the intelligentsia, new ideas and a demand for reform were also becoming more widespread (ibid). This era is discussed as the period in which the idea of modernity and the politics of constitutionalism were introduced in Iran, and has been called the 'era of awakening'

(Adamiyyat, 1972). The film's projected image of Reza Shah as the sole and the first ever moderniser, or even a Westerniser, therefore could not help but be more misleading.

6.1.2.2 Iran's affairs before Reza Shah

The second point about the film's framing of Iran's development is related to the representation of the 'chaos' and 'disorganisation' in the country prior to 1921. As seen in Table 6.ii, Reza Khan's rise to power is described against a background of chaos apparently caused by the First World War. Historically, Iran tried to avoid entanglement in World War I by declaring its neutrality, but ended up as a battleground for the Russians, Turkish, and British, each trying to retain their interest in Iran. Iran's chaotic situation during and after the war that was created by these imperialist interventions is conflated in the film with the chaos created in Europe as the result of its direct involvement in WWI. The imperialist rivalry in Iran was not, however, confined to the period of the war and started early in the nineteenth century, when the contemporary Qajars monarchy began to face pressure from two great world powers, Russia and Britain (Hopkirk, 1992).

> Britain's interest in Iran arose out of the need to protect trade routes to India, while Russia's came from a desire to expand into Iranian territory from the north… The two great powers also came to dominate Iran's trade and interfered in Iran's internal affairs. They enjoyed overwhelming military and technological superiority and could take advantage of Iran's internal problems (Metz, 1987).

As the last years of the nineteenth century - characterized by growing royal and bureaucratic corruption, oppression of the rural population, the break down of the tax machinery, and the endemic disorder - drew to an end, public anger reached boiling point as a result of the Shah's propensity for granting concessions to Europeans in return for generous payments to him and his officials. As Metz has observed "people began to demand a curb on royal authority and the establishment of the rule of law as their concern over foreign, and especially Russian, influence grew" (Metz, 1987). After a few months of protest by the religious establishment, the merchants, and other classes the Shah was forced to issue a decree promising a constitution. In October, an elected assembly convened and drew up a constitution that provided for strict limitations on royal power,

an elected parliament, or *Majlis*, with wide powers to represent the people, and a government with a cabinet subject to confirmation by the *Majlis*. The Shah signed the constitution on December 30, 1906. The Supplementary Fundamental Laws approved in 1907 provided for freedom of press, speech, and association, and for security of life and property. According to Ann K.S. Lambton, "the Constitutional Revolution marked the end of the medieval period in Iran" (cited in Metz, 1987). The revolution was an attempt to establish both democracy and national sovereignty that was resisted by both the monarchy and the foreign powers as the establishment of Iran's national sovereignty was perceived as a threat to foreign interest in Iran (Azimi, 2009).

In representing the country's state of affairs right before the appearance of Reza Shah, the film avoids discussing the issue of imperialism and the Constitutional Revolution, the two very subjects crafting the course of affairs and leading eventually to the rise of Reza Shah. These two subjects that epitomise the intra-society and the inter-society dynamics shaping and directing the development of 20th Century Iran are not recognized in the discourse of development presented in the film, which is constrained by an industrialisation dependent on Western assistance (financially and technologically) and socio-economic reform replicating Western models. In championing the cause of modernisation, Reza Shah's reforms and Western 'positive' involvement - through establishing industrial enterprises that brought Iran's natural resources to the service of its advancement- are overstated at the expense of other factors. In order to appropriate the image of pre-Pahlavi Iran to fit into this perspective, the discourse has to draw on Orientalism, omitting to present the nation's struggle against internal oppression and foreign exploitation as a meaningful source of change. The film therefore constructs Iran as an Oriental setting, and its internal and external conflicts as a chaos that stems from the supposedly essential characteristics of the place, namely its barren landscape, its stagnant history, and its servile population who are unable to keep the society together without a powerful figure on the throne.

Dawn of Iran is one of the earliest examples of documentaries which make the role of the Pahlavi dynasty and their modernisation plans central to Iran's modernity. A more recent

example, discussed below, is ITV's film *A King's Revolution* (Associated Rediffusion for Intertel, 1964). Starring Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the son of Reza Shah, the film presents the Shah's "revolutionary plans" for modernizing Iran. Launched in 1963, these plans, referred to in the film as the King's revolution, were part of an extensive reform plan including legislation for social reforms, land reform, and economic reform, a package named by the Shah as the 'White Revolution', and were advertised as a step towards modernization, and the ultimate long-term aim of transforming Iran into a global economic and industrial power. The White Revolution consisted of 19 elements that were introduced over a period of 15 years, with the first 6 introduced in 1963. These were 1) the Land Reforms Program, where the government bought land from the big landlords at a fair price and sold it to the peasants at 30% below the market value; 2) Nationalization of Forests and Pasturelands; 3) Privatization of the Government Owned Enterprises; 4) Profit Sharing, for industrial workers in private sector enterprises; 5) Extending the Right to Vote to Women; and, 6) Formation of the Literacy Corps fighting illiteracy in the villages. This analysis therefore examines the film's perspective on the Shah and his reform plans, and how this perspective affects the general representations of Iran.

6.2 *A King's Revolution*

The opening shot of *A King's Revolution* introduces the Shah's plans for modernising Iran against a backdrop of an uneven relationship between the Shah and the Iranian people. The commentary introduces Iranians as "22 million people" who are being ruled by the Shah, who is called "the shadow of the Almighty" by the documentary. On pictures of the interior of a bazaar a voice-over then adds: "This is the Iran the Shah wants to change. The Iran of bazaars as backward as they are beautiful…" This establishes from the beginning that the initiative for change is coming from one person, the Shah, who "wants to change" the rest, a phrase implying the 'will' for change on the part of the Shah and indifference and reluctance on the part of the people. To support this view of the population, of course, a reservoir of Orientalist markers and concepts is at hand, as shown in Table 6.iv.

Construct	Sequence
Oriental people	Shots of people doing copper-smithing, people in bazaars: "[People of Iran:] conservative, lovers of traditions and fine craftsmanship".
Oriental history of past glory and present decline	Shots of a camel powering a primitive windmill: "... from Christ's time to the present, and will do for a long time yet. This is not the behaviour of a barbaric or uncivilised man. Iranians know very well that they belong to one of the earliest and greatest cultures. They are Persians. At least a quarter of them can neither read nor write… The Iranian is not an easy man to govern."
Life is primitive and hard	Shots of children weaving carpets: "For most of the Iranians, life is not an easy one to live. From the hands of little girls come the land's most valuable exports: Persian carpets …12 hours or more of labour".
The extravaganza of Oriental palaces	"On the other side of Iran is glitter. The vast royal palaces the Shah has inherited are crowded with the treasures of centuries".

Table 6.iv: Iran as an 'Oriental space'

The Iran that the Shah wants to change is therefore depicted as being home to a populace who are not advanced but civilised, who live difficult lives due to the unforgiving landscape, and who are not easy to govern, despite, or in accordance with, the fact that a quarter of them are illiterate. The idea of 'going round in circles' for centuries is particularly emphasised through the metaphor of a camel driving a windmill "from Christ's time to the present…and for a long time yet" (Table 6.iv). In stark contrast to this picture are the views of glittering Golestan palace and the Peacock throne (details shown in Table 4.v) that follow, accompanying the commentary: "On the other side of Iran is glitter. The vast royal palaces the Shah has inherited are crowded with the treasures of centuries". The glittering extravaganza of the palace and the throne identified with Oriental rulers, and reinforced through the commentary that suggests such extravagance is the result of centuries of accumulated treasure by past kings, establishing the Shah as an Oriental ruler. This is particularly reaffirmed through the illustrated gap between his way of life and that of the ordinary Iranians.

6.2.1 Mohammad Reza Shah, a Middle Eastern monarch shaped by Western ideas

This filmic construct of the Shah vis-à-vis the people of Iran is suggestive of what has been known as a type of leadership and governance associated with Middle Eastern despotism (Bogdanor, 1991: 122). However, this centuries-old and essentially autocratic way of governance is not in line with the picture of the Shah that the film is set to project: a revolutionary king, with a vision for fundamental change. The film is thus quick to announce immediately afterwards that "The 44 year old Shah is essentially a contemporary figure. A Middle Eastern monarch shaped by Western ideas". The reconciliation between the apparently contradictory principles of being a Middle Eastern monarch on the one hand, and a contemporary figure shaped by Western ideas on the other, is a theme that underlies the representation of the Shah, the historical events of his time and the modernisation scheme. It thus ultimately affects the way contemporary Iran is represented in the film, as argued below.

The image of the Shah as a Westernised Oriental king and the centrality of his role to the project of reform is constructed in the film by presenting the Shah's biography, which is then followed by an interview shot whereby the Shah is given a platform to air his visions and hopes for modernising Iran. As seen in Table 6.v, the biography is constructed in such a way that presents the Shah as possessing a Western mentality at the same time as being raised like, and having the authority of, an Oriental king.

Construct	Sequence
The Shah's education: Special and European	"Mohamad Reza Pahlavi, son of the military adventurer who usurped the crown, was schooled to be a king. Special school with special education, so that he should mix with no other boy. International school in Switzerland, again cut off from the outside world. This was the lonely education for Mohamad Reza Phalavi."
The Shah's personal life as the source of inspiration for reform	Shots of the Shah's marriage to princess Fuzieh of Egypt, sister of Faroque, King of Egypt, followed by the Shah's coronation: "In 1941 the son of a soldier became the Shah of Iran, the king of kings. Fuzieh only gave birth to a girl, so coldly and legally Fuzieh was divorced. Next was Sorayah… The new queen was universally admired. But her loveliness was not enough. No son from her appeared so coldly and legally she was divorced and sent abroad. Soon the Shah chose the third one and this time it was the equally beautiful Farah Diba. With the birth of the crown prince, there was at last the heir to the crown… With the birth of the crown prince, there crystallized in the Shah's mind the project for reform."
Shah as a benevolent visionary …	Medium shot of the Shah: "This started long ago when I was a young boy in Switzerland for my studies and I was thinking to myself that if one day I have a hand in the affairs of my country, I would try my best to raise the standard of living of my people and our society to the level of the modern countries of the world".
With the prestige and the authority of an Oriental king	Cut to close up of the Shah: "For reaching our immediate goals, it won't take more than 3 to 4 years, but we hope that in the next 20 years our society will reach the caravan of the modern civilisations of the world. You can call it a revolution, reform or some other expression but it is complete transformation of the country now. It had to be done by someone with prestige and the authority that a king could have here."

Table 6.v: The Westernised Shah as the spirit and the initiator of modernisation

As seen in Table 6.v, the centrality of the person of the Shah to the project of reform is illustrated through a couple of narrative and televisual techniques. The interview shots make the Shah a dominant figure in the frame, talking directly to the camera, and thus to the audience. This effect is especially strengthened by a cut from the medium shot of the Shah to his close-up, a jumpy transition to a closer frame that pushes the already dominant figure further into the centre of attention. The transition is well matched with the content of the Shah's speech in this part, the lofty aspirations of a person with "the prestige and the authority of a king" (Table 6.v). This authority and the centrality of the Shah to the project of reform are also illustrated through a narrative structure that interweaves the story of modernisation with the Shah's personal story. The idea of reform, we are told, was crystallised in the Shah's mind by the birth of the crown prince (Table 6.v). The frustrations and hopes of the Shah for his nation were thus mirrored by the ups and downs of the royal family establishing a sustained monarchy.

The Shah is also presented as a visionary monarch with a passion for the betterment of his people, fostered since the days of his youth. His benevolence is explained by him in terms of plans for "raising the standard of people's living" and reaching "the modern civilisations" of the world (Table 6.v). He therefore frames modernity in terms of socio-economic reform, and suggests it is attainable by implementing steps that can be measured against a standard set in "modern countries" of the world like Switzerland (Table 6.v). The backward image of the country depicted previously helps to foster these measures as both tangible and urgent. To deal with the magnitude of such a task only a person possessing a unique combination of "authority", bestowed upon the king by the force of tradition, and "prestige", offered by Western education, seems to be in the right position. "It had to be done by someone with prestige and the authority that a king could have here" (Table 6.v), as the Shah puts it. This image of uniqueness is constructed by the Shah through manoeuvring simultaneously between the image of an Oriental king and a Western moderniser. The Shah is therefore introduced as an exceptional, fundamental and irreplaceable element in Iran's path to modernity. Endorsing this perspective, the film appears to be resorting to the Orientalist stereotype of a Middle Eastern king. As argued below, such a perspective influences the film's narrative of Iran's modernity to its core, influencing the representation of the people, the history as well as the overall Iranian society and its interactions with the outside world.

The editing of the shots following the interview shot continues the strategy of depicting the Shah as an Oriental king, a person with sole authority for change. The medium shot of the Shah fades out, and his physical features are gradually replaced by that of the image of a Persian Sphinx that fades in, while the voice-over says: "The Iran of today is the great Persia of 2,500 years ago" (Table 6.vi), presenting the Shah as the vital bridge between the greatness of a long-gone past and eminent future greatness. Thus the Shah is presented as embodying the process of change. Not surprisingly, therefore, the account of the history of Iran that follows frames this process in a narrative of the rise and fall of the power of its kings, similar to previous examples examined in this thesis (Tables 4.ii and 4.iii). The historical stagnation and the decline of the country's fortune are described as

being due to the disappearance of "great men", and 'the impotence' of "weak kings" (Table 6.vi). Order is finally imposed on the country's chaotic situation by the emergence of another powerful figure, Reza Shah, "the soldier-king" (Table 6.vi).

Construct	Sequence
The rise of the powerful kings	Extreme long shot of Persepolis: "The Iran of today is the great Persia of 2,500 years ago … that dominion of 28 nations. Among the ruins are inscribed the words of those mighty rulers who retained the reigns of absolute power (long shot of Cyrus the Great engraved on stone): 'I am Cyrus King of Kings'. It was great and glorious a long time ago". The camera frames the pillars of Persepolis before craning upwards to frame the blue sky. The image of a blue dome fades in: "The towers of Isfahan: these reminders of poetry and history. Here, after 1,000 years of conquest and occupation the Safavid restored the wealth and the power of the land. The kings of Safavid left their mark forever on mosques and palaces built 400 years ago".
The fall of the powerful kings	Long shot of some ruins. A man sweeps the steps leading to an ancient monument: "But these great men vanished. Only the stones remained. Iran sank into decay. Weak kings watched impotently as Iran was conquered and re-conquered". "Mainly contended by Britain and Russia, [the country] turned into a semi-colony, administered by corrupt officials. The intruders put their marks on the land. The English ran the banks, the Russian Cossacks, the army".
The return of powerful kings	"Then came the Reza Shah, the father of Mohammed Reza Shah. In 1925, he created the new dynasty. The soldier-king imposed order on the stricken land".

Table 6.vi: The history of Iran as the story of the rise and fall of powerful kings

The above sequence bears many resemblances to parallel accounts in other films. There are, however, elements in this sequence that are new to this account of the Iranian history. For the first time, there is a reference to the colonial intrusion of Western powers, including Britain, into the political, economic and military affairs of Iran. Nevertheless, this fact is put forward in a way that suggests the intrusion happened as the result of the already existing decay of the country and was not in any way responsible for or contributing to it, as Iran already "sank into decay", with "weak kings" who "watched impotently as Iran was conquered and re-conquered" (Table 6.vi). This subtle sanitisation of Western imperialist involvement in Iran next takes place in the depiction of Reza Shah. Unlike in previous examples, Reza Shah's rise to power is merely described as resulting in an imposition of order, and not as the hallmark of a new era of greatness (Table 6.vi). This might be due to the main theme of the film, which is to endow the

present Shah and his modernisation plans with the mission of resuscitating Iran's past glory. Nonetheless, the brief and non-glorious description of Reza Shah should also be seen in the light of his abduction in 1941 by the allied forces occupying Iran during WWII. This incident is described in the film in the following lines:

> As he grew older, he [Reza Shah] came under the spell of someone even more accomplished in the ruling art: Hitler! In 1941, Churchill had him overthrown and exiled and he returned to his country only in his coffin.

At the time, and for many years afterward, the main reason given for the occupation of Iran by the Allies was that German influence in Iran at the start of World War II was pronounced (Sami, 2005). However, Reza Shah had already issued a Declaration of Neutrality at the outbreak of the war, and the main motive behind the invasion of Iran was to have access to a safe corridor to supply arms to Russia for the Allied war efforts against Germany (Bakhash, 1987). The incident as presented by the film is an example of how the official views of Western governments on different aspects of the history of Iran are reflected uncritically by the film. This example can be taken a precursor to a similar treatment of the issue foreign involvement in Iran in relation to the event of the nationalisation of Iran's oil industry that follows.

6.2.2 Oil nationalisation as the Shah's 'crisis'

It is interesting to note that the nationalization of the oil industry of Iran is referred to in the film, not only as a 'crisis', but as the Shah's crisis (Table 6.vii). Historically, the issue of oil nationalisation has dominated Iran's political scene since 1949. For a number of reasons, especially the refusal of the AIOC to offer of a 50–50% profit sharing deal to Iran, and public anger over Iran's defeat and occupation by the Allied powers during the Second World War, nationalization of oil was an important and popular issue with a broad cross-section of the Iranian people (Saikal, 1980: 38). The film, however, formulates the issue as a personal battle between the Shah and "his turbulent Prime Minister", even though it acknowledges the fact that both the parliament and the people were involved. The ways in which the events of oil nationalisation and its aftermath (1949-1953) are framed by the narrative, as shown in Table 6.vii, present the entire phenomenon as an adventure instigated by a "turbulent" and "eccentric" person

(Mossadeq) who manipulated the people to seize "the British owned" refinery out of whim, and make it a 'crisis' for the Shah.

Construct	Sequence
Oil nationalisation as the Shah's crisis'	Long shot of the Shah in the office: "The young son felt the weight of the office, and within 6 years the Shah faced his first crisis: the oil crisis". Long shot of oil pipes, fires in the background: "Here is the bleak and burning land with oil below its deserts, bringing the richness and consciousness of foreign exploitation".
Nationalisation as Mossadeq's personal problem with the Shah	Extreme long shot of Abadan refinery: "Abadan, the world's largest oil refinery, was strained with the Shah's turbulent Prime Minister Mossadeq, a frail old eccentric, who proclaimed the new Iranian Nationalism that now had oil nationalisation as its focus". Shots of demonstrations in Tehran: "Parliament was behind it. The people were behind it… The army was sent to Abadan [and took control of] the British owned refinery… But without local skill to market the oil an economic crisis developed. People became disillusioned with the new freedom which proved so empty. Mossadeq, the manipulator, encouraged them to find the scapegoat. The crowd turned against the monarchy".
Anglo-American backed coup as the 'counter-revolution' of the Shah	Shots of the Shah and Sorayya in Rome: "The Shah saved his life by flying to exile with Sorayya. In Rome with the help of Americans, he planned his counter-revolution". Shots of Tehran streets, pro-Shah demonstrations: "Within days, the crowds of Tehran turned together again, this time against Mossadeq. They had the support of Shah's army who conducted a counter-revolution. He returned, backed from inside, stronger than ever. They welcomed him with smiles, cheers and flowers. The people who revolted [against] him yesterday praised him this day…Mossadeq was arrested and jailed. Now the Shah could start his revolution".

Table 6.vii: Oil Nationalisation and the Shah

Referring to oil nationalisation as a crisis, coupled with the use of the word "behind" to describe the public and parliamentary support for it, frames it as a story of collective treason and disloyalty to the film's hero, the Shah, led by the "frail old" villain, the Shah's Prime Minister Mossadeq. Accordingly, the narrative structure of the last few months of events is framed in the form of a classical drama, with the rising action portrayed through manipulation of the people by a villain who desires a scapegoat to be blamed by the people for his own failure. The dramatic climax is the consequent turn in

the fortunes of the Shah and his escape to Rome to save his life. The falling action or denouement in the drama is the moment of reversal when the protagonist, the Shah, wins against the antagonist, his evil Prime minister.

Nevertheless, the chronology and the content of the historical events were more complicated than presented here, as footage of the unfolding of the events in the newsreel archives of British Pathé and other news agencies of the time shows. These events can be summarised briefly as follows: a) The Shah dismissed the Prime Minister to be replaced by an army general; b) the Prime Minister refused to be dismissed, and as a result a military coup by the pro-Shah military units took place; c) Initially the coup failed as a result of the resistance of pro-Mossadeq military units, and the Shah fled the country; d) eventually the pro-Shah units and street crowds won the battle and the Shah returned to the country (Bakhash, 1987). As we have seen, the film's narrative starts with people turning against the Shah, making him look like an innocent observer, a mere scapegoat who was caught in the action, through the intrigue of other players, and was pushed to a "counter-revolution". The chronology of these events had been available to the filmmakers at the time of the making of the film as the footage used in the film is taken from newsreel archives. The elisions and the dramatic narrative style of the documentary result in obvious favouring of the Shah and an equally evident vilification of those who opposed him.

I shall return shortly to the issue of oil nationalisation, its historical significance and the representational strategies applied in depicting it. Before that, it is necessary to examine the following sections of the film, the accounts of the White Revolution (1960s).

6.2.3   Mohammad Reza Shah and the will to modernise

After the happy ending to the Shah's first 'crisis', we are told, "now the Shah could start his revolution. But between him and his reforms stood a barrier, the ancient and giant barrier of his own faith, Islam" (Table 6.viii). In the same commentary the word 'still' is used recurrently in describing the religion of Islam and its role in the Iranian culture, creating the impression that certain changes are expected to happen in people's religious

affiliations if there is going to be a revolution, and that those changes have not yet taken place. The presupposition that Islam is one of the cultural and institutional roadblocks that did not allow the country to develop is further indicated by referring to the teachers of the faith as 'fanatics' and describing the people's hostility to change as resulting from their being Muslim and influenced by religious teachings:

> Muslims of Iran are Shi'ite, more tolerant than the Sunnis of the Arab world. They are hostile to change with the fanaticism of the teachers of the faith, the mullahs. The men of Iran: the more fanatical they are the more influence they absorb [from the mullahs]… passive listeners… (Table 6.viii).

Construct	Sequence
Islam *a backward religion*	Shots of people in rows of prayer in a mosque, the sound of Azzan heard in the background: "But between him and his reforms stood a barrier, the ancient and giant barrier of his own faith, Islam. The mosque is *still* the centre of life in Iran. The overwhelming majority of the people *still* practise the faith of the believers… Man is allowed *only* to pray to Allah and Mohammed".
Men *Fanatic, passive, easily influenced*	Shots of a group of men seated on the floor in a mosque listening to a sermon from a mullah on a pulpit: "Muslims of Iran are Shi'ite, more tolerant than the Sunnis of the Arab world. They are hostile to change with the fanaticism of the teachers of the faith, the mullahs. The men of Iran: the more fanatical they are, the more influence they absorb… passive listeners"…
Women *Oppressed, by both men and religion*	Shots of a group of well dressed women in an apparently formal occasion. Unlike men in the previous sequence, these women are sitting on chairs: "More and more women reject the society dominated by men, protected by sanctions of religion. Now for the first time they can make their voice heard. The majority still have the veil, the symbol of servitude. Most still fear the modern world, but in the cities more women wear Western dress, and are seizing their opportunities. They see in the Shah a leader who is prepared to satisfy their needs". Interview with the Shah: "What made the Shah to put women's demands in the foreground of the revolution is explained by him as being a) that women are half the population and b) that they are the teachers of the new generation".

Table 6.viii: The setting for the White Revolution (italics are my own)

The depiction of the "overwhelming majority of the people" of Iran is visualised through Mullahs and their male audience, portrayed as a passive and at the same time fanatical population. Women, on the other hand, are presented as the antithesis to what the male population stands for. The film claims that "more and more women reject the society

dominated by men, protected by sanctions of religion". Women are said to have their "voices heard" under Pahlavis "for the first time". The powerful concept of the veil is conjured up and this time accompanied by a statement in the narrative that it symbolises the continuing servitude of women inside a traditional culture. In contrast, women's freedom is described through their change of appearance to Western dress, and visualised through showing them sitting on chairs (a Western habit) in contrast to the men who were earlier shown sitting on the floor (a presumed Oriental habit). The sequence summarises what the film assumes as the native culture of Iran, an Islamic and patriarchal culture that is hostile to any change that might affect its social hierarchies (women dominated by men who are in turn dominated by Mullahs). The change, on the other hand, is associated with manifestations of Western culture. The Iranian society is thus not fit for modernity because of its innate structural problems such as gender inequality, problems arising from institutions exemplified by religion, and cultural problems of passivity and fanaticism. This representational approach may be regarded as underpinned by the ideas of cultural determinism wherein "culture itself functions as a 'natural' determinative force" that "locks the individuals and groups *a priori* into their cultural genealogy" (Salecl, 1994: 12). This cultural determinism, or "meta-racism" as it is called by Etienne Balibar (1991), is essential to the film's discourse in depicting the Iranian society vis-à-vis both the Shah and Britain, as explained below.

Firstly, the depiction of people and the society in this way sets them up as a foil to the depiction of the Shah as the sole advocate of reform and progress, two sides of one coin. In constructing these representations, both the film, and the Shah, as we shall see towards the end of the film, seem to be drawing on what has been discussed here as the concept of Oriental despotism, though in a modern benevolent variation. As explained in Chapter 3, the assertion in this concept is that the relationship between the despot and the people is that of one person having power over the masses, a relationship based not on fear but on consent, due to the servile nature of the people. As we have seen, the depiction of the people of Iran is similar to this definition not only in their relationship with the Shah, but also with reference to other figures of authority. They are introduced as 'passive listeners' in relation to the religious authority, and as easily manipulated by Mossadeq

during oil nationalisation. The same people are then presented as swinging back towards the Shah, for reasons not clearly stated in the film. One section of the people, the nomads, are described as "three million completely outside the mainstream of the nation" that the Shah wants to bring to the 20th Century without regard to their desires or predilections (Table 6.x).

Secondly, the depiction of the people as culturally 'determined' is illustrated in the film through the theme of oil nationalisation, the only event in the film attributed not to the Shah but to the people and the parliament. The whole venture is thus presented as a misguided attempt at bringing a "new freedom" only to prove itself to be, finally, "so empty". The 'new freedom' is presumably a reference to freedom from British control over Iran's strategic asset. The emptiness of such a freedom is said to be connected to an economic crisis that happened as the result of the lack of "local skills to market the oil". Without mentioning the British imposition of a worldwide embargo on the purchase of Iranian oil, the freezing of Iran's sterling assets and banning export of goods to Iran throughout 1951 to 1953 (Katouzian, 1988: 209), the film can comfortably blame the insufficiency of local ingenuity to sustain the economy, presented as yet more evidence of the vital need Iran has for the British, for its very survival. The Americans, the other Western player in the events of 1951 to 1953 and the eventual coup to topple the government and the parliament of Iran, are also presented euphemistically as 'helping' the Shah in a 'counter-revolution', presumably to save the country from the chaos created by its own people. By presenting a selective version of the events of oil nationalisation in this way, the national struggle of Iranians for independence from imperialistic influences vis-à-vis the attempts by the British and Americans at maintaining those influences is undermined in the film.

6.2.3.1 The White Revolution

The film next presents what constituted the background to and the principles of the White Revolution, or the King's Revolution as the film calls it. In this sequence, presented in Table 6.ix, the Shah is given a platform to air his personal views on the Revolution in the form of various interview shots where he talks about some aspects of the reform package,

notably the land reform and the formation of the Literary Corps. The Shah explains that these reforms are aimed at enhancing the livelihood of the peasants who did not have a fair share of income under the previous land scheme. Modern engineering, such as the construction of dams and irrigation, the Shah states, are key to the transformation of the country, and its rural life, while the Literacy Corps is aimed at educating peasants in preparation for agricultural modernisation.

construct	Sequence
The background to the revolution: *Problems caused by the aridity of the land*	Shots of Northern provinces of Iran: forests, sea, fishery industry and caviar production: "Here is Iran at its most friendly… but this area is only one-twentieth of Iran. Everywhere else in this burning arid land the story is tragically different." A sequence of shots of desert and semi-arid landscape, and towns and villages from different parts of Iran. Medium shot of a man pulling water out of a well: "One-third of Iran is desert. There is nothing more precious than water. Nothing can save the agriculture but modern engineering."
Solutions offered by the revolution: *Agricultural modernisation*	Shots of dams and irrigation constructs: Voice-over explains the Shah's plans for extensive scheme of dams and irrigation, what could be called the basis of the 'King's Revolution'.
Land Reform	"But it is not enough. If the king's revolution is going to succeed it should change the hearts and minds of the people." The Shah explains his land distribution and land reform schemes.
Literacy Corps	Voice-over explains that the primitive agriculture can not be modernised without the proper education for peasants. The Shah explains the establishment of the Literacy Corps.

Table 6.ix: The Revolution and its background

As shown in the Table 6.ix, the sequence blames Iran's problems mainly on the aridity of the landscape affecting the agriculture and the life of peasants, another problem 'innate' to the geography of the country and represented through the concepts of desert and aridity. In illustrating the importance of agricultural modernisation, conjuring images of desert to provoke a sense of 'tragic' barrenness of the land "everywhere else" can also be read as a representational strategy emphasising the primitiveness of life all over Iran, hence placing the locus of urgency in infrastructural modernisation.

6.2.3.2 Enemies of the White Revolution

The emphasis, visually and rhetorically, on the primitiveness of life and the barrenness of the land continues in the next sequence, identifying what the film claims to be obstacles in the way of the Shah's reforms, the nomads, the rich and aristocracy and the city workers (as shown in Table 6.x). Nomadic imagery, as we have seen throughout this thesis, is typically presented as a way of showing the extent of Iran's primitiveness to emphasise the gravity of the task of modernisation of any form. Similarly, the film represents what it claims is another group of the Shah's enemies, the elite and the aristocrats. According to the film, 3% of the people are said to own 90% of the "national resources", which raises the question of what the film means exactly by national resources. As the most important national resource, oil and its related industry, was a nationalised property, and thus any blame for any unequal distribution of national revenue should be directed at the government of the Shah. It seems that what is presented here is a generalisation of the statistics relating to farmland ownership across the entire economy of social classes in Iran. In 1957, 82% of farmlands belonged to the non-peasantry, leaving the majority of rural masses as landless, poor peasants (Khosravi, 1972: 28-9). The statistics and the relationship between the rural poor and the landowners, an Oriental oligarchy, is conflated as the general picture of the poor-vs.-the rich all over the society to suggest a feudalist style system of social class oppression.

Construct	Sequence
Nomads	Shots of nomads in their seasonal migration: "Three million, completely outside the mainstream of the nation. A tremendous exodus, full of danger for men and their animals, a massive obstacle to the Shah's revolution… Shah is trying to bring the 20th Century to these remote lands, but the plan is attacked by nomads because they know when the new roads are made their days of freedom would be over. They are the first casualties of the king's revolution."
The Elite	Shots of apparently well-off men and women around a private swimming pool: "Other opponents are those with influence and power, the aristocrats and the elite of Iran. 3% own 90% of the nation's resources – rich and poor are a world apart. The rich are constant obstacles to the King's revolution clinging to their Oriental oligarchy by the poor."
Workers	"The city workers are other enemies of the Shah because of poverty. No benefit of the king's revolution for them." As the result of the discontent, the commentary explains, there is the danger of the growth of a Pro-communism underground.

Table 6.x: Enemies of the Revolution

Most interestingly, the Shah is announced as the one person who is going to challenge these powerful elites single-handedly for the sake of the poor, a disputable point according to Abrahamian:

> The Shah carefully tried to avoid policies that would alienate the large landed families and the bazaar middle class. Mossadeq's decree increasing the sharecropper's portion of the harvest was shelved. Aristocrat families… continued to enjoy power in both provinces and in Tehran. The landed element in Parliament increased from 49 percent of the Seventh Parliament (1952-1953) to… 51 percent of the Ninetheen Parliament (1956-1960)… This policy… was suddenly disrupted in 1960-1963 by an acute economic crisis and by American pressure for land reform… The Kennedy administration, acting on the belief that liberal reforms were the best guarantees against communist revolution, offered $85 million on condition that the Shah brought liberals into the cabinet and took meaningful steps to implement land reform" (Abrahamian, 1982: 420- 422).

Abrahamian explains that the plans for land reform which were originally put forward in the parliament in 1946 were taken up once more under the 1962 government, but their radical content soon disappeared and "the Shah claimed it as his own and used it to launch with much fanfare a six-point program known as the White Revolution" (ibid: 424). As we have seen here, the representation of land reform plans in the film is in line with the Shah's strategies of promoting the White Revolution, another example of the film's uncritical support of the Shah's reforms. It is only towards the end of the film that some criticism of the Shah and the state of affairs under his rule is presented. Before examining this important part of the narration, however, I would like to summarise the narrative's approach to the issue of modernisation of Iran under Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, by comparing the narratives of the oil nationalisation with that of the White Revolution.

6.2.3.3 Oil nationalisation vs. the White Revolution, Orientalising Iran's politics

In comparing the two events of the oil nationalization and the White Revolution, two points form a focus for my analysis. First is the role of the main players in the oil nationalisation which are, according to the film, the people, the parliament and Premier Mossadeq on the one hand, and the Shah, the British and the Americans on the other. The second is the relationship of each of the two events with the development of Iran as

presented by the film. As already discussed above, the oil nationalisation is presented as a 'crisis' created through the collusion of the people, the parliament and the Premier Mossadeq that ended in disaster for the nation. The other camp, that of the Shah and his Western allies, eventually put the chaos in order and paved the way for a revolutionary act of socio-economic reform to save the country. This act, the White Revolution of the Shah, is then presented against a backdrop of utter socio-economic misery to further highlight not only its importance and urgency but also its novelty and originality. In the following paragraphs I dig deeper into such claims through contrasting the information presented in the film with other sources, and analyse the discursive strategies of the film that render those claims plausible.

In depicting the Shah's reforms, as mentioned above, the impression is created that those reforms were the first of their kind, at least during the Shah's reign, and that they were the brain children of the Shah. Nevertheless, by the 1960s governmental planning for such reforms was an established practice in the Iran. A comprehensive agricultural and industrial development of the country, for example, had already been approved in 1949 by the Iranian parliament as part of its First Development Plan (1948-55). The plan, that was to be financed in large part from oil revenues, paved the way for the nationalization bill to go to the parliament in the same year. Therefore, such plans were also connected to the events of the oil nationalisation specifically because, for Mossadeq and his colleagues, the political reasons for the oil nationalization were as important as the economic reasons (Katouzian, 1990, 137). Katouzian explains that "Mossadeq was prepared to settle the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute at almost any economic price, but was equally determined not to grant another concession at any cost" (ibid: 138). As Mahdavi has observed "for Mossadeq any talk of democracy, freedom and the rule of law was no more than indulgence in romantic self-deception unless foreign concessionaires was removed at all economic costs" (Mahdavi, 2003: 15). Mossadeq put the reasons for the campaign's adherence to the principle of nationalisation in the following terms, which show the relationship between the country's development and its control over its strategic asset of oil:

Our long years of negotiations with foreign countries… have yielded no results this far. With the oil revenues we could meet our entire budget and combat poverty, disease, and backwardness among our people. Another important consideration is that by the elimination of the power of the British company, we would also eliminate corruption and intrigue, by means of which the internal affairs of our country have been influenced. Once this tutelage has ceased, Iran will have achieved its economic and political independence (cited in Fateh, 1979: 525).

The reform plan under Mossadeq's leadership was a comprehensive plan (with similar elements to those of the White Revolution) that included the following:

the amendment of the electoral laws, legal system, press laws, land reform, employment law, tax policy; improvement of education, heath and communication, and establishment of local government and village councils. Mossadeq's Agrarian Reform was a method of lessening foreign dependence and resolving socio-economic problems. His land reform law provided for the country's more than 40,000 villages to have partly-elected councils, an income, and their own bank account. He forced the Shah to return the Court lands to the state to be distributed to the peasants. As part of Educational Reform he made Tehran University financially independent. He sought free and compulsory education throughout the country. By giving independence to the Iranian Bar, Mosaddeq sought for an independent judicial system, which would guarantee the rights of defence. He renamed the Ministry of War the Ministry of National Defence, for the army was considered only a Defensive Force. Knowing that the Shah's real aim of controlling the army was to consolidate his own power, he reduced the government spending on the army (Diba, 1986, cited in Mahdavi, 2003:13).

The nationalisation of the oil industry of Iran under the Premiership of Mossadeq not only significantly reduced the involvement of Britain in the social, economic and political affairs of Iran (Monroe, 1963:172), but also aimed to curb the Shah's power. Azimi has explained this dual purpose of the oil nationalisation movement as follows:

Mossadeq's nationalism embodied firm beliefs in both independence and democracy; it aimed not only at creating a genuinely Iranian state to rule the nation, but also an autonomous and credible democratic polity. It entailed a firm conviction that the Shah should, in the spirit of the Constitution, reign and not rule (Azimi, 1988: 61).

The oil nationalisation, therefore, entailed a clash of interests between the parties involved. Such clashes however, are undermined or even completely omitted from the narrative of the film so that the oil nationalisation is constructed as being bad for Iran,

while the White Revolution introduced by the Shah and supported by the British and Americans is presented as the best path to Iranian progress. Towards the end the film brings up some criticism of the Shah by explaining that "in Iran the word progress is a relative word. The Shah keeps his grip tight and firm over the freedom of expression. Not even a word would be tolerated against him". The bureaucracy and favouritism are also described and commented on: "no change to this antique chaos". These criticisms however, are framed within particular discourses in such a way that the shortcomings of the Shah's rule seem somehow justifiable, or less significant, in comparison to the benefits of his rule.

The first of these discourses is what can be called the Orientalist narratives of the socio-political affairs of Iran. The discourse is constructed through both the voice-over commentary and the Shah's comments. As shown in Table 6.xi, an Orientalist perspective of the state of affairs in Iran is built through comments such as: "This, after all is the Middle East. Everything depends on the Shah's reform and personal mastery he exercises over people". In these comments, therefore, the relationship between the Shah and the Iranian people is put in the context of what is assumed in an Orientalist discourse to be the basis of Middle Eastern politics, namely Oriental despotism. Such a perspective is further supported by inserting parts of the Shah's interview that affirms the presupposition that Iranians are not 'grown and mature' enough for democracy under a constitutional monarchy (Table 6.xi).

Construct	Sequence
Orientalist Narrative of the state of affairs in the Iranian society (Oriental despotism)	Voice-over commentary: "The success of the revolution depends on one thing: the Shah and his army… But the loyalty of his officers is not blind or unchristian. This, after all is the Middle East. Everything depends on the Shah's reform and personal mastery he exercises over people".
Self-projection of the Shah as a benevolent autocrat	Cut to the Shah in the last interview shot: "When my people are grown and mature to the level of other constitutional monarchies, very probably, almost definitely, I would also act accordingly… but before that I don't think in any other form of democracy you can have any greater kind of democracy that you could have under a monarchy".

Table 6.xi: Orientalising the politics of Iran

Another discursive strategy used to undermine the shortcomings of the Shah's rule can be detected in relation to the film's concluding comments. Here, it is acknowledged that in spite of the socio-economic reforms being undertaken by the Shah, political reform still remains an unsolved problem:

> But Iran is not a democracy yet. This is a king's revolution. If it fails, he would go with it…the crowds which praise him today would swallow him tomorrow. There can be no turning back now: the king has started a revolution; he may yet prove to be a principle victim.

The suppression of freedom of expression, bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption, and a very serious issue with the Shah's modernisation, the lack of political reform, are all acknowledged in these comments. Nevertheless, if the film's narrative is taken into account in its entirety, certain apologist elements of the discourse can be identified. The first of these, as already explained, was the suggestion that the most urgent needs of Iran are of a socio-economic and not political nature, through an Orientalist depiction of the Iranian society. The statement "this is the Middle East after all" sums up the film's discursive attempts at presenting Iran as part of a particular entity completely different from 'ours' (in this case, British and Western) and thus with no urgent need for political reform. A diminutive rhetoric in describing the people is used in the very last lines of the film's final statements. The people are described as crowds whose only part in any reform of the society is to 'praise' or 'swallow' the figures of authority, in this instance the Shah, while the burden of reform still lies on the Shah, and the success or failure of reform depends on exercising his "personal mastery over people".

Similarly, the logic underpinning the discussion of the issue of oil nationalisation in the film is problematic due to its internal contradictions. Oil nationalisation is presented as a 'crisis' only so far as the British interest (and those of its Iranian allies, the Shah's camp) is concerned. In the context of the Iranian society, namely a society not limited to the person of the Shah and the royal family, the oil issue was a matter that had, to quote the film, both 'the people' and 'the parliament' 'behind' it. The involvement of these two elements of the society, the people and the parliament, therefore makes the issue a matter of national interest, national discussion and an eventual national decision according to the

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democratic values of the film's Western voice. By referring to the matter as a 'crisis' and not a national issue the film's voice is clearly taking sides with the stand of the British and the Shah at the expense of undermining its own democratic values.

Another issue involved is that despite the serious and acknowledged shortcomings of the Shah's rule, the West (Britain and America), whose stand on the issue the voice-over represents, is backing the Shah. In an attempt to resolve these contradictions, the discourse draws on rhetorical strategies characteristic of a "defensive discourse" (Ware and Linkugel, 1973). The twin strategies of "differentiation" and "transcendence" that are used in representing the Shah and his modernisation, and the rhetorical devices of "denial" and "bolstering" that are used in representing the oil nationalisation are four factors composing such a defensive discourse. Below I explain each of these factors in an attempt to show, through discourse analysis, the stand of the West on the rule of the Shah.

6.2.3.4 The stand of the British on the rule of the Shah

In analysing the discourse framing the representation of the Shah vis-à-vis his country and people, I draw upon the theory of defensive or apologetic discourse. In this theory "differentiation" refers to an attempt at "separating some facts, sentiments, object or relationship from some larger context in which the audience presently views that attribute" (Ware and Linkugel, 1973: 278). In contrast to "differentiation", which separates the object from an undesirable context, "transcendence" places the object in a different or a more favourable context (Daddario and Wigley, 2006: 13). In representing the Shah, it seems that attempts have been made to separate his autocratic rule from an undesirable context that is "modern dictatorship" by emphasizing his more positive attributes such as being "a moderniser", an "essentially contemporary figure" shaped by "Western ideas" and education. On the other hand, to appropriate and transcend the Shah's autocratic rule, it is situated in two transcending contexts.

The first of the two is an Orientalised setting, created through portraying Iran's religion and its people as backward, fanatical and opposing change. This is done by

foregrounding what is presented as oppressive gender relations, and an inequality of social classes stemming from the remaining Oriental feudalism. Nomadic imagery is also used as evidence for the existence of primitive ways of life that are still defended against change. All these elements are presented in opposition to the Shah's progressive intentions, thus laying all the responsibilities with the Shah and "the personal mastery he exercises over people". The statement: "this, after all, is the Middle East" sums up the Orientalising strategies of the film, creating a context where the Shah's autocratic rule can be regarded as part of the supposedly appropriate and long-standing tradition of Oriental despotism.

The second transcending context is created when referring to the city workers. Despite acknowledging their poverty and the uselessness to them of the Shah's modernisation, any heavy-handed approach of the Shah and his army to the potential proletarian unrest, it is suggested in the film, should be viewed in relation to the growth of communism. The threat of the growth of communism therefore serves as a context where exercising military-based suppression of social movements is justifiable: Better a Western-bolstered autocrat than a democratic leader likely to succumb to communist sympathies.

In representing the oil nationalisation and its aftermath, and the role of Britain and America in that regard, the discourse draws on a parallel couple of rhetorical strategies. The first is denial that "consists of the simple disavowal by the speaker of any participation, relationship to, or positive sentiments towards whatever it is that repels the audience" (Ware and Linkugel, 1973: 276). Although the film does not contain any denial of the involvement of Western powers in Iran (Britain and its dispute with the Iranian government over BP, and Americans helping the Shah with his counter-revolution), there is a denial of deliberate wrong-doing on the part of the Western players. In the case of Britain, there is no mention of the existence of any kind of formal or informal colonialism associated with foreign concessionaires such as the one held by BP in Iran, the country's refusal to settle the oil dispute with the Iranian government at almost any economic price but without being granted another concession (Katouzian, 1990, 138), and finally its role in the 1953 coup to topple the Iranian government of the

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time in order to maintain its strategic interest in Iran. The last point becomes poignantly ironic if one compares the film's final comments about Iran not being 'yet' a democracy, with the historical evidence that not only did a democracy exist in the country more than two decades before the making of the film, but also that it was aborted by factors created in a great part by Britain.

The second of the defensive rhetorical strategies used in representing oil nationalisation and Britain's involvement is bolstering. The bolstering strategy is an attempt to identify the self with a fact, sentiment, or relationship seen as favourable (Daddario and Wigley, 2006: 10). The British involvement in Iran is presented as being no more than positive, beneficiary and benevolent. Britain is presented as helping Iran to progress through its financial and technological investment in the oil industry. The Western culture at large is counted as the main factor in the Iranian modernisation through influencing and educating the Shah, the one person who initiated modernisation.

The bolstering of the positive role of the Shah and Britain/America in Iran is done through situating their actions in the transcendent contexts of modernisation and the universal battle of good-vs.-evil (first in relation to the Allies-vs.-Axis forces in WWII and then the Eastern block-vs.-Western block of the Cold War era). This however, takes place on the basis of diminishing Iranian society and its people, through utilising the common documentary strategies of Orientalising the history and the geography of the country such that in this particular example the strategy serves to establish the most urgent needs of the country as socio-economic in nature, with less urgency and even less aspiration for political reform. These representational strategies are made evident in the way the events of oil nationalisation (1949-1953) are framed in the film.

6.3 Concluding remarks

This chapter examined the documentary representation of the Pahlavi dynasty and their modernisation schemes. I argued that Reza Shah (1925- 1940), was presented in *Dawn of Iran* (1938) as a Westernised moderniser who initiated the modernisation of the country where it previously did not exist in any form. Subsequently, to construct such an image

of Reza Shah, Iran's history is constructed as a pattern of rise and fall, ending up in an acute state of decline up to the time of the Shah's ascendance to power.

Similarly, Mohammad Reza Shah (1940-1978) is depicted in *A King's Revolution* (1964) as the sole advocate of reform and progress. I highlighted the documentary representations of two historically significant events of his reign, the nationalisation of the oil industry of Iran (1950- 1953) and the Shah's reform schemes or 'the King's Revolution' as it is referred to by the film. By comparing the representations of the two events and analysing the discourses framing the narrative of the film, I argued that the people and the culture of Iran appear in the film to be responsible for the country's misfortunes, while the Shah and his Western backers, Britain and America, appear to have tried to save the country from the chaos created by its own people. Through this narrative of the events, the modernisation of Iran under Mohammad Reza Shah was presented as the best path to Iranian progress towards Modernity. It is not surprising therefore that the Iranian revolution of 1979 that toppled the Shah is then depicted as the worst possible event at the end of that same path. The Revolution is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 7

The Iranian Revolution in British Documentary

The year 1979 was a turning point in the history of Iran. In February 1979 a popular revolution put an end to the Shah's reign and the Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979), replacing them with an Islamic republic. Iran's pro-West regime was replaced by an Islamic one, which claimed independence of and opposition to the West. Through an examination of the documentaries made in the decades after the revolution, the next two chapters will explore representational modes and policies for depicting post-revolutionary Iran in the British documentary.

From among documentaries on the subject of the revolution (see Appendix) I have two reasons for choosing to discuss *1979 God Fights Back* (BBC, 1995), an episode in the highly acclaimed TV series *People's Century* which won an International Emmy and George Foster Peabody Award. Firstly, I have chosen it for the importance of the series itself. Christine Whittaker the archive producer of the series expressed its significance this way:

> The brief of the series was to provide a popular history of the 20th Century which would be accessible for a mass audience… and had to interest not only the faithful documentary viewer, but also the people who did not normally watched [sic.] historical programmes, people who had never heard of the Marshall Plan or Yalta. It also had to have international appeal- it was co-produced with WGBH in Boston and so far has been sold to 23 other countries (Whittaker, 1998: 151).

Secondly, I have chosen this documentary because on its own the episode *God Fights Back* contains many of the themes associated with post-revolutionary Iran in British documentary. The importance of this particular film to this thesis relates also to the use it makes of other and older documentary films, a practice I have personally found to be controversial for reasons stated throughout the thesis.

7.1 *People's Century: 1979 God Fights Back*

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 is among the main events of the last hundred years that are covered in the 26 episodes of the series, *People's Century*. However, the episode on

the Iranian revolution, *1979 God Fights Back*, is not solely focused on the revolution and is rather a complicated amalgam of various themes and stories. To make the structure of the episode more evident, I have divided it into three main sections: 1. a prologue introducing the subject, the Iranian revolution of 1979; 2. The main body where the events of the revolution itself are depicted, the background to it and the causes of it taking place among other story lines; and 3. an epilogue, summarizing the argument of the film. Table 7.i shows the three main divisions and also further division of the body of the film into segments, to which I will return in section 7.2. The left hand column of the table shows the three main divisions: Prologue, Body and Epilogue. The commentary extracts in the right hand column connect the main theme of that division of the film with the segment shown in the middle column.

Formal structure	Thematic structure and related sub-segments	Statements connecting themes and segments
Prologue	Iranian Revolution at a glance	"The appeal of the revolution was soon felt outside Iran".

Body	Segment 1: Modernization
	  a) Islam at the turn of the century
	  b) Turkey
	  c) Iran
	  d) India
	  e) Egypt
	  f) Iran
		"And in the rest of the Islamic world it was the same story. Muslims from West Africa to Lebanon, Malaysia and Indonesia saw return to Islamic tradition as a way of asserting their identity, and found an alternative to the materialism and tensions of the 20th century. Around the world millions of others in other religions were coming to the same conclusion: the reassertion of the basic principles of their faith could hold the answer to moral uncertainties and stresses of modern life".

	Segment 2: Global Islamic Revival
	  g) Pakistan
	  h) Sudan
	  i) Egypt
	  j) Islamic world
		"The Shrine of Ayatollah Khomeini outside Tehran. At the end of the century God's followers, Muslims, Christians and Hindus were once again determined not only to express their own faith but also to order the lives of others around religious lines".

	Segment 3: Global Religious Revival
	  k) US
	  l) Israel
	  m) India
	  n) Turkey	

Epilogue	The message of the episode	"The Shrine of Ayatollah Khomeini outside Tehran. At the end of the century God's followers, Muslims, Christians and Hindus were once again determined not only to express their own faith but also to order the lives of others around religious lines".

Table 7.i: The formal structure of *People's Century: God Fights Back*

Because of the importance of the prologue in setting the tone and introducing the main theme of the film, I will explore it more closely. Before the title of the episode appears on the screen, the prologue devotes a few minutes to the story of the revolution, outlining the last few years of Iran under the Shah, the crumbling of his regime and his overthrow by the revolution, and finally the establishment of the revolutionary regime and its national and international implications. The opening shot is an aerial view of Tehran from the point of view of the Shah who is piloting a helicopter, observing the making of Shahyad.[14] The voice-over comments:

> 1971, the Shah of Iran, a modern autocrat, shows off his country's achievements. He used the wealth from Iran's oil to finance a high speed drive for modernization. He told Iranians to put aside old-fashioned ways and become Westernized. Science and technology should prevail, not religion.

In this comment the voiceover introduces the Shah as the source of modernization in Iran. The story of his fall follows immediately:

> But eight years later his regime is crumbling… and as their ruler seeks refuge abroad, the crowds are overjoyed in the streets of Tehran. They pinned their hopes on a 77 year old exiled cleric whose priorities are opposed to those of the Shah.

The interplay of the Shah as a modernizer and Khomeini as anti-Shah portrays implicitly and immediately the revolution as anti-modern. As the Shah's regime crumbles, we are told, Iran is overtaken by Khomeini, "a cleric whose priorities are opposite to those of the Shah". This contrast is established in a sequence where a set of binary oppositions seem to be set up, building the foundation of anti-revolutionist rhetoric that will recur throughout the film. These opposing elements are constructed here as a cluster of concepts such as the Shah's achievements, modernization, Westernization and the domination of science and technology paired with images of modern urban life, which then cuts to an oppositional cluster, the concept of tradition accompanied by a picture of people practising their religious duties. Table 7.ii gives a shot-by-shot description of the

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[14] Completed in 1971, the Shahyad Tower has managed to become the symbol of Iran's capital city in just a few decades. The name Shahyad, meaning 'the monument of the Shah', was changed to Azadi (freedom) after the 1979 revolution.

content of the sequence, showing the synchronisation of voiceover with image, as it occurs on screen.

Image	Commentary
Shah of Iran in helicopter observing the making of Shahyad. He flies the helicopter himself.	"1971, the Shah of Iran, a modern autocrat, shows off his country's achievements".
Camera goes up on a tower and frames a shot of a big city behind it.	"He used the wealth from Iran's oil to finance a high-speed drive for modernization".
Shots of buses and cars in the streets of Tehran. Shot of a girl in bikini, on a yacht, applying sun tan lotion.	"He told Iranians to put aside old-fashioned ways and become Westernized".
Shot of a disco with young people dancing.	
Shot of a female teacher in white uniform teaching chemistry. Shot of a woman working with microscope.	"Science and technology should prevail…"
Rows of females praying in black chador.	"…not tradition".
Shah at the airport leaving the country	"But eight years later, his regime is crumbling…"
Shots of anti-Shah demonstrations in Tehran	"…and as their ruler seeks refuge abroad, the crowds are overjoyed in streets of Tehran".
Shots of Khomeini coming to Iran.	"They pinned their hopes on 77-year old exiled cleric whose priorities are opposite to the Shah's".

Table 7.ii: Modernisation vs. the revolution

The film thus implies that the revolution itself signifies opposition not only to the Shah, but to everything the Shah's modernization drive achieved (symbolized in the film by images of modern urban life: cities, streets, buses and cars, buildings, teachers, doctors, etc). This message is supported by the visual rhetoric, with cuts from image-clusters of urban life to shots of anti-Shah demonstrations. The Iranian revolution is presented, in the opening scene, as a religious resurgence and as an essentially backward movement, a turn to the past. As Esposito puts it, this point of view is inbuilt within Western secular beliefs:

> Much of Western scholarship viewed Muslim societies through the modern prism of a development theory that was secular and Western in its principles, values, and expectations. Experts analyzed and judged societies as their elites ran them - from the top down. As a result, academic and government analysts and the media often slipped into the same pitfalls: focusing on a narrow, albeit powerful, secular

elite segment of society; and equating secularization with progress and religion with backwardness and conservatism, believing that modernization and Westernization are necessarily intertwined (Esposito, 1999: 261).

What Esposito explains here is focused on the religion of Islam, but as we will see later, the logic of equating secularization with progress and religion with backwardness is extended to other religions in the film. This idea is voiced briefly as a summary statement at the end of the prologue:

> What happened in Iran marked a turning point not just for Islam but for other world religions. After this, millions more will turn back to the fundamentals of their beliefs whether in Christianity, Judaism or Hinduism.

The shot immediately following this statement is a fixed-frame shot of a demonstrator from the 1979 demonstrations, and the caption "1979, God Fights Back" fades in on the picture (Image 1). The prologue then has put the story of the Iranian revolution in a general context of a global religious revival, "a turning back to the fundamentals" of religious beliefs. This message is further elaborated and therefore emphasized in the main body of the film, carried through both the rhetoric and the formal structures.

Image 1: Screen shot from *People's Century*

7.2 A century of modernisation and religious revival

The body of the episode, *God Fights Back,* rather than being simply the story of the 1979 revolution, is a compound of several stories and different themes on the modern history of a wide range of countries from the U.S.A. to Malaysia, with Iran placed selectively among them. The frequent cuts from the story of one country to another and flash-backs and flash-forwards inside each story, combined with cuts in each story to the story of Iran, giving the body of the documentary a complicated formal structure, where the body

of the episode is divided into three major segments, each formed around a theme introduced through verbal statements. The tabulated segments and specific elements of the commentary connect the themes within the Table 7.i to explain how the film arrives at this suggestion:

> Around the world millions of others in other religions were coming to the same conclusion: the reassertion of the basic principles of their faith could hold the answer to moral uncertainties and stresses of modern life.

This message provides the framework in which the roots of the revolution, its content and its aftermath – the birth of the new post-revolutionary Iranian society and its relation with modernity – are interpreted.

Segment 1 on the theme of modernization presents a brief history of modernization in Turkey, Iran, India and Egypt as will be discussed in section 7.2.1. This is then connected to Segment 2 by the statement, "The appeal of the revolution was soon felt outside Iran". The theme of Segment 2, the "appeal of the Islamic Revolution" of Iran to other Islamic countries, is therefore established in this way. Segment 2 then tells the story of the Islamic revival in Pakistan, Sudan and Egypt, as we shall see in more detail below, and connects those stories to theme of a global religious revival in these comments:

> And in the rest of the Islamic world it was the same story. Muslims from West Africa to Lebanon, Malaysia and Indonesia saw return to Islamic tradition as a way of asserting their identity, and found an alternative to the materialism and tensions of the 20th century. Around the world millions of others in other religions were coming to the same conclusion: the reassertion of the basic principles of their faith could hold the answer to moral uncertainties and stresses of modern life.

The statement marks the beginning of Segment 3, which looks at the religious revival as a global phenomenon, discussing the revival of (Evangelic) Christianity in U.S.A., (orthodox) Judaism in Israel and (fundamentalist) Hinduism in India. Finally, in the Epilogue all the foregoing themes and stories are pulled together in the form of a statement that brings these themes together to conclude:

> At the end of the century God's followers, Muslims, Christians and Hindus were once again determined not only to express their own faith but also to order the lives of others around religious lines.

These apparently universal comments are however, voiced-over a very particular long shot of Iran. The image shows the shrine of Ayatollah Khomeini which is then cut to the close up of women in the shrine (Images 2 and 3). This editing implicitly re-emphasizes the opening statements of the film:

> What happened in Iran marked a turning point not just for Islam but for other world religions. After this, millions more will turn back to the fundamentals of their beliefs whether in Christianity, Judaism or Hinduism.

This re-establishes the implied causal relationship between the Iranian revolution and a global religious revival against the forces of modernity.

Image 2: Screen shot from *People's Century*   Image 3: Screen shot from *People's Century*

In the rest of this chapter I mainly focus on Segment 1 of the body of the episode where the narrative of revolution and post-revolutionary Iran develops. Segment 1 begins by showing and telling the story of Islam at the beginning of the 20th century, and moves on to a lengthy description of how at the beginning of the century Turkey, Iran, India and Egypt started a journey toward a new destination, the modern world. The language of the film makes the journeys of these four separate countries look very similar by means of: 1) use of black and white archival footage of the real events which took place at the time, 2) selection of events and the way the narration is structured, and 3) building up of the narration by inserting parts of older documentaries. I will look now at the theme of Islam and modernisation in segment 1, their relationship and the way the whole segment provides the film with links to the story of the Iranian revolution (see: Table 7.i (f)).

7.2.1 Islam at the beginning of the century

Sub-segment (a) in Table 7.i consists of sequences of black and white archive footage from some eastern countries in the early decades of the 20th Century. It begins with voice-over comments:

> At the start of the century Islam was one of the largest religions of the world, its followers divided between two sects, the majority Sunnis and the minority Shi'a. Most Islamic people were still under the political rule of European Empires, but the mosque was still at the centre of spiritual life...

The accompanying images are of an unidentified Islamic setting with veiled women crossing streets, people in rows at prayers, people in some shrines, a person in a minaret saying *Azaan*, and so on. The sequence then cuts to the image of a map on which a green shadow starts to spread from left to right, showing the geographical locations of Muslim nations. The voice over explains:

> In countries that spread from Morocco across North Africa, through the Middle East, to the Indian subcontinent and beyond, up to 300,000 Muslims turned to Mecca five times a day.

The Islam sub-segment therefore might be taken as an introduction to the sequences that follow in order to provide statistical information relevant to the subject of Muslim nations. But the Islam sub-segment can also be viewed as showing that Islam as a concept always functions in the same ways and that the historical transformation of some countries, no matter what the difference is in history or culture, have had the same results. One example of this is that vast geographical entities and hugely different nations are put under the same category of "Islamic people". This unified Islamic world is further constructed in the shot containing the image of the map. Here, the vastness of the Islamic world is shown through the visual highlighting of the geographical entities on the map and the verbal account of the same entities, using names and numbers (population). These vast territories, spreading from North Africa to the Indian sub-continent, with their large populations are presented in relation to their religious traditions in the map-shot. The reductionist approach of the commentary is built through encapsulating Muslims in their religion, which, in its turn, is encapsulated in one single practice: turning to Mecca five times a day. In the next chapter of this thesis I have discussed further this representational approach to Islam, as a trans-historical essence running through an entity known as the

'Islamic world'.

The rhetorical arrangement of the information concerning Muslim nations is vague and generalised. We are told, in a fairly unspecific manner, that 'most Islamic people' were under the rule of Europeans, evading in this way the question of whether they were actually the majority of the Muslim nations. The vagueness also includes the concept of time as well as quantity, as we are told that these nations were "still" under the rule of Europeans at the start of the century, but not telling us since when, nor for that matter, until when, precisely. Because many of these statements lack precision or accuracy it could be argued that the commentary has been tailored to further shape the message that Islam is the same wherever in the world it appears. For example, in the comment "most Islamic people were still under the political rule of European Empires, *but* the mosque was *still* at the centre of the spiritual life..." the word "but" implies contrast between the two statements: although the Muslim peoples were ruled by Europeans, their spiritual life was not directed by European principles but by a different (and opposite) set of principles, which have not yet changed. What is implied here is that not only is Islam a unified force but it is also a unified force against modernisation. The film's perspective on Islam as described in this segment has important implications for the way the Iranian revolution is presented later in the film.

7.2.2 The story of modernization: Turkey, Iran, India and Egypt

The Islam sequence can be taken as a build-up to themes which are then given a full life in the story of Turkey. The account of Turkey's modernization is set from the very beginning against the polarities of religion vs. progress. The image track consists of archive footage of   the Ottoman era in Turkey, describing it as a country where "the Sultan was also head of the clergy", "politics and religion were bound together" and "Islam governed all aspects of ordinary life". The native culture is described in terms of being Islamic not only in the voice-over commentary but also in an interview with an old Turkish gentleman who recalls his childhood memories of old Sultanate Turkey, when religious rules were observed in the ordinary household.

The birth of modern Turkey, on the other hand, is described in terms of demands for "a secular government" and the removal of religion from politics:

> With the old Ottoman Empire cut back after the First World War, radical Turks demanded a secular government. The sultanate was abolished and one man took power to impose a social and political revolution... Ataturk was determined to remove religion from politics. Mosques emptied as Fridays stop to being public holiday and the influence of clergy was undermined. Turks were told progress had to be achieved the Western way if they themselves were to stand up to the West.

The modernization of Turkey under Ataturk is then featured by cutting in lengthy chunks of an older documentary, very similar in style to *A King's Revolution* (discussed in Chapter 6) and using the same style of voice-over. Like *A King's Revolution,* the approving tone of the film celebrates the attempts of one man to single-handedly push his country toward progress and development, which is conflated with Westernisation:

> With his power as president and dictator he [Ataturk] begins his report. He commands young Turks to go to business school. He brings in foreigners to show girls how to dress, how to manage their homes the European way. Into European dress he forces both men and women, sweeping away the veil…

The whole experience is then summed up in the words of the commentator from *People's Century* (on a shot containing old archive footage representing the Ataturk era): "it was a wholesale attack on the Islamic culture of the past. Even the way Turks wrote in Arabic was replaced by the European alphabet." Here again the film uses older documentary footage of Ataturk and his cabinet members to feature this example of his forced cultural changes. The voice-over (of the older documentary) accompanying the footage announces:

> In one of the great reform movements of the modern time, he [Ataturk] outlaws Arabic writing. He keeps his cabinet sitting day after day studying the Latin alphabet. He gives his people two years to learn reading and writing the simpler European way.

The sequence ends on the image of a Turkish citizen behind bars, due to failure to meet the two-year deadline. The modernization of Turkey is therefore depicted as being conflated with secularization and Westernization through featuring an older documentary, and further affirmed by the commentary from the *People's Century* that Ataturk's plan for modernisation was "a whole sale attack on the Islamic culture of the past". As a result

of such an attack on the past culture, it is concluded that the experience of modernisation in Turkey was "a traumatic change over [that] the Turks lived through". What is implied through the combination of the older documentary and the voice-over comments is that because reform and progress in Turkey was associated with the defeat of religion and the (forced) introduction of an imported culture (Westernization), the whole experience turned out to be a trauma for the nation. Based on this logic, the rise of political Islam in contemporary Turkey is presented as a backlash against Ataturk's modernisation:

> Even in Turkey which has been thrust into modernisation in 1920s, an Islamic campaign [promised] to turn back many of Ataturk's reforms.

The rise of political Islam, or Islamic fundamentalism as it is referred to by the film, is implied to be an essentially 'cultural' issue, and a movement to reverse the traumatic effects of a past experience. Through this and other such rhetorical arguments throughout the film, the parallel binary oppositions of past–present, native culture–Westernization, Islam–progress/modernization are formed. I attempt to show in this chapter how the formation of these generalized and broad opposites give the film's argument the advantage of simplification, enabling it to formulate theories which are applicable to many different cases.

Before moving to the story of Iran's modernisation in sub-segment (c), I would like to sum up the rhetorical importance of the Turkey episode. By adopting the voice-over commentary of the older documentary directly and uncritically, *People's Century* draws upon voice-of-authority commentary for forming its argument. By exploiting both the rhetorical and the stylistic features of the older documentary, *People's Century* manages to freely play with the concepts of modernization (built up in the footage of the modernization of Turkey) and modernity (the usage of words "reform" and "modern times") using them interchangeably. It is in the combination of the concept of trauma with modernity/modernization, that eventually in the discourse of the film the modernity itself, inapplicable to non-Western settings, becomes a 'traumatic experience'. This will be discussed fully below in relation to the representation of the Iranian revolution (section 7.3.2).

The transitional shot to the Iranian sub-segment of the film is the image of a map on which the camera pans from Turkey to Iran, as the voice-over in *People's Century* comments: "The traumatic experience of Turkey was next copied by its Eastern neighbour and even older civilization, Persia". In this way, the idea of modernization as traumatic is already settled in the case of Iran, before its story begins. The emphasis on the idea of Iran as being 'an even older civilization' and the use of the word Persia, with its connotations of an ancient past, creates the foundation for a concept of 'ancientness' as part of the binary of past/old/Islam vs. future/modern/Western. It can be said that concepts such as the oldness (in the sense of no longer good enough), ancientness (good and noble ancient empire) and backwardness of Iran at the turn of the century are implied visually and rhetorically. The sub-segment starts with some footage in *Dawn of Iran* from the sequences shown in Table 6.i and 6.ii, while the original commentary accompanying the footage in *Dawn of Iran* is at times paraphrased by the voice-over from *People's Century*.

Footage	Commentary
Dawn of Iran	*voice-over from People's Century* "In 1920s many Persians still lived as nomads following their flocks. Women were kept sequestered and veiled. But a coup d'état by a reforming military officer rushed the Persians into a new age after 1925.
Dawn of Iran	*voice-over from Dawn of Iran* "In 16 years the Iranians have learnt to live a new way. The feudal towns have changed into cities. Mules and camels have given way to cars and motor buses. Docks have been laid out on the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf. The people are taking to rail travel. In Tehran a great national University has been settled. After 1300 years the women of Iran have been emancipated. They may go out unveiled, free to mix with other men and women and take part in the life of their country."

Table 7.iii: Iran at the beginning of the 20th Century

As in the case of Turkey, we are given an account of how a country in which many people "still lived as nomads following their flocks" was transformed into a modern state in 16 years, after a "reforming military officer" took power in a coup in 1925. A long list of changes follows where "feudal towns" are replaced by "cities" and 'mules and camels' by 'cars and motor buses', villagers became 'construction workers and mechanics', and women of Iran were emancipated 'after 1300 years'.

The film then presents us with even more examples of the same story, those of India and Egypt. The same account of one man transforming, not only an entire nation, but its entire history, in a matter of few years is repeated in both cases, where the inserts from older documentaries with their similar styles and their authoritarian voice-of-God commentary paint the same picture over and over again. The images of industrial advancement in India and Egypt are accompanied by commentary about tradition and religion. As the footage of backward rural areas in both countries is followed and replaced by footage of urban industrial settings, the commentary tells the story of the countries' independence from imperial powers, and subsequently the will of their leaders to secularize their societies. The way Nehru is introduced in the film is an example of the rhetoric of industrial progress vs. tradition: "To India's first prime minister, Nehru, technology and engineering were the new gods". In the case of Egypt, Nasser is presented as being forced to suppress the "Islamist" opposition in order to advance his plans for modernizing the country, as stated in these comments:

> The nationalist leader Colonel Nasser promised social revolution and denigrated old customs. He asked the Egyptians to believe in industrialisation and social planning. A group of Muslim militants had a different view of Egypt's future. When they stood in Nasser's way they were imprisoned, exiled or executed. The Islamic opposition would have no place in the new state.

In other words, modernization is presented as involving not only an act of industrial progress, but an act of eliminating the traditional culture and the religious elements in the society. The 'traumatic experience' of these societies (Turkey, India and Egypt) is presented therefore as the result of an encounter with both the industrial progress and the process of cultural development. The film (segments 2 and 3, Table 7.ii) concludes that it is against both of these concepts that a backlash eventually took place in those settings, in the form of a return not only to traditional beliefs (religion) but also to traditional ways of life (pre-modern/pre-modernized states of being).

On the basis of this logic, the Iranian revolution is presented in the next sequence as the most severe backlash, the ultimate reaction to the experience of modernity, because "it was the Iranians", among all of these nations, "who were put on the fastest track to secular modernization" (see Table 7.iv). This commentary, taking place across the image

of an oil rig, is in the opening shot of the Iran sequence, where the story of Iran is told from the age of modernization to the revolution and the post-revolutionary society. It foreshadows what comes next in the film: the story of the non-acceptance of fast-track modernization and a return to an unenlightened past.

7.3 Iran: from modernization to revolution and beyond

The story of the Iranian Revolution as it is related in the film in sub-segment (f), gives an account of the historical period between the 1960s and the early 1990s, covering both the event of the revolution itself, and also what are considered to be the causes and the effects of the revolution. It is also here that the main themes of the film come together to create the message that modernisation in the 20th Century resulted in religious revival in many parts of the world. A parallel can be drawn between the internal structure of this sub-segment and the general structure of the film. Here again, we have a three-part narrational structure, each part connected to the next in such a way that cause-and-effect chain of the message is re-emphasized (Table 7.iv).

Formal structure of the narration of the revolution	Themes
Link to previous sub-segment (e)	Iranians among other third-world nations on the fastest track to secular modernisation
Part 1 of the sub-segment: years of modernisation	Cultural alienation from modernisation
Part 2 of the sub-segment: the lead-up to and the revolution	Cultural and religious motivations for the revolution, religious content of the revolution, mirrored in its leadership
Part 3 of the sub-segment: Post-revolutionary society	The emergence of an 'Islamic state'
Link to Segment 2: Global Islamic revival	The appeal of the 'Islamic revolution' of Iran being felt by other Muslim nations, and later other religions, across the globe

Table 7.iv: Sub-segment (f), Iran from modernisation to revolution and beyond

As shown in Table 7.iii, these three parts are the years of modernization of Iran (1960s and early 1970s), followed by an account of the years leading to the revolution (the late 1970s up to 1978), and finally the post-revolutionary society of the 1980s. The Iranian revolution is presented as the negative aspect of a religious resurgence, resulting directly from modernization, and leading to other negative phenomena which demarcate the post

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revolutionary Iran: the emergence of an Islamic state, the American embassy hostage taking and the Iran-Iraq war. The way this part is sandwiched between two voice-over statements can be analyzed as an arrangement which places the Iranian revolution as a link between the two themes of modernization and religious revival. The first statement, "but it was the Iranians, with their oil wealth, who were put on the fastest track to secular modernization", therefore acts as the introduction to the story of revolution which then ends on this statement: "The appeal of the Islamic revolution was soon felt outside Iran", thus linking the subject of the revolution with both the Islamic revival and the global religious revival.

7.3.1 Modernisation

The sub-segment Part 1 starts with a sequence introducing the Shah's modernisation. According to the film, the Shah was pressing on with "the changes which became known as the King's Revolution" and that "he was moving too fast", causing protest from both "the left and the right wing Shi'ite clergy" (Table 7.v). As for the content and nature of those changes causing the protest, the film is not specific. However, because the first few shots are intermittently cut with shots from *A King's Revolution,* it can be assumed that the filmmakers are re-iterating what they mean by "… changes known as the King's revolution" (for full commentary quotation see Table 7.v).

Image	Commentary
Shot of an oil rig	*Voice-over from 'People's Century' fades in:* "But it was the Iranians who were put on the fastest track to secular modernization".
Insert from 'A King's Revolution' Shots of tunnels and roads in a mountainous landscape.	*Voice-over from 'A King's Revolution':* "Iran has joined the 20th Century with an urgent vitality …essential to a modern nation".
Shah and Nixon in a Ferrari waving to the camera.	*Voice-over from 'People's Century' fades in:* "Fiercely anti-communist, apparently progressive, the Shah was backed by the U.S. which supplied arms and advice. He pressed on with the changes which became known as the 'King's Revolution'".
Insert from 'A King's Revolution' A department store in Tehran. Shots of people shopping; Men in suits and ties; women with big hair and wigs, some in colored *chador*, buying underwear.	*Voice-over from 'A King's Revolution':* "Persian women kissed farewell to their Yashmak and Purdah a long time ago. Now, thanks to the King's Revolution, they can vote, they are in the parliament and Tehran boasts the only woman police…" *Voice-over from 'People's Century' fades in:* "The Shah dismissed protest from the left and the right-wing Shi'ite clergy that he was moving too fast".
Interview shot of the Shah talking to the camera.	*Shah interview on screen* "This is the very familiar , what we call the unholy alliance between the black and the red. That is the communism and the very reactionary people strata. We always see it because they are both against the progress and the happiness of this country".
People and some clergy in the street, looking into the camera; Shot of Khomeini praying.	*Voice-over from 'People's Century'* "When a small group of Mullahs in the religious city of Qum continued to oppose him, he sent the most critical of them, Ruhollah Khomeini, into exile".

Table 7.v: The causes of the revolution

The commentary about the anti-communist and progressive nature of the Shah's reforms is preceded by commentary about Iran joining the 20th Century as a modern nation, and followed by commentary about the situation of women under the reform. In particular, the way the voice-over from *A King's Revolution* is replaced by that of *People's Century* using a fade-in technique, implies an identification of the first commentary (women's emancipation) with the second commentary (protest against the Shah). In other words, the protest against the Shah is implied to be the same as the protest against his reform programme (the "fast track secular modernization" (See: Table 7.iv) which is only symbolised in *People's Century* as progress by urbanization (highways) and women's

emancipation.

We, the audience, are made to realize by the commentary where the protest comes from, "the unholy alliance of the communists and the clergy", as the Shah put it, but not the context or content of the protest. "The right" and "the left" are announced, in the Shah's interview on screen, as being against the "progress and happiness of this country", a comment which is indirectly approved by the filmmakers given the way it is presented, highlighting the speech and the image of the Shah in an interview shot. That medium shot, focused on the image of one man, the Shah, speaking directly to the camera, is contrasted on screen immediately afterwards with the images of silent crowds of people (Table 7.iv) dominated by the authoritative voice of the commentator speaking as if for the crowds:

> When a small group of Mullahs in the religious city of Qum continued to oppose him, he sent the most critical of them, Ruhollah Khomeini, into exile.

The shot after this to a group of Mullahs "in the religious centre of Qum" emphasizes that the opposition to the Shah (and his plans for the progress and happiness of the country) was voiced mainly by Mullahs and particularly, "the most critical… Ayatollah Khomeini". From this evidence there seems to be an attempt within the film to forge the idea that not only was the content of the revolution was based on religious motives, but also that the only active opposition came exclusively from religious figures and organisations. Even based on the very little information provided by the film about the content of the protest, this is obviously a contradictory conclusion. The 'left' here clearly refers to the oppositional groups related somewhat to 'communist' ideology, or 'the red' as the Shah puts it in his interview, whose opposition to him could not have been religiously motivated.

Next, the film continues to dig deeper into the issue of the Shah's modernization in two sequences, the first focusing on the celebration of 2500 years of monarchy (Table 7.vi), and the second on the Westernization of some sections of Iranian society (Table 7.vii).

Image	Commentary
Extreme long-shot of Persepolis	"In 1971 the Shah's grand vision for his country and himself was confirmed when …"
Zoom out on a grand fountain, framing a large pool in a magnificent square	"He staged an elaborate celebration of Iran's culture and history".
Long shot of boulevards with running water and fountains in the middle; people going around in scooters, preparing the place for the occasion	"A tented city was built to the edge of the ruins of Persepolis to commemorate two and half thousands years of Persian Empire".
Inside one of the tents, with guests around magnificent dinner tables	"The Iranian government invited leaders and distinguished guests from 69 countries, including Prince Phillip, Romania's Ceauşescu, and the Soviet Union's president".
Pan on guests	"They ate baked peacock and quail eggs off gold plates under crystal chandeliers…food and wine were flown in from Paris…"
Zoom out framing the Peacock throne and the guests in front of it.	"Although the extravaganza cost millions of dollars, the Shah's purpose was to show the West the sophistication of the Peacock throne".

Table 7.vi: The royal celebration

The last sequence in Table 7.v (Peacock throne celebration) highlights the Western interpretation of the Shah's modernisation through the commentary, part of which is quoted in the Table. This can be interpreted as a Western understanding if not acceptance of this cultural display of immense material wealth to mean "sophistication", showing therefore sympathy with the Shah's intention to impress the West with his extravaganza. The westernization aspect of the King's revolution continues to be presented in the second sequence on the westernized attitude and taste of the children of the elite (Table 7.vii).

Image	Commentary
Shots of a Tehran square, streets and fountains at night; youth dancing in a night club; a girl dancing; young girls passing by in the streets;	"And in Tehran the children of the elite grew up with Westernized attitudes and taste".
An interview shot with a middle-aged man; subtitle reads: Dariush Keshvarfard	"Daruish Keshvarfard was a student in Tehran".
young boys taking a taxi (with hippy-like appearances); a young boy riding a motorcycle	D. Keshvarfard talks to the camera about boys and motorcycles, upper-class neighborhoods in Tehran where people lived 'very up-to-date' and bought 'Easy Rider' and 'Chopper': "such bikes were very common in Iran, those people were (pause) very cool, as you put it!"

Table 7.vii: Westernization of the elite children

The two sequences are followed by a shot where we are informed: "but many other Iranians saw the modernization as alien and corrupt". It can be drawn from the arrangement of the two sequences and that statement that the word modernization in this commentary refers to what has already come before it, the content of the two preceding sequences. Thus, modernization equals Westernization embodied in the visual symbols of Western culture (Table 7.vii) and the Shah's desire to be approved of by the West at any cost (Table 7.vi).

The theme of 'alienation' becomes linked, later in the film, to the concept of disorientation with regard to the people's reaction to modernisation. "But many other Iranians saw the modernization as alien and corrupt… Disoriented and confused, many longed for the moral certainties of their past" (Table 7.viii). In order to make it clear what they are alienated from, and who the alienated "many Iranians" are, we have to turn from the commentary to the visual footage. Drawing from the information in the film, alienation comes from the Shah's plans for "the happiness and progress of the country" (Table 7.v), a collection of changes gathered under the term modernization which refers to a variety of things in different parts of the film. Modernisation also appears in the film to be equivalent to secularism, urbanization and female emancipation and Westernization in its various manifestations. The alienation of Iranians from modernization is thus implied to be an alienation also from all its constituents. As for those who are alienated, they are referred to in the commentary as "many other Iranians", and identified in the

visual footage accompanying the commentary as poor working people (Table 7.viii), as opposed to the elite of the society, the governing class represented in the sequence of the royal celebration (Table 7.vi), and the well-off classes represented in the sequence on Westernization of the elite children (Table 7.vii). The poor working people who, in the discourse of the film, are identified as the "many other Iranians" who are the dissatisfied, and who are the main body of the revolution.

| Image	Commentary
An old villager in the streets of Tehran	"But many other Iranians saw the modernization as alien and corrupt".
Subtitle: Sorour Moradi Nazari Tehran 1975	S. Moradi speaks to the camera: "Cabarets were open, bars were opened and our media were in the hands of those who promoted Western culture. They stimulated the emotions of our youth. Our singers were singing very cheap corrupting songs. This was pushing the young people towards drinking, corruption and all the ills of the society".
Chadori women walking away from camera	"Disoriented and confused, many longed for the moral certainties of their past".

Table 7.viii: Many other Iranians (the non-elite)

Because of the importance of the visual and verbal content of these shots, the words are accompanied by exact images in each shot, to clarify the correspondence between what is

said and what is shown, and what can eventually be received by the audience as these "many other Iranians". As seen in the table, the accompanying image of the commentary phrase "many other Iranians…" is a medium shot of an old man who is in the focus of the camera against a blurred background of a crowd of passers-by. His appearance, the way he is dressed, suggests that he comes from either a rural or poor urban background. The other image is of two women in black chador in a medium shot, with their backs to the camera. An interview shot follows in which we have another *chadori* woman, followed again by another shot focused on *chadori* women from among other passers-by. The importance of having women in these shots might refer to the iconic value of their appearance, a dominant visual theme in the representation of the post-revolutionary Iran, which will be discussed fully in the next chapters. Their particular way of dressing, in a black chador, can be interpreted as a very strong visual sign of religiosity, especially by the non-Iranian viewers, who most probably are not able to differentiate between the various significations of such a way of dressing.

The theme of religiosity becomes a dominant way of representing the Iranian people, at least partly through this visual motif of *chadori* women. Analyzing the verbal content of the interview shots in this sequence shows how the themes of religiosity and traditionality are also married through the use of the *chadori*-motif. What is considered, in the words of the female interviewee (Table 7.viii), as "corruption" and the cause of "all the ills of the society", is a cluster of concepts such as "cabarets, bars, singing, dancing and a media promoting western culture". This is the exact parallel of the same cluster in the elite sequence, where these symbols of 'Western culture' are considered as signs of modernity for the elite. The kind of culture that the interviewee is identified with through her comments is, on the one hand, anti-modernist (through the verbal negation of the 'symbols of modernity'), and, on the other hand, religious (through the use of her iconic mode of dress). There are enough rhetorical reasons to argue that her own natural culture is the same as that implied by the film to be the authentic native culture. On this basis it can be concluded that:

a) A cultural identity is assumed for Iranians that is: essentially religious (through

iconic use of women and images of mosques); essentially incompatible with modernity (alienation from modernization, and from the modern culture of the elite); that belongs to the past/is backward looking ("many longed for the certainties of the past") and is resistant to change (alienation from the changes under the King's Revolution).

b) This fixed cultural identity is taken as the main cause of people's alienation from, and their rise against, the Shah, thus identifying the revolution as a revolt against modernity. The theme of 'going back in time' is developed further in describing the post-revolutionary society. It is also important to note that in defining the revolution in terms of an identity crisis, the film makes the revolution an exclusively socio-cultural phenomenon, ignoring its political and economic roots.

The first assumption can be said to be in line with the overall assumptions about the 'authentic culture' of Iran and its inherent problems with modernisation as represented in many of the documentaries examined in this research, particularly *A King's Revolution* (ITV, 1964), which seems to be the source here for the illustration of Iran's modernisation under the Shah. It is interesting, though, to notice that in defining the causes of the revolution, the film seems to be completely oblivious to the shortcomings of both the Shah's revolution and that his type of leadership was already causing discontent apparent enough in 1964 to be included in *A King's Revolution.* As discussed in Chapter 6, *A King's Revolution* is critical of the Shah because of his 'undemocratic' manner, particularly in regard to freedom of expression. I cite once again the prophetic statements that end *A King's Revolution*, where the very issue of 'democracy' is again highlighted as the basis for any potential uprising against the Shah:

> But Iran is not a democracy yet. This is a king's revolution. If it fails, he would go with it…the crowds which praise him today would swallow him tomorrow. There can be no turning back now: the king has started a revolution; he may yet prove to be a principle victim.

A King's Revolution is not the only source that could have served for a more comprehensive discussion of the roots of the revolution in the film. The footage of a 1974 interview with the Shah on CBS *60 Minutes* by reporter Mike Wallace, for example, is

just one of many written and filmic documents (by Westerners) that could be used to give some hints as to the accusations of widespread corruption, favouritism and the torture of political prisoners under the Shah.[15] To do this though would have undermined the filmmaker's main argument that the Iranian revolution was 'essentially' a movement for the revival of religious fundamentalism. That is perhaps the reason why the film also ignores other aspects of the revolution, such as the economic basis of the public discontent with the Shah's modernisation. Referring once more to *A King's Revolution*, those who are mentioned there as the "enemies of the king's revolution" are among different social groups with various grievances. One group in particular, the urban working class, is mentioned to be against the Shah because there is "no benefit of the king's revolution for them" (Table 6.x). This very group are among those 'many other Iranians' who, the narrator of *People's Century* claims, were alienated from the Shah's modernisation because it was culturally 'disorienting' and 'confusing' to them.

In summing up this section, it seems necessary to clarify what the film regards as 'many other Iranians'. Referring to the visual content of the sequence shown in Table 7.viii, the population of Iran is represented through images of only the rural or the urban poor. According to the discourse of the film, members of the urban middle class are excluded from the body of the people participating in the revolution, first visually from sequences like the sequences of "many other people" (the urban poor), and second conceptually, by including the urban middle classes in sequences representing the elite of the Shah's regime, presenting them indirectly as pro-Shah. In this way the Iranian revolution is implied to be in opposition to the socio-political and cultural inclinations of the urban middle class who represent the modern face of Iran in the film.

7.3.2 The Revolution

The emphasis on the religious and cultural nature of the revolution continues as summarised in Table 7.iv (Part 3, Segment (f)). In this sequence, the initiative in starting

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[15] This footage was used in a documentary titled *Crisis in Iran* by the American History Channel in 1996. Just like People's Century, the episode was part of a series *The 20th Century With Mike Wallace* looking at the preceding and following events of the fall of the Iranian revolution.

and directing the revolution is given to the clergy. The events of the revolution up to the formation of the Islamic republic start with the comment: "In the mosques, Mullahs directed people's resentment towards the Shah". An interview shot follows where a clergyman introduced in the caption as Hadi Gaffari, Mullah, 1978, says, "The important point was that within the mosque, people would listen to principles rooted in our history, principles which are presented in our beliefs. The regime of the Shah was fundamentally considered as an amoral regime". These comments give a religious content to a protest which starts in "the mosques" and was "directed" by religious leaders, who promoted people's resentment by talking about principles rooted in their 'history' and 'beliefs' (implying the ideological nature of the protest), and the 'amorality' of the Shah's regime (implying the moral nature of the protest).

These comments are accompanied by images of interiors of mosques, mullahs preaching for the people inside a mosque, a still from Gaffari from years earlier talking into a loudspeaker over heads of a crowd of demonstrators, and then the present day interview shot of him. This visual rhetoric dominated by the symbols of religiosity, the mosque and the clergy contributes to a discourse of 'revolution as a religious resurgence', giving it a religious content and a religious leadership via visual associations. The next step, the whole idea of the revolution, and the initiative in starting the political action, and the leadership, are attributed to the clergy and embodied one man: Ayatollah Khomeini. The commentary continues:

> The mullahs drew their inspirations from the exiled Khomeini who kept in daily touch from Paris. His staff sent recordings of the Ayatollah to be played in public meetings at home, and in Iran that message began to be converted into political actions. At first the demonstrations were isolated and the Shah would up to now rely on his secret police, sending troops trying to contain them. But the protest continued to grow and in 1978 martial law was declared.

Khomeini is introduced at this point as the sole inspiration for the revolution, his staff, here identified as mullahs, are identified as the medium of passing the message to the people, and his message is identified the source of the political action. Using the words 'at first' in the commentary makes the temporal arrangement of the events of the revolution seem to be as follows: Khomeini started the idea of revolution, other clergy

conveyed this message to the masses, followed then by political action in the form of street demonstrations. The chronological order of the events shown implies that the events of the revolution began only in the spring of 1977, six months before the victory and twelve months into the beginning of street demonstrations. Omissions of temporal 'events' reduce the sequence to a set of cause-effect 'facts' happening in quick succession, without reference to contributing complexities.

This sequence simplifies the revolution by omitting (or being unaware of) information about the composition of different revolutionary forces and their role in advancing the events of the revolution. In particular, as referred to by Abrahamian, non-religious organizations, such as the National Front or its many affiliates like the Liberation Movement, all played important roles in the events of the revolution like organizing the first mass gatherings, critical demonstrations, and general strikes (Abrahamian, 1988: 506-522). Another important group excluded from the film are guerrilla organizations whose activities against the regime of the Shah had started in 1970, and whose impact on the events of the revolution from the second half of 1977 was decisive for the victory (ibid: 495).

Furthermore, there is not enough reference made to the 'ordinary people' as a force driving the revolution in its early and established phases. These people are first depoliticized in the film as being driven by their desire to go back in time, as discussed and evidenced earlier in this chapter (7.3.1 Modernisation). The film presents the people it shows as drawn to action merely by "mullah's sermons" and "Khomeini's messages". According to Abrahamian, the people's participation in demonstrations and their initiation of industrial and general strikes was known to be driven by solid economic, social and political reasons (Abrahamian, 1988: 515- 517). Although the film shows the scale of demonstrations both in images and in words such as "millions", and the "the protests continue to grow", "millions defied him", it can be said that the information that is omitted is the socio-economic and political motivation. The religious motivation is over-emphasized if we take as evidence for this also the relatively short running time given to the year and a half of revolutionary events in relation to a similar length of

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running time devoted to the short arrival procession of Khomeini on his return from exile from the airport to Tehran. Similarly, for the whole filmed duration of revolutionary events, there is no interview with anyone present at the time, whereas there are two lengthy interview scenes about Khomeini's return, one with a bystander who was a child in the crowd at the time and another with Mohsen Rafighdooust, who was given "the honor of driving Imam's car". In this interview he describes in detail his feelings and excitement when driving the car. The bystander describes his memory of trying to catch a glimpse of Khomeini passing in the car.

The film also downplays the role of violent clashes between people and the army and the subsequent deaths which acted as a catalyst in expediting the downfall of the Shah. From among all the violent events only one, Black Friday, is presented in the film. This is, however, passed over quickly in this commentary: "Black Friday left more than a hundred dead". This is the only time in the film that the issue of casualties is mentioned.

The people's participation is highlighted, however, in the next sequence, presenting the participation of millions in the demonstration of Ashura Day, a holy day in the Shi'ite calendar, falling three months after the events of Black Friday. Although this is a very important date and the film acknowledges the significance of the day it does not inform the viewer that the Shah had already reached an agreement with the leaders of the opposition to observe the powerfully felt religious significance of the day, and decreed that he would withdraw the troops so long as the opposition agreed that only a quiet public gathering would take place (Abrahamian, 1988). In effect, the people therefore did not defy either the Shah's decree or agreement between him and the opposition. The demonstration attended by "millions" may or may not have been 'quiet', but an air of solidarity against the Shah was certainly present in the form of placards and chants. The commentary accompanying the shots of millions of people in the streets on that holy day says:

> … the Shah [had] said the demonstration planned to mark the holy festival of Ashura would also be stopped by the army, but when millions defied him he was forced to withdraw his tanks.

The background to the withdrawal of tanks, according to Abrahamian, was because of the ratification of the historical manifesto of the revolution by the leaders of the opposition to the Shah. This reason, which may or may not have been 'religiously motivated' for the sake of Ashura Day, is not the reason presented in the film. The sequence is one example of missing information about possible political motivations behind the ratifying of a holy day. The real importance of a date and the sequence of the events of the revolution are distorted in order to conceptualize the revolution as an uprising with religious motivations and content. Here the sequence again makes an association between the forceful and significant presence of "millions of people" and a religious motivation, "the holy festival of Ashura". Depoliticizing the motivation of people and minimizing their role in directing the events of the revolution and also the exclusion of socio-cultural and political forces results, even by default, in highlighting the role of the mullahs and Khomeini.

Another strategy utilised to support the film's perspective on the revolution is the use of interview shots, in which individuals give their personal interpretations of events. Referring to the first two interviews in this part, both the content of the shots and the way they are edited in the sequence help to give the revolution a religious content. The first interview, with a woman called Soroush Moradi, presents moral issues as the root of people's outrage, and is cut to the voice-over comments: "disoriented and confused, *many* longed for the moral certainties of their past" (Table 7.viii). The content of her speech is acts as supportive evidence for the commentary which follows immediately, thus her views representing that of "many" in the commentary. The same thing happens again in the next two shots. There the voice-over comments: "in the mosques mullahs directed people's resentment towards the Shah", cut to the interview with Hadi Gaffari who supports the comment by presenting the public dissatisfaction and protest as being religiously motivated. This strategy is useful in making the film's role as a supposed presenter of documented 'fact' seems impartial because the 'evidence' comes from the people.

Another present-day eye-witness interviewee introduced as Mohsen Shahosseini, Tehran

carpenter, refers to the content of the chants in demonstrations. First, there is an aerial extreme long shot showing huge crowds of demonstrators on and below a bridge in 1978, as the commentary says: "Mr. Shahosseini was crossing the Sadi Bridge when he began a new chant". This is cut to a shot of him in the interview explaining the message of his chant: "I said people why don't you say what is in your heart, why don't you say what is Islamic, why don't you say what God wants. You should say death to the Shah". The shot is then cut to a high-angle medium shot of a demonstrator's face shouting: "death to the Shah", and then to an extreme long shot of demonstrators repeating the same chant. By editing the sound track in this way, people's chant "death to the Shah" seems to be an answer to his request "people, you should say death to the Shah". Moreover, by editing the image of one man to the image of millions of people who repeat parts of his words, the film is making his opinion that of those millions, i.e. what is "in their heart" is "what is Islamic", "what God wants", and that is "death to the Shah". Once more, the protest against the Shah is given a religious motivation, through the testimony and memory of one interviewee. The editing instruction for the film seems explicitly biased to emphasize an atmosphere of spontaneous religious feeling among the people, with little evidence of social or economic revolutionary motives.

7.3.3 The post-revolutionary society

The idea of the revolution as religious fanaticism is further developed in the next part presenting the post-revolutionary society. A monolithic and retrogressive Islamic discourse is presented as the organizing principle of the post-revolutionary society, and is built up through an overwhelming emphasis on the words and images of Khomeini, the iconic use of *chadori* women and symbols of Western culture, and the voice-over commentary. Over shots of Khomeini talking to chanting crowds, the voice-over comments: "Khomeini said: We want Islam, only Islam. Two months after he returned, and in a referendum in which 98% of Iranians voted for him, he declared the first day of the government of God". The commentator's avoidance of using words such as "republic" and replacing them by words such as "the government of God" is noticeable. The theme of (religious) retrogression is then fully developed in the next few shots. The camera frames a street full of cars and people, and then tilts up to frame a mosque in the misty

background, creating the effect of the dominance of the ghostly might of religion over the society (Images 4 and 5).

Image 4: Screen shot from *People's Century*

Image 5: Screen shot from *People's Century*

This is followed by shots of an Ashura ceremony, and accompanied by the following comments: "Then he [Khomeini] set about turning the clock back: cinemas and bars closed. Iranians were now to be governed by religious laws, made 1300 years ago in time of Mohammad". Once more, the concept of "turning back time" is considered to happen as the result of the denouncement of Western culture (cinemas and bars) and adherence to religion. The emphasis on the image and words of Khomeini, the symbol of religiosity, reinforces the theme of turning back to religion as the goal of the revolution. He is introduced as "the political and spiritual leader, both Pope and president at the same time". While the first part of the comment may be accurate, the second part is misleading, as presidency in Iran is a separate position to leadership, and the president is chosen via election. A great part of the running time of this sequence is also devoted to Khomeini's lectures containing religious themes.[16] As Moaadel has noted, although the dominant view in the literature on the Iranian revolution is that the revolution was Islamic, the concept of Islamic Revolution could be misleading because

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[16] The exact content of the lecture is as follows:
In the name of Allah, the companionate, the merciful. We hope God almighty will bless all Muslims, our country and our people on this holy eve. To serve Islam is to serve mankind. Mankind is today enslaved in the hands of those who supervise them in tyranny. All nations are caught in the traps of these powers who consider themselves pious and competent. What shall we do with the conditions which prevail in the world today? There are those who claim to be the followers of Jesus, who said if one slapped your face, you should turn it so that he would slap it on the other side. But this is just a lie. Jesus would not make such an error. If he had given the opportunity, he would do exactly what Moses did to the Pharaoh.

It does not capture the real content of the post-revolutionary changes… with the end of the revolution, Islamic discourse became the ideology of power. In contrast to the revolutionary situation of 1977-1979, Islam was no longer the most important organizing principle of society (257).

The sequence also contains the issue of women and the *chadori*-motif, reinforcing the themes of religiosity and turning back (to tradition). Women are shown sitting at the back of a bus, and in a gathering in a room reading some books, accompanied by the commentary: "Step by step society was re-segregated by sex. On buses women now used separate doors and sat at the back. They were encouraged to live separately, bringing up children and studying the Quran". Although there is a common belief in the West that under the Shah sex segregation did not persist, culturally habituated social norms such as separate groups of men and women in buses were acceptable in Iran as soon as buses were introduced and throughout the Shah's reign. (To discuss what type of changes affected the social role or status of women after the revolution is beyond the scope of the present thesis.)

In effect, the extent of change in post-revolutionary Iran is reduced to the two concepts of sex-segregation (women's issues) and anti-Western gestures (Westernization). The same two concepts are used in previously discussed sequences as the criteria for measuring the extent of development and modernization under the Pahlavis (see Tables 7.ii, 7.iii, section 7.3.1 and Table 7.v). Therefore the progress in Westernizing the society and female emancipation marked the progress towards modernity. The reverse of this process, which according to the film happens in the post-revolutionary society, marks the rejection of modernity and a return to traditionalism. This view entails certain mainstream theories of modernity in European intellectual history which "consider Western culture an essential part of modernization, viewing non-Western cultures and traditions as fundamentally hostile to modernity and incompatible with modernization" (Mirsepassi, 2000: 2).

7.4 Concluding remarks

In summing up, the focus and argument of the chapter is, firstly, the Iranian revolution of 1979 was represented through the rhetoric of an Islamic resurgence. This rhetoric is made evident through accumulating key themes through footage from past documentaries of the 1930s to 1960s. These older documentaries are used in *People's Century* in order to reuse the specific discourses from those previous decades, extending them to interpret, justify and judge contemporary world events. The discourses were also bound up with the theme of modernisation as it was beginning to emerge as a global factor in politics and economics (as discussed in Chapter 5 on industrialisation of Iran and in Chapter 6 on Iran' modernisation). This cumulative effect, I have argued, is central to documentary representations of Iran.

Secondly, I have shown that the assumption of a progressive timeline away from medievalism has partly shaped the argument of the film. The main premise of the argument is that Iran is stuck in some pro-religious anti-progressive time warp, leading to the inevitability of a resurgent wave of a pro-religious, anti-secular, anti-Westernism culminating a fundamentalist revolution.

Consequently, my evidence from the documentary substance of *People's Century* shows how a picture of the revolution is presented based on culturally-centred attitudes and ideologies. In the broader context of socio-political discourses, which regard all forms of activities involving a religious, and particularly an Islamist, rhetoric as uniformly anti-modern, the film therefore forces itself to perceive Iranian history and society within a so-called 'global' movement of religious upheaval. The revolution then becomes, in the film's perspective, living proof of Iran's being swept along in the force of an almost a tidal surge against modernity.

In Chapter 8, the documentary consequences of the revolution for Iranian society place the revolution in a causal relationship with all social and cultural realities to the extent that Iran itself is in a hiatus of fundamentalism. This fundamentalist discourse will be shown in Chapter 8 to clash with the discourses of British documentaries, to the extent that they present fundamentalism as preventing Iran from engaging with progress *per se.*

Chapter 8

Post-revolutionary Iran in British documentary

This chapter continues in an historical direction from the Pahlavi dynasty's final days through an exploration of some representations of post-revolutionary Iran in British documentary film (1980-2005). This chapter is also a continuation of what was discussed in Chapter 3. Here, I aim to make a parallel study of a body of documentaries made on Iran since 1979 in order to elaborate on the continuity and/or change in documentary representations of Iran. To do so, I draw upon the concept of Islamic Fundamentalism and the ways it has been applied in discourses about the Middle East.

The significance of the concept of Islamic Fundamentalism for the present thesis is that the Iranian revolution of 1979 plays a central role both in Western accounts of the rise of political Islam (Halliday, 1996: 107), and also in the documentary representations of post-1979 Iran. As an event that put an end to the pro-West reign of the Pahlavi dynasty (1925- 1979), and replaced it with an Islamic republic that claimed independence of, and opposition to, the West, the revolution was seen as the "manifestation of Islamic Fundamentalism" (Michael Fischer cited in Sayyid, 2003:7), and was conceptualised as Islamic resurgence (P.J. Vatikiotis cited in Sayyid, 2003:7). It has also been argued that the assumption of a monolithic and essentialist Islam that has led to the fear of an Islamic bloc poised against the West (Esposito, 1999: 222-5), and the subsequent rise of a phenomena known as "Islamophobia" in the West (Runnymede Trust, 1997), have been linked to the revolution and the Islamic government it brought to power (Roberson, 1998, Piscatori, 1986, Halliday, 1996). Consequently, in British media the concept of Islamic Fundamentalism was used "as a way of understanding the revolution and as a criterion for the selection of news about Iran" (Mohsen, 1991: 123).

As discussed in Chapter 7, the Iranian revolution of 1979 was represented in documentary film through the rhetoric of an Islamic resurgence, as a fundamentalist revolution, and subsequently a monolithic and retrogressive Islamic discourse, was presented as the organizing principle of the post-revolutionary society. In this chapter I

discuss the representation of post-revolutionary Iran in more detail by looking at two ways in which the discourse of Islamic Fundamentalism is articulated in documentary representations of post-revolutionary Iran. Firstly, I identify the themes which are most associated with post-revolutionary Iran in British documentary films. I will argue that the selection of stories and subject matters about Iran shows the prevalence of the themes associated with the discourse of Islamic Fundamentalism.

Secondly, I focus on the textual analysis of sample documentaries in order to identify the concepts and markers that construct Iran as an Islamic Fundamentalist society. Two closely identifiable and overlapping concepts shape the image of post-revolutionary Iranian society in British documentary, namely, the 'Islamic-ness' of Iran and the revolutionary background of Iran. The representational strategies used in these documentary films make constant visual and verbal references to the presupposed 'Islamic-revolutionary traits' of post-1979 Iran, and therefore depict the country as being governed by these traits, hence the construction of an 'Islamic-revolutionised' Iran in those films.

8.1 The discourse of Islamic Fundamentalism

Islamic Fundamentalism, Zubaida explains, is a term "which has been created in current discourses on the Middle East and elsewhere which has an identifiable but not strictly limited range of reference" (Zubaida, 1989: 38). In Western discourses, Fundamentalism as a category is based on the dichotomy of 'normal' and 'practises which disrupt the normal'. It is conceptualised in a "historical site which establishes the western cultural practices as the template by which the world is described, policed and mastered" (ibid, 1989: 16) hence the equation of normal with Western. Fundamentalism, on the other hand, is predominantly equated with Islamic movements:

> Although resurgent Islam may be only one form of fundamentalism, it is the form which is most often cited as an example of it. Fundamentalism itself is made flesh by drawing upon examples of 'Islamic fundamentalism'. Veiled (Muslim) women and bearded (Muslim) men, book burners and suicide bombers have emerged as fundamentalist icons enjoying recurrent Hollywood canonization. Consequently, although representing only one aspect of global fundamentalism, Islamic fundamentalism has become a metaphor for fundamentalism in general (ibid: 8).

In the Western media, Islamic Fundamentalists became equivalent to the 'true' Muslims (Abbas, 2000:65), and subsequently "an almost organic link between Islam and violence" was conveyed in the media representations of Muslims (Salamé, 1998:32).

In order to show how a discourse of Islamic Fundamentalism can affect the documentary representations of Islamic societies such as Iran, below I discuss the documentary *Paradise Found* (C4, 2005). My aim is to show how an entity called the Islamic world, or Muslim world, is created in British documentaries and how the entirety of such a world can be connected to contemporary terrorist acts committed in the name of Islam.

8.1.1 Documentary representations of Islam

The film *Paradise Found* (C4, 2005) is a journey across the "Muslim world" from the countries in central Asia to the Middle East in search of "Islamic art" and architecture. It presents examples of "Islamic art" in Mali, India, Syria, Egypt and Iran. The presenter-commentator introduces the subject of the film in these words:

> The truest evidence that any civilisation ever leaves behind is its art. Art never lies. It didn't lie about the Greeks, it didn't lie about Romans, and it certainly doesn't lie about Islam.

At the same time, the presenter tells us about the phone call he had from London about the 7th July 2005 bombing, while he was in the filming location: "I heard seven bombs exploded in London this morning… the handicraft of, probably, Al-Qaeda… you think dark things at this moment, and I am thinking about this film. Is it right to be making it? It's about the wonders of Islamic art… is that still an appropriate subject?" He then explains about the fascinating beauty of the places he had visited and the kindness and the hospitality he was shown by the local people in all the filming locations, concluding that "not to have made this film, would have been utterly dishonest". Despite the positive statement that concludes the presenter's comments, the association he has already made between the two very remote phenomena, the London bombing and the making of a film about Islamic art, points to a presupposition about Islam on the side of the speaker; that is, that there must be some sort of connection between various phenomena that are deemed to be Islamic. The filmmaker's hesitation about the appropriateness of his chosen

subject matter and the final disclosure to the audience of his personal tension are further signs that perhaps such a presupposition is a common belief shared by the filmmaker and his audience alike.

The filmmaker's approach to his subject matter, Islamic art, can also be viewed as revealing similar assumptions about Islam. The story of Islamic art starts with comments about the origins of the Islamic religion:

> Islam was born in one of the hottest and least hospitable places in the world. Its creators were desert people. Its moods were desert moods. To feel its arts, I suggest considering the desert dwellers' relationship with oases.

These lines are accompanied by the image of a desert. The narrative then travels to Medina, where the first "Islamic society" was born, telling the story of the Prophet Mohammad's first settlement, and the creation and development of the Great Mosque of Medina. The history of the Islamic religion and the geography of its expansion over the world are then narrated, before introducing examples of the Islamic architecture in Syria, Egypt and Iran. Two points are observable in relation to this account of Islamic art, as discussed in the following paragraphs.

First, there is a link made between the origins of Islam as a religion and the entire history of architecture in Muslim societies. A particular geographical setting, the deserts of Arabia, is assumed to be the original and continuous inspiration for the art work throughout the entire Muslim world during the centuries and in hugely disparate geographical places, climates, and cultures. Thus it can be concluded that the film's narrative draws on the presumption that there is a coherent 'Islamic' whole or spirit that transcends and binds together numerous distinct historical and geographical settings. The film appears to suggest that the kind of art and architecture that is created in places where Islam is the dominant religion has to have originated from one essence, that of 'Islamic-ness'.

Paradise Found is by no means an isolated example. Titles such as *Public Eye: Islam's Militant Tendency* (BBC2, 1995), *Assignment: Islam Year Zero* (BBC2, 1996), and *Sufi*

Soul: The Mystic Cult of Islam (C4, 2005) are but a few of the numerous documentaries made on the premise that Islam is an all-inclusive spirit that runs through societies as diverse as the countries across Asia, Europe and Africa. Typically, these documentaries concentrate on broad themes such as Islamic art, Muslim women and the history of Islam, or on political issues such as the emergence of Islamic movements. These films are either in the form of a series of programmes, or in the form of a single programme divided into a few parts, each exploring a particular society in relation to the central theme of the programme/series. Although in many of these films there is a direct reference to the differences between the societies presented, the very act of gathering them under the generic title of Islamic or Muslim points to the underlying logic of the filmmakers: the presumption, perhaps, of an essence such as 'Islamic-ness' or 'Muslim-ness', or an imagined sphere such as the Islamic or the Muslim world. As examples of these documentaries that include Iran in their programme and subsequently as part of the imagined Islamic world, the following can be discussed: *Living Islam: Struggling with Modernity* (BBC, 1993), *Langan behind Lines* (BBC, 2001), *Faultlines* (ITV1, 2004), and *Correspondent: Letter to America* (BBC2, 2001).

The treatment of Islam as a particular mode of existence that prevails equally in what is in fact a variety of Islamically-oriented nations (Esposito, 1999: 263), is similar to the treatment of the Orient in the discourse of Orientalism. The particular essence of 'Oriental-ness' that connected all the components of an Oriental setting previously finds a counterpart in the current representations of Islam. As in the case of the 'Orient' in the discourse of Orientalism, 'Islamic-ness' is a quality, or an essence, that transcends time and place, and shapes the (imaginary) history and geography of the Islamic World. In the case of *Paradise Found*, this 'Islamic World' is recreated partly by the motif of desert that still in this case constitutes the main part of an Islamic (previously Oriental) setting, and partly by the musical score, an Arabic tune, that accompanies the images of all the cultures shown in the film, whether Arab or non-Arab. Like the other countries shown in the film, Iran is represented as part of a larger whole, the sphere of Islam. The film is just one example of the representations of the post-revolutionary Iran in British documentary

that is shaped by constructing it as an Islamic space marked by qualities that shows its Islamic-ness.

Referring back to the opening scene of *Paradise Found*, the second point established there is the association between Islam and the terrorist activities of Islamic groups such as Al-Qaeda. Such associations can be read in the context of the discourse of Islamic Fundamentalism. Islamic Fundamentalism in current discourses on the Middle East "refers to modern political movements and ideas, mostly oppositional, which seek to establish, in one sense or another, an Islamic state" (Zubaida, 1989:38). However, as Halliday has observed, the concept of Islamic Fundamentalism has been conflated with "the mere fact of the people being 'Islamic' in some general religious and cultural sense" (Halliday, 1996: 107). In the same line with Halliday, Sayyid believes that the concept of Islamic Fundamentalism has emerged in the West as an analytical category, "a way of representing and analysing a series of events involving Muslim communities" (Sayyid, 2003:7). The association of Islam with the political activities of Al-Qaeda in *Paradise Found* is an example of how a discourse of Islamic Fundamentalism is articulated in British documentaries in the discussions (of non-political subject matters) related to Muslims and Islamic societies.

8.1.2 'Islamic Iran' in documentary

In general terms, Islamic Fundamentalism refers to the role of Islam as a symbol of political legitimacy and a source of political and social activism and popular mobilisation emerging in the public life of Muslim societies. Nevertheless, it has been argued that since the 1970s, the application of the term Islamic Fundamentalism in Western debates on the Middle East has been put to the service of "confounding the presuppositions of a development theory predicated on the progressive Westernisation and secularisation of society" (Esposito, 1997:2).

The problem with the use of the concept of Islamic Fundamentalism in discussing development arises from the fact that the concept presupposes the existence of a continuous historical essence of Islam from which social patterns, mentalities and

moralities emanate in the Muslim world. Zubaida has concluded that drawing upon the concept of Islamic Fundamentalism to interpret the historical development of societies in the Muslim world is problematic because

> It enhances the tendency to read history backwards and to ignore or dismiss the secular and secularising forces, institutions and practices in the modern history of the Middle East and the lengthy episodes in which nationalist, liberal and leftist politics predominated. It obscures the fact that behind religious rhetoric and symbolism, social and political practice remains, for the most part unrelated to religion, notably in the Islamic Republic of Iran (Zubaida, 1989: xiii).

I have already shown in Chapter 7 the application of the concept of Islamic Fundamentalism in representing the Iranian revolution of 1979 in British documentary. There it was discussed that in *People's Century* (BBC, 1995) the revolution is read in terms of a religious revival, a turning back to "the fundamentals of one's belief" (Table 7.i), and a reaction against the uncertainties of modern life, in particular "fast-track modernisation" (section 7.2.2). This particular view of the revolution can also be interpreted as the tendency to read backwards into the revolutionary process, namely to conclude from the assumingly 'Islamic-ness' of the post-revolutionary society (the constitution of an Islamic Republic) that there must have been an Islamic motivation for the occurrence of the revolution. Matin has shown that such a tendency underpins many of the Western interpretation of the revolution (Matin, 2008). Such perspectives on the revolution not only make an even stronger association between the revolution and post-revolutionary Iran with Islamic Fundamentalism in British discourses, but are also in tune with the earlier British discourses concerning Iran's development and modernity. Whereas in the discourses of social development, Iran stood for the 'under-developed', 'non-industrialised', and 'traditional' (non-modernised) 'other' of the West earlier; the concept of a 'fundamentalist society' defines Iran as the 'other' of Western democracy in the more recent discourses of political development.

Subsequently, in the British media, the concept of an Islamic resurgence has become a means and backdrop to British understanding of the revolution (Mohsen, 1991; Richardson, 2004). The main themes associated with Islamic Fundamentalist representations of the revolution and the post-revolutionary Iran in British media can be categorised under two main headings: 1) the theme of violence and/or threat towards the

West and Western values, and 2) repression of their own people, especially of women (Mohsen, 1991; Richardson, 2004; Sayyid, 2003). These themes also appear frequently in British documentaries on post-revolutionary Iran as discussed below. The prevalence of such themes shows that in selecting stories about post-1979 Iranian society there is a tendency to focus on the aspects of the society that further contribute to the image of Iran as a threat not only to the Western interest worldwide but also to the spread of Western values of democracy and progress through the suppression of those values in Iranian society.

The concern over the British interest in Iran in particular and in the Middle East in general as the result of the 1979 revolution became an instant subject matter of many British television programmes even as the revolution was still unfolding. The *Money Programme* series and *Inside Business* series, for example, had several items between 1979 to 1981 on the subject of the revolution and the effect of toppling the Shah and the establishment of the new revolutionary regime on British industry and commerce, British business investment in Iran, and the broader impact on the oil market and its implications for the Western world. In one of the 1979 episodes of *Inside Business,* the programme investigates the impact of the change on English businesses in Iran. The synopsis of the programme from the online archive of British Universities Film and Video Council reads as follows:

> Five years ago British businessmen joined a new "gold-rush" in the Middle East where there was suddenly plenty of business to be done. Now Iran's bloody revolution has changed the fortunes of the British firms involved. Contracts have been cancelled, payments withheld, work disrupted, staff evacuated and the lives of those who stayed behind imperilled. Inside Business has been watching on the spot as this drama unfolds (BUFVC, 2003).

The success of the revolution meant the downfall of the Shah and the loss of an ally for the West who secured the interest of Western countries in Iran's market. This fact alone can explain, at least partially, the cynicism, and at times outright hostility, to the Iranian revolution that continue in British documentary representations of it in the following decades.

One of the major subjects on the theme of violence or threat towards the West is the story of the hostage taking of the American embassy in Iran. The long duration of the event (444 days of captivity for the hostages) and its political importance meant that it received extensive coverage in the news and current affair series, as Naficy has observed, to the point of saturation:

> With all of its symbolism, suspense, outrage, political opportunism, and seemingly clear-cut characterisations of good and evil, the hostage-taking event lent itself readily to the spectacle of saturation media coverage" (Naficy, 1984: xx)

Even though the extract above is concerned more with the coverage of the event in the American media, the same could be said about British television, as the list of British programmes made on the topic shows (Appendix). The BBC's documentary on the subject, *444 Days to Freedom: The Inside Story*, which was made in 1998, almost two decades later, frames the subject in a similar narrative of good vs. evil focusing mainly on the events of the duration of hostage taking and the memories of the hostages, with no in-depth analysis of the reasons or the background to the crisis.

Similar treatment of the subject of hostage taking is observable in *People's Century: 1979 God Fights Back* (BBC, 1997). In the section where the aftermath of the revolution, in terms of Iran's relationship with the outside world is explained, the commentary states that "Iranians increased their own diplomatic isolation by making foreign countries part of the new demonology. For the Mullah there was little to choose between them". The image of a wall in Tehran with a huge graffiti quoting Khomeini in Persian appears on the screen as the commentator reads the English translation of it: "America is worse than Britain, Britain is worse than America, Russia is worse than both of them, and each one is worse and uglier than the others". The hostile relationship between Iran and foreign countries is represented as being exclusively the result of Iran's revolutionary propaganda. Without giving any further explanation for the reasons behind Iran's apparently self-imposed isolation from the outside world, the commentary then frames the hostage taking episode in the same rhetoric of revolutionary zeal:

> But it was the United States, the Great Satan, which was singled out for the support it had given the Shah. In November 1979 the American embassy in

Tehran was attacked by students. The staff was taken hostage and Khomeini called for an army of 20 million to confront the United States. Young men showed their fervour with military exercise in the street outside of the embassy.

In this way, the narrative of hostage crisis is represented through the prism of the discourse of Islamic Fundamentalism with the assumption that the animosity towards America in post-1979 Iran arises out of ideological and revolutionary fervour.

Another major category of themes concerning the threat of post-1979 Iran is that of an Iran armed with weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons (Appendix). Such programmes are usually investigative, building a hypothesis that Iran is inclined to get hold of weapons of mass destruction. As there has been no evidence of such intentions on the part of Iran, the discussion of the films is usually based on speculation drawn from interviews with 'experts' such as former CIA and other American officials, UN inspectors, or in the case of *Will Israel Bomb Iran* (BBC2, 2005), with Israeli politicians. For example, *Panorama: Arming for Islam* (BBC1, 1993), reports from Iran on what the reporter refers to as "the Islamic Republic intent on building up its arsenal and dominating the Gulf". The reporter then explains the hypothesis of the programme as this: "We ask: 'Is the West right to accuse the heirs of Khomeini of developing weapons of mass destruction, and 'What is the evidence of Iran arming for Islam?'". Despite the programme travelling far and wide to find 'evidence' that the technology for biological and nuclear weapons is being exported to Iran from various countries, no definite evidence is presented. Instead, Iran's 'intention' to get the bomb is confirmed by people like Robert Gates (introduced in the film as Director, CIA 1991-1993) who also suggests the rough timeframe for when Iran would have the bomb.

This speculation is built up not only in such interviews but also by the reporter's comments. We are told that Iran has signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and as the result the country's nuclear activities are monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The reporter then adds her own view of the matter as this: "They [IAEA inspectors] say they are satisfied with what they have seen [in Iran] and find no evidence

of a military programme. But that was what they concluded with Iraq and they were proved definitively wrong".

The Iran-Iraq war is presented as yet another reason why Iran might be intending to build up its arsenal: "the war left a great scar on the nation's psyche" for which reason "Iran will never again be unprepared for battle". The film's other hypothesis, which suggests that Iran is intending to build up its arsenal for Islam, is also supported by such rhetorical arguments. We are shown images of Friday prayers in Iran and are told that in such places "anti-Western sentiments and the desire to export the revolution" can be felt. This comment is about the only evidence in support of the claim that Iran needs weapons to support the export of its 'Islamic' revolution. The film ends on similar speculative comments about the West's potential reaction to Iran's potential access to the bomb:

> As Iranians see their nation emerging from the shadow of isolation, attempts to block progress reinforce their view of outside interference. The world stood by as another country in the region built the bomb. This time the West may not wait to see if Iran becomes that dangerous man.

As shown here, these documentary representations are based on speculation to a great degree in order to appropriate an image of Iran, and Iran's activities, as involving potential threats to the West.

I have thus far discussed how the prevalence of particular themes in British documentaries on Iran contribute to that image. To further that argument I would like to use an example of association and dissociation of Iran with certain themes by comparing and contrasting two documentaries. The first is *The Cult of the Suicide Bomber*, produced in 2005 by Channel 4. The presenter, who is a former CIA agent (Robert Baer), presents what he claims to be the secret history of suicide bombing from the truck bombers in Southern Lebanon to the suicide bombers who have committed atrocities in the Middle East, US and Europe. In his opening comments, he explains his mission, that is, to reveal the roots of suicide bombing, and also establishes his authority on the subject:

> My name is Robert Baer For 20 years I have worked as undercover agent in some of the Middle East's most dangerous countries. On seventh July 2005 London was the first European city to face a new form of terror, the home grown suicide

bomber…. For the British the bombers came from nowhere. But suicide bombing is not new. 25 years ago I was stationed in the Middle East when somebody killed 380 Westerners. The Beirut bombing was the worst terrorist attack until 9/11. I lost several colleagues in that explosion and although I have now left the CIA, I have made it my life's mission to find out who did it, and why and where the cult of suicide bombing started.

The next shot shows Bear in Tehran, which he introduces as "the capital of Iran, home to 70 million Muslims". After a short explanation about the history of Iran's relationship with the US, which deteriorated after the revolution and was followed by the accusation of Iran by the US of trying to develop nuclear weapons and sponsoring state terrorism, he concludes that "Iran is also the birth place of the suicide bomber". What we are given in the rest of the programme as the 'evidence' to this claim is in fact the presenter's hypothesis that one Iranian child martyr of the Iran-Iraq war, Hossein Fahmideh, was the sole initiator of what he introduces as the worldwide cult of suicide bombing. Hossein, only thirteen years of age, blew himself and an Iraqi tank up in an attempt to halt the progress of the Iraqi army towards his city. Based on this incident, which the presenter acknowledges was a "spontaneous and isolated act", he concludes that the entire cult was invented as Hossein "was to become a prototype for suicide bombers everywhere". The presenter tries to back his claim by bringing in even more hypotheses about what he assumes is the 1,400 year-old culture of martyrdom in Iran, and by putting forward to his interviewees rhetorical questions such as: "but Hossein was the first suicide bomber, wasn't he?" Regardless of the answers he gets, he concludes that: "Modern suicide bombing began here in Iran…. It was not until the cult was exported abroad that suicide bombing became a deadly effective weapon of war". In an attempt to push his hypothesis, the presenter brings the history of "modern suicide bombing" to as late as 1980s (the era of the Iran-Iraq war), leaving the audience to wonder if other examples of suicide bombing that happened elsewhere, such as Japanese suicide pilots of WWII, belonged to 'pre-modern' or perhaps 'non-modern' cults of suicide bombing and could not possibly be exported worldwide to become 'a deadly effective weapon'.

In contrast to *The Cult of the Suicide Bomber* and other numerous examples of documentaries where political Islam (and at times Iranian Shi'ism in particular) is associated with terrorism and other sorts of violence, the Channel 4 production *The Sufi Soul: The Mystic Cult of Islam* (2005) is an attempt to show a side of Islam different from its usual representations in the Western media. In the words of the presenter:

> In the Western media we are bombarded by frightening and negative images of Islam every day. Islam is depicted as a threatening force connected with fundamentalism, repression or terrorism… But there is another strand of Islam where music is placed at the heart of religious devotion. Sufism is the popular mystical strand of Islam with millions of followers around the world… It overturned all my preconceptions about Islam. It is peace-loving, tolerant, and pluralistic. It has created art, poetry and music across the Islamic world. It is a journey to the other side of the Islamic world.

To introduce Sufism, the presenter travels to Pakistan, Syria and Turkey and Morocco where he presents the history of Sufism and the rituals and beliefs of its current followers, showing various places of worship, ceremonies, rituals and festivals and interviewing various people. It is interesting to note that, as the country that has produced the greatest and most important part of the philosophy, art and poetry of Sufism (Iqbal, 2005: 85, Arbery, 1979: 106), Iran is not among the places visited by the presenter nor does he mention its relationship to the subject. This point becomes even more surprising when it comes to introducing the Persian poet Jalal-e-din Rumi. Rumi, in the words of the presenter, "has come to represent above others the ideals of Sufism worldwide… That Rumi was best-selling poet in America in 1990s is an indication of his contemporary appeal. Rumi has always been the most universal of all Muslim thinkers". There is however no indication of Rumi's cultural background or even the Persian language in which entirety of his work was composed. Instead, the geographical places of his birth and death are highlighted: "Rumi was born in what is now Afghanistan, but made Konya [in Turkey] his home in the mid-thirteenth century". Because the film gives no further information about Rumi, and considering that his shrine is in Turkey (as shown in the film), the people who are interviewed about him are all Turkish, and the spiritual rituals of Rumi's modern followers in Turkey are shown, it is very probable that the audience is drawn to a conclusion that Rumi was Turkish.

Unlike other documentaries made about many aspects of the Islamic World that include Iran as part of their discussions of such a world, *Sufi Soul* presents us with a case where Iran is excluded from the 'Islamic World'. Whether it is a deliberate attempt to dissociate Iran from particular aspects of the 'Islamic culture' or whether it is out of lack of research into the subject, the result is the same. If we contrast *Sufi Soul* with *The Cult of the Suicide Bomber*, it becomes apparent how Iran is forced into or out of specific narratives of Islam in British documentaries, which results in positioning Iran nearer to the Fundamentalist end of the spectrum of the Islamic world, and thus further away from the West and its cultural values. Such positioning is also affirmed in documentaries focusing on social and political repression of the Iranian society. Violation of human rights (and women's rights in particular), the persecution of the opposition and the suppression of the demands of Iranians for more social and political freedom are common subject matters in British documentaries on post-revolutionary Iran (Appendix). However, the discourse of Islamic Fundamentalism is also articulated in documentaries that try to show a more positive view of the revolution and of post-revolutionary Iran. As an example of such documentaries, below I examine *Faultlines: Iran* (ITV, 2004).

In *Faultlines: Iran*, the presenter, a former American hostage in Beirut (John McCarthy), travels to Iran in an attempt to show the country's current socio-political situation after the election of the reformist president Khatami. Through interviewing people and recounting the recent upheavals in Iran such as the pro-reformist student demonstrations, the presenter attempts to show the aspirations of and the possibility of change in Iran. The discussion of change, however, is framed within the discourse of Iran as an 'Islamic society'. In his discussions with an Iranian filmmaker (Maziar), the presenter observes that: "Maziar was quick to point out that the conflict here is not about practicing Islam. Islam has been here for 1,400 years. Rather it is about how some people in power interpret Islam". This observation of the post-revolutionary situation then serves as a platform to interpret the causality of the revolution. The revolution is defined by the presenter as a reaction against Western interference and influences by Iranians who believed that "embracing only Islamic principles would solve all the economic, political and social problems of Iran". The commentator concludes that "it was this radical

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approach to religion as preached by Ayatollah Khomeini that galvanised Iran's revolution that overthrew the despotic regime of the Shah and carried Iran's clerics to power". In the presenter's final comments, the revolution is once more presented as a religious movement, an experiment to examine the possibility of coexistence between democracy and Islam:

> I have come to realise that Islam and democracy can coexist given the time and space to do so. And all this began with an 80 year old Ayatollah and the Islamic revolution he led. Many mistakes may have been made, but at the same time Iranians found the freedom to experiment.

As shown in this section, in British documentaries the conflation of Islam as a religion and Islam as political rhetoric is one way of articulating the discourse of Islamic Fundamentalism in representations of Iran. In the following sections of this chapter, I examine other representational strategies that consolidate such perspectives about Iran in documentary films.

8.2 Revolutionary Iran in documentary

Another way of articulating the discourse of Islamic Fundamentalism in representing post-1979 Iran is to refer to its revolutionary background. Almost all of the documentary films made about post-1979 Iran refer to Iran as a revolutionary setting, even if they do not directly deal with the revolution, revolutionary regime or related subjects. As already mentioned, since the 1970s, even the mere fact of societies being Muslim can easily be conflated with fundamentalism (Halliday, 1996) a trend that is believed to have been helped to a great extent by the Iranian revolution of 1979 (Roberson, 1998, Piscatori, 1986). In British documentaries the association of the revolution with political Islam on the one hand, and the association of the post-1979 Iranian society with the revolution on the other hand, often results in the presumption of Islamic Fundamentalism as governing all aspects of life in Iran. I aim here to show that the constant visual and verbal references to what are supposed to be the signs of the Islamic-ness and revolutionary status of post-1979 Iran depict the country as a particular space in which these Islamic-revolutionary traits determine and define a particular mode of existence.

In order to elaborate the representational strategies used to create this space, I would like to examine the documentary *The Outsiders* (C4, 1998). In doing so, I apply methods of discourse analysis on a parallel study of the representation of Muslims in broadsheet media by J. E. Richardson. According to Richardson, in representing Muslims the "identification of a space" separate from "our own" space is the first stage in a three-part process of dissociation (division and rejection) of Them (Muslims) from Us (British). The second stage, according to Richardson, is to explain "the workings or composition of this space in contrast to 'our own'" and the third is to place "a (negative) social value on both this space and its composition". Richardson explains that "the third stage in the process often occurs simultaneously with one or other of the preceding stages given that value judgements are often achieved in reference and predication" (Richardson, 2004: 69). In depicting post-1979 Iran in British documentary, a parallel representational structure can be identified upon which the process of differentiation (often leading to negation) of post-revolutionary Iran takes place. The particular space created in the process can be called an Islamic-revolutionised one, as shown in the example below.

8.2.1 Iranians as "the outsiders"

The Outsiders (C4, 1998) is a documentary about Iran's football team in the 1998 World Cup. Nick Hancock and Andy Smart (the film's presenters) decide to make a documentary about Iran's football team, accompanying them on their journey to World Cup. Their motivations in choosing Iran, from among thirty-two other teams, are explained by Andy as follows:

> For two men [Andy and Nick] spending the last thirty years supporting Stoke and Farnborough respectively, Iran offered the sort of glamour that was difficult to resist. They were to be our team and we would follow them all the way to France and their final showdown with the Great Satan himself, the USA.

Iran's unique attraction to the presenters is here implied to be connected to its unique political stand in international arena, because Iranians are the only nation in the world who call the USA the Great Satan, and are thus different from the rest of the world. They are 'the Outsiders', as the title of the film suggests.

In the context of football, outsiders can mean the underdogs, and this is definitely one of the meanings that the film title denotes, as explained in the words of the presenter: "Iran: the last team to qualify, five hundred to one outsiders and the only team without a Chelsea player in their squad". But the political connotations of the word 'outsiders' is soon revealed as Andy continues his comments: "In the twenty years since their last World Cup, Iran had undergone revolution and war and become a withdrawn nation, unpopular, unloved and even perhaps misunderstood".[17] As his comments end, shots of Iranian fans in the streets of London, gathered for the result of the World Cup draw, are suddenly cut to the shot of a placard carried by a man reading "Down with the USA". This shot marks the beginning of a sequence which takes the viewer away from the familiar world of football, the World Cup, and the streets of London and to a completely different territory. This series of shots that fade in and out of the frame show agitated demonstrators from the 1979 revolution, religious ceremonies in Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini in a speech, and soldiers from the Iran-Iraq war (Table 8.i). The soundtrack accompanying the sequence however does not belong to the original footage and consists of a series of voices which clearly belong to western interviewees (ordinary people in the street), giving their opinions about Iran and Iranians, as shown in Table 8.i.

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[17]An *Independent* editorial commenting on Iran's entry into the World Cup reflects this dichotomy in popular imagination between Iranians (as imagined by the outside world, here Britain) and what is the normal (to the British):

The idea of a nation peopled entirely by fundamentalist mullahs and women deep in purdah taking to the turf in studded boots, shorts and shirts covered in advertising logos is enough to give the popular imagination a pause. (From *All World's a pitch; the fixture is friendly*, 6 December 1997, cited in Richardson, 2004: 69).

Image	Commentary
Shots of some women screaming and showing their fists to the camera (one veiled and one unveiled women together shows that this image belongs to demonstrations in revolution)	Voice 1 (male, British accent): everything I get is from TV, reading news … Voice 2 (male, British accent): backwards (with echo)…
slow-motion of women in black *chador*, beating themselves in mourning	Voice 3 (male, British accent): they are all brain-washed…
a huge crowd of male mourners, beating their heads	Voice 4 (male, British accent): violent towards the West… Voice 5: they are the baddies in the West…
a shot of Khomeini in one of his speeches	Voice 6 (male, British accent): Ayatollah…
a low angle, slow motion shot of a soldier (from Iran-Iraq war), moving his weapon against the sky.	Voice 7 (male, British accent): Muslims (with echo)… Voice 8 (male, British accent): a lot of people think they are enemy or something Voice 9 (female American accent): I think they are frightening, because they really believe what they are told.
A long shot of a group of female demonstrators in black *chador*, carrying a banner, walking away from the camera.	Voice 10 (male, British accent): If they don't do what they are told, you never see him again. That's it, you never see him again.
Close up of a banner in a demonstration in revolution, with image of Khomeini in the middle of it and slogans on two sides reading (in Persian) Independence, Freedom, Islamic Republic.	Voice 11 (female, British accent?): I am not able to imagine not being able to dress how I want and to do what I want Voice 12 (male, British accent): basically, I am sound… Voice 13 (female, British accent): I would definitely not like to live *there*…

Table 8.i: Iranians as an unpopular nation

By combining the original of footage of some of the major themes associated with the post-1979 Iran with the voices of British and Americans the sequence is clearly intended to elaborate Andy's previous comments as why Iranians are unpopular and also, as Andy puts it, "perhaps misunderstood". By putting the images side by side with the comments we realise that the unpopularity of the Iranians is caused by a combination of some facts related to Iran and their reception in the West (Britain and America, as delivered through the choice of the interviews with either British or American accents). These facts are all

related to the revolution (through images of demonstrations) and what is perceived to be its direct effect on the society such as the rule of religion (through the depiction of Ayatollah Khomeini, images of *chadori* women, and mourning rituals), angry agitated people (women screaming) and potential danger of violence (through the image of the man with a gun). The unpopularity of Iran is therefore shown to be as the result of perceiving the country as being dominated by religious and revolutionary zest. The predominant public opinion of Westerners about Iran is represented in the film through the words of the anonymous members of the public, and highlighting the words such as Ayatollah, Muslims, backwards, and so on.

The function of the sequence seems to reflect an underlying and broader public perception: a consensus about what Iran is. This point is brought up in the beginning of the film when Andy goes to meet Nick in his house before they start their introductory trip to Iran. Andy is supposed to stay in Iran for six months in order to "immerse himself" in the culture, while Nick has taken an "easier route and married an Iranian". As they meet, Andy brings up the question of how they feel about this journey. Nick answers: "No matter how much we try to learn, we try to know, there is still a feeling that *it is the East*, it's the infidel land and we are the West End, and *it is* full of … fundamentalists and terrorists, and *we don't understand*! That's in here (pointing to his heart), still in me, so it's probably in everyone".

If the sequence and the following self-reflective comments by the presenters are examined according to Richardson's analytical model, the three part process of division and rejection of Iranians in the West's public opinion (as represented by this documentary) can be observed. First, Iran is identified as a space separate from that of the interviewees in comments like "everything I get is from TV, reading news" implying that they (Iranians) exist only in a mediated, unreal sphere. The comment "I would definitely not like to live *there*" implies the separation of this space from that of the speaker through using the word 'there'. The echoing words "Ayatollah" and "Muslims" indicates that this space is in the realm of Islam. More importantly, the East vs. West dichotomy is mentioned by Nick as the basis for lack of understanding.

Second, the workings and compositions of "their space", and the subsequent attribution of negative social values to this space and its composition takes place in comments implying that Iranians are people: who are "brain-washed" (voice 3); who believe what they are told (voice 9); who live in a police state (as implied in the voice 10 comments: "If they don't do what they are told, you never see him again") and under unimaginable restrictions, especially for women (British female commentator in voice 11: "I am not able to imagine not being able to dress how I want and to do what I want"); who are crazy, as opposed to the comment "basically I am sound"(voice 12); who are the enemies of the West as echoed in words "violent" (voice 4), "baddies" (voice 5) and "enemy" (voice 8).

Although the sequence is presented in a light-hearted way and to make a subtle and humorous criticism of the ways Iran is depicted in the British media, it can be argued that the content of the joke draws on people's actual opinion to achieve its humorous affect. Similarly, what is presented here can be taken as the reflection of real representational issues involved in the media image of Iran.

8.3 Iranian society as an Islamic-revolutionised space

The sequence also reveals another important point about the media representation of Iran, which is that perceiving Iran as an infidel, inconceivable territory is the product of its being codified in political terms. This politicized codification means that post-1979 Iran is presented with a constant reference to its Islamism (in both political and cultural senses) and its revolutionary background. Together, these codifications produce the discourse of Islamic Fundamentalism in documentary representations of Iran. In Chapter 3, I identified the concepts and markers that constitute the discourse of an 'Orientalised Iran'. If the same method is applied on documentaries about the post-revolutionary Iran, it can be concluded that 'Islamic-ness' and 'revolutionary-ness' are the concepts through which the discourse of Islamic Fundamentalism is activated in documentary representations of post-revolutionary Iran. Besides that, there are other elements that are

common in many documentaries on Iran that can be labelled as the particular markers of an Islamic-revolutionised space. The filmic ways in which these markers appear in documentaries are identified below by bringing together examples from a wide range of documentary films.

8.3.1. Religious sites, ceremonies and activities

Places, ceremonies and activates related to the religion of Islam are among the markers that prevail in representations of Iran after 1979. Images of mosques and religious schools are presented in documentaries when discussing the religiosity of Iranian people, Islam, or simply the culture of Iran or the socio-political climate of post-1979 revolution. This includes the shots of façades and interiors of mosques and religious schools, mosque yards, shrines, domes and minarets. These shots can also include images of clergy (*tollab*), pilgrims and the pious entering and leaving these sites, praying, listening to sermons, studying religious texts, etc. The two most important religious rituals covered in documentaries are images of praying, especially Friday prayers, and Ashura.

Ashura, one of the most central rituals of Shia Islam, is a ceremonial mourning to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hossein, the third Imam of Shia and the Prophet's grandson, held once a year in the month of Muharram (first month of the Arabic/Islamic calendar). The performance of *tazieh*, the dramatic re-enactment of the tragedy of Imam Hossein, can also be part of the ceremony. The highly dramatic nature of Ashura rituals and their cultural and historical importance can be a rich subject for documentary making. However, the ritual is presented in documentaries in exclusively socio-political terms. In *Langan behind the Lines: Women in Black* (BBC, 2001), post-1979 Iran is introduced to the audience through an association Iran with Ashura, which is itself associated with Islam and Islamic extremism through the commentary. The film opens on a medium shot of Khomeini's portrait on a wall which is then cut to a sequence of shots of a *tazieh* performance in Tehran. The presenter, Langan, is among the audience watching the event and giving explanations (in form of voice-over). Interestingly, none of the voice-over commentary is about the occasion itself; Langan's comments to the camera are concerned more with the safety issues of the performance, than any

information regarding what the occasion is about. To clarify this case, below I examine the opening scene.

This scene is an independent introductory section of the film which comes before the credits and can be divided into four sections. The first section is a series of shots of mourners (all in black), such as men playing drums, men flagellating, men beating their chests and chanting and calling Hossein's name. This section is not accompanied by any commentary and the only sound track is that of the music played in the ritual. On the last shot of this section, a caption appears which reads: Tehran, Iran. The second section is composed of five long shots of the play, cut alternately with four close-ups of Langan who is among the audience. The long shots show us a group of children in bright green clothes and head-covers (symbolizing the captured family of Hossein) chained together and running in front of a man in red (symbolizing the army of an enemy) who is pulling the chain and trying to whip them; a tent and a man on a horse with a torch galloping around the tent (symbolizing Hossein's camp after its fall); crowds shouting in mourning and beating their heads; the tent surrounded by men pouring petrol on it; and a huge audience in the background, some of which have climbed the windows of a huge building to have a better view; a horse covered in a white piece of cloth covered in red stains (symbolizing Hossein's horse covered in blood after his slaughter) is galloping around the tent, a group of men in black following it and crying. Langan's close-ups, inter-cut with these scenes, deliver his comments about his impressions of the event, given straight to the camera. His commentary is as follows:

Close-up 1: They just warned me to sit back because they are about to set light this tent.

Close-up 2: I've got bloody nervous, because they told me to sit back and now I am stuck in the middle.

Close-up 3: I can't believe it, all those kids under that tent, covered in petrol, paraffin

Close-up 4: It is very dangerous, because people are still inside the tent. …

The last close-up is then cut to another series of shots of the event which constructs the third section of the scene. In this section, the pictures are accompanied by voice-over (Langan's voice) commentary. As the action in the play and the audience's response to it

intensifies the commentary begins: "Islam is one of the great religions of the world and one of the most misunderstood. Islamic extremism is considered by some as a threat to the West. I have come to see for myself. My journey so far has taken me to Afghanistan and now to Tehran, Iran". The phrase "Islamic extremism" is matched with the climax of the play, a long shot of the burning tent, with people crying and beating themselves all around it. The phrase "now to Tehran" is juxtaposed with the next shot, which shows the mourning getting more intensive around the burning tent, and is then cut to a close-up of Langan, looking nervously at the scene and then to the camera saying: "POH!" This close-up is the first shot of the fourth section which is, like the second section, composed of shots of the event inter-cut alternately with Langan's close-ups. The section shows us an extreme shot of the whole scene, which is now heightened with strong emotions. The camera zooms in to the centre of the scene where the tent is now burning to ashes, and zooms in further to frame the jumping and crying mourners. The frame is bursting with intense movement (people beating themselves on the head) and sound (people crying: "*Ya* Hossein"). As in the second section, here again the only comment given by the presenter is about his impressions: "It has gone a bit wild now. Welcome to Iran," Langan says in a jerky close up, as he, and apparently the camera man, are being pushed in the crowd.

The use of Ashura rites in this introductory segment of the film cannot be taken as an attempt to introduce an unfamiliar subject, probably being seen by the majority of British audiences for the first time. The absence of any information about the nature, characteristics and relevance of the occasion is a sign that in the filmmaker's view, it needs no deeper explanation. Langan positions himself to the camera in a way which constantly dissociates him from his surroundings and the subject he is presenting. Not only he is physically distant from the environment, i.e. closer to the camera than the event in the background, but also he separates himself from his surroundings by being more intimate with the camera, i.e. talking straight to the camera about his feelings and opinions. As shown in these sequences, Langan's comments appear to be marginal, thereby undermining the content and the importance of the ritual and the performance. Matched with his mocking tone and nervous gestures, the scornful commentary,

culminating in his final comment about the wildness of the event, makes it clear that Langan disdains exploring and explaining Ashura. Told directly to the camera, the comment "it has gone a bit wild" is the passing of his personal value judgment to the audience with the probable effect of alienating them further from 'this strange and wild ritual'.

If, in showing Ashura as a cultural or religious practice of a foreign country, the film has no intention of introducing a new subject in its own right, why should it be chosen as the introductory scene in a film about Iran? To answer this question I would like to have a close look at the three major components of the scene, the voice-over statements, the presenter's explanations and the imagery, and examine the effect that their juxtapositions produce. As already discussed, the image is that of a ceremony, obscure and strange to the viewers. It also introduces the geographical setting to the audience through the caption "Tehran, Iran", appearing on shots of the same ceremony. Therefore, the film associates Iran with the franticness of the ceremony. Further, the presenter's comment, "It has gone a bit wild, welcome to Iran," makes a direct association between Iran and 'wildness', both verbally and visually (a jerky shot framing the presenter stuck in the middle of the chaos). The voice-over commentary on the other hand, announces Iran as the site of (Islamic) extremism. The interrelations of the image, voice-over explanations and presenter's comments associate Iran with elements of wildness, obscurity and franticness.

The concept of Islam is also associated with the same elements through the interrelations between the same components. Islam is associated verbally with extremism and enmity to the West, and visually with strange rituals. While the voice-over introduces Islam, Islamic extremism and its site (Iran and Afghanistan), the image continues to be that of an obscure ritual without any information about its Islamic relevance.[18] The presenter, on the other hand, distances himself from the ritual and emphasizes his separation in phrases

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[18]The ritual has got nothing to do with Islam as a whole, as it is an exclusively Shia and predominantly Iranian ritual.

expressing his astonishment, "I can't believe it", or fear and bewilderment, "I am bloody nervous… now I am stuck in the middle".   While Iran and Islam are associated with each other and with the elements of obscurity and franticness, the British presenter is dissociated from both. He represents the Western voice and its narratives of the fear and danger associated with Islamic Iran. By creating these associative and dissociative effects, the film creates the binary of Islamic Iranian vs. Western, where the Western remains the voice of rationality which is incapable of comprehending and accommodating the franticness of the other.

In *People's Century* (BBC, 1997), discussed in Chapter 7, the images of men flagellating their backs, one of the rituals in Ashura, is the visual content for the voice-over comment on the effect of revolution on the Iranian society: "Iranians were to be governed by the rules made 1,300 years ago by the time of Prophet Mohammad". Images similar to the rituals in Ashura, especially the beating of the head or chest as sign of mourning which can take place on other occasions of mourning, are also used in documentaries. In *Living Islam: Struggling with Modernity*, a medium shot of a bearded man in black among mourners beating their chests solemnly serves as the image for the commentary that: "instead of perusing Western modernity, Ayatollah Khomeini led his country in an attempt to restore an Islamic regime". As this shot is cut to a long shot of the same gathering and then to the portrait of Khomeini on a wall, the commentary informs us that this gathering on the anniversary of Khomeini's death is evidence of the popular support for him and that the Iranian revolution was one of the most significant events in the recent Muslim history.

8.3.2. Portraits of Ayatollah

Showing wall portraits of the clergy is another way of depicting an Islamic atmosphere, often accompanied by comments about the influence and authority of the depicted religious figures on Iranian society. This can be used in the very opening shot of the film, without any explanations, as an introduction to the setting. In *Langan behind the Lines,* this motif is repeated three times within the first few minutes of the film, accompanied by Langan's comment: "the portraits of Ayatollahs looking at people from every wall, a

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reminder of strict Islamic laws". In *Paradise Found,* the wall portrait of Khomeini serves as the visual content for creating an Islamic-revolutionised space. Though twenty-seven years after the revolution, and in a film mainly concerned with Islamic art and architecture rather than any political issue, the presenter cannot help making frequent references to the figure of Ayatollah Khomeini and his influence on modern Iran, while presenting on Iran's historic monuments. In a programme which is a journey across the "Muslim world" from countries in central Asia to the Middle East in search of the Islamic art, Iran's history of art is the only one which is set against its present socio-political situation. Between the sequences praising the magnificence of Isfahan's architectures, suddenly there appears an extreme close up of Khomeini's eyes from his portrait on a wall, and the presenter comments that "under the watchful eyes of Ayatollah a bit of illicit leisure activities goes on".

An example of the use of the Islamic elements as visual motifs to create an Islamic space can be found in the documentary *Mohammad and the Matchmaker*, an episode of *World Weddings,* a series produced by BBC2 in 2004. The story takes place in Iran and is about a man who is HIV positive, Mohammmad, in search of love. The film follows his story from his past as a drug addict and a social outcast, his struggles and his final success in beating the addiction, through to his discovery of being HIV positive, to his battles with his illness and the temptations to go back to drugs, to his present challenges of finding love and settling down as a normal citizen. (In narrating all this there are verbal references to the social restrictions in Iran which in the film's point of view originates from the Islamic culture of the country and are adding to the problems facing Mohammad). The motif of wall portraits of (Islamic) authorities is used both in the opening and closing sequences without any logic in the narration of Mohammad's story to justify these shots.

The opening sequence of the film is a series of shots of cars, highways and huge buildings in Tehran, accompanied by an Iranian pop song about love. The shots of highways are then suddenly cut to a wall portrait of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The camera then tilts to a cinema and shots of posters of actors and actresses, which is cut again to

shots of cars and then to another wall portrait, this time of Khomeini. The camera then tilts on this picture and frames in a soldier kissing Khomeini's hand. This is cut to a shot of a woman wearing a face veil, to another portrait of a soldier and to shots of cars. This sequence can be taken as the film's introduction to the setting of the story, Iran/Tehran, while the music introduces the theme of love. Why should the shots of Islamic authorities be part of the film's introductory scenes to such a personal drama? In the end of the film, when Mohammad has finally found his match, the scene of the registration of their marriage is suddenly cut to a zoom-in on more wall portraits of Khomeini and Khamenei, and then cut to the second portrait of another cleric, before it cuts to shots of people walking in the street and then to Mohammad and his wife walking hand in hand in the snow. These opening and closing shots locate the story in a geographical setting, Tehran, in Iran, but they also imply that this city is somehow different from other metropolises: it is an Islamic one. The intercuts of shots of busy city life and Mohammad's personal drama with those of Islamic authorities imply the presence, and probably the interference, of an Islamic element in this special setting.

8.3.3. Veiled women

The image of the veil in media representations of Muslims has continued to perpetuate "assumptions about an unbridgeable East/West divide" (Stollery, 2000: 211). In the case of post-revolutionary Iran, the veil serves as one of the most persistent motifs in creating an Islamic-revolutionary space. The documentary *Paradise Found* is a good example of how such a space is created, in a non-political programme, through the motif of veiled women. Explaining about the miniatures painted on the walls of a monument in Isfahan, the presenter comments that "in modern Iran, where women are not allowed to show their hair, these pictures showing uncovered women are a surprise". Shots of the images of women in miniatures are then intercut with those of women visitors in headscarves. The contrast between the images of the two groups of women acts as a visual emphasis on the particularity of modern, post-revolutionary Iran, marked by women's veil. The Iran episode of *Langan behind the Lines* that is devoted to revealing the situation of the post-revolutionary Iran bears the subtitle of *Women in Black*, an example of the association of

revolution with women's dress code, particularly the colour black, as one of the most powerful symbols of the society created by that revolution.

An interesting point about the motif of veil in post-revolutionary representations of Iran in British documentary is the emphasis on a particular form of veil, the black *chador*. *Chador* was traditionally the only form of veil for women in Iran. In recent decades however, other variations of *hijab*, like headscarves, became common. After the revolution and when *hijab* for women became compulsory, wearing different types of headscarves along with trousers and a long coat on the top became the most common form of *hijab* besides *chador* (conventionally in black for wearing outside the house). As a conventional form of cover, black *chador* can point to various cultural, social and political significations depending on the individuals wearing it and the context in which it is worn. In media representations of Iran however, only particular forms of signification, often in the wrong context, are imposed on it.

First of all, instead of being one of many forms of *hijab*, the *chador* is presented as the only form, worn by women unanimously either as the sign of their loyalty to revolutionary ideals, or as the compulsory form of *hijab* imposed by the Islamic-revolutionary government, both of which are false assumptions. In *Iran's Muslim Dream* (BBC, 1979), the Iranian revolution is represented partly through the introduction of a group of women in black *chador*. The group is described by the presenter in these words: "All in black… as if they are going to funeral or something…". In *Hot Spot: Iran* (BBC, 2004) the extraordinary victory of president Khatami is explained as being backed by Iranian women who are "yearning for better life". Through accompanying images of masses of women in black *chador* it is implied that all Iranian women wear *chador*, and that this form of *hijab* is part of what they yearn to change.

Secondly, *hijab* in general and *chador* in particular are presented as being brought about by the revolution: contrast between pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary society is presented in form of the contrast between women without *hijab* and women with *hijab* in films such as *People's Century* (BBC, 1997), *Correspondent: Raising the Veil* (BBC,

2000), and *Iran Under Cover: Inside the Hidden Revolution* (C4, 2003). Finally, a contrast made between women in *chador* and those in headscarves is a common representational strategy that serves to make a clear-cut distinction between two groups of women, the traditional, conservative, and pro-regime vs. the liberated, socially progressive, and anti-regime (often presented as more Westernised on the merits of their dress and especially the made-over face and dyed hair). In reality, such divisions are more complicated, and certainly not based on such clear-cut distinctions of appearances. An exception to this norm is *Raising the Veil* (BBC, 2000) where a *chadori* lady, Dr. Dastgerdy, is presented as the example of women who despite their 'traditional' appearance are socially active and progressive. More importantly, she is introduced as an active feminist despite her otherwise anti-liberal political stand. The very act of putting forward this seemingly contradictory case in the film points either to a common belief that such women are exceptions to the norm of the Iranian society, or that they are representatives of a group of Iranian women who do not normally get represented in British media.

All of the motifs discussed above can also serve as seemingly random images filling gaps in the visual content of the narration when the discussions centre on abstract or theoretical issues. For example, in *Faultline*, when discussing topics varying from the nuclear issue to the economic situation of Iran, the pictures of women passing by in streets, specially the ones in *chador*, serve as background to the comments. When Jon Snow reported live from Iran in *Uncovering Iran* (C4, 2006) a dome glowing at night was his background. Random pictures of people entering a mosque or praying together can be placed in the frame to fill in the otherwise empty visual space. This seemingly random way of editing images might be seen as supplying a visual content for the verbal narration when arguing theoretical or abstract topics in documentary. This way of editing, however, points to implicit assumptions of the producers about the settings they are portraying. The presence of the Islamic-revolutionary markers in British documentaries establishes Iran as a location which is as socially, politically and culturally distant from the British society, as it is geographically, by codifying it as an Islamic-revolutionary space.

8.4 Concluding remarks

This chapter looked at the ways in which the discourse of Islamic Fundamentalism is articulated in representations of post-revolutionary Iran. I argued that the prevalence of certain themes in documentary films on Iran depict the country as a potential threat to the West. The association and dissociation of Iran with certain narratives of Islam on the other hand contribute to the image of the country as being governed by principles which are at odds with modernity and values such as human rights and social freedoms.

By theorising the representations of post-revolutionary Iran in the framework of the discourse of Fundamentalism, I aimed to elaborate the continuity and/or changes in documentary representations of Iran through the decades. Comparing the representations of Iran before and after the revolution, it can be concluded that the prevalence of the themes of social development and the near non-existence of political themes in documentary representations of Iran pre-1980s gives place to an array of politically charged programmes about the country since then. The change in how documentaries have represented Iran reflects the change in the broader field of media representations of the country that is in turn the reflection of the change in Britain's, and the West's, relations with Iran. Iran's essential 'otherness' continues to be a part of its media representation, but it continually appears in new forms. In representing Iran, the theme of modernity's 'other' evolves from the discourse of Orientalism into Islamic Fundamentalism. Islam is transformed from an element of Oriental peculiarity and traditionalism in the first discourse and into the central theme and the essence of 'otherness' in the latter.

Chapter 9

Conclusion (Iran in British documentaries)

> The image of Iran - through the prism of the Western media - gives a somewhat one-sided view of a fanatical yet repressed population railing against the Great Satan. The fact that British and Iranian modern history is inextricably linked, that Iran had the Middle East's first democratically elected government which in turn was toppled by Western powers, and also has a century-old women's movement is less known. (BBC Radio 4, 2006).

The above comment from online advertisement for BBC Radio 4 series of programmes on Iran, *Uncovering Iran*, summarizes the British media representation of Iran as exemplified by documentary films and programmes examined in this thesis. The extract mirrors many of the general findings of this research such as the one-sidedness of the accounts of the country as presented by the films and the biased criteria for the selection (inclusion and exclusion) of subject matters and stories. The extract also points to more detailed findings in this research of a prevalence to select for documentary representation certain themes and concepts such as the fanaticism of the people, the repressiveness of the society and so on. In concluding the thesis I need to bring all those findings together in order to consolidate in summary a comprehensive picture of the thesis.

9.1. Iran as an object of representation

By examining closely numerous British documentaries made about Iran throughout the 20th century and beyond (between 1920 and 2005) a perspective develops in which many points of connection between individual films appear. In the hypothesis developed in this research these connections are patterns of representation that together constitute a 'whole', an object of representation or an imagined entity named 'Iran'. This entity is as much a product of filmic representations as it is a theoretical construct devised by me in an attempt to answer the central question of the thesis, about the represented position of Iran in the world and in comparison to Britain, as well as how the positioning has evolved along historical change inside Iran, in the outside world, and in Iran's relation with the outside world and Britain. In order to answer that question I had to find a way of

demonstrating the complexities, the continuities and discontinuities, involved in the act of representation over the specified period of time.

The representational continuity of this projected and mediated entity, 'Iran', is made possible by perceiving Iran as an entity that moves in time along a linear path towards a specific goal. This path is that of historical development from the past to the present and future. The ultimate destiny is 'modernity', a point which for Iran is a) located in the future, and b) located somewhere beyond its current boundaries. Based on this logic Iran's distance from modernity is 'assessed', as well as its direction and the speed of its movement or 'progress' towards that destination. Based on the presence or absence of some 'factors' that are assumed to be necessary for achieving modernity, it appears that Iran is represented as moving forward (progressing towards the goal of achieving modernity) or backwards (distancing itself from the goal). These factors, the films appear to suggest, are a) a suitable form of modernising governance for Iran and b) Western involvement of some sort, as a guide on this difficult path. The involvement is primarily the presence of Western enterprise and technology, Western cultural influence or social models. When these 'appropriate factors' are present in the documentary accounts of Iran, a sense of 'advancing' is forged into the representation of the country as a whole, and 'change' is interpreted as 'historical progress'. On the other hand, the absence of 'appropriate factors' may mean that 'change' is interpreted as negative development and represented as a backward movement along the line of history, a retreat from the ultimate goal of history (which is also assumed, it seems, to be a universal goal) that is the state of modernity.

In documentary representations of Iran 'positive change' and 'forward movement' are presented as those related to socio-economic change. The factors bringing change are cited as industrialisation and technology brought about by Western enterprise, and modernisation of the country that took place under the Pahlavi dynasty (1925- 1978) in cooperation with Western revenue and guidance. Changes that are positive but that happen as the result of factors other than these do not seem to be represented at all

despite their historical significance, as discussed in the case of the Constitutional Revolution of 1908 in relation to the representation of Reza Shah's modernisation. Changes involving the negation of any of the 'positive' factors mentioned above are represented as negative and considered as 'backward movement', typically exemplified by the case of Iran's own incentive towards oil nationalisation (1950 -1953) and the revolution of 1979.

The reasons for this type of representation of Iran's history and its development in British documentaries might be one or more of the following. First of all, the majority of documentaries on Iran up to the 1960s were made or sponsored by Western industries investing in Iran, in particular BP. The image of Iran as depicted in those films is contingent upon the main purpose of these films which is the promotion of the industry and its products. Secondly, as discussed in Chapter 2, since the mid-1950s and the disbanding of the organised form of documentary making in Britain under the British Documentary Movement – mostly as the result of the demise of the traditional sponsors of documentary (the government and British industry) – many documentary makers dispersed into film and media elsewhere, including television, which by then was emerging as the new sponsor and the new medium for documentary making. This might partly explain how the influence of older modes of documentary making, their ideological perspectives and representational approaches became a heritage in the ensuing decades of film and television.

The representation of Iran's historical development seems also to be influenced and underpinned by contemporary theories of development and modernisation. In the context of development theories, concepts such as industrialisation, modernisation or Westernisation - which is often conflated with modernisation (Brugger and Hannan, 1983: 1-3) - are regarded as universally beneficial to the development of any country. As these concepts were the prevalent subjects of British documentaries on Iran up to the 1970s (or, so long as the Shah was in place), Iran's historical development in that context was generally viewed and represented as 'positive' and 'progressive'. These theories stressed the importance of societies being open to change and saw reactionary forces as

restricting development. Maintaining tradition for tradition's sake was thought to be harmful to progress and development (Khan, 2001: 162-4). Proponents of Modernisation would therefore see events such as the Iranian Revolution as a setback to development and progress (Brugger and Hannan, 1983: 43), the same view that is often projected in documentary representation of the revolution. Some of the more pessimistic perspectives would even view such a setback as proof that countries like Iran are inherently incapable of becoming modern (Macionis, 2008: 953).

This more pessimistic perspective is observable in depicting post-revolutionary Iran in British documentary. From this perspective the setback brought about by the revolution means that the path to modernisation, paved as it was by a Western-backed 'modern' autocrat, was reversed. This view is reflected in documentaries on Iran through the shift in the locus of representation from the socio-economic aspects of modernisation in pre-revolutionary Iran to a more political and cultural focus in the post-revolutionary phase. In other words, the locus of documentary representations of Iran changes from aspects of modernity that epitomize 'positive change' and progress, namely development and economic growth, to those that epitomize 'negative change' and regress, namely, a lack of democracy and human rights as the result of the emergence, or resurgence, of religious fundamentalism in the society and the governance. It is worth noticing that although democracy and political development was an issue with the pre-revolutionary depiction of Iran as well, it had not acquired centre stage in documentaries made at the time. On the other hand, the continuing schemes of development and modernisation in post-revolutionary Iran are featured only as being of very minor significance in contemporary documentary representations of that society.

At a different level these negative and positive representations of Iran's historical development can be seen as part of a greater context in which social discourses about 'otherness' and national or cultural attitudes take place which are either manifest on the one hand or created on the other, as identities thought of as the 'other'. The change in the relations between Britain and Iran after the 1979 revolution seems to have affected the relationship between the agent of representation, British documentary, and that which is represented, Iran. This can be viewed as a difference between representing an 'other'

who is trying to become like 'us', namely Iran under the Shah, and the one who is insisting on its own 'otherness', the post-revolutionary 'Islamic' Iran. The shift can be theorized as a shift from the discourse of Orientalism to the discourse of Fundamentalism, or rather, from the evolution again along a preconceived historical timeline, of the former into the latter. In terms of documentary representations this shift meant that the concept of religion was given new significance and associations. In documentaries underpinned by the discourse of Orientalism, 'Islam', as the religion of Iran, is presented an anti-Modern element that, alongside other particularities of an Oriental setting, is responsible for the continuation of tradition and the subsequent backwardness of the country. In the more recent documentaries underpinned by the discourse of Fundamentalism 'Islam' is presented as the sole, all-encompassing force, that resists the implementation of democracy and whatever it stands for. Common to both discourses are what Sadowski has described as the portrayal of Islam as "a social entity whose 'essential' core is immune to change by historical influences" (Sadowski, 1993: 19).

In discussing Orientalism and fundamentalism in relation to documentary representation of Iran, an issue of essentialisation emerges as having been generalised to Iranian society as a whole, with the Islamic religion as one part of it. As discussed in Chapters 4 to 6 about pre-revolutionary Iran and in Chapters 7 and 8 about post-revolutionary Iran, the Iranian society and culture, its history and geography, as well as its people and its supposedly indigenous forms of governance are all presented as 'essentially' lacking dynamics for bringing 'positive change' towards modernity from within. In the discussions of these phases of British documentary representation of Iran, it was necessary for my thesis also to mark and show how no weight at all was accorded to foreign involvement in the affairs of Iran leading to change. It became clear that this was a necessary strategy to 'prove' that the obstacles to development are overwhelmingly internal and have not changed for centuries of Iranian history. Essentialism and the dismissal of Western colonialism and imperialism are normally paired together in discourses of Orientalist and neo-Orientalist historians of the Middle East, as Sadowski has observed, "since each makes the other more plausible" (Sadowski, 1993: 20). It

seems that the same perspectives of history have been adopted in documentary representations of Iran throughout.

In summary this thesis has worked to demonstrate that a country, in this case Iran, is never more vulnerable than when it is being viewed from outside, while at the same time being seen as 'an outsider' with socio-economic-political ways of being which are obstructive to some or all of the pre-supposedly historically determined and beneficial aims, purposes and assumptions, of the country representing it.

Appendix: Thematic division of documentaries on post-revolutionary Iran

The Iranian Revolution of 1979
>*Iran's Muslim Dream* (BBC, 1979)
>*Inside Story: Road to Terror* (BBC, 1989)
>*People's Century: 1979 God Fights Back* (BBC, 1995)
>*Shah vs. Mullahs* (ITV, 1978)

Threats of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the West and Western Interests
>Hostage Taking of American Embassy
>*The Making of 1981* (ITV, 1982)
>*Panorama: Iran vs. America* (BBC1, 1979)
>*TV Eye series: To Free a Hostage* (ITV, 1980)
>*Nationwide series: Fifty American Hostages Still Held in Iran* (BBC1, 1980)
>*Macleod in Japan* (BBC2, 1981)
>*444 Days to Freedom: the inside story* (BBC, 1998)

Terrorism and Nuclear Iran
>*Panorama: Arming for Islam* (BBC1, 1993)
>*This World: Iran's Nuclear Secret* (BBC, 2005)
>*Sign Zone: Panorama* (BBC1, 2006)
>*This World: Will Israel Bomb Iran* (BBC2, 2006)
>*The Cult of the Suicide Bomber* (C4, 2005)

Repression of Iranian Society
>Persecution of the Opposition
>*Inside Story: Road to Terror* (BBC, 1989)
>*Prisoners of Conscience* (BBC, 1991)
>*Assignment Special: Guardians of the Ayatollah* (BBC2, 1996)
>*Sign Zone: A Murder Mystery* (BBC, 2004)
>*Iran Under Cover: Inside the Hidden Revolution* (C4, 2003)
>*Holidays in the Axis of Evil* (BBC, 2003)

Human Rights and Women's Issues
>*Human Rights, Human Wrongs* (BBC2, 1996)
>*Iran Under Cover: Inside the Hidden Revolution* (C4, 2003)
>*Execution of a Teenage Girl* (C4, 2006)
>*Tonight: Iran Women* (BBC, 1979)
>*People's Century: Half the People* (BBC, 1997)
>*Iran: the Passion of Islam* (C4, 1984)

Filmography

444 Days to Freedom: the inside story (BBC, 1998)

A King's Revolution (ITV, 1964)

A Persian Caravan (Instructional Films, 1928)

Assignment: Islam Year Zero (BBC2, 1996),

Construction of the Lali Bridge across the Reviver Karoun (BP, 1952)

 Correspondent: Letter to America (BBC2, 2001)

Correspondent: Raising the Veil (BBC2, 2000)

Dawn of Iran (BP, 1938)

Earthquake: the Story of an Appeal (BBC newsreel, 1962)

Fault lines (ITV1, 2004)

From a Drop to the Sea (BP, 1950)

Hot Spot: Iran (BBC, 2004)

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