

Discuss any one of the films listed in the module guide by adopting one of the ap...

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Stephen Frears is one of the greatest British directors who build his international reputation by directing many controversial movies. One of these movies is 'My Beautiful Laundrette' which started his career in the mid 80's.

The film is a perfect slice of Thatcherite Britain and great gay romance. "My Beautiful Laundrette" is the story of Omar, a young restless Asian man caring for his alcoholic father in Thatcherite London. Escape comes in the form of his uncle's many varied business ventures..." (Nicola Osborne. (2005). My Beautiful Laundrette. Available: http://www.eufs.org.uk/films/my_beautiful_laundrette.html. Last accessed 08th March 2011)

Frears's unique visionary mind – a mind that truly understood the cinematic art form – presents in his film issues about immigration and racism in Britain at the beginning of 1980's. Stephen Frears shows the true image of England. This is the main reason why 'My Beautiful Laundrette' becomes my choice for the debate in this essay. The argument Stephen Frears in 1980s was the forefront of the new generation of British shock artists.

As one of the first directors who started breaking the taboo of nationality, immigration and homosexual relationships – in British cinema. Not many directors before him used this mix of all these aspects in one film story. In 'My Beautiful Laundrette' the two main characters become great examples in the debate about nationality and sexuality in Thatcher's society.

However, is the difference in sexuality or race what makes them feel different from the others or only that society makes them feel that way or

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the director wants to presents ' them' this way? However, by analysing the short sequence from ' My beautiful Launderette' in aspects of misen en scene, I will try to answer these questions as well as make debate about national and transnational cinema. Introduction to the sequence The sequence of my choice from Stephen Freaks's movie is 30 seconds long and is located between the forty-fifth and forty-sixth minute of the film. The sequence starts with the shot from the slowly passing car in front of the laundry. The camera is located behind the driver which gives us the view of the person in the car as well as the view from the car's window. From this perspective we can see the group of teenage skinheads looking at the shop and the car which stops. The next shot shows us a young Indian man coming out of the laundry and starts looking at the skinheads. The shop that he comes out of is under renovation and is covered in white and blue paint. In front of the building there is a long ladder with a man on the top, painting the wall.

As soon as he sees the person coming out from the shop, he looks at him and quickly comes down to meet Indian man. They greet with a friendly smile and looking into each other eyes. The man from the shop gives money to the painter and two characters embrace each other. This moment is presented in two different shots.

In the first shot, the camera shows a view of the whole shop and people. In the contrast, the second shot presents a scene from car driver's perspective. As soon as two characters hug each other, the painter passionately kisses

and licks Indian man's neck. However, the moment of the kissing is very discreet, so no one else can see it.

The sequence ends when the Indian man walks back into the shop and closes the door and the group of skinheads carefully look at him. Camera movement, angle, framing music In ' My Beautiful Laundrette', the two main characters represent different nationalities and social backgrounds. Omar is a young Indian man who has lots of influence from his family about his life and what does he has to do to be successful. As well as his best friend Johnny, who is always chased by his ex – skinhead friends.

For example, at an earlier discussed scene shot, the sequence when the car was slowly passing in front of the shop was filmed from the moving car. This offered a close up shot of the driver's face and a long shot of the shop and people on the street. The driver is member of Omar's family who is out to on spy him. The people on the street appear to be a group of skinheads, ex – friends of Johnny's who are trying to convince him to join the gang again. In contrast the moment when Johnny passionately kissed Omar's neck, the director decided to use extreme close up shot, to present the intimacy of the moment.

In the other hand, the director perhaps wants to show to the audience how two characters want to break up with their backgrounds and be free from any influence. The shot of the unexpected kiss is easily the most erotic situation in the movie with gives tension to the story. In this short sequence, sound is diegetic and consider dialogue and ambient. The background sound

of playing children can be heard for most of the time and emphasize the place of the action which is east London. (During times of Margaret Thatcher this part of London was the place for working class people living in large tower blocks.).

‘ In the other worlds, the sound is a vital component and adds an aural dimension to the scene’ (Nick Lacey (2005). Introduction to Film . New York : Palgrave Macmillan . p16.) Costumes and nationality in the movie In ‘ My Beautiful Launderette’ the costumes are a crucial part of identity and nationality, they speak to the others about their unique personality and to what social group they belong to. For an example in discussed sequences characters in front of the shop wear the black, army jackets, black footwear and blue jeans which represent them as skinheads.

They are also wearing sunglasses which represent them as more powerful as they really are; more likely make them look like a gangster. Skinhead fashion presented in this sequences as well as in the rest of the movie stand for racism and anti immigration in England. In contrast the Indian man from the car wears expensive cloths and gold jewellery. According to the sequences when his car passes the shop, the camera firstly shows skinheads and next focuses on him and his costume to show the contrast between rich immigrant and working class English people.

‘ Hence, ‘ My Beautiful Launderette’ was criticized from within the Asian community both for its presentation of homosexuality and representation of Asians as ‘ money grabbing’. It is however, a deliberate strategy of the film

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to eschew positive image and, in doing so, emphasize the plural, complex, and crossed characters of identities, including 'black' and 'Asian' identities, in the contemporary world.' (John Hill (1999). *British Cinema in The 1980s*. New York : Oxford .

p212.). To make clear the argument of the Director for avoiding the 'positive' image of immigrants demonstrate how the black and Asian communities are themselves differentiated by class, gender, generation, and sexual orientation. At this stage it is necessary to quote the conversation from one more scene from 'My Beautiful Launderette'. The scene starts when Johnny calls Omar's uncle 'Paki' and he reply: 'I am not 'Paki', I am a businessman'. In case of materialistic values, Omar's uncle doesn't want to identify with his background but rather look at his self in from the English class structure.

The ending information Misen en scene is the starting point of analysing 'film as film' as a director from film in its social context. By analysing the short sequences from 'My Beautiful Launderette' in case of misen en scene we can see that the director used many different techniques to present issues for national cinema. Same the approaches considered: sound, camera movement or camera angle. In the other case the costumes of the actors play an important role for the viewers to understand the role of nationality, race or sexuality in the movie. Stephen Frears by using all different methods of misen en scene, and putting them together in his own unique and original

style was able to create this shocking masterpiece - ' My Beautiful
Launderette'.