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Introduction

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Alfred West F.R.G.S.

Alfred West was a resident of Southsea in Hampshire at the turn of the century. He was a partner with his brother George in their photography business West & Sons in Osborne Road. Alfred concentrated on marine photography while his brother handled portraiture in the studio.

Little is known of the background of Alfred West and his family. He was born on 1st August 1857 in the family home in the High Street in Gosport. He was one of eight children, George being the oldest and sixteen years older than the youngest, Alfred. His father George Edmund James West is stated as being a master carpenter/joiner on Alfred's birth certificate. We know that West & Sons had a photographic studio in Gosport which we would assume was the original and that after some initial success the family firm opened up their second branch in Southsea in Osborne Road.

In his unpublished Autobiography *Sea Salts and Celluloid* West writes that his 'first snapshots' (1) were taken at the regatta held by the Royal Albert Yacht Club at Southsea in 1881. He was twenty-four. These 'snapshots' however were the first photographs taken using the newly invented 'dry plate process'.(2) The West brothers were obviously photographing before that regatta using the 'wet plate' process which was a much slower method (in terms of film speeds) and could only photograph much more static subjects. This would have been portraiture in the studios in Gosport and Southsea and the British warships at rest in Portsmouth Harbour. It is not certain when the studio in Southsea was opened up exactly as no dates are given in the autobiography. What is clear from his autobiography is West's great interest and liking for the sea and for maritime culture. This is not too surprising as he was born and raised in the garrison town of Gosport surrounded by the British military fleet and the civilian yacht builders of Camper & Nicholson. Such was his enthusiasm for the navy it is surprising that he did not 'join up' himself but again we know little of the formative years of Alfred West, of his education and of the intervening years on leaving school to his appearance with his brother in his father's photography business.

As a student of film history what interests me in the case of Alfred West is the combination of interests, circumstances and situations which led from these first snapshots to the large collection of cinefilm which he amassed in the next twenty-five years. West was a specific example of a pioneer film maker participating in the development of film in Great Britain, and analysis of his life and products might provide valuable information to allow historians to gauge the actual nature, characteristics and mechanics of the emergence of film as a cultural form and practice in this country. I propose to utilise the methodology which revisionist film historian such as Gomery, Allen, Jarvie and Bordwell have expounded. They have set out to revise and re-assess earlier readings of film history. Many of these histories, they suggest have suffered from an over-reliance upon a 'Grand' or 'meta-narrative', such as Marxism or Freudianism or a heavy adherence to a singular theoretical paradigm such as Structuralism. They also suffered from a vulgar and naive interpretation of factual evidence due to this dogmatic adherence to their chosen theme. Revisionist film history attempts to move away from the single meta-narrative and theoretical paradigm. It constructs its history by utilising the many disciplines of academic enquiry - aesthetic, technological, economic and social history. From these disciplines a history of film is constructed which stresses the inter-related nature of a cultural practices' historical development. Revisionist film history encourages the gathering of factual archive evidence which it then interprets within its 'realist' philosophical perspective. Ideological bias is replaced by a 'scientific theory which is objectively assessed by reference to empirical evidence'.(3) Yet in the case of West, as I have said this information is difficult to obtain. I have gained access to Alfred West's unpublished Autobiography '*Sea Salts and Celluloid*' and a selection of contemporary newspaper articles, reviews, announcements and advertisements pertinent to West. A copy of the film catalogue of Alfred West has been retrieved from the British Library. It must be said however that the autobiography is not a very informative document in terms of describing the technicalities of pioneer film production. It does not show how he built up his connections with the navy, or his lifestyle or background. The autobiography concentrates very much on descriptions of naval life, its traditions and routines with anecdotes of amusing incidents which obviously peppered his life but it always revolves around the omnipresent subjects of the Monarchy, the Empire, the navy and his part in their maintenance. The complete catalogue of Alfred West's film entitled '*Life in Our Navy and Our Army*' is stamped by the Royal Colonial Office as having received it on 29 February 1912. It is obviously a useful and illuminating document. It follows the format of film catalogues of that time and gives the title of the film, its approximate length in feet, its catalogue number and, most importantly for the purposes of this dissertation a précis of the events in the film.

For example;

Film number 41. Titled Bean Bag Competition. (75 ft)

"The cadets form up in a single column line ahead, and throw a bean bag to the next astern, which must be caught and thrown on until it reaches the last one, who rushes forward to take the place as "Leader of the Line." Failing to catch the line puts this one out of action."

and

Film number 107. Titled Trysting place. (100 ft)

"He returns to duty, but bears in loving remembrance the sweet face of the girl, and six months later they meet at the trysting place. There against the stile in a meadow, amidst the trees they plight their troth, as the birds sing in joyful harmony with their happiness."

In this case the description is followed by a tantalising 'still' from the film, which sadly, as with most of West's films, has been lost or destroyed. It is this dearth of filmic evidence which also makes the task of writing a film studies dissertation difficult; West's contribution to the development of 'film language' or narrative is hard to establish. We can see from his catalogue that even though West made predominantly documentary' films (i.e a short recording of a public military event or spectacle) he also made a narrative film of which the *Trysting place* was a part). He called it a 'pictorial story' which would inevitably have involved editing, camera movement and perspective. So the case of Alfred West does raise and problematise the question of evidence in film history. He was clearly an important and innovatory figure, but we have to rely on piecemeal and often incomplete evidence to constitute even a tentative account.

If we survey the written material that is extant, the collection of newspaper articles, reviews and announcements, (mostly taken from the local Portsmouth *Evening News* but also a few from *The Times*) we see that they do contain some important and helpful information in regard to the exhibition practices and network of venues of West. We also learn something about his audience and their responses. For instance, we read from an advertisement in the Portsmouth *Evening News* on March 28th 1900 that Alfred West's *Our Navy* was showing at the Victoria Hall in Southsea. In fact it was showing every evening that week at 8pm, with a matinee on Wednesday and Saturday at 3pm. Prices were 3 shillings for reserved seats, 2s & 1s for unreserved seats and 6d for admission. (Tickets could be obtained at 16 Palmerston Road Southsea and 99 High Street Gosport). We read in a review of 'Our Navy' which appeared in the *Evening News* in the previous night - March 27 1900 that:

Messers. West & Sons, with considerable patriotism had announced that the entire gross receipts for the night would be handed over to the Mayor's fund for the Blue-jackets and Marines engaged in the war,,,,, his Worship (Mr H.Pink) rose and informed that no less a sum than £30 6s.8d had been placed in his hand. (4)

Information like this is valuable in ascertaining the economic returns of the pioneer film makers on their exhibition circuits. If West was taking approximately £30 box office receipts every evening and his show was on six nights a week plus two matinees then we might approximate his weekly returns at £200. Quite a substantial amount. Information like this also gives valuable insights into the sympathies of Alfred West and the expectations of the audiences, since these donations by West were a regular occurrence. I have endeavoured to add to the knowledge about Alfred West and his background and career by carrying out researches at various local and national sources. At the Portsmouth Public Records Office I have searched through the Rates Returns books for 7 Villiers Road in Southsea in to which the West family moved in 1888-89. I have been to the Local History section of Portsmouth Central library and searched through past copies of *The Navy and Army Illustrated Journal* to count the number of photographs that West & Sons supplied to the journal. I have contacted the resident historian of the Royal Albert Yacht Club and the Royal Navy Club to see if Alfred West was mentioned in their records. I have been to the British Film Institute library to see what information was held on West and have consulted many other local historians, publications and institutions in the attempt to gauge those interests, circumstances and situations which might illuminate the reasons why West entered into cinefilm production, also the effect he had on it.

Alfred West & W.F.S.A

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the repercussions of the emergence of Alfred West as a subject to be researched. He was a pioneer film maker whose films should be collected and preserved because he was a prominent contributor to early British film culture. In attempting to analyse the West phenomenon I shall consider the quite intimate and reciprocal relationship between the institutions of the film archives, both regional and national, and the film studies courses offered in British universities on early British film.

Firstly it is important to relate the circumstances of the Wessex Film and Sound Archive's interest in Alfred West. David Lee, the archivist at W.F.S.A had a job at the B.B.C at Southampton in the library before he was offered the post at W.F.S.A. Whilst he was there a freelance producer James T Gardener was also present making a programme called 'Bioscope Days'. Included in this programme was the West footage of the Freemason procession along Fawcett Road in Southsea. When the series was finished, Mr Gardener happened to leave the original nitrate print in the outside film vaults, to which Mr Lee had access and he came across the film. When he was leaving to take up the post of W.F.S.A film archivist he was given permission to take the West footage to add to the W.F.S.A collection. He then contacted Mr Gardener who informed him, as much as he could, of the provenance of the film. When he had obtained a viewing copy of the film for the archive he then passed it on to the National Film Archive. They in turn informed him of the existence of Mr Antony Clover who had been researching the life of his grandfather Alfred West and Mr Lee contacted him in Old Portsmouth. So chance, accident and personal interest were separate determinants in the emergence of West as an object of study and the name of Alfred West and his contribution to British film culture started to emerge again. It had certainly been known before. In Low and Manvell's *The History of the British Film 1896-1906* (1948) they briefly mention Alfred West and Our Navy Ltd. (indicating incidentally that he did set up a fully-fledged business organisation). John H Bird also mentions West much more comprehensively in his 1946 book *Cinema Parade - Fifty Years of Film Shows* in which he acknowledges Alfred West as the 'grandfather of British film' (1). In the late 1980's John Barnes contacted Mr Clover about Alfred West's inclusion in his book *Pioneers of the British Film Vol 3*. He included a substantial piece on West's work and life which he had gained from Mr Clover and from his own researches into magazines and trade journals for West's time, such as the *British Journal of Photography*, the *Optical Magic Lantern Journal* and the *Amateur photographer*.

In the case of the Wessex Film and Sound Archive and West we have an example of a regional film archive realizing that its region contained an untapped resource of information and potentially of films. Initially David Lee had to reassess the main priorities of the film archive. He had to decide whether they were merely to seek out filmstock and preserve it for posterity, or whether the archive should go out into the region and actively assist in the discovery and accumulation of film, its makers and its making. Lee took the latter definition of the role of the film archive. However he candidly states that it was not only for that reason alone that the subject of West is of benefit to his regional film archive. West could be used to promote the archive and its work to the public, by increasing its stature amongst institutions who have a vested interest in it i.e the parent funding body of Hampshire County Council and the Film Archive Forum. These bodies might be impressed by the prospect of W.F.S.A becoming the archive to have the monopoly on film and information on the 'grandfather of film'.

West thus becomes a figure who confers status and possibly wealth gaining potential. So in pursuit of both information and status, Mr Lee would like a *Portsmouth Paper* about West to be written by myself. This might also be accompanied by a local exhibition on West and Portsmouth in conjunction with the city and county councils. Lee also intends to issue a film search notice to all of the film archives in the Commonwealth and Dominions for Alfred West's films through F.I.A.F. He already has copies of West's autobiography, film catalogue and newspaper cuttings.

What are the implications of these moves and policies for academic film studies and what is the relationship between the film archives and institutionalised film studies? John Gartenberg addressed these issues in his article 'The Brighton project. The archives and research.' At the 34th Annual conference of F.I.A.F at Brighton in May 1978 600 feature films from the period of 1900 - 1906 were screened and papers were presented on them. He writes:

The importance of the project lay not only in the quantity of the motion pictures screened, but also in the activity of the ensuing week, when a group of international experts, both scholars and archivists analysed the films. (2)

Previous to this conference these two groups had not collaborated together to the extent that one would have expected from two groups who had the same vested interests. He says:

Scholars have often viewed archivists as unnecessarily secretive about their holdings. Conversely, archivists have viewed scholars as largely unaware of the workings of a film archive and of the delicate role that the archivists play as mediators between the owners of the film (the film producers) and the users of the products, the scholars.(3)

So at Brighton conference and afterwards, the relationship between film archives and film studies perceptibly changed, and Gartenberg sums up the situation:

This kind of collaboration between film archives and universities and archivists and film scholars is significant not only for Brighton, but also for the model it established for future interactions on such similar projects involving intense study of neglected areas of film history. (4)

The 'model' referred to. is the 'revisionist film history' model which has been discussed in the introduction. It is an approach which moves away from analysing film from one particular theoretical position, and it especially avoids dominating the analysis by an all encompassing macro theory. Revisionist film history utilises and draws upon much historical and empirical evidence which it views as what Gomery and Allen term "a realist theory of science". (5) The relationship of archive work/labour to academic work/labour is where the archive provides these original documents, accompanying information and empirical evidence such as production year and production company, length of film and number of shots, set construction and information regarding salient technical, stylistic and production characteristics. It also, importantly provides permission to view and use these resources. It is the academic historian's job to construct a reading of the development of film.

What effect has the omission of the films and history of Alfred West had upon the readings of the character of British film culture?

Such was the popularity and success and effect of Alfred West in his day that I feel that he certainly made a large contribution to the early pioneering British film culture. Any omission of him will therefore, inevitably leave gaps in the 'picture' of film culture at that time. If we do not place West in the overall picture, we would miss his contribution to the development of film language and narrative. We would also be disabled from establishing the possible effects that his work had, as a forerunner [or progenitor] of the British realist tradition of actuality films and documentaries. As an example of the ever changing relationship between cinema and state, he is certain to be of interest to the film academic. In omitting West to the canon, we risk biasing both the regional and national levels of our present day constructions of what 'British' film is. At a national level Alfred West and his films add to the historical evidence from which the assessments and descriptions of 'national character identity' are drawn. This is an important ideological function of any national cultural institution. The National Film and Television Archive has the task of saving the film for the nation and the raw material is passed to the academic institutions for analysis and inclusion into our constructions of Britishness. This function is repeated at the regional level where the regional film archive has an added interest in preserving film of a regional 'flavour'.

Why West?

We know that Alfred West was involved in still photography before he ventured into ciné photography. In his autobiography he does not dwell on the reasons for this move. He says:

In 1897 my attention was drawn to the art of cinematography, and from that time forward I devoted myself to obtaining films. Amongst the very first of my efforts in this line were some pictures of a torpedo explosion and a Whitehead torpedo being fired. (1)

For a student of film history, however, the reasons for the movement from one cultural practice to the next are very important in helping to explain the development of film. This movement might be seen as a 'natural progression' to a person such as West. It was his undoubted ingenuity which prompted him to invent the first automatic shutter which in turn allowed him to photograph moving objects (yachts) without them blurring. It must be said as well that these photographs were not just a novel technical development. The quality of them in terms of framing, clarity and spectacle is very high indeed. They won him fame, praise, prizes and medals from photographic societies all around the world. He was obviously a gifted photographer as well as an inventor. This reading of historical change as technological invention developed by individual people needs to be revised as it leaves many factors unaccounted for which might also have played a part in this change. Its theoretical explanation of history is now considered as inadequate to fully account for the myriad of factors which played a part in the development of film. Let us take the case of the automatic shutter which West first 'invented'. Michael Chanan in his article *Economic Conditions of Early Cinema* gives an additional explanation of the inventive process:

Technological opportunity is the consequence of the historical stage of development which has been reached by the material forces of production. In the case of cinematography the main factors were the improvement of photographic emulsions. (2)

This interpretation might well be applied to the case of West. The new 'dry plate' process obviously incorporated film emulsions which were much 'faster' than the older process and a picture could be obtained with a much quicker shutter speed. West did indeed design and build a primitive automatic shutter which used an elastic band as its spring return but this was in response to the introduction of the faster dry plate process. West's *Sea Salts and Celluloid* helps us to raise, with some clarity, these questions of historical and textual interpretation.

Alfred West and Class

The attempt to assess the class character of Alfred West arises out of two objectives. Firstly, in the preceding chapter, I raised the question of the motivation for West's transition into cinefilm. I believe that the 'structural' category of class can be shown to have been influential in West's life, though of course not explicitly referenced by West himself. Secondly an objective of the dissertation is to assess what insights may be afforded on West by recent academic debates on early British film culture. I believe that the aim of both of these objectives is to attempt to:

uncover the patterns of a characteristic kind, the patterns which sometimes reveal identities and correspondences in hitherto separately considered activities, and sometimes again reveal discontinuities of an unexpected kind. (1)

Therefore it is important to study the patterns which appear in his personal and cultural lifestyle. A study of his ideologies, his aspirations, motivations and politics helps us to understand the historical development of film in this country. If we understand the discontinuities and the idiosyncrasies of Alfred West (both at the levels of agency and structure), this must assist our understanding of the characteristics of the historical milieu, of the character of film as a vehicle for ideology and of the opportunistic nature of the Victorian and Edwardian state. Only one thing is missing - his films. Since so little is extant the historian is in a difficult situation in terms of assessing the contribution of West in terms of textual content. It is impossible to do a close textual reading (or, pace Gomery and Allen, 'film criticism') of films which are not there.

I now need to progress more directly to the results of my researches on West's class position. As has been said he was the last of eight children born to a Gosport family. The father was identified as a master carpenter/joiner on West's birth certificate in 1857. However his father probably instituted a change of career during Alfred's youth. He entered into the photographic business and set up a studio in Gosport which came to be called West & Sons. Whether it was West AND SONS at its inception is open to speculation which leaves open the question of who in the family actually initiated the step. Nevertheless we know that the oldest child of the family George entered into the firm, but we do not know whether the father (also George) took an active role in it, or possibly was the craftsman who made and repaired the cameras. We know that Alfred went to school locally (3) but we do not know where or for how long. We can assume that he went into the business straight from school (4) and did an informal 'apprenticeship' in the field of photography. In 1881 he took those first snapshots. From that time, and in the following sixteen years when in 1897 he first picked up a ciné camera he married Elizabeth Lucy House (in 1885 or 86), a local woman from Milton in Portsmouth whose family were quite prosperous market gardeners. (5) The family moved into 'Rozel' at 7 Villiers Road in Southsea, (6) literally just around the corner from the new studio that had been opened in the middle class shopping centre of Palmerston Road. Information from the Rates books tell us that West was renting that part of the house which was owned by a Miss Elizabeth Hollingsworth who still resided there. In conversation with Mr Clover I have built up picture of Alfred West's personality. He seems to have been a genuine and likeable person who was very generous (both with his money and with his friendships). Mr Clover says that he did however lack a sense of business. He was a regular church goer at St Jude's in Southsea and sang in the choir. We already know that he regularly entered into photographic competitions and had great success. We can assume that he received the relevant magazines and publications which were necessary to keep in touch with these events but we do not know whether he was an active member of the Royal Photographic Society, although they awarded him a Gold Medal. So in 1897 just before Alfred West was to start cinefilming he was a son of a Gosport master carpenter who was living in rented accommodation in Southsea with his wife and two children. He had achieved some fame through his yacht photography but the firm of West & Sons was also having to compete in the business market for its income. He had enough money to be able to keep a yacht which he used for recreation. His photography of both civilian yachts and naval warships were submitted to such popular publications as *The Navy and Army Illustrated Journal*.

I believe that West's autobiography can also be used as a resource with which to assess his class position. As a personal 'text' written by the author it is a document which would express the, author's class, social position and background through such implicit indicators as the style of language; We need to pay attention to his use of metaphor and simile, of colloquialism and slang, of such cultural references from popular or high cultural sources. We can assess the class position of an author using the knowledge that we have of the differing styles and rhetoric and by comparison to other texts of that period, in terms of both form and content. From the style of his autobiography *Sea Salts and Celluloid*, it is clear that Alfred

West had not had a Victorian 'classical' education. The language lacks the strength and depth of a text produced by a person of the educated middle classes, it lacks the discipline which would produce a much more focussed and authoritative autobiography. His style tends to wander into the anecdotal, genial, and conversational and connotes the education and background of a person who has not had the opportunity to acquire a range of references and a sense of structure. He is ill-at-ease and therefore unconfident when moving out of a familiar milieu and seems to lack a sense of an ordered trajectory.

We can assume that Alfred West was from the upper echelons of the Victorian working classes. That particular strata of families had as 'head' a skilled craftsman who had attained a comfortable standard of living and had many social aspirations; members of such families could apply themselves to those aspirations. In his 'book *The Aristocracy of Labour in Nineteenth Century Britain 1850 - 1914* Robert Gray identifies an "upper stratum of the working classes" (7) who had many of the characteristics and followed the pattern of George Edmund James West, the master carpenter father of Alfred. Gray cites Hobsbawm's criteria which distinguish members of the labour aristocracy:

First, the level and regularity of a workers' earnings: second, his prospects of social security; third, his condition of work, including the way he was treated by foremen and masters: fourth, his relations with other social strata above and below him: fifth, his general conditions of living, lastly, his prospects of future advancement and those of his family. (8)

The labour aristocracy were the superior groupings of workers enjoying higher pay, greater economic security and often a large measure of control in the immediate work situation; this is a level of status that a master carpenter/joiner would attain. The foundation of their superiority was economic and the expansion and flourishing of these groups represent the favourable conditions of a long upswing in the trade cycle in Victorian capitalism. But there were also social and cultural implications of the labour aristocracy. Gray identifies the pursuit of 'respectability' as one of the social goals of this strata. He says that notions of respectability were:

closely bound up with 'independence', the ability to provide for oneself and one's family in whatever style was appropriate to a particular social level and to avoid the indignities of subjection to 'the will and dictates of others'. (9)

For the middle classes this could mean ownership and control of one's means of livelihood and I believe that West senior's venture into the petit-bourgeois world of the self employed businessman was very much to do with the social aspirations towards middle class respectability as identified by Gray. If West senior was one of the labour aristocracy then there should also be indications of what Gray calls 'social distancing' where these artisan elites would construct social identities for themselves through a social life and cultural institutions which met with some recognition in the wider community. In the case of the West the move into the middle class sphere of portrait photography might be seen as this 'social distancing', its physical manifestation emerging with the move to the heart of middle class Portsmouth at Palmerston Road in Southsea.

With the development of film as a cultural practice in mind I must now ask myself how does this description of West compare with the class position of any other pioneer film makers i.e are there any continuities, discontinuities or patterns to be found?

In terms of class background a fruitful comparison might be made between Alfred West through his autobiography *Sea Salts and Celluloid* and Cecil Hepworth through his autobiography *Came The Dawn*. Some continuities between the two are soon apparent. In both cases the occupation of their fathers was a major influence; West was affected by his father's decision to start the photographic business and Hepworth followed his father's interest and career in lecturing on scientific subjects, of which photography was a major topic. It seems that both men were 'socialised' into the sub-culture of photography, of science and new inventions. This sub-culture, allied with some artisanal skills, enabled both men to utilise and adapt equipment to their own ends in those early days. West invented and constructed the first automatic shutter and Gimbels (10) for his yacht bound camera, and Hepworth designed, made and patented an electric arc lamp for early film projectors. (11) Hepworth had been given a small lathe for his twenty first birthday. Both men made the transition from an active participation in still photography and magic lantern slide shows to a combination of the two. Both men then extended their expertise to cinefilm. Both started filming 'documentary' subjects but West remained rooted in it whilst Hepworth diversified quite quickly into narrative fiction films. West had a more practical 'hands-on' socialisation into photography through the family business whilst Hepworth also had a theoretical aspect to his. He wrote articles for *The Photographic News* of which his father was an editor and possibly a part owner. (12)

The Hepworth Family were always struggling to make ends meet financially where as it seems that the West family were financially secure; nonetheless I would still identify the Hepworths as 'middle class'- lower middle class perhaps but nevertheless in the stratum of society that were distanced from the working classes in terms of education, language and culture. No matter how short of cash they were they were still able to afford to employ governesses for the children. I believe that a textual analysis of *Came The Dawn* confirms my above identification. Cecil Hepworth's autobiography reveals a person who is much more familiar with the written word as a means of communication (and as a means of earning a living). The language, whilst still not the quality of Matthew Arnold's or Ruskin's is much more precise, structured and focussed upon the issue of his part in the new film culture than West's:

This is the story of a man whose life was devoted to the making of films, but it is not a categorical account of the film industry, although the two stories ran parallel for many years. (13)

The wider social and historical context, and the subject of Empire and Monarchy are almost entirely absent in *Came The Dawn*. So whilst there are many continuities in their backgrounds, there are enough discontinuities to make me believe that they came from different class backgrounds.

The key question is whether these differences in class and language played any part in the choices made by both film makers in the subjects which they filmed. It must be asked what factors, other than the ones of blatant human agency, played a part in West's decision to remain - in the 'documentary' aesthetic and led Hepworth to diversify into 'quality' narrative fiction films?

Pierre Bourdieu in his book *Distinction* definitely considers the class position of a person as a factor in the choices made by producers of culture. He cites what he terms the 'habitus' of a class, its unbeknown strategies of regulation, improvisation and expectation as affecting the practice and disposition of that 'actor'. In terms of West and film production the essentially working class yet socially aspiring habitus of West would affect the assimilation of the legitimate and dominant symbolic power, in this case film. Bourdieu sees the distinction between aesthetic dispositions of the two classes in terms of a hierarchy of symbolic systems. This is most cogently expressed in the aesthetic disposition of the bourgeoisie who have

an internalised willingness to play the game of art, to see the world at a distance.
(14)

Bourdieu views the aesthetic disposition of the working classes as functional and non 'avant garde'. It is subordinate in the hierarchy of symbolic systems. Now while we cannot possibly identify the narrative fiction film of Hepworth as the 'avant garde' aesthetic in opposition to the 'realist' aesthetic of West, I do believe that there are insights to be gained from Bourdieu's analysis. For instance, the movement from monstration to narration can be viewed as the construction of a new (cinematic) language which places the 'real' world at a distance from the incompetent viewer. I therefore feel that class ideologies, habitus and aesthetic disposition did play a large part in the choice West made to remain in the actuality aesthetic. Habitus also permitted Hepworth to rise quickly up the hierarchy of aesthetic choices. This ensured the increase of his and his films' 'Cultural capital' for economic returns, for social status and the reproduction of the social formation.

Alfred West and Empire

In his book *Visions of Yesterday* Jeffrey Richards says:

If it is possible to date the apogee of the British Empire, then that date is surely 1897. (1)

At that moment in history Beatrice Webb wrote that "Imperialism was in the air" and that "all classes were drunk with sight seeing and hysterical loyalty". (2)

I feel that the most distinctive characteristic of Alfred West as a pioneer film maker was his total concentration upon and dedication to the one subject of the Empire of Great Britain. It is just as all pervasive in his autobiography, and even film is subdued to it in the title of *Sea Salts and Celluloid*. "Sea salts" are seen as a metaphor for the military (naval) arm of the Empire. The title could just as well be viewed as Empire and Celluloid, and should be seen in conjunction with the quote published in the Morning Post in 1905:

Mr Alfred West has accomplished with his pictures what Mr Rudyard Kipling has done in his story and verse. (3)

The relationship between West and Empire has two aspects. The first focusses on West himself. It is obvious, even from a cursory reading of the autobiography that West was a dedicated supporter of the British Empire and all its social, political, economic and institutional implications. For example on a visit to Australia in 1911 he wrote:

One has a feeling of pride of race in visiting such a country and in the knowledge that it is absolutely and entirely British. (4)

and

Without this vital supply of wheat from Canada and other parts of the world, England would starve so that the importance of maintaining a strong navy can plainly be seen. (5)

We have already stated that West, as a member of the socially aspiring 'aristocracy of labour' would want to be identified with institutions which had a wide social acceptance and high status. At this time in 1897 we can see that no other institution is more widely accepted than the monarchy; and Empire was a notion that was very widely assimilated. All these very strong and pervasive personal and social factors therefore seem to have played a major part in the decision of Alfred West to turn his ciné camera towards the monarchy, the military and the empire. The second and more interesting aspect of the relationship between Alfred West and Empire is the fact that he was able to represent it with the blessing of the Victorian/Edwardian establishment. This is surprising when we summarise what we know of Alfred West and compare it to what he actually achieved.

We have said that he was of an upwardly mobile working class background. We know that he was a pleasant respectable man with a great deal of enthusiasm and innovatory ideas on photography. He was not however, a particularly 'cultured' person in comparison to the members of the establishment with whom he came to be well acquainted. i.e Sir Percy Scott and Lord Brassey. He had achieved fame through his yacht photography, but researching the relevant copies of *The Navy and Army Illustrated Journal* leads me to believe that West & Sons were not leaders in military photography in Portsmouth at that time. They were only one of many and the firms of Russell & Sons, Symonds & Co, Mills and C.R & B.B, Cribb and A. Debenham supplied more photographs to the journal than did West & Sons. If the number of times that a firm's photographs are used in *The Navy and Army Illustrated Journal* is an indication of its importance or reputation, and therefore the 'connections' of that firm to the navy then West & Sons seems to have been a 'minor player' at that time. Therefore the question remains 'how did Alfred West cultivate the relationships with the establishment which led to his privileged position and *carte blanche* access to naval events and institutions?'. His achievements are surprising. For instance West took his first snapshots from his own yacht but the next year he had a place on the Royal Albert Yacht club Committee boat. How did this come about? I contacted Mr Jack Dalmeny, the resident historian of the club to try to find out whether West was a member. This turned out to be out of the question as membership was only for the highest of the establishment - i.e its Commodore was the Duke of York. At the Fleet Review of the Diamond Jubilee, West was the only photographer allowed to be in the line of ships at Spithead. How did opportunities like this come about? Was it because as West says in *Sea Salts and Celluloid*,

Captain Balliston of the Royal Yacht happened to see a copy of it (the snapshot of the Bacchante) and showed it to the Prince of Wales who expressed a desire for the photographer to be presented to him.(6)

Is this how the officers of H.M.S Vernon heard what he was doing with ciné film? Did they then invite him to take films of the explosion of mines and the firing of a Whitehead torpedo? Mr Dalmeny has suggested another reason for these opportunities. He suggests that West was probably a Freemason. This membership was the 'key' which opened up the door of opportunity to the 'mismatched' Alfred West. West's membership has not been confirmed, but Mr Dalmeny's suggestion was prompted at first by the social circle into which West was invited, and was strengthened when he saw the list of distinguished members of the audience at a showing of *Our Nav* in Portsmouth. It contained many people of the Admiralty and of the Navy League, who were both supporters and patrons of West who were also members of the Royal Albert Yacht Club AND members of the old and powerful Masonic Phoenix Lodge in Portsmouth. The Masonic link was strengthened further for Mr Dalmeny when I told him of the extant film of the Freemason's Procession along Fawcett Road in Southsea which was filmed by West in 1902. This explanation would also fit well if we suppose that the master craftsman and labour aristocrat, (West senior) is certainly a good candidate for membership of Freemasonry as a bid for social distancing and respectability.

Of course the explanation of West's privileges might simply be that he had won a reputation for his photography of yachts; the people whose yachts he photographed wanted those prints, and they were the members of the military establishment who got to know West. When he turned to cinefilm, those people utilised West for their own interests which were West's interests as well. It is to the interests of the 'establishment' that we now turn our attention.

Jeffrey Richards has already stated that in 1897 (when Alfred West started cinefilming) the material and ideological hegemony of the Empire was at its greatest. It is this historical situation which makes the case of Alfred West all the more interesting as a model example of how an emerging cultural form and practice is integrated into the dominant ideology and then used to maintain and promote that ideology. The utilisation of cultural forms in the maintenance of a society's hegemonic institutions and structures is nothing new. Raymond Williams in his essay "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory" describes a process of incorporation/integration and defines the type of role that a cultural form or practice might have in our society. (7) Using his definitions I would classify the films of Alfred West as an example of an 'emergent yet incorporated' cultural form. Its 'form' in terms of the modernist cinematograph and animated pictures was not perceived as oppositional or threatening to the establishment or state at that time. In a process of incorporation which does much to revise the popular notion of the Victorian military establishment as a reactionary and antiquated oligarchy; this oligarchy very quickly saw the potential of film and its new technology for its purposes of the maintenance of its hegemony. As early as 1848 in *The Communist Manifesto* Karl Marx had identified, at the 'macro level' the propensity of the capitalist state to utilise the latest technology to for its own ends. He wrote of:

the constant revolutionising of production (8)

In the constant battle for the maintenance of hegemony which is mainly achieved through the construction of social consensus the dominant class could never afford to relax or become complacent. At the 'micro level' an example of this is found within the Victorian navy. In his article "The Relations Between the Admiralty and Private Industry in the Development of Warships" Hugh Lyon writes that the iron and steel battleships of the Victorian period were "the most complex machines of their day" and their manufacture required the creation of many new techniques but:

No navy could hope to have the resources to cope with all the developments simultaneously. Yet in order to retain British naval supremacy it was vital that the Royal Navy should not only remain conversant with the latest technical developments in all the relevant scientific fields(9)

In the light of this policy Alfred West took his first cinefilm of one of the latest technical developments which the navy was pursuing, and which was causing great concern to the Admiralty because of the extent of the changes that its introduction had brought upon the navies of the world - The Whitehead torpedo.

The magnitude of the incorporation of the newly invented film practice by the state through Alfred West is, I believe not to be underestimated. He was given every facility, i.e Royal invitation, Admiralty and Navy league support and patronage and letters of introduction (10) to obtain and maintain a collection of film which proved itself to be a powerful and effective propaganda medium at a time when the decline of the British Empire was beginning. He did

cultivate a unique relationship with the administrators of Empire but it must be stressed that the relationship was always a reciprocal one. West was given carte blanche to film at all military establishments, and he could then show and sell these films for his own profit. He was provided with permanent exhibition premises and office facilities at the Marlborough Halls in the Polytechnic of London in Regent Street by the Admiralty which he used for fourteen years. In return the navy and the state got free and effective publicity. As West writes:

The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty and the members of the Army Council recognised that my efforts were proving splendid propaganda for recruiting purposes and granted me every facility. (11)

The audience were also involved in the reciprocal relationship as he filmed while "Imperialism was in the air" and:

Thus was formed an entertainment of Imperial interest in which I was greatly encouraged by the intense enthusiasm with which it was received by the public. (12)

This chapter has endeavoured to illustrate the case of West and his films as an early example of how the social, ideological, economic and political spheres of society and film culture merged together at a particular historical moment. Alfred West's son, who followed his father into the cinefilm business for a while before emigrating to Australia to farm wrote:

His pictures had their greatest popularity in the East End of London, filling to capacity such buildings as the East End Town Hall ... his films were probably the best voluntary propaganda for recruiting the services have had: in fact many people thought he was subsidised but apart from the facilities afforded to him by the Admiralty.... he never accepted any thing from the state. He felt well rewarded in 1914 when he knew that numbers of men who were trained and ready might not have been, but for him. (13)

Here is the expression of achieved consensus par excellence.

West and Showmanship

This chapter connects up the exhibition techniques and film form of the early British film pioneers, with the specific case of Alfred West.

We have already said that Alfred West was 'socialised' into the sub-culture of photography, however one sphere of which he had little or no experience of was that of the exhibition techniques and practices of Victorian public occasions. West writes:

Before I started I knew nothing of how to run a show, but with the able help of my staff, which numbered something over 50 most of the difficulties were overcome. (1)

This is somewhat different to the case of Hepworth, who was familiar with the formats and disciplines of presentation through his own and his father's background in lantern slide shows and scientific lecturing. However, West did not allow his lack of expertise to become an obstacle. The enthusiasm and inventiveness which he had shown in his Floating Exhibition (2) saw him through the initial stages when he was exhibiting his films before the Queen and the royal family at Osborne House and before the Duke of York and the crew of H.M.S Crescent on the jetty in Portsmouth Dockyard. But for his first public (and paying) audience "a Southsea concert agent was engaged saying that he would do all the organising and arranging in connection with it" (3). West himself still took on the role of the compere or lecturer for the show and was his "first experience of addressing an audience" (4). He describes that first performance thus:

The stage was profusely decorated, the screen being draped with the Union Jack and the White Ensign flanked by palms and banks of flowers. A large orchestra was engaged together with a professional lady singer. (5)

Even on that first night he included sound effects of loud drums being banged behind the screen when ship's guns were shown being fired on the screen. Between the films various lantern slides were shown. Through reading *Sea Salts and Celluloid* a sense of the occasion and its atmosphere is clear. West mentions that "songs were sung and all joined in the choruses with gusto", that pipes and tobacco were produced and a cloud soon enveloped everyone, and that after the National Anthem "three lusty cheers were given for the Duchess". The sense of audience participation and theatricality is very evident. This is the same sense of theatricality and participation that characterises the Music hall format and while the links and identifications made between early film exhibition have been well documented and perhaps too causally linked in film by some historians, the case of West seems to rely a great deal upon the input and legacy of the music hall. This might be due very much to the content of West's films.

An analysis of Penny Summerfield's article on the Music Hall suggests that there is a commonality of reference between popular entertainment of the period and the subject matter of West's films. At the level of subject matter she says that nautical and military melodramas were a regular feature on the programme and 'Jolly Jack Tar' was an established figure of 'virtue triumphant' and an expression of the love of freedom. (6) She cites the 'Jingo' songs of 1878 and beyond which matched up with numerous 'little wars of Empire' that occurred regularly after 1870. I feel that that tradition, both in form (flag draped proscenium arches of the screen and the interactive singer/audience/orchestra relationship) and content (West's 'little war of Empire'- the Boer war and all its related jingoism) was continued by West and had its roots in Music Hall practice and expectations. We must be careful when we say 'West'. As we have already said he hired a professional concert agent to organise the shows and we might be guilty of attributing too much agency to West in a reductionist and overly auteurist account of the shape and characteristics of West's presentation format. I believe that the combined 'weight' of Music Hall form and content and of the cultural competence of the audience in their attitude to the new emerging form of film had an influence on techniques of presentation. As West writes:

Although films were then being shown in Music halls the subjects were mostly of little interest, poor in quality, very trying on the eyes. They were usually the last item on the programme and were taken by the audience as a sign to get up and walk out. (7)

Many at that time doubted whether the interest of the audience would be maintained for the length of a full two hour film performance. (8) But in a period of emerging genres, cultural forms or new commodities, film needed to be comprehensible if it was to succeed. To be accepted it had to be at once familiar and novel. Its familiarity was the inclusions of Music Hall, magic lantern, scientific lecturing and military pageant into its presentation format. When it was judged that the audience had become fully 'film literate' and 'culturally competent' to de-

code the text, then we see the decline of extra filmic presentation practices. Yet before that point arrived, West and his company utilised such practices as having people behind the screen reading out loud fully scripted screen dialogues in synchronisation with the images on the screen and a great many sound effects. This amalgam of practices was the characteristic of the 'itinerant' film exhibitor at that time. The fact that West's *Our Navy* was shown at the Polytechnic of London says much about the attitude of society towards film at its emergence. Hepworth recounts in *Came The Dawn* how, for him the 'Poly' was the site of scientific experimentation and exhibition in his childhood. That is where the first British public exhibition of film was given of Lumieres films by Felicien Trewey, a juggler and shadowgraph pioneer, Matt Raymond was operator and Francis Pochet was the lecturer. Alfred West's documentary and 'realist' films were esconced in this site under the patronage of the Admiralty and The Navy League. This was perhaps the first example of a 'permanent cinema'. It was billed as entertainment 'of the edifying and stimulating kind¹⁽⁹⁾ i.e as a social benefit. According to John H Bird it was the person who first managed West's *Our Navy* at the Polytechnic, an experienced showman called Waller Jeffs who first

took the pictures from the academic and experimental display centres to the people for their amusement and interest. (10)

The showmanship of Waller Jeffs and West also included the advertising of the film show, both at its resident site and its itinerant venues all over the country. The use of handbills and 'throwaways', pictorial letterpress posters and bills, sandwich board men and novelties such as the large model warship that West had built for promotional purposes (and was later used for filming 'realistic' documentaries (11)), and the packet of stimulant (12) are all examples of the increasingly widespread assimilation of film into society at that time.

A slightly more Complicated picture of the situation of Alfred West and early film production has been obtained from the research. We can now assume that the model of the lone "Jack of all trades" involved in the artisanal and cottage industry is not appropriate here. For instance we know that West had sometimes as many as fifty people working for *Our Navy Ltd*. These included managers (Waller Jeffs), Lecturing Assistants (Captain R.E Edwards. R.N ret'd), his assistant C.P.O MacGregor (ex H.M.S Vernon) who took the cinefilm on the Ophir cruise, his country-wide publicity agents, another cameraman James Adams who patented a cinematograph that he invented (No 9738 on 28 April 1898), all the printers, developers and office staff at the 'cottage' in Villiers Road Southsea and the office staff and projectionists at the Poly. The sense of the auteurist individual that we get from the newspaper adverts, i.e West's *Our Navy* is undermined by the obvious scale of operations of *Our Navy Ltd*. Whilst we must realize that these operations were still of the cottage industry mode of production, the scale of this mode was nevertheless extensive. Whilst it is difficult to gauge the extent of the input of the other members of *Our Navy Ltd* in terms of the production of ideas, it seems clear that the phenomenum. of 'Alfred West' was more than merely the one named person, but an amalgam of people who were all caught up in the emergence of film and played a part in it. Can this be said for the content of the films? We have already said that West did not, by any means personally record all the footage that went under the 'banner?' of *Alfred West's Our Navy*. In regard to the development of film narrative can the remaining films of 'Alfred West' be analysed to assess the particular stage, or gauge the examples of film narrative construction that are displayed?

Let us look at the film of the Freemason's procession.(13) At a length of just over four minutes, it appears on initial viewing as a single shot continuous documentary/actuality footage. The camera is situated on one side of Fawcett Road looking across to the other side, but at an angle to it and looking down on the procession slightly. The camera is not at either hip or eye height but a few feet above normal head height. The procession of people passes in front of the camera from the left of the frame and disappears to the right. The camera is static apart from a slight movement in the second half of the footage. This half is evident from a cut in the filming as one stage of the procession passes and a gap appears in which the crowd mingle into the road. The movement of the camera is an adjustment made by the cameraman (it is believed by Mr Clover to be Alfred West) to frame the action of the entourage who, in the second shot had moved closer to the other kerb, and therefore closer to the top of the frame. It is therefore an example of an actuality film which records scenes of everyday life but is:

not just unadjusted, unarranged, untampered reality, but that each case presents a process in such a way that the beginning of the film coincides with the beginning of the process. (14)

In his article "Shots in the Dark - The real Origins of Film Editing" Stephen Bottomore puts forward the theory that:

because early cinema studies have concentrated so largely on post 1900 fiction films, the true contributions of the actuality [to the development of film technique] has never been properly assessed. (15)

Bottomore's point is that the actuality film form, which probably accounted for 80% of films in the cinema's first five years did make a significant contribution to notions of the construction of filmic techniques of the narrative both fiction and non-fiction) of film. i.e how early techniques and conventions in editing, framing, camera movement allied with equipment limitations and innovations such as film joining methods contributed a great deal to the development of film form - space, frame and narrative.

The procession of Freemasons then, is an example of what Cecil Hepworth termed "the unknown - a public occasion or sporting event where one did not know what would happen" (16) and it was this factor that dictated some form of editing. In this case to get rid of empty time as one section of the procession passed and West and the onlookers waited for the next. Does the context and purpose of the film have any bearing on its form? We know that West showed the film in a public arena. It was billed as an attraction on his newspaper adverts and bill posters (17) but what was its attraction? We realize that it has narrative flow in terms of a beginning and end of the procession of people and in terms of movement in and out of the frame i.e space and frame but what of narrative in terms of narration, What is the film telling us?

Firstly we can say that the Freemason footage can be seen as indicative of the West genre. Its subject is literally a parade, an exhibition' of the uniformed male body, ordered and in regalia for public exhibition. These public displays were telling the audience, on a symbolic level about a shared system of cultural values. The military uniforms, banners, marching tunes in an ordered, regimented style were recognisable symbols and icons to the audience. These symbols incorporated the public in to the ceremony through their recognition and familiarity securing their participation through their 'gaze'. The Freemasons' procession, however is somewhat different to the generic in the sense that this parade is not meant to create a shared meaning. The symbols used by the participants are not known by the public. The potency and success of Our Navy was the successful exchange of shared meanings. Yet the very fact that the procession of elitist vested interests went ahead, and went ahead successfully says many things about the nature of the ideological consensus and social structure of late Victorian/Edwardian society. These things are centred around the notion of power in society. Social anthropologists view the body as the symbol par excellence for society as a whole. Mary Douglas writes;

Even more direct is the symbolism worked upon the human body. The body is a model which can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious. The body is a complex structure. (18)

Analysis of the Freemasons procession shows the male body, presented in constricting formal dark clothes. This is bedecked with the 'uniform' of the masons, the aprons, chains and badges. They are upright, ordered and moving confidently. They are distanced from the onlookers who stand on the pavement whilst the masons walk in the road. The male masons are watched by the predominantly female audience. As we have said the masons appear confident and as they stride past the camera some of them acknowledge the camera with a glance of the eye and even a grin. Even at that early age it seems that the camera subject had become self conscious and aware of the lens. A perceptible shift in stance, a shift in angle of the body of the men can also be detected, by using the frame by frame viewing facilities of a V.H.S editing suite, towards the camera. And this is clear when the holders of power, the bedecked males twist their bodies slightly to display themselves and their power for the newly emerging medium of symbolic display. Like most of West's Our Navy and his local films of events they actually 'tell' us very little in terms of narration, but but rely on what Gaudreault identifies as 'monstration' as its form of narrative. (19) I do feel that the films of West relied on the spectacle of the image which fuelled and fed upon the fervour of Empire. The date of the procession that West filmed was 21st May 1902.

If we turn to the other piece of film we do have some evidence of West utilising some of the editing techniques that emerged in the film language. For instance in the film number 40 in his catalogue described as:

OUR NAVY IN THE PAST. An old naval veteran, 93 years of age, who had served under Rear-Admiral Parker, who was ONE OF NELSON'S CAPTAINS, placing a wreath, as his centenary tribute, on the spot where Nelson fell

This scene is full of dramatic and historic incidents, and may be considered one of Alfred West's best works.

The film has four cuts and a change of camera angle which might indicate the use of a second camera. The second perspective, being edited in between the first and 'last' (i.e. the first). The camera pans to the left to follow the movement of the people in the frame, at the end of which, when it had reached its furthest point a cut is made. An insert shot of H.M.S. Victory dressed overall with its famous message is shown, followed by a shot of a painting of the Battle of Trafalgar which dissolves into a portrait of Nelson and finally ends with the caption "Remember Trafalgar". This was taken in late 1905, the same year as Hepworth's *Rescued By Rover* which is often cited as displaying progressive editing techniques. It is difficult to gauge the extent of West's use of editing, of space and of frame. What we can say is that the very nature of West's work, i.e. the celebration of Empire through the spectacle and 'monstration' of the image in a public, interactive sphere of showmanship with a subject inherently 'communal' in its effect certainly shaped the form of his work. Considering the types of event that West filmed i.e. the actuality of the Empire, could West ever have incorporated the emerging conventions of film narrative to portray his subject? The answer to that question is that West actually did utilise these conventions (in the Nelson film and as far as we can tell in his 'true Pictorial story' of the recruitment of a boy into the Navy). If Alfred West did adapt and 'progress' in his film form what were the reasons for his eventual decline

The Decline of The West

In *Sea Salts and Celluloid* Alfred West gives the reasons for the ending of his film making career as the:

new regulations which came in in 1912, it was made compulsory to have the operating box right away from the auditorium, and as I was not in a position to comply with these regulations at all places where my films were shown, I saw that my best course in future would be to concentrate on hiring out my films to the new cinema concerns. (1)

The 'new' regulations that West identified were the additions to the issues covered in the Cinematograph Act of 1909. This was "an Act to make better provision for securing safety at Cinematograph and other Exhibitions" and was directed at the exhibition side of the film industry. In retrospect we now view this act as an expression of many inter-related changes that were taking place in the British film industry and film culture at that time, (2) and on reading the career of Alfred West and researching his background it is possible to see these changes bearing down upon him and his work. Satiated the ever growing demand of the audience. This material had to be novel and different. Even though West had had a 1 Permanent' cinema at the Poly for many years it was basically exhibiting the same commodity - military spectacle. In this situation it was the audience that changed and the films that remained the same. The new changes reversed this situation. The new situation contained two factors. Firstly, audiences demanded novel products; secondly, new regulations and licences were required for the new viewing establishments necessitated by growing numbers. Also audiences required films which were novel in form as well as content.

There was a definite preference for the fiction film over the documentary. The ~ audience were also becoming more sophisticated' in their expectations of narrative construction.(3) West was slow to respond to these changes. He did however attempt to do so. In the chapter "The Coming of the Cinemas" he relates how he coped with the changes in the mode of distribution of films. Initially his films were sold outright by the foot to whoever wanted to buy a copy. West always kept the negative:

I had always kept my films to myself, because there were a great number of "pirates" who used to buy a positive copy of some film and print others from it. (4)

And when the change in method of obtaining film for exhibition by the exhibitors occurred, West built up a hiring organisation "to meet the great demand" (4). It was at this time that he produced the illustrated catalogue of his films which he sent to the exhibitors when they hired his films. He writes:

The response to this hiring scheme of mine was quite beyond my most sanguine expectations, and I was flooded out with orders for film from hundreds of applicants. (6)

He says that he hired a London firm to do the printing as he could not cope with the amount at Villiers Road but:

I began to feel that the business was becoming too involved for me to tackle by myself. (1)

In these words we are witnessing the end of the emergence of the film as a cultural form and are seeing it take its fully integrated and incorporated place in the scheme of British capitalism. At the level of agency we are witnessing the end of Alfred West's ambitions of social mobility; his background and culture do not allow him to make that 'leap' into fully fledged high capitalism. He says that he then sold out the world-wide hiring rights to a Glasgow firm. He still kept the negatives and "only let the Glasgow firm have the positives they needed for showing". (8) So in 1912 Alfred West left the film industry. I believe that his specialisation in the subject of Empire was also a factor in his decline. The apogee of the British Empire has been identified as occurring within "a period of unsettlement". (9) Though Britain remained at the head of a mighty empire its relationship with the rest of the world had undergone a subtle change. At the end of the nineteenth century Britain had begun to be challenged in terms of economic strength and trade. Russia, France and Germany were all growing rapidly and strategically Britain went on the defensive. This sense of change and threat to power is very evident in the writings and lobbying of the Navy League and in Alfred West's *Sea Salts and Celluloid*:

Without this vital supply of wheat from Canada and from other parts of the world England would starve, so that the importance of maintaining a strong navy can be plainly seen. (10)

We have said hegemony is never total and complete. At this time a Conservative government had to assert itself strongly to contain the changes sought by a working class, many of whom were living in over crowded slum conditions and were over worked and badly under-paid. The slow demise of the British Empire had begun and the growth of discontent became focussed upon the notion of Empire:

Within a few short years it is all under attack. The Old Queen dies with her century.
Comes the Boer War, a war felt by many to be unjust and unrighteous. (11)

This undercurrent of feeling would have affected the audience of *Our Navy* and it reinforces the sense of Alfred West as a phenomenon of a particular time and place. Even though he was inundated with requests for his films for hire in 1912 he also seemed to realise that his 'era' had come to an end:

Little could we guess that within two years not only would *Our Navy* be a thing of the past, but that all peace time activities would be overshadowed by the great catastrophe that was to burst on the world Thus the organisation which had for so long entertained the British public in illustrating the preparations for their defence, became submerged in the gigantic conflict that was to shake the world, and when peace was again restored nothing remained of it but pleasing memories. (1,2)

I wonder whether Alfred West realised the complete truth of those words. Almost nothing does indeed remain from the large collection of *Our Navy*, *Our Army* and the multitude of local novelty and interest films which West took over the years. No one is really sure what happened to it. It is possibly lying in a vault somewhere in the country but Mr Clover tentatively suggests that West, in his business naivety, sold all the film stock (and we presume that means the negatives) to an unscrupulous person who disappeared with the lot and was never seen again. West never received a penny for them. Another possibility is that all his film stock was brought by the Navy and processed to retrieve the explosive nitrate compounds of the film stock which the Admiralty then used for guncotton in its ammunition shells. "The Lord High Admiralty giveth and the Lord High Admiralty taketh away"!

Appendix

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Filmography

(1). Procession of Freemasons along Fawcett Road in Southsea, Hampshire. Filmed by Alfred. J. West. F.R.G.S. on 21st May 1902. Only existing 35mm print now held by The National Film and Television Archive. Approx 4 mins long. Black & white. Silent. V.H.S. video copy provided by Wessex Film and Sound Archive.

(2). *Our Navy in the Past*. Film number 40 in catalogue *Life in Our Navy and Our Army*. Approx 30Oft. Filmed by Alfred. J. West on Trafalgar Day 1905. Existing 35mm print held by The National Film and Television Archive. V.H.S. video copy provided by Wessex Film and Sound Archive.

Notes to Chapter 1

(1). Title of Chapter 1. *Sea Salts and Celluloid*. P4.

(2). 'Dry Plate process'. Gelatine Bromide. Dr Richard Leach Maddox.

"The disadvantage of all the above mentioned processes was the relatively low levels of sensitivity, which limited photographers to static subjects. Adding gelatine to the collodion was suggested on a number of occasions, but it was Maddox who discovered the formula, the principle of which is still in use today The plate treated with gelatine bromide became forty times more sensitive than wet collodian plates. The way was now open for 'instantaneous' photography'

Lemagny, Jean Claude & Rouille, Andre.,ed. *A History of Photography*, Cambridge University Press. 1986. Appendices. p 270.

(3). Gomery, Douglas & Allen, Robert. *Film History Theory and Practice*, (McGraw Hill, 1985), p16.

(4). *Portsmouth Evening News*. 27 March 1900.

Notes to Chapter 2

(1). John.H.Bird, *Cinema Parade-Fifty Years of Film Shows*, Cornish Bros, Birmingham. 1946. p6.

(2). John Gartenberg. "*The Brighton Project: The archives and research*". *Cinema 1900-1906*. An analytical study, (B.F.I.1978), p.6.

(3). Ibid.,p.6.

(4). Gartenberg, p 13.

(5). Gomery & Allen. *Film History Theory and Practice*, (McGraw Hill Inc 1885). "Realism therefore takes as its object of study the structures or mechanisms that cause observable phenomena -mechanisms that are rarely observable directly. It is the role of theory to offer descriptive models of these mechanisms". p15.

Notes to Chapter 3

(1). Alfred West. *Sea Salts and Celluloid*, Unpublished autobiography. Wessex Film and Sound Archive, Chapter III, p 27.

(2). Michael Chanan. "The Economic Conditions of Early Cinema". *Early Cinema Space Frame Narrative*. (B.F.I. 1990). p175.

(3). Thomas Elsaesser. "Early Cinema: From Linear History to Mass Media Archaeology". *Early Cinema Space Frame Narrative* (B.F.I. 1990).p3.

Notes to Chapter 4

(1). Raymond Williams. *The Long Revolution*. (Chatto & Winclus. 1961.) P63.

(2). *Portsmouth Times. Telegraph & Post*. Friday 22nd Jan.1937. Obituary of Alfred West.

(3). Information given in interview with Mr A. Clover.

(4). Ibid.

(5). Clover.

(6). Portsmouth Rates Books. 1885-86. (Portsmouth City Records Office.)

(7). Robert Gray. *The Aristocracy of Labour in Nineteenth Century Britain*. C 1850-1914, (Macmillan Press, 1981). p30.

- (8). Ibid. p30.
- (9). Gray. p37.
- (10). Alfred West. *Sea Salts and Celluloid*. p6.
- (11). C.M.Hepworth. *Came The Dawn*. (Phoenix House, 1951). p28.
- (12). Ibid. P18.
- (13). Hepworth. p9.
- (14). Pierre Bourdieu. "Artistic Taste and Cultural Capital". *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*. (Cambridge University Press. 1990. p211.

Notes to Chapter 5

- (1). Jeffrey Richards. "Towards a Definition of the Cinema of Empire". *Visions Of Yesterday*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul.1973),P2.
- (2). Ibid. p2.
- (3). Alfred West. *Sea Salts and Celluloid*. Preface.
- (4). Ibid. p205.
- (5). West. p187.
- (6). West. p5.
- (7). R.Williams. "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory". *Debating Texts*, (Open University Press, 1987.), p204.
- (8). Karl Marx with Engels. "The Communist Manifesto". *Karl Marx. Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*. (Pelican Books. 1956.)
- (9). Hugh Lyon. "The Relation Between the Admiralty and Private Industry in the Development of Warships". *Technical Change and British Naval Policy. 1860-1939*. (Hodder & Stoughton. 1937). p37.
- (10). West. *Sea Salts and Celluloid*. Letter of introduction from Sir Edward Ward, Secretary to the Army Council to Brigadier General Eyre Crabbe at Aldershot. p116
- (11). West. p2.
- (12). West. p2.
- (13). J.C.West. Letter from Cumuldarnap, Gnowangerup, Western Australia. (Collection of newspaper articles. p32).

Notes to Chapter 6

- (1). Alfred West. *Sea Salts and Celluloid*. p2.
- (2). Ibid. p17.
In 1898 West purchased a schooner of 150 tons, which he had fitted out to take an exhibition of sailing equipment along with a few of his photographs. The yacht was towed to many ports and yacht clubs on the South coast.
- (3). West. p31.
- (4). West. p34.
- (5). West. p33.
- (6). P.Summerfield. "Patriotism and Empire. Music Hall entertainment. 1840-1914" . *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, (Manchester University Press.1986). p31.
- (7). West. p34.
- (8). West. p34.
- (9). *The Times*, Saturday October 21st 1905.
- (10). John.H.Bird. *Cinema Parade. Fifty years of Film Shows*. (Cornish Bros, 1946). p3.
- (11). West. p93.
- (12). West. p83.
- (13). Freemasons Procession, 21. May 1902. Wessex Film and Sound Archive.

- (14). S.Bottomore. "Shots in the Dark". *Early Cinema Space Frame Narrative*, (B.F.I. 1990). p104.
 - (15). Ibid. P110.
 - (16). Bottomore. p107.
 - (17). *Portsmouth Evening News*. 23rd June 1902.
 - (18). Mary Douglas. *Purity and Danger*, Routledge, 1966. p115.
 - (19). A.Gaudreault. "Film Narrative, Narration. The Cinema of the Lumiere Brothers. *Early Cinema Space Frame Narrative*, (B.F.I. 1990). P73.
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Notes to Chapter 7

- (1). Alfred West. *Sea Salts and Celluloid*, p195.
- (2). Both Vincent Porter in *On Cinema* (Pluto Press 1985) and Annette Kuhn in *Cinema, Censorship and Sexuality 1909-1925* (Routledge 1988) analyse the implications and effects of the 1909 Cinematograph Act on the British film industry and culture in areas other than safety.
- (3). Yuri Ts ivian, "Some Historical Footnotes to the Kuleshov Experiment". (*Early Cinema Space Frame Narrative*, B.F.I. 1990). p247.
- (4). West. p195.
- (5). West. p195.
- (6). West. p196.
- (7). West. p196.
- (8). West. p196.
- (9). R.C.K.Ensor. *England 1870-1914*.(Oxford University Press. 1936). p304. quoted in *A Critical History of the British Cinema*, (Secker & Warburg. 1978). p16
- (10). West. p187.
- (11). J.Richards. *Visions Of Yesterday* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973). p13.
- (12). West. P197.