

## Introduction

When the critic Graham Fuller interviewed David Lean in 1985, his opening observation was that the director's films were 'not everyone's cup of tea.'<sup>1</sup> Leaving aside the apposite Englishness of the metaphor, prompting recollection of all the cups of tea that punctuate Lean's masterpiece *Brief Encounter* (1945), Fuller was quite right to detect a certain degree of critical ambivalence towards the work of David Lean. On one hand, Lean had an incredibly high standing in the industry and retained that reputation even during his long fallow period in the 1970s and early 1980s. 'A rule of mine is this', said William Goldman in 1983: 'there are always three hot directors and one of them is always David Lean.'<sup>2</sup> Many of his films had been regarded as cinematic touchstones by his contemporaries, directors such as George Cukor, Billy Wilder and William Wyler, and continued to be highly influential among the next generation of filmmakers, with Steven Spielberg in particular crediting Lean with inspiring him to become a director. But while Lean had the admiration of his peers, a brace of Oscars and other awards, and could boast impressive box-office figures for many of his films, critical acclaim was often much harder to come by. As one journalist remarked in 1985: 'The curious thing about Sir David Lean is that everyone likes him except the critics.'<sup>3</sup> This imbalance of opinion was very clearly demonstrated by the 2002 results of *Sight and Sound's* ten-yearly poll of the greatest films of all time. Lean enjoyed an extremely strong position in the list based solely on directors' opinions: in their estimation, *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) was the fourth greatest film and Lean the joint-ninth greatest director of all time. By contrast, in the equivalent lists compiled from the votes of critics, Lean and his films were absolutely nowhere to be seen.<sup>4</sup>

David Lean's lesser reputation among critics is a legacy of the initial establishment of the auteur theory in Anglo-American critical circles. In Andrew Sarris's founding text of English-speaking auteurism, *The American Cinema*, Lean was placed under the pejorative heading of 'less

than meets the eye', a deliberately iconoclastic grouping into which Sarris decanted all the directors whose industry veneration he felt belied their essential emptiness of vision (admittedly Lean was in very good company there, next to the likes of John Huston, Elia Kazan, Carol Reed, and his admirers Billy Wilder and William Wyler).<sup>5</sup> A few years earlier, the first issue of the influential British-based magazine *Movie* had included an infamous directorial histogram and editorial which denigrated British cinema for its 'lack of what we would consider as talent'.<sup>6</sup> David Lean was no exception to this general rule, placed in the category 'competent or ambitious' (an ambiguous pairing) with his most recent film *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957) specifically singled out for exemplifying the bogus formula for the 'quality' picture.<sup>7</sup> It is instructive to compare Lean's reputation at this time with another British director who certainly *was* the object of auteurist adoration, Alfred Hitchcock. Whereas Hitchcock's British work was characterised by the auteur critics as preliminary practice for a talent that reached full fruition within the Hollywood studio system, by comparison Lean's early British work was generally seen as the highpoint of his career before it was swallowed up by overblown international epics.<sup>8</sup> As Robert Horton points out, 'Lean's critical profile suffered from the timing' of the auteurist moment; just at the point when 'Hitchcock needed championing, Lean was busy winning Oscars'<sup>9</sup> for his epic films, and appeared to be critically invulnerable. However, on a personal level, this was far from the truth. Lean was profoundly affected by critical disdain for his work, still able to quote word for word a slighting review from twenty years before. 'The critics are the intellectuals. I'm always frightened of intellectuals',<sup>10</sup> he admitted in 1984, referring back to long-standing feelings of intellectual inferiority compounded by having been overshadowed at school by his academically gifted younger brother Edward. For that reason, when critics disapproved of a film, their judgement had a particular force: 'There it is written down – *The Times* says so, the *Daily Telegraph* says so, the *Daily Mail* says so, all shades of opinion – and it *must* be true.'<sup>11</sup> Lean's worst fears were realised by the excoriating reviews he received for *Ryan's Daughter* (1970) and the blow they dealt to his confidence was a strong contributory factor in his fourteen-year absence from the screen thereafter.

With the respectful and celebratory reception of Lean's final film, *Passage to India* (1984) – 'An old master's new triumph'<sup>12</sup> announced the cover of *Time* magazine – and the 'chorus of awe-struck hosannas'<sup>13</sup> that greeted the 1989 restoration of *Lawrence of Arabia*, it might appear that the critical battle had been won, and that Lean's advocates now outnumbered his detractors. No longer would the director be dispar-

aged as ‘safely schematic, blandly middlebrow and British, the sort of artist for whom knighthoods in the arts were invented’.<sup>14</sup> Even those who had, in Kevin Jackson’s words, ‘lavish[ed] praise on his early British films – particularly the Dickens adaptations – the better to disdain his international epics’<sup>15</sup>, would have to revise their opinion of Lean’s later achievements in the light of the reappraisal of *Lawrence*. Up to a point this is true, and the publication in the mid-1990s of Kevin Brownlow’s brilliant and definitive biography of David Lean certainly helped to consolidate the growing sense that he was a filmmaker worth taking seriously.<sup>16</sup> Even so, there still remain notable pockets of that critical ambivalence towards his work detected by Fuller. There was a striking example in *Sight and Sound*’s coverage of David Lean’s centenary in 2008, for instance. A series of articles on Lean as film editor, on his representation of empire and on the restoration of his films was prefaced with a short introduction by the magazine’s editor Nick James in which he acknowledges that *Sight and Sound* had been ‘routinely dismissive’ of Lean’s work in the past and goes on to explain:

If that seems absurd in retrospect, then we must yet acknowledge that Lean’s films are more complex in their craftsmanship than in their conception. That he made enduringly gripping and entertaining films is because he believed in a critically unfashionable kind of total cinema, one in which every moment counts towards the primacy of thrilling the audience ... that’s what he was: a hugely successful populist director with no Boswell on hand to raise his reputation, as Truffaut did with Hitchcock. We’re not aiming to laud Lean in quite that way here, but we do want to give him his due.<sup>17</sup>

Somewhat damning Lean with faint praise, James admits the popularity and stylistic verve of Lean’s films but still insists that technical craft outpaced conceptual complexity, echoing critiques first made back in the 1960s. The tone suggests that obligation rather than enthusiasm may have driven the editorial decision to devote space to the director, culminating in the final statement on giving Lean no more than ‘his due’, declining any suggestion that they might ‘laud’ him – even on the occasion of his centenary.

In contrast, this book aims to give Lean his due *and* laud him; indeed, it would be impossible for me to do the former without doing the latter. David Lean remains one of the outstanding directors of British as well as world cinema, and thus an essential addition to a book series dedicated to British filmmakers. As Peter Hutchings has noted, scholarship on British cinema has exhibited a tendency ‘to shy away from making evaluative judgements’, to claim the significance of particular texts on the grounds that they are ‘interesting’ rather than

because they are 'good'.<sup>18</sup> There is very cogent reasoning behind the valorisation of 'the interesting' as equally worthy of attention as 'the good' and a retreat from a purely evaluative agenda of film studies in favour of more pluralistic concerns. However, Hutchings suggests that 'despite all the new work being done on British film, evaluative claims are not being made nearly enough'<sup>19</sup>, an argument with which I fully concur. So while this book gives full consideration to the many ways in which Lean's body of work is interesting, it also aims to demonstrate the ways in which it 'deploys the resources of cinema in an imaginative, intelligent and distinctive manner';<sup>20</sup> in short, why these are also good films. To argue that David Lean made good films might seem to be pushing at an open door. But, as I've shown, the fact remains that Lean still occupies a strangely subaltern position within British film's critical culture. It is telling, for example, that this is the first full-length study of all the director's films to originate from a British author and press, nearly all previous scholarly overviews of that kind having come from the United States. What the journalist Hollis Alpert observed in 1965 still seems surprisingly true: that Lean is somehow 'less honoured in his own country than anywhere else'.<sup>21</sup> Yet his films offer one of the most triumphantly affirmative and convincing answers I can think of to Peter Wollen's question to British cinema scholars, 'Which are the films that really count, the ones we wouldn't mind seeing again and again? ... The British cinema that interests me is a cinema which produces great films – films which are masterpieces.'<sup>22</sup>

The original auteurist grounds for dismissing Lean frequently rested on his perceived impersonality as a filmmaker, a criticism which perplexed Lean: 'they tell me that I am not a personal filmmaker. I don't know what they mean by this. Everything goes through me from script to final print, and nothing is done which is not a part of me.'<sup>23</sup> The archival materials available attest to his full involvement in all aspects of his films, with notes pertaining to every single stage of production from the initial germ of an idea right through to the tiniest of final editorial tweaks. Sometimes this attention to infinitesimal detail was presented as the cornerstone of Lean's achievement, as with George Stevens Jr's quotation from Dickens – 'Genius is the infinite capacity for taking pains' – at the gala presentation of Lean's American Film Institute lifetime achievement award. However, the director's total commitment to the film in hand could equally be presented in a negative light as suffocatingly perfectionist, 'like being made to build the Taj Mahal out of toothpicks'<sup>24</sup> as Robert Mitchum memorably remarked. This is the David Lean of the icy stare and the long impenetrable silence, of whom a technician on *Kwai* allegedly complained: 'The bloody perfectionist!

He shot thirty seconds of film a day and then sat on a rock and stared at his goddamn bridge!<sup>25</sup> Some of those kinds of stories are undoubtedly apocryphal exaggerations but Lean's commitment once a film was under way was indeed absolute and all-encompassing: one of his collaborators described him as having 'no peripheral vision'.<sup>26</sup> While working for him on *Doctor Zhivago* (1965), Rod Steiger even wondered aloud 'just how much of that man is alive when he is not working'.<sup>27</sup> As far back as *The Passionate Friends* in 1949, Lean was being described as a fanatical filmmaker with 'celluloid instead of blood in his veins',<sup>28</sup> simultaneously suggesting cinematic prowess but also possibly an unfeeling approach to his craft, technically exacting but essentially cold. And yet Lean spoke of his attachment to his films as 'entirely emotional' and likened choosing a project to 'falling in love'.<sup>29</sup> His question to fledgling directors seeking his guidance was never a practical one but the more creatively inclined 'do you dream?'<sup>30</sup>, and he described his own 'dream-like imagination' when envisaging scenes for a film.<sup>31</sup> What emerged from Lean's daydreaming was a definite vision for his films: 'it's as if I've got an imaginary negative in my mind, and when I get on the set, I try to make a positive which will match that negative.'<sup>32</sup>

This book aims to give full and balanced credit to Lean's collaborators for the achievements of the films, particularly key figures like his fellow Cineguild members Anthony Havelock-Allan and Ronald Neame in his earlier career, and in later years, producer Sam Spiegel, composer Maurice Jarre and – particularly – writer Robert Bolt, as well as the many actors who contributed memorable and moving performances to his films.<sup>33</sup> There is not as much space in this book as I would like to devote to the invaluable contributions made to Lean's films by other production staff, from outstanding cinematographers like Guy Green, Freddie Young and Jack Hildyard and production designers John Bryan and John Box, to stalwart continuity supervisors Maggie Unsworth and Barbara Cole or someone as indefinable and indispensable as Lean's property master, location scout and all-round fixer Eddie Fowlie. But at the same time, my account of the films is still underpinned by the belief that David Lean was the central guiding intelligence behind each of his films. This is true even of his collaborative debut with Noël Coward, *In Which We Serve* (1942); that the film works in cinematic terms is largely down to Lean's script guidance, co-direction and editorial expertise. Although Lean took very seriously the advice Noël Coward gave him to 'always come out of a different hole' and never do the same thing twice, Lean's body of work actually has more than enough aesthetic and narratological continuity to satisfy the most avowed auteurist. Moreover, Lean's position on the authorial role of the director converged to a

remarkable degree with the auteur theory. Even back in 1947, Lean was arguing that the ‘best films are generally those that have the stamp of one man’s personality’.<sup>34</sup> A later comment echoed Alexandre Astruc’s auteurist notion of the *camera-stylo* (camera-pen): ‘What is directing? It’s trying to use a lot of people and some very heavy apparatus, and give it all the lightness of a pen while you are writing.’<sup>35</sup> And Lean’s status as the man in charge of the machinery, the one with the central controlling vision, was absolutely self-evident on set, according to his former cinematographer Nicolas Roeg: ‘If the Martians landed they would not have needed to say “Take me to your leader”. They would have picked David out from the crowd immediately.’<sup>36</sup>

My approach to Lean’s work deploys methodologies and sources associated with film history, consulting archival documentation relating to the production, marketing and original critical reception of the films. But this is combined with close analytical attention to those films, not only in terms of narrative structure and characterisation but also *mise en scène*, camera framing and movement, lighting, colour, editing and soundtrack. Lean, like many other filmmakers before him and since, advocated the primacy of the visual in the medium, stating categorically that ‘moments you remember in movies are not often dialogue. They are images – pictures with music and sound that move you.’<sup>37</sup> As we have seen, Lean was absolutely meticulous in his construction of the flow of images, working to the ‘imaginary negative’ in his mind’s eye, and thus his films repay equally meticulous scrutiny of their textual properties. In writing about Lean’s films in this book, I am engaged in the activity of *ekphrasis*, using the written word to invoke a visual medium, offering what Adrian Martin has described as film criticism’s ‘secondary elaboration, after the primary elaboration of the film-work itself ... re-describing what has already been etched onto the screen’.<sup>38</sup> But the act of re-description is never neutral and, Martin observes, has the potential to act in an ‘alchemical, transformative’ way upon the film text, enabling new ways of understanding it.<sup>39</sup> My *ekphrastic* endeavour in this book is ‘to evoke for a reader that lost object ... to bring the film into imaginative being for the reader, so that she views it in the process of reading. In reading, she becomes a film viewer.’<sup>40</sup> Through that process of evocation, of drawing out particular features of Lean’s films and positing potential interpretations, I hope to demonstrate fully their outstanding cinematic achievement. Although there is no small irony in using V. F. Perkins, author of the famously slighting *Movie* editorial about British cinema mentioned earlier, as a touchstone for an analysis of David Lean’s work, Perkins’s defence of this model of film writing is both inspirational and indispensable:

No intra-textual interpretation ever is or could be a proof. More often, it is a description of aspects of the film with suggested understandings of some of the ways they are patterned. Rhetoric is involved in developing the description so that it evokes a sense of how, seen in this way, the film may affect us, or so that it invites participation in the pleasure of discovering this way in which various of the film's features hang together.<sup>41</sup>

I hope to give Lean his interpretive due, showing how his films demonstrate precisely that sense of aesthetic coherence alluded to by Perkins, and to build a persuasive case for David Lean as someone more than worthy of being lauded.

Lean's directing career spanned major industrial changes from the 1940s through to the 1980s, and took him from modest British studio production to Hollywood-financed widescreen blockbusters. Those series of very different filmmaking contexts – from working under the aegis of J. Arthur Rank's generously laissez-faire Independent Producers, then moving to Alexander Korda's London Films with a cohort of fellow refugees from Independent Producers after its curtailment by John Davis, to later setting up big-budget epics with Sam Spiegel and Columbia, then Carlo Ponti and MGM, and so on – obviously played a strong role in determining the content and style of each of the productions. However, despite the undeniable changes in Lean's filmmaking attendant on very different industrial contexts, I contend that there are clear continuities observable from his earliest films to his last. The unmistakable recurrence of certain motifs, themes, situations, character types, and visual and aural tropes in films spanning the five decades of Lean's directorial career belies the idea of a total split between his early and late films, as suggested in Sue Harper and Vincent Porter's statement that Lean's later work 'bears no visual relation to the films he made before 1955'<sup>42</sup> and that from *Kwai* onwards 'the demands of Sam Spiegel and the epic genre overcame any claims to visual authorship'.<sup>43</sup> I beg to differ from this viewpoint. Is it pure coincidence that the last words of *Kwai*'s fanatical visionary Colonel Nicholson – 'what have I done?' – are identical to those of another half-mad fanatic, Miss Havisham, from one of Lean's earlier films, *Great Expectations* (1946)? The image of a man's hand placed on the woman's shoulder from *Brief Encounter* returns in his much later work *Ryan's Daughter*, a repetition across the decades which Robert Horton finds 'uncannily moving. It's less the work of a cool technician than a physical memory.'<sup>44</sup> There are other correspondences between Lean's films across the separations of time and genre: the reverberation of the word 'home', sometimes comforting but more often tinged with disappointment;<sup>45</sup> and, connected to this, the recurrent return to aspects of the

British Empire, from the Wembley exhibition visited by the family in *This Happy Breed* (1944) through to the Raj depicted in *A Passage to India*. In Richard Dyer's work on whiteness, his shorthand phrase to denote white identity – 'strangled vowels and rigid salutes'<sup>46</sup> – maps perfectly onto the worlds of *Brief Encounter*, *Kwai* and *Lawrence*, as well as many other Lean films, suggesting the director's inadvertent but no less profound entanglement with the representation of whiteness.

One central recurring theme of Lean's work is illuminated by an intriguing literary reference which appears in *The Passionate Friends*. The film shows its former lovers Mary and Stephen thumbing through old books on his shelves before stopping to read the epigraph of one particularly cherished volume. 'God gave to every people a cup of clay', Mary reads, and then Stephen completes the sentence, 'and from this cup they drink their life'. Although never acknowledged in the film, this Native American proverb was used to preface Ruth Benedict's pioneering work of anthropology, *Patterns of Culture* (1934). It's unclear whether the reference to Benedict's work was the invention of Eric Ambler and Ronald Neame in their original draft screenplay for *The Passionate Friends* or an addition made by Stanley Haynes and David Lean in their heavily revised version, but Benedict's ideas certainly have a special resonance in relation to Lean's work. Her investigation into different 'primitive' societies is structured around a comparison of those tribes who embrace an ethos of restraint and tribes who embrace frenzy and abandon. Benedict draws on Nietzsche's distinction between the Dionysian and the Apollonian as a means of characterising 'two diametrically opposed ways of arriving at the value of existence':

The Dionysian pursues them through 'the annihilation of the ordinary bounds and limits of existence'; he seeks to attain in his most valued moments escape from the boundaries imposed upon him by his five senses, to break through into another order of experience ... he values the illuminations of frenzy. The Apollonian distrusts all of this, and has often little idea of the nature of such experiences. He keeps the middle of the road, stays within the known map, does not meddle with disruptive psychological states.<sup>47</sup>

This dyad perfectly encapsulates the struggles undergone by a number of Lean's heroes and heroines, torn between sticking to the routes offered by known maps or trying to embrace other orders of experience which promise perfect fulfilment but frequently shade into madness. I think it's fair to surmise from biographical evidence from various sources that this conflict between the Dionysian and the Apollonian was deeply felt by David Lean himself, whose austere Quaker upbringing clashed with his wayward libidinous impulses, civilized respectability



coming up against what Lean memorably described as ‘the “animal” which is only a little way under all our skins, which can be very exciting but very dangerous’.<sup>48</sup> Producer Anthony Havelock-Allan remarked that he had ‘never seen a man who was in more of a subconscious dilemma between his sensuality and his strict sense of morality’.<sup>49</sup> His second wife Kay Walsh saw him as ‘a disturbed, split man’, while Cineguild associate Ronald Neame suggested that beneath Lean’s cool guarded surface, there was indeed ‘a battle royal going on’.<sup>50</sup> Likewise, Omar Sharif characterised Lean as a divided soul, ‘a human being as Anglo-Saxon as they come and as romantically oriental as ever I have known’.<sup>51</sup> His planned but never made project about *HMS Bounty* may have represented the ultimate expression of his inner conflict with ‘Captain Bligh, the rigid disciplinarian, and Mr Christian, the man of feeling who embraces the sybaritic life’ symbolising ‘the two sides of David’, according to his friend and admirer John Boorman.<sup>52</sup> ‘A very emotional man’, his biographer Kevin Brownlow observed of him, ‘but being English I take a lot of care to cover it up’, Lean added.<sup>53</sup> But the traces of that division and repression are writ large in his films.

The conflict between Apollonian and Dionysian in Lean’s films is often expressed via a focus on ‘repressed sexuality’, and, as Steven Organ observes, ‘Lean’s repressed protagonists were mostly women’.<sup>54</sup> The feminine angle of much of Lean’s work has seldom been fully acknowledged even though, as Alain Silver and James Ursini point out, six of Lean’s sixteen films – *Brief Encounter*, *The Passionate Friends*, *Madeleine* (1950), *Summer Madness* (1955; US title *Summertime*), *Ryan’s Daughter* and *A Passage to India* – have ‘preeminent female protagonists’<sup>55</sup> and a good deal more also feature women in key roles: from *This Happy Breed*’s Ethel and Queenie through to *Doctor Zhivago*’s Lara. In a sense, the all-male worlds of *Kwai* and *Lawrence* are anomalous in Lean’s career, although they have come to be seen as representative of his work, because of the higher critical profile those films have enjoyed in comparison with some of Lean’s more female-focussed pictures: indeed, when Judy Davis was cast in *A Passage to India* she expressed doubts about Lean’s ability to direct women precisely because his reputation was so strongly tied up with those two male-dominated epic war films.<sup>56</sup> One of the major objectives of this book is to bring into sharper focus the other side of Lean’s filmmaking, the more female-centred films, in order to redress this imbalance in perception. My study prioritises questions of gender in relation to Lean’s work, marking a departure from previous studies of its kind. It deliberately foregrounds films which have tended to occupy a more marginal position within Lean’s oeuvre, arguing for their significance not only on the grounds that

they're 'interesting' but also because they're 'good'. For instance, it is my contention that *Summer Madness* is a film of equal emotional power and visual complexity, albeit in a very different register, to the much better-known and more widely celebrated *Lawrence of Arabia*. Therefore my analysis gives both films equal space and explores them in equal depth (if anything, slightly weighted in the former's favour to counteract the usual bias in attention towards the latter).

David Lean has been characterised as a director of highly romantic disposition whose films offer a vision of 'the romantic sensibility attempting to reach beyond the restraints and constrictions of everyday life'.<sup>57</sup> He once quoted with approval William Wyler's contention 'I don't see why anything shouldn't be told through a love story',<sup>58</sup> and Lean's male-centred adventure films are arguably just as much love stories as his more female-oriented romances; indeed, Michael Anderegg observes how 'in Lean's hands, adventure and romance are very much the same thing', both centred on someone trying to 'break through the barriers of conventional thought and feeling, of morality and custom ... to some higher, more intense, deeply felt existence'.<sup>59</sup> But that common ambition is expressed via very different routes depending on genre and gender, and has very different outcomes for male and female protagonists. As mentioned earlier, the final words of Miss Havisham and Colonel Nicholson are identical and both characters orchestrate grand but tragically flawed schemes to make their mark on the world. But Miss Havisham is defined by her hermitage, shut up in a cobwebbed interior space, not seeing the sun for decades, whereas Nicholson, although similarly psychologically hampered, is burnt by the sun and driven mad by it, his own dreams of immortality bound up with the megalomania of imperial endeavour, of being a protagonist on the world stage. There are other crucial differences of gender at play here: while Nicholson's fanaticism revolves around the *construction* of a lasting monument, the bridge, Havisham's revolves around *destruction*, using her ward Estella to break men's hearts. Male characters in Lean's work are often granted a degree of visionary insight through their romantic obsession (before their eventual and inevitable descent), but the female characters who share the same impulses generally remain passionate but frustrated, driven to sabotage or self-destruction, rather than grand action on an epic scale. Laura in *Brief Encounter* can only daydream that the coppiced willows at the level crossing are palm trees, remaining all the while in her fire-side armchair and conjuring up her affair through flashback. The epic hero, T. E. Lawrence, sees the palm trees for real while traversing the vast expanses of the desert. But both are romantics whose aspirations are ultimately thwarted and who must endure unhappy homecomings.

The structure of this book is based on part-chronological, part-thematic groupings of David Lean's films. After this general introduction, chapter two deals with Lean's early career, covering his entry into the film industry and flourishing formative years as an editor, honing skills he would continue to apply through his filmmaking career, and his official entry into direction in collaboration with Noël Coward on the war film *In Which We Serve*, an incredibly prestigious and successful directorial debut. The chapter goes on to cover all of Lean's subsequent films in association with Coward (with the exception of *Brief Encounter*, which is dealt with in chapter four instead) and details the formation of David Lean into a major British directorial talent.

Chapter three examines Lean's four forays into the nineteenth century, encompassing his two Dickens adaptations, *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist* (1948), as well as his two later Victorian dramas, both centred on rebellious females, the 'true crime' tale *Madeleine* and the comedy *Hobson's Choice* (1954). By grouping these four films together rather than placing the Dickens films in their own separate subcategory and examining them exclusively through the lens of adaptation studies, various continuities in Lean's representation of the nineteenth century become apparent. Each film presents a vivid instance of the twentieth century in the process of 'inventing the Victorians';<sup>60</sup> put together, the quartet of films show how perceptions began to change during the pivotal postwar years, with Lean's films both contributing to and reflecting those changes.

The remaining three chapters are centred on gender, beginning with chapter four, which focusses on a trio of films about women in love, *Brief Encounter*, *The Passionate Friends* and *Summer Madness*. The latter two films are probably among the least well known of Lean's films and the most deserving of reclamation and celebration as fascinating investigations into female subjectivity, rendered with astonishing visual panache and total emotional commitment. There is also, I argue, evidence for a large degree of authorial identification with their lovelorn heroines: David Thomson is absolutely right when he says that in *Brief Encounter* 'Lean has dug up his own buried soul in the name of a woman's picture'.<sup>61</sup> Chapter five then moves onto ground more readily associated with the director, with three films centred on male visionaries, *The Sound Barrier* (1952), *The Bridge on the River Kwai* and *Lawrence of Arabia*. These latter two films also consolidated Lean's total transformation from parochial British to epic international filmmaker; although the process had actually begun with *Summer Madness*, the director's first transatlantic coproduction. The sixth and final chapter looks at the three concluding productions of Lean's career, *Doctor Zhivago*, *Ryan's Daughter* and *A*

*Passage to India*, examining them in the light of a growing tension in Lean's career between epic form and intimate subject matter. Critical responses to those films often perceived a mismatch between monumental style and small-scale stories which reached its apotheosis in the animosity expressed towards *Ryan's Daughter*.

The opposition of later international and early British films, of big versus small, undoubtedly defines Lean's career and his reputation. But Lean himself sidestepped its significance by insisting that 'emotions not spectacle make a picture big',<sup>62</sup> so a 'small' film like *Brief Encounter* could potentially be as 'big' as a blockbuster like *Zhivago*. Such dissolution of the usual boundaries between the different stages of his career is refreshing and prompts new ways of thinking about his films beyond the customary pre-and-post-epic divide. In this respect, it corresponds perfectly with the overarching aim of this book, which is to propose new perspectives on the work of David Lean and offer a fuller and more varied appreciation of his manifold achievements as a filmmaker. In so doing, the study makes interventions in wider academic debates around authorship, gender, genre and aesthetics in relation to the British cinema and transnational cinema of British cultural inheritance of which Lean was such a remarkable exponent.

## Notes

- 1 Graham Fuller and Nicholas Kent, 'Return Passage: Interview with David Lean', *Stills*, March 1985, p. 34.
- 2 William Goldman in 1983, quoted in Sandra Lean with Barry Chattington, *David Lean: An Intimate Portrait* (London: Universe, 2001), p. 44.
- 3 Peter Waymark, 'Portents of an Indian Summer', *The Times*, 16 March 1985.
- 4 *Lawrence* had dropped to 48th position in the 2012 directors' poll, perhaps indicating a fall in his fortunes as a key influence on filmmakers. However, Lean still has definite advocates among younger directors, particularly Joe Wright (2007's *Atonement*, 2012's *Anna Karenina*). When the poll was first conducted in 1952, Lean's *Brief Encounter* managed to attain joint tenth place, the first and last time to date any of his films occupied a position of significant esteem among critics in this invaluable litmus test of critical preferences.
- 5 Andrew Sarris, *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions 1929–1968* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968).
- 6 *Movie*, May 1962, p. 8.
- 7 *Ibid.* Further on this difference in opinion between directors and critics as to Lean's worth, *Movie* critic Ian Cameron once ruefully commented that 'on confronting many of the film-makers I most admire, I invariably find that the film-makers *they* most admire are Messers. Lean and Fellini whose work I cannot abide.' Quoted in Alain Silver and James Ursini, *David Lean and His Films* (Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 1992), p. 9.
- 8 Incidentally, Lean is on record stating his admiration for Hitchcock, stating that the shower scene in *Psycho* (1960) is very good 'but the three minutes before

- it, when nothing happens, they're *brilliant*'. Steven M. Silverman, *David Lean* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1998), p. 136.
- 9 Robert Horton, 'Jungle Fever: A David Lean Joint', *Film Comment*, September/October 1991, p. 14.
- 10 Lean interviewed by Jay Cocks in 1984 anthologised in Steven Organ (ed.), *David Lean: Interviews* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2009), p. 59.
- 11 Fuller and Kent, 'Return Passage', p. 36.
- 12 *Time*, 31 December 1984.
- 13 J. Hoberman, *Village Voice*, 14 February 1989, p. 57.
- 14 Brian Case, *Time Out*, 12 April 1989.
- 15 Kevin Jackson, *Lawrence of Arabia* (London: BFI, 2007), p. 9.
- 16 Kevin Brownlow, *David Lean* (London: Faber, 1997).
- 17 Nick James, 'David Lean', *Sight and Sound*, July 2008, p. 38.
- 18 Peter Hutchings, *Dracula* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), p. 3.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 Quoted in Organ (ed.), *David Lean: Interviews*, p. 13.
- 22 Peter Wollen, 'Riff-Raff Realism', *Sight and Sound*, April 1998, p. 22. Wollen's essay was also cited in Neil Sinyard's book in this series on Jack Clayton, in a discussion which anticipates Hutchings in its recognition of how 'in the invaluable re-evaluation of the British cinema which has taken place over the last two decades, the aesthetic case has been tentatively handled.' Neil Sinyard, *Jack Clayton* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 17.
- 23 Gerald Pratley, *The Cinema of David Lean* (London: Tantivy: 1974), p. 21.
- 24 Quoted in Brownlow, *David Lean*, p. 559.
- 25 Quoted in Silverman, *David Lean*, p. 123.
- 26 Ernest Day, 'A Passage to India', *American Cinematographer*, March 1985, p. 59.
- 27 Interview by Jay Cocks in Organ (ed.), *David Lean: Interviews*, p. 65.
- 28 *The Passionate Friends* pressbook, BFI Library.
- 29 Lean interviewed by Robert Stewart 1965 in Organ (ed.), *David Lean: Interviews*, p. 22.
- 30 Lean with Chattington, *David Lean*, p. 50.
- 31 Interviewed by Stewart in Organ (ed.), *David Lean: Interviews*, p. 24.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 Who, asked producer Michael Balcon in 1951, 'can entirely separate the names of David Lean, Ronald Neame and Anthony Havelock-Allan?' He added, however, 'I think neither of the other members of the triumvirate would quarrel with my guess that Lean was the leading member.' 'Ten Years of British Films', *Films in 1951: A Special Publication on British Films and Film-Makers for the Festival of Britain* (London: BFI, 1951), p. 37.
- 34 David Lean, 'The Film Director', in Oswell Blakeston (ed.), *Working for the Films* (London: Focal, 1947), p. 36.
- 35 Quoted in George Stevens Jr. (ed.), *Conversations with the Great Moviemakers of Hollywood's Golden Age* (New York: Knopf, 2006), p. 425. A variation also appears in another interview: 'Can you think of any art that isn't one person's vision? Making a movie is using a vast piece of machinery like a crane to draw a fine line. One person must control the machinery.' Lean quoted in Aljean Harmetz, 'David Lean films a famed novel', *New York Times*, 7 December 1984, p. 21.
- 36 Adrian Turner, *The Making of David Lean's Lawrence of Arabia* (London: Dragon's World, 1994), p. 143.
- 37 Quoted in Lean with Chattington, *David Lean*, p. 6.
- 38 Adrian Martin, 'Incursions', in Alex Clayton and Andrew Klevan (eds.), *The Language and Style of Film Criticism* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 56.

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- 41 V. F. Perkins, 'Must we say what they mean? Film criticism and interpretation', *Movie*, Vol. 34, No. 5, 1990, p. 4.
- 42 Sue Harper and Vincent Porter, *British Cinema of the 1950s: The Decline of Deference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 31.
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- 45 See Neil Sinyard, 'David Lean: home and the concept of Englishness', unpublished paper, 1998.
- 46 Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 10.
- 47 Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), p. 79.
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- 49 Anthony Havelock-Allan quoted in Brownlow, *David Lean*, p. 217.
- 50 Kay Walsh quoted in Brownlow, *David Lean*, p. 111. Ronald Neame in 1946, quoted *ibid.*, p. 217.
- 51 Quoted in Lean with Chattington, *David Lean*, p. 9.
- 52 John Boorman, *Adventures of a Suburban Boy* (London: Faber, 2003), p. 299.
- 53 Brownlow, *David Lean*, p. xv.
- 54 Steven Organ, 'Introduction' in Organ (ed.), *David Lean: Interviews*, p. x.
- 55 Silver and Ursini, *David Lean and His Films*, p. 3.
- 56 Brownlow, *David Lean*, p. 673.
- 57 Steven Ross, 'In Defence of David Lean', *Take One*, July/August 1972, p. 10.
- 58 Lean interviewed by David Ehrenstein in 1984 in Organ (ed.), *David Lean: Interviews*, p. 74.
- 59 Michael Anderegg, *David Lean* (Boston: Twayne, 1985), p. xiii.
- 60 To borrow Matthew Sweet's useful phrase from his book of the same name, *Inventing the Victorians* (London: Faber, 2001).
- 61 David Thomson, 'Unhealed wounds', *Guardian* (Review section), 10 May 2008, p. 13.
- 62 Quoted in Lean with Chattington, *David Lean*, p. 6.