

Gilroy: worksheet

Key concept two: **postcolonial melancholia and Albion**

1. What has happened to the British Empire since 1945?

2. What social group reminds us of our previous Empire power according to Gilroy and why?

3. Gilroy suggests that we collectively experience both guilt and a sense of loss as a result of the demise of the British Empire.

a. Why do we feel a collective guilt?

b. For what reasons do we feel a national sense of loss as a result of the demise of the British Empire?

learn it:
page 77

Media Theory for A Level

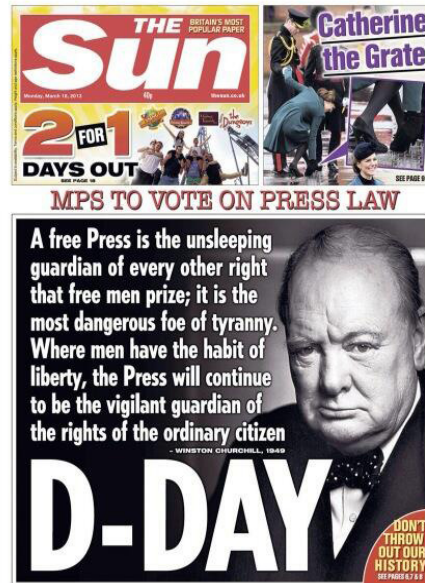
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chapter 7
page 77-80



Above: Empire propaganda poster: the colonial nations pay tribute to the might of imperial British rule.

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Above: Newspapers routinely invoke WW2 imagery to compensate for the loss of Empire.

4. For what reasons does the media routinely refer to World War Two according to Gilroy?

5. For what reasons does Gilroy suggest that the recurring references to WW2 by the media are odd?

6. Gilroy also argues that the media manufactures an Albionic representation of Britain by constructing a mythic view of a long-lost rural England.

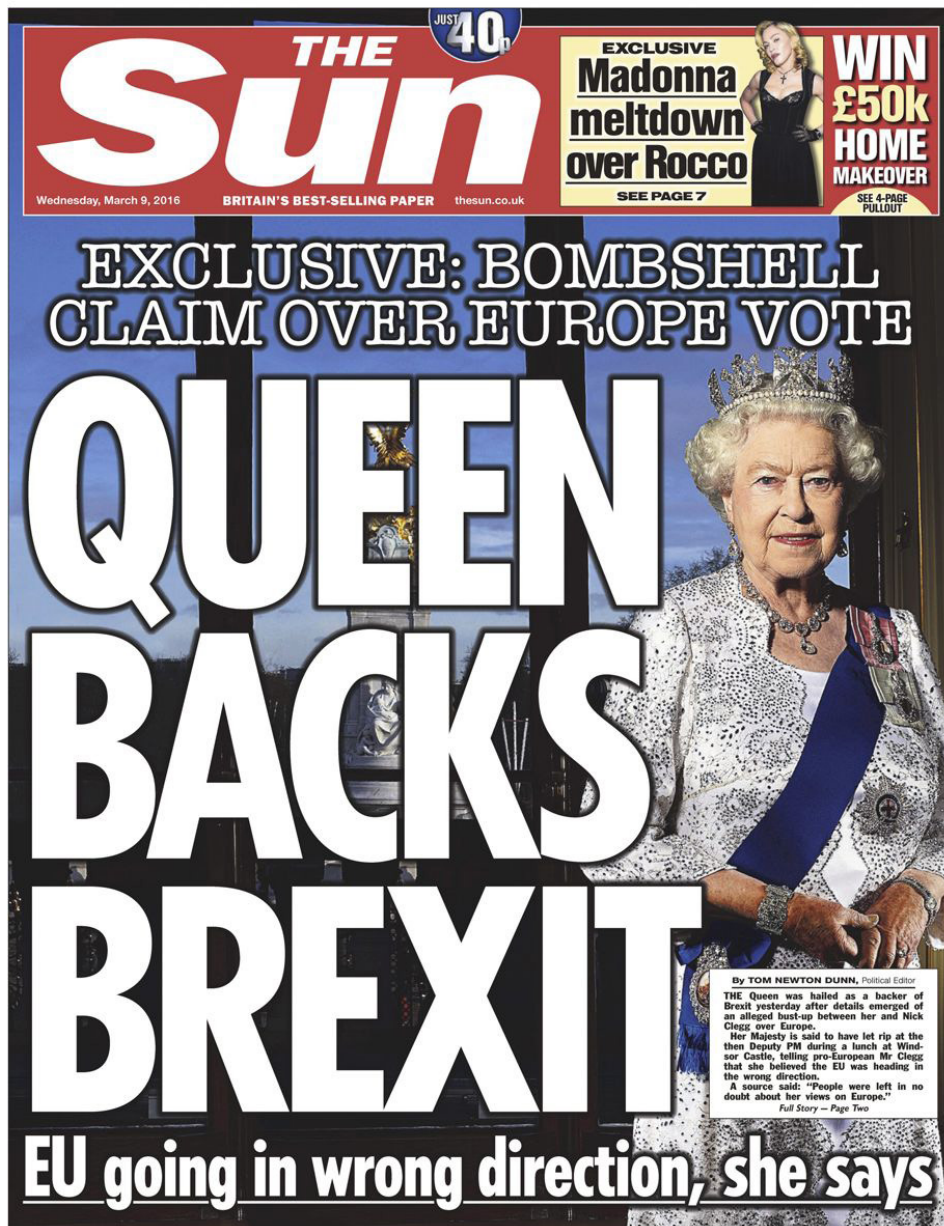
a. What role do representations of the Royal family play in the construction of Albionic England?

b. How do television dramas use settings and locations to construct an Albionic view of the UK? What examples of TV shows are given that construct Albionic Englishness?

learn it:
page 78

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Above: Sun front cover (2016) - the Royal Family are deployed as a stable symbol that represents a mythic traditional England.



Above: Sun front cover (2018) - an albionic representation of the UK constructed using rural imagery and nostalgia.

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7. Using the Sun front cover on the previous page answer the following:

A. What famous locations or icons can you recognise that have been included in the front page collage?

B. Which other visual icons reference a nostalgic view of the UK?

C. In what ways does the headline construct a reductive or overly simplified message?

D. What effect does the headline's labelling of the UK as 'Great Britain' create?



Above: The hit ITV show and film, Downton Abbey. Albionic representations are often critiqued because they don't reflect the real world ethnic diversity of contemporary Britain.

7.3 Discuss it: to what extent does the media channel postcolonial melancholia?

- What evidence could you present to support or contradict the idea that the media is obsessed with nostalgia and the past?
- Why are British newspapers so obsessed with the Royal family? Do they represent order in a chaotic modern world? Do they represent British tradition?
- Does the media construct an Albionic representation of Britain - a largely white, rural version of England that is celebratory? What products have you seen that construct this imagined version of England?
- Why do you think the media constructs these idealised representations?

Your thoughts:

Think it:
page 79