

University of California, Santa Barbara
The Department of Film and Media Studies
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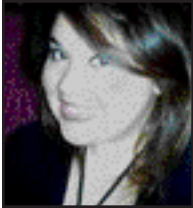
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ABOUT THE STAFF



Dhirana Guerrero: Co-Editor in Chief

Some people call her a “jack-of-all-trades.” Others call her “the essence of wisdom.” As a Film and Media Studies and Dramatic Art double major and as a Professional Writing Minor in the Technical/Multimedia track, Dhirana is too busy to pay attention to such titles. Although the above may be true, Dhirana does not let it go to her head. She is quite the modest soul and because of it, she is perhaps one of the most likeable characters in the department. Dhirana looks forward to the future as she aspires to be what is known in the industry as a triple threat: a director-writer-actor.



Alyson Osterman: Co-Editor in Chief

Scholar, writer, singer, part-time belly dancer, and *Grey's Anatomy* enthusiast. She is also a graduating senior, with a B.A. in Literature at the College of Creative Studies and a B.A. in Film and Media Studies at the College of Letters and Science. She plans to pursue careers in screenwriting and journalism, conquering both industries...one grammatical correction at a time.



Libby Wells: Layout Designer

Libby is a graduating senior who likes to make things. Whether such “things” be films, rock ‘n’ roll, or books, the processes of production and construction are a part of her genetic make-up. Perhaps a symptom of her slow transformation into a robot or perhaps her desperate attempt to recover man’s aesthetic presence in the operational aesthetics of today... no one really knows - not even Libby.



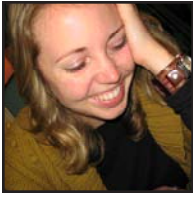
Christina Franquet: Treasurer

Christina Franquet is a graduating Film and Media Studies major who hopes to succeed as a film producer/director. She plans to attend the American Film Institute where she will complete her master's degree in Film Producing. Christina hopes to eventually work with her future husband (Quentin Tarantino) in order to create cinematic masterpieces, (i.e. the next installment of *Kill Bill: vol. 3*).



Nathaniel Bayer: Copy Editor

When Nathaniel Bayer grows up, he wants to be a space shuttle. That way he will feel no pain, because space shuttles don't cry. Sometimes he edits people's papers.



Lara Britt: Copy Editor

Lara Britt is a Film and Media Studies major graduating in June. She enjoys life, love, music, laughing, film, and cookies. Smiling is her favorite. She plans to challenge the next step of her life to a scrabble game where she'll wipe it out with a whammy of a triple word score, using all of her letters including the letter, "Z." She hopes to pursue a career in film history and



Ronnie Choi: Copy Editor

Ronnie is a third year, who is double majoring in Film and Media Studies and English. He is the official "Cope" editor of *Focus* (a term coined by Alyson Osterman). He spends most of his time at *Focus* meetings by making inane, useless, and sometimes amusing comments. One of his all-time favorite movies is *Stepmom*, and he can recite many quotes from the film, such as: "Anna, you DO NOT run OUT on YOUR mother!!!" "No, that's your job."



Brent Hagata: Copy Editor

Brent is a graduating senior who plans on moving to Los Angeles and dominating some part of the film industry. He enjoys star gazing and sunny late winter days. As of June 2007, he is single.



Laura McHugh: Copy Editor

Laura is a third year Film and Media Studies major, pursuing a minor in Professional Writing. She has worked with *Focus Media Journal* for a year, and plans to continue as part of the staff in the coming school year. This summer she will study abroad at Cambridge University in the UK, followed by an internship in Washington DC in the Fall. Her favorite color is aqua, she's a Capricorn, and she does, in fact, like long walks on the beach!



Julian Quisquater: Technical Editor

As a graduating senior in the Film and Media Studies Department, Julian continues to avoid film production at all costs. Instead, he would much rather focus on analysis and critical studies. The fact that he is part of the editing track of the Professional Writing Minor, enables him to strengthen his concentration. Although he joined *Focus* late in the game, Julian (a.k.a "the new guy") managed to catch up and help the journal's development.



Patrick Scoggins: Copy Editor

Patrick Scoggins is a third year Film and Media Studies major/Comparative Literature minor/television junkie who is optioning a hunger strike if the CW's *Veronica Mars* is not renewed for the 2007-2008 season. With that out of the way, when he isn't editing submissions for *Focus*, he tries to strike a balance between his 30+ hour television-viewing schedule and his social/academic responsibilities. He envisions this balance will be lost next year as he plans to venture away from exercises of critical film analysis to explore the wondrous, often sleepless world of filmmaking. Thank God for TiVO (and Tapatio Sauce)!

A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

On behalf of the Focus Media Journal, we would like to thank those who contributed their time and effort in making this journal possible. It has been quite the journey, and we are beyond grateful to those who guided us along the way. We are so proud of this year's journal, and we wish to extend our thanks to those who helped us most.

We would first and foremost like to thank our committee for their passion and dedication. They not only focused on *Focus* (pun intended) but also on the departmental newsletter formerly known as *Jump Cuts*. They have devoted much of their time and effort, for which we are extremely grateful. To all those graduating: good luck with all your endeavors! To those who are staying at UCSB: we are sure you will make next year's journal even more powerful with your voices.

We would also like to thank the Film and Media Studies Faculty and Staff for all their support. Without them, this journal could not have been possible.

A special thanks to Professor Peter Bloom for your commitment to this journal. Your expertise in the subject matter was invaluable, as well as your eagerness to help us and our staffers.

Another very special thanks to the best advisor the Film and Media Studies Department has ever had (and the only one we've ever known), Joe Palladino! Thank you for keeping everything together, and always being there for us! Your gentle encouragement was a much needed, and appreciated, support system.

This year's topic, social issues, proves especially relevant in today's political climate. If we better understand the issues at hand, we may better understand each other's differences, as well as the simple humanity in which we are all linked.

When we first started this journal, neither of us could imagine the troubles and tribulations nor could we fathom the great sense of accomplishment we would feel after all was said and done. We hope you enjoy reading this journal as much as we enjoyed creating it!

Many thanks to all,
Dhirana Guerrero and Alyson Osterman
Editors-in-Chief

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"I'VE GOT NO STRINGS..."

THE IDEOLOGY OF GROWING UP IN MICKEY'S MAGIC KINGDOM

by derek domike

"I've Got No Strings/To Hold Me Down/
To Make Me Fret/Or Make Me Frown"

"I Had Strings/But Now You'll See/There
Are No Strings On Me"

- Pinocchio, "I've Got No Strings"

Althusser wrote in his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" about the transition of power between the Church and the educational system as the dominant Ideological State Apparatus. He first defines a dominant Ideological State Apparatus as one "which concentrated within it not only religious functions, but also educational ones, and a large proportion of the functions of communications and 'culture.'" (Althusser, 151.) Later on, he stresses the new dominance of educational structures in their ability to take a majority of the child's time and attention involuntarily to indoctrinate their particular beliefs (Althusser, 157). I have a contribution to this theory: that mass media has taken the place of the School and the Church as the dominant Ideological State Apparatus because of the voluntary use of large amounts of limited individual time (taken between work, school, etc.) towards these pursuits.

If we wish to take the analogy of the Sacred: if the Movie Theater can be the Cathedral of Mass Media, and Television the personal altar, then there is one saint more vaulted than any other, one figure who is unimpeachable and untouchable in both his power, his influence, and his perceived innocuousness. That figure is Mickey Mouse, the anthropomorphic personification of the Walt Disney Corporation. Disney is viewed as purely harmless

children's entertainment. It is good, clean, wholesome, harmless, fun-for-the-whole-family entertainment. Such views can be unenlightened, if not dangerous.

In his essay "Milk and Wine," Roland Barthes writes "there are thus very engaging myths which are however not innocent. And the characteristic of our current alienation is precisely that wine cannot be an unalloyedly blissful substance, except if we wrongfully forget that it is also the product of expropriation." (Barthes, 61.) Thus, Barthes argues that we need to critically analyze all objects, regardless of how innocent or "unalloyedly blissful."

In an essay calling for parents, educators, and other adults to pay closer attention to the content and narrative of Disney films, Henry Giroux stressed their importance as the "new 'teaching machines' as producers of culture." (Giroux, 99.) He then goes on to say that the works of the Disney Studio (with "Uncle Walt" and his familiar rodent as their untouchable icons) should not be universally condemned or viewed as innocuous fluff. Disney "does both." The power of the Disney films is in its ability to "[inscribe] itself in a commanding way upon the lives of children and powerfully shapes the way America's cultural landscape is imagined. Disney's commanding cultural authority is too powerful and far-reaching to simply be the object of reverence. What Disney deserves is respectful criticism, and one measure of such respect is to insert Disney's scripted view of childhood and society within a critical dialogue regarding the meanings it produces, the roles it legitimates, and the narratives it uses to define American life." (Giroux, 103.)

With this framework in mind, and other research, I intend to examine four Disney films: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Cottrell et al, 1937;); *Cinderella* (Geronomi et al, 1950); *Pinocchio* (Babbit et al, 1940); and *Peter Pan* (Geronomi et al, 1953.) In particular, I wish to focus on the differences in desires and environment of the protagonists, and their intended impact as gendered narratives on young male and female spectators.

The Disney films are marketed towards families, and in particular the small children of this family. These films present a certain ideology towards these characters, and that ideology centers around the idea of “growing up.” Growing up is the gendered nature of the protagonist concerned. Growing up means typically hegemonic consent to the authoritarian structures of Western culture: this means either an acceptance of responsibility and transitioning from boy to man in the case of the male protagonists; and taking on domestic duties and marriage and procreative-related duties for female protagonists.

The second Disney film released after *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Pinocchio* is a story about an animated puppet who eventually becomes a real boy. Disney adapted and altered the original Carlo Collodi story, setting many of the incidents at night or indoors, where Collodi set the story mostly during the day or outdoors, altering the mood in favor of a darker tone and drawing less on the original European sources (Allan, 67.) For this newly-found American reinterpretation and focus “...is all the more reason to focus on the image of the boy Pinocchio and how he is socialized to represent the ‘American Boy,’ because if Disney and his staff worked together on projecting what it takes to be a good boy...then this figure represents the product of a particular

group of American male artists reflecting on what it means to be a good boy and a good son in their society.” (Zipes, “Happily Ever After,” 84.)

What values make up a good boy, according to Disney and his animators? *Pinocchio* is taught, through examples and with the guidance of his “conscience” Jiminy Cricket, that honesty, hard work, and responsibility, will enable an animated object to become a “real boy,” and thus, able to grow up into a real man.

The Blue Fairy notes “a little boy who isn’t good, might as well be made of wood.” Thus, *Pinocchio* can’t become a real boy until he learns what it takes to be a good boy, and simultaneously, how not to be a bad one. This takes him most of the movie. After the events of becoming a marionette actor under Stromboli and the immoral hedonism of Pleasure Island does *Pinocchio* learn to accept hard work and not be a jackass (quite literally avoiding the fate of turning into a donkey and serving in the salt mines, like his human friend Lampwick). Honesty is stressed as he learns to avoid lying after the scene with the Blue Fairy. An education is shown to be important, as all of these events take place as *Pinocchio* is sidetracked on his first day to school. It is only by learning these ideological lessons that *Pinocchio* is able to pass the Blue Fairy’s test and become a real boy.

For *Pinocchio*, like for the other male Disney protagonists, home is a safe place, from which they must be cast out, in order to encounter adventure. Nurturing



Disney Princesses (left to right: Cinderella from *Cinderella*, Aurora from *Sleeping Beauty*, Belle from *Beauty and the Beast*, and Snow White from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*)

parent figures are thus contrasted with villainous counterparts who are only examples of what not to do. For Pinocchio, his father Geppetto (who, as Zipes notes [Zipes 96] serves paradoxically as a sincere, nurturing, self-sacrificing, mother figure,) and Jiminy Cricket serve as the safe positive role models of the home, where Honest John the Fox, Stromboli, and the Coachman to Pleasure Island all serve as examples of greed, dishonesty, and exploitation, all things Pinocchio learns to avoid by his adventures into the dangerous outside world.

Peter Pan, based on the James Barrie play, is also a story about growing up, but taken from a different angle. Instead of learning the lessons of growing up with Pinocchio, we learn against the example of Peter Pan, the little boy who will never grow up. Placed in the protagonist's place of the three Darling children (Wendy, Michael, and John,) we learn that we cannot live in Never-Ever-Land like Peter Pan, Tinkerbell, Pan's Lost Boys, the Indians, and the Pirates do, but rather we must live in the world of the Darling parents, who insist that twenty-year-old Wendy move out of the nursery, symbolically moving into the world of the adult. Growing up can thus not be avoided, like the alternative suggested by Pan, and must be embraced.

The character of Peter Pan does not learn anything in the course of this movie. It fits the fact that he never grows up; he is always frozen at a certain pre-pubescent age. The semi-sexualized advances of Wendy, the mermaids, Princess Tiger Lily, and a curvaceous Tinker Bell who was based on the famous picture of Marilyn Monroe from *Playboy* (Brode, 132, 242-243) are all ignored by Peter, who is content to be a kid and play with his Lost Boys. However, Wendy is abducted to act as a mother to the Lost Boys; she even

sings a song about mothers that reduces the Lost Boys to tears. (Byrne and McQuillean, 63.)

At its core, the story of Peter Pan is a pre-sexualized reconciliation of the Oedipal complex: Peter battles Captain Hook (voiced by the same actor as Mr. Darling [Wendy's father], and a role traditionally held by the same actor) to protect/reacquire Wendy, a mother figure. And Captain Hook, fearful of the passage of time (the ticking clock inside the crocodile), finds himself chased out of the primal scene in the ultimate act of Oedipal vindication. But Peter cannot consummate this relationship with Wendy, he seems physically and emotionally incapable of consummating any sort of relationship with anyone. Instead, the children grow up and go back to the real world, where they can grow up to be real people, as opposed to the frozen images of Peter Pan.

Both of these stories have to do with a transition into change in order to grow up as a good person. Pinocchio has to become a real boy, freezing from an immutable marionette into a boy who can eventually grow into a man. Wendy, Michael, and John learn the lesson of Peter Pan, that children must grow up eventually and can't go on living in Neverland as though time were frozen. The children learn to accept their place in society and grow up, Wendy is willing to move out of the nursery, and childishness is left behind them.

Is this formula applicable to female protagonists, and thus, to all Disney narratives? The answer is a resounding "no." The female protagonists of Disney films follow a different set of rules, because they



Cinderella, from the Walt Disney film



Walt Disney

have a different destination. As women, they are expected to get married and perform in the domestic sphere. Thus, for Disney's princesses, danger often begins lurking inside the home, a danger that has to be rectified (or an obstacle that must be removed) before she can marry Prince Charming and Live Happily Ever After. (The ideology of Disney reflected post-World War II attitudes). I'll be looking at two such cases, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and *Cinderella*.

Unlike *Pinocchio* or *Peter Pan*, where the heroes are thrust out of the safety of home to danger only to return to the structures they had originally left (Geppetto's cottage or the Darling's nursery, respectively,) *Snow White* focuses more around the danger within the home, which forces the heroine to flee. *Snow White* must leave her home for fear of the Wicked Queen, her stepmother. There she becomes the housemaid to the Seven Dwarfs (Sleepy, Sneezy, Happy, Bashful, Grumpy, Dopey, and Doc,) who share the title of the film. Brode describes the figure of *Snow White* as an example of "redemption through housework" (Brode, 178). This redemption, as Robin Allan describes, is that "a pure heart and intensive longing can build a love that transcends death and pain." (Allan, 62.) This transcendence, in response to the death at the hands of her wicked stepmother, is rewarded by the kiss of her Prince Charming. It leads to *Snow White's* removal from the family sphere into a "new life" as a wife, a transition from childhood to domesticity.

When discussing *Cinderella*, it's hard to differentiate it from *Snow White*. Both films deal with a young girl who feels

alienated in her own home because of a stepmother and who, through backbreaking redemptive housework aided by animal friends, is able to escape her life in the servile position of a child into the position of wife and mother.

However, there are some interesting notes that can be made about the differences in these films. For one thing, blondes and brunettes are differentiated to embody stereotypes of the "good girl" and the seductress. *Snow White* was a brunette in an era when blondes were the pinnacle of innocence and untouchability (Shirley Temple, Mary Pickford, etc.) and brunettes were depicted as sexpots or femme fatales (Clara Bow, Theda Bara, etc.). *Cinderella* was a blonde when blondes were navigating a new avenue as sexual beings (Marilyn Monroe, Jayne Mansfield, etc.) and brunettes were the pinnacle of innocence (Disney's own Annette Funicello, also compare and contrast the titles of the films *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and *Gentlemen Marry Brunettes*.) That kind of change is indicative of the ideological changes related to something as mundane and meaningless as hair color has been given an ideological charge which has shifted, one which Disney has played against in his choices of hair color.

The specific place of marriage, however, differs vastly for both *Cinderella* and *Snow White*. *Snow White's* marriage to Prince Charming is based on a relationship between two people which is not blatantly sexual or procreative (the ending of *Snow White* does not directly imply the birthing and/or rearing of children). *Cinderella's* Prince Charming is looking for a bride for a totally different reason. He is throwing the ball at his father's behest, and the King wants an heir, he wants a grandson. Thus, *Cinderella's* marriage to Prince Charming is based on love. As such, there is a distinctive procre-

ative edge to *Cinderella* that is not found in *Snow White* (Brode, 130). When considering the shifting cultural attitudes from the depression era, as with *Snow White*, or the abundance of the post-War period, as in *Cinderella*, couples were induced to produce children with the return of the GI's after World War II. The resultant Baby Boom reinforced the ideological construct of marriage and procreation as the key to happiness.

These films produce a gendered world view for spectators through the protagonists. However, what meaning can be taken for those spectators of a different gender? They don't necessarily receive the same ideological material. At some times, they aren't entirely represented at all in terms of representation, forcing (in particular) female spectators to try and engage with the film in different ways.

Pinocchio is an example of this. The two female characters in the film are Cleo the Goldfish and the Blue Fairy. The former is a minor character who has limited screen time, and the Blue Fairy serves primarily as a plot device, whose primary goal is to present hints alluding to Pinocchio's goal to become a "real boy" (telling the truth, following the advice of Jiminy Cricket, and so on). This forces the character into a kind of story-progressing role that is difficult to see as a character you can identify with. So, what does this tell the female spectator? This is primarily the story of a little boy, and how a little boy is supposed to grow up properly, and female spectators are not a focus of concern.

Peter Pan fares better with female characters. There is Wendy (who serves as a focus for the young female spectators) who is in a transition period between child and adulthood, which is a position many young girls desire to be in. However, if Disney's merchandising has proven any kind of measure of popularity, then

Tinkerbell is a far more popular character among young girls. This is most likely because Tinkerbell possesses more negative character traits. She is jealous of Wendy's affection for Peter to the point of revealing the location of the Lost Boy's hideout to Captain Hook, but sympathetic in saving Peter from the bomb Hook laid. Is she more popular because she is complex, and thus, more identifiable than Wendy, who was written and characterized in an effort to be identifiable? However, spectatorship has taken that to a different place.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs has a wider range of male roles. We have the Hunter, Prince Charming, the Magic Mirror, and the Seven Dwarfs. However, of all these options, the only major character that can serve as a site of identification is Prince Charming. And, within the role of Prince Charming, young male spectators find themselves most likely to find the trappings of heterosexual marriage to be a goal. This is best illustrated in the "Some Day (My Prince Will Come)" song number, and in the final sequence, which shows Prince Charming reviving the sleeping princess with a kiss. So, in this role the Prince serves to fulfill the half of the binary. In terms of characterization, however, the Prince is largely a one-dimensional character, an object of desire, but not a fully realized character given time for characterization or understanding.

Although *Cinderella* has a wider range of male characters than *Snow White*, an identifiable male character emerges, that of Prince Charming. The two Prince Charmings are practically indistinguishable from each other, both are handsome men who serve as an escape from the family structure into a marriage structure, but serve as very limited means in terms of personality or character development.

The Walt Disney films of the 30s and

50s focus on marriage and focus on growing up. It is a structure of hegemonic consent that Disney conceals for fear of disrupting their innocent, family-friendly, image. However, despite attempts to naturalize the heterosexual focus (as well as generally white, middle-class, male, and Western preferentiality), its assumptions can be revealed to portray a not-so-innocent backside to the façade of Mickey (and Uncle Walt's) Magic Kingdom.

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INEQUALITY AND URBAN PREJUDICE

AS ALLEGORICAL MEANING IN BEIJING BICYCLE

by brent hagata

In the United States, it is possible that audiences have glanced over the idea of melodrama as a means for enacting social change. This is in part due to the success of romantic-tragedies such as Douglas Sirk's *All That Heaven Allows* (1955). It is easy to pass this genre off as irrelevant, particularly in the Hollywood film industry. Outside of the United States, in countries with an exponentially greater degree of government censorship, the melodrama is highly effective in creating allegory to begin discourse on needs for social change. Wang Xiaoshuai's *Beijing Bicycle* (2001) is such an example of melodrama utilized as a political tool. In the context of the film, *Beijing Bicycle*, Xiaoshuai uses the story of a clash over the ownership of an expensive mountain bike as an allegory to represent the conflicts between rural Chinese moving into urban areas and the relatively wealthier urbanites that have been born and raised in the city.

The director of the film, Wang Xiaoshuai, is said to be a member of the Sixth Generation of Chinese filmmakers, along with Zhang Yuan (East Palace, West Palace), He Jianjun (Postman), Ning Ying (On the Beat), and Jia Zhangke (The World). Sixth Generation films did not truly begin to take shape until the 1990s. By 1970, filmmakers worked under the harsh guidelines of the government, obeying rules such as the "Three Prominences." The rule stated that films should "stress positive characters, highlight only their heroic characteristics, and feature their most obviously positive and heroic figures as protagonists" (Yang, 110). To address topics that contrasted these ideal films, such as drug addiction or crime,

would easily result in censure and possibly revocation of a Chinese passport. Film production has been limited by financial constraints in the system such that there was no financial bases for "independent" Chinese cinema (Yang, 111). In 1990, Zhang Yuan filmed *Mama*, which challenged the production methods of the Beijing Film Academy. Soon, the other directors that are now categorized as the Sixth Generation began to make a name for themselves. Sixth Generation filmmakers tended to reject the trend to present China from a Western perspective. They chose to focus on the rougher aspects of urban life, focusing much of their attention on young urbanites and the problems that they face. For example, Wang Xiaoshuai's *The Days* (1993), as Michael Berry says, "[is] a powerful black-and-white exploration of the dark, repressive atmosphere in post-Tiananmen Beijing through the lives of Dong and Chun, an artist couple who struggle to find meaning within the monotony and oppressiveness of their everyday reality" (Berry, 163). So, in comparison to the films of Fifth Generation filmmakers like Zhang Yimou, current films tend to shy away from the grandiose representations of China's past and explicitly focus on problems that Chinese citizens face. The problem therein lies in how quickly and why these films are censored.

For modern Chinese cinema, the use of the melodrama has been important in its use of indirect social criticism. The melodrama had been an important mode for Chinese filmmakers, particularly in the films of Fifth Generation filmmakers such as Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou.

For filmmakers in China, the melodrama was an indispensable mode of addressing a societal problem without demonizing the government. By personalizing the problems of a given cultural crisis within an individual or group of characters, filmmakers are able to indirectly criticize Communism. In addition, filmmakers from the Fifth and Sixth Generations would only address a crisis within the system. There is never a proposed solution to the character's plight. Because filmmakers address an issue in the film, it creates a clear need for discourse surrounding the issue at hand. A story will not demonize any particular institution as the cause of the problem, nor will it necessarily become overly didactic. Had any film made an explicit attempt to encourage the Chinese population to see reform in the Communist government, the Party would deem the film counterrevolutionary, thus unfit for public reception. Of Chinese melodrama, Silbergeld writes, "[Melodrama] infuses films of moral drama with cloaked identities, so that we know all too well who in the film is good and who is evil but are left uncertain about who or what in modern Chinese society is being referenced allegorically by their moral struggle" (238). The necessity for vague representations of what is good and what is evil arises from the fear of censorship. In *Beijing Bicycle*, for example, there is no clear-cut protagonist or antagonist in the film. Two characters who may seem at odds throughout most of the film struggle for the same goal. Through this struggle, the film creates a larger image of the conflicts between the two social classes in which both characters belong.

In essence, *Beijing Bicycle* focuses on the lives of two Beijing citizens and their desires to add meaning to their lives. Guei and Jian quarrel over the rights to

the bike, before eventually coming to a compromise. The use of a bike has its own particular meaning to the film's director, Wang Xiaoshuai:

"[Bicycles] are put out of sight and out of mind when they are not used, and no one takes care of them in bad weather or when they need repair. The saddest moment, however, and the moment we realize just how indispensable bicycles are to our lifestyle, comes when they suddenly disappear. When I was a college student, bicycles were often stolen from campus. When it happened to me, I felt it was the most painful experience in the world. I wanted to capture this feeling in my film: the sudden disappearance of the thing we always count on in life" (Berry, 175).

Guei's use of the bike for work at the Fei Da courier service and the father's promise to Jian that he would receive a bike form the explicit importance of the bike in the film. The desire for the bike can then be seen as a way to maintain the character's equilibrium in the film. Attempts to continue owning the bike reflect the characters' needs to return to the original state of being before the film begins. However, as a symbol, the bike represents Guei and Jian's hopes to better their own future. Wang has said, "For these two boys, owning a bicycle symbolizes maturity and their ability to possess something in society. It is a stage of their growth" (Berry, 175). With the bike, Guei is able to continue working at his relatively good job and Jian is able to fit-in with the rest of his classmates. The original title of the film (Shiqi de Danche) translates to "Seventeen Year Old's Bike." In this context, the title, in a way refers to the film as a coming-of-age story. To place such an implicit meaning on the bike requires one to analyze the quarrel over the bike's ownership.

Because the conflict in the story arises



Beijing Bicycle photo still

between two individuals such as Guei and Jian, the film begins to criticize contemporary society. Guei is from the country, while Jian is from the city. The conflict between the two then evolves into the conflict that is present between the rural migrants into Beijing and those who have established themselves in the city. In the article, "Urban Experiences and Social Belonging among Chinese Rural Migrants," Li Zhang writes, "[Since the beginning of rapid commercialization after the post-Mao era in the 1970s], some 100 million peasants have come to the cities in search of work and business opportunities" (Zhang, 275). For the past thirty years, these rural migrants have flocked to cities with the hopes of making a better life for themselves and their families at home. Usually, rural migrants will leave home in the country to work in a city, where they can earn more money than was possible at home. The workers will then send money to his or her family as they earn it. However, when migrants move into the cities, it is nearly impossible to achieve their goal. It is nearly impossible to rise above one's status as a peasant. Migrants are forced to live in a city where the state provides permanent residents with "job-security and state-subsidized housing, children's education, medical care, etc. [Meanwhile], rural migrant workers have minimum job security and lack a stable place to live" (Zhang, 279). In addition, migrant workers must face somewhat corrupt bosses, who at times do not pay rural migrants' wages on time, or at all. The end result results in the poor remaining poor, while the permanent residents enjoy stable jobs, wages, and housing.

Low-paid migrant workers must live side-by-side with city dwellers that have become complacent in their lifestyle. The stark contrast between the rural workers and permanent residents has now evolved into high levels of urban prejudice. One migrant says,

"Before I thought that since Beijing is the capital, its people must be very polite, open-minded, and well-educated. But now I can only say that Beijing people are parochial, arrogant, and intolerant towards outsiders like us" (Zhang, 281).

Similar to the idea that there will be a cornucopia of work available to them in the cities, rural migrants must face a Beijing that exponentially diverges from the images portrayed on television and in mainstream film. In addition to the realization that one's personal image of urban life has been destroyed, rural migrants must combat the prejudices of urbanites and even the police. Li Zhang writes that

"Derogatory terms such as 'country bumpkin' (xiangbalao or tubaozi) and 'stinky peasants' (chou nongmin) are typically used by urbanites to refer to migrants. In everyday life, migrant workers are subject to arbitrary questioning and personal searches by the police on the street. Such urban prejudice reinforces the migrants' sense of alienation and inferiority" (Zhang, 281).

What is troubling about the plight of migrant workers is that many of them are unable to escape the situation at all and must face prejudice on a daily basis. Workers must stay in Beijing and continue to fear for their health and safety simply because it is not possible to return home. For many, the reason for coming to a city was because of the desire to earn money for the family and make something of oneself. To come home with nothing except stories of struggle would only bring shame on the individual and the entire

family. Thus, rural migrants are thrown into deeper personal torment by forcing themselves to remain in the city. Filmmakers of the Sixth Generation have often taken the side of the rural workers by focusing their films on the alienation that they face everyday.

Speaking generally of films that focus on the problems of the transition from rural to urban life, filmmakers tend to alienate the characters. In reference to the style of the Sixth Generation, Dai Jianhua says, "Objectivity presupposes a cold and nearly cruel style, in which the camera, replacing the witness, approaches the location in a sadistic, masochistic manner" (95). Wang, in *Beijing Bicycle*, attempts to be a witness to the cultural conflict between the rural and urban. There are several sequences in the film in which Jian and his gang find Guei and try to get the bike back. At one point, the gang surrounds Guei and tries to verbally convince him to hand over the bike. Because Guei has nothing to say to them, he remains quiet the entire segment. Instead of working to a compromise at this point, the gang resorts to taunting him and insulting him continuously. They even make reference to his roots in the country and his stupidity. Here, the prejudice against the rural migrants is especially noticeable. The sheer arrogance of Jian's friends forces the audience to relate to Guei, and in this instance, despise the urbanites. In one of the most disturbing scenes of violence, the gang chases Guei into a parking garage. Camera arrangement places the viewer at a distance from the "action" of the scene. The framing of the wide-shot presents a wide-open space, in which the characters occupy only a small portion. Here, the mass of space contrasted with the intense action of the scene works to disturb the viewer. One watches the scene from the point of view of an individual who may be

watching the gang punch and kick Guei as he lies on the floor. There is nothing that can be done to interrupt the action, except bear witness to the unforgiving cruelty of Jian and his friends. Similarly, the audience is expected to feel empathy for rural migrants as they try to survive under the dominance of permanent residents. Throughout this entire scene, the viewer is confronted with instances of cruelty that create a sense of guilt for not stopping it.

The film also attempts to draw empathy for rural migrant workers through use of Guei's scream as a sound motif. *Beijing Bicycle* is a relatively quiet movie. There is not a large amount of dialogue, while the dialogue that is in the film remains comparatively calm. When Guei holds onto the bike as Jian's friends attempt to pry it from his hands, his scream shatters the silence present in a large portion of the film. When his shriek begins, it is at a seriously high pitch. The volume of the scream and the desperation with which he shouts reflect not only a fear of bodily harm, but of a fear of losing the object that symbolizes why he came to Beijing. By stealing the bike, the gang would have caused Guei to lose his job. There would be nothing for him in Beijing, as the prospects of finding a new job would be near impossible. The scream reflects his desire to hang on to the hope of a better future that his bike promises. His scream is a means of defiance against the oppression of Jian's urbanite friends.

In terms of one's desire to advance in Beijing society, the maid that Guei and his relative watch through the wall is a testament to its impossibility. Throughout the movie, Guei and his relative stare longingly at the woman changing her dresses in the window. They not only long for her beauty, but the life that they think she leads. The two cannot even compre-

hend how one can own so many clothes. When she comes to buy soy sauce from the market, the two are unable to even conjure a sentence to speak to her. To maintain the façade of an urbanite, the maid will not even speak to Guei when standing two feet away. Eventually, the maid's boss finds her in the shop, wearing her clothes and wearing her shoes. It is only then that Guei and his relative learn that she is from the country. Only with this knowledge does Guei's relative feel that he might have been able to talk to her. The relation between the poor and the perceived high class is an interesting dynamic in the film. Guei and his relative are fascinated with her and want to be with her, but at the same time are afraid of her (when they think she is from the city). The only division is the place of birth. These scenes reflect an unfortunate acceptance of the differences between the two opposing classes. Guei and his relative know that they should not talk to her because she is from the city. In the same way, the maid knows that, as a person from the city, she should not speak with those from the country. It is ironic that one of the most powerful means of illustrating the divisions between the rural migrants and permanent residents occurs between the interactions of three rural migrants.

Though *Beijing Bicycle* is effective in illustrating that there is a problem between the two different groups in Beijing, it conforms to many Chinese melodramatic styles in the sense that it does not offer a solution to any problem, only further complications. Jian and Guei make an agreement to trade the bike every other day, but the relationship between the two does not evolve in any way. Only once does Jian even ask for Guei's name. In the climax, as the two receive the beating of a lifetime, Guei only shouts "I didn't do anything!" Both he and Jian show no in-

terest in knowing each other. The arrangement to share the bike cannot be said to be a reconciliation between the two classes, so much as it is a realization that the two must coexist, however unhappy they both are about the situation. In addition, one of the thugs destroys the bike, the object that symbolizes the growth and future of the two characters, into a state of uselessness. The story of Guei and Jian begins in a worse state than the beginning: Guei has no job and Jian has lost his girlfriend. Similarly, with the story of the maid, there is no affirmation of her desire to become one of the wealthier denizens of Beijing. Her boss catches her and presumably sends her back to the country. If anything, she represents the consequences brought about through over-reaching a predetermined place in society. Guei, Jian, and the maid all witness the destruction of their hopes for a better tomorrow.

In *Beijing Bicycle*, Wang Xiaoshuai creates a stirring allegory of the unfair divisions between social classes in China. By setting the film in modern day urban areas, the film creates a more explicit allegory than had its predecessors in the Fifth Generation. The target of the melodrama's criticism focuses on the problems facing residents of urban areas (permanent and migrant). Wang effectively addresses the issue of urban prejudice and struggles for the future, but, as traditional of melodrama, stops here. He offers no viable escape for the characters, who are left in a state that is worse than at the opening of the film.

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"CINE-NICOTINE"

THE INTOXICATING ARTISTRY OF LOTTE REINIGER'S SILHOUETTE FILMS by Laura Mchugh

German filmmaker Lotte Reiniger is credited with developing unprecedented animation techniques to put fairytales onto film, using two-dimensional cardboard cutouts silhouetted against intricate backdrops. Reiniger combines narrative content with artistic style in her light-hearted silhouette films that the public responded very well to. In an essay devoted to Reiniger's films, Eric Walter White explains that typical comments from the London Film Society included "Delicious, my dear! Such a relief after that other monstrosity—and so clever! I can't imagine how she does it" (White 19). Although this comment does include a positive reception of Reiniger's art, it shows a general lack of knowledge with respect to her techniques and the actual process of making silhouette films. Reiniger had to use extended creativity to develop cohesive narrative structures from cardboard figures moving in a two-dimensional space. White's essay explains that Reiniger's films employed cinematic "tricks" more complicated than those of her animated counterparts; traditional animation allows for the drawing of false three-dimensional perspective while silhouette films must undergo a much more engaged process. In order to create the impression that a bird is flying towards the viewer, Reiniger had to cut out a series of shapes that gradually increased in size. She would place the smallest bird on the image, capture the shot on camera, place a larger bird in the same place, take another still shot, place an even larger bird, and so on (*The Art of Lotte Reiniger*, 1996).

In compiling bold and fantastic images, Reiniger's silhouette films shed light on various art movements that emerged

at the beginning of the twentieth century. Her art reflects the German Expressionist Movement with its bold forms and contrived settings; however, it also enables the viewer to escape from the reality of the war. German Expressionism developed in interwar Germany, a country in the grip of economic and social collapse. With the formation of the Weimar Republic, however, the nation saw new hope and optimism, a spirit that artists translated onto paper and other mediums. The duality of this destruction followed by optimism created a frequently-emulated style that emerged in theater, art, and cinema. German expressionism employs exaggerated sets, theatrical make-up, painting backdrops, and bold compositions. The famous *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (dir. Weine, 1919) exemplifies both the artistic form of Expressionism and the depressed mentality of the time in its theatrical style and ambiguously dark content.

Similar to Expressionism, Cubism emerged in Europe at the beginning of the 20th Century, revolutionizing painting and sculpture while inspiring similar movements in music, literature, and film. Spanish painter Pablo Picasso and French artist George Braque are credited with the first "Cubist" artwork that incorporated abstract images from smaller angular shapes to depict forms from multiple viewpoints. Cubism deconstructs bodies and objects and recompiles them from smaller objects to enable a more comprehensive and abstract viewing of the image (wikipedia.org). The process that Reiniger undergoes in order to create her unique silhouette films requires that she literally break down each form into smaller pieces to facilitate body movement. John Cau-

man suggests that in breaking down each form into smaller pieces, the Cubist artist depicts the subject from a multitude of viewpoints to present the piece in a greater context (Cauman, 2001). This notion informs the social movements through which Reiniger's fairytales evolved. While her films may revolve around narrative structures directed towards a younger audience, they also act as an alleviation of the dismal sentiment resulting from the war.

Surrealism is a derivative of Cubism and Expressionism, using images and composition to challenge the notion of reality. The American Heritage Dictionary defines surrealism as an art form that stresses the "subconscious or non-rational significance of imagery arrived at by automatism or the exploitation of chance effects, unexpected juxtapositions, etc" ("surrealism," The American Heritage Dictionary). Notable surrealist artists include French painter René Magritte and Spanish artist Salvador Dalí who collaborated

with Luis Bunuel to make the surrealist film *Un Chien Andalou* (dirs. Bunuel and Dalí, 1929). Surrealism allows the mind to escape reality by emulating a dream world through the juxtaposition of images that otherwise have no association. Surrealism also redefines the ordinary to include the subconscious and unrealistic. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art recently opened an exhibition devoted to the works of Magritte and other surrealist artists entitled "The Treachery of Images." Not only did the museum feature some of Magritte's most famous pieces, the staging of the entire exhibit, organized by the L.A.-based artist John Baldessari, echoes his surrealist vision by including carpet with his renown cloud pattern. To enter the exhibition, the spectator is required

to walk through an amorphous gap in an oversized door, a structural addition directly modeled after Magritte's painting "Unexpected Answer" (1933). In emulating surrealist motifs, the Magritte Exhibition becomes a microcosm for the dream world identified in his individual pieces.

Lotte Reiniger's silhouette films amalgamate the artistic movements of German Expressionism, Cubism, and Surrealism in their visual style and fantastic themes that allow the viewer to escape reality. The films feature silhouetted images placed over a stationary background, creating a simple yet moving composition that allows the viewer's imagination to visually compile the story as desired. Emulating the tradition of German Expressionism, Reiniger's films include theatrical figure movement and hand gestures, replacing



Prince Achmed photo still

the facial expressions that are not possible with silhouette art. Her stationary backgrounds also parallel the painted backdrops in German Expressionism. Like Cubism, her figures are geometric and compiled

of smaller pieces put together to make a greater image. This artistic attribute allows for abstraction and variation in otherwise traditional and familiar stories. Reiniger's films mostly animate fairytales, the content of which is implausible and defies notions of logic and reality. In this sense, her films emulate the Surrealist movement that strives to allow the mind to escape reality and enter a dream world. Her light-hearted and unrealistic films allowed the public to escape the death and destruction of World War I.

While Reiniger is known for her 1926 creation *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, many of her films retell traditional fairytales like "Cinderella," "The Frog Prince," and "Hansel and Gretel." Her 1922 rendition of *Cinderella* exemplifies

the craft and care with which Reiniger composed her silhouette films. Because the nature of the characters as solid black silhouettes prevents the inclusion of specific physical features, Reiniger puts great detail into their outline to allow for the differentiation of characters. For instance, the character of Cinderella has a delicate profile and a petite nose while her wicked stepsisters are obviously overweight and have exaggerated witch-like noses. Reiniger also magnifies the importance of texture by using variation in the garments the characters wear to show social differentiation. In the beginning of the film, the outline of Cinderella's clothes is jagged to indicate her position as the underprivileged servant of the household. The exaggeration of her clothes provides perspective for the latter portion of the story when she goes to the ball in an extravagant gown, the outline of which is smooth and indicative of a luxury and wealth. *The Frog Prince* (1954) uses the same background as *Cinderella*, reiterating the simplicity of her films that allows for the viewer's imagination to expand on the visual narrative.

Dziga Vertov, a Russian filmmaker and theorist, disagrees with the functions of surrealism and implausible works like Reiniger's fairytale films. In 1920, Vertov wrote that "Film drama is the opium of the masses... Long live the ordinary people filmed in everyday life and at work!... down with the bourgeois imagination and its fairytales!" (Vertov, 1920). His manifesto continues to describe film drama as a deadly weapon in the hands of the capitalists and that modern art-drama is a "relic of the old world [and] an attempt to press our revolutionary reality into reactionary forms!" (Vertov, 1920). Vertov discusses the relationship between the filmmaker and the spectator, and the

function of the subconscious versus the conscious. He argues that the "director-enchanter" misleads and manipulates the unconscious viewer to submit to any suggestion. This notion seems hypocritical, considering his works like *Man with the Movie Camera* (1929) juxtapose images in a certain way to achieve his desired result as the filmmaker.

Vertov's opinion of fiction film and the connection between art and cinema provides a lens through which to observe Lotte Reiniger's lighthearted children's fairytales. Vertov argues that the fiction film acts like a cigarette for a smoker: "Intoxicated by the cine-nicotine, the spectator sucks from the screen the substance which soothes his nerves" (Vertov, 1924). While Vertov addresses what he considers negative cinematic attributes, he actually solidifies the exact reason why Reiniger's fairytales were so successful and essential to that social moment: the "war effort increased the need for entertainment"



Prince Achmed photo still 2

(Murray, 23). The artistry and fiction with which Reiniger created her films enabled the general public to forget the reality of the war and enjoy lighthearted tales that traditionally end happily, unlike World War I. Malcolm Le Grice's discusses the historical connection between film and art, arguing that "there is no inevitability in cinema's history; it is the result of needs, priorities, social and economic pressures" (Le Grice, 7). Reiniger's silhouette films emerged because of her unique creativity, but also as a result of social desires; Vertov discussed kino-pravda because of his specific revolutionary goals, not necessarily as a natural social reaction.

While Vertov's ideas may seem legitimate and apply to a notable movement in Avant-garde cinema, Reiniger's films react to social needs in a different way.

The Futurist Cinema manifesto compiled by various artists in 1916 argues that, despite the notion of *kino-pravda*, cinema as a visual art must “fulfill the evolution of painting, detach itself from reality, from photography, from the graceful and solemn” (Le Grice, 12). Lotte Reiniger exemplifies the notion that art and cinema are inherently connected, since the camera allows for her two-dimensional cut-outs to move creatively and form a narrative structure. Unlike Vertov’s *kino-pravda*, expressionist films “criticized existing conditions but, instead of providing suggestions for political action, they offered at most a mystical ray of hope for better times to come” (Murray, 27). Reiniger’s silhouette films are artistically cubist, surreal, and expressionistic, centering upon lighthearted fiction stories that the public desired after the destruction of the war. A 1928 article from *Weltbuhne Reviews* explains that Reiniger’s moveable silhouette “charmingly maintains the right balance between the product of art and life” (Arnheim, 141). The article argues that Reiniger used the “ideal technique...[since] silhouette is not as close to reality as a three-dimensional thing, no matter how imaginatively it may be thought out. It thus spares the viewer, particularly the child viewer, the fear that sets in when the fairy tale passes a certain point of vividness and becomes tangible reality” (Arnheim, 141). While Vertov would argue that the masses must consciously unite to address the reality of social “fears,” Reiniger’s silhouette films enable the escape of life’s hardships in their quest towards idealism.

The disputed relationship between film and culture provokes discussions of film’s reliance upon reality versus the imaginary. Reiniger’s silhouette films function to amalgamate the two by focusing their content on fairytales as a reaction

to the reality of the war. While the content of her films relies upon fiction, the visual style fuses the artistic movements of German Expressionism, Cubism, and Surrealism. Dziga Vertov argues that film must appeal to the masses by showing ultimate truth or reality; however, his theories ignore that such art-cinema movements emerged precisely as a result of the reality of the war. Provoked by the wartime sentiments, these art movements arose as a reaction to the destruction witnessed while simultaneously providing the public with a means to escape the war. While Reiniger’s films may revolve around implausible fairytales, her work actually reveals the ultimate truth of the social needs after the war by incorporating traits from various international artist movements. Despite his revolutionary goals, Vertov was ultimately right: Reiniger’s idealistic fairytales supported the “nico-cinema” desired by the masses in desperate need of relief from the stress created by post-war society, politics, and economics.

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ALUMNA INTERVIEW: TIME OUT WITH JULIE MARSH

by alyson osterman

In April of 2007, Focus Media Journal conducted a phone interview with Julie Marsh, an alumna of UCSB's Film and Media Studies Department. Since her departure from UCSB, she has worked primarily as a producer. Marsh is currently working on a documentary, and has other films in the works.

What films have you worked on?

I've done development, primarily, for most of my career. I did development for about 12 years. A number of products didn't get made. I'm now an independent producer, which gives me a little more control. I came here to be a screenwriter, but I'm a writer who doesn't write. I've written a number of screenplays, but I've never tried to market my own writing. I worked for Disney on a couple of cartoons, and when I started producing, I saw my name on IMDB. I'm in production on a feature-length documentary, where we shot in places like Orlando and Myrtle Beach (which is the focus of the documentary), and a narrative feature. I've been working as an independent narrative consultant. I do it on a freelance basis for professional people, almost all here in L.A. I want to make sure my clients are serious about their careers. I work with people almost as a manager would, but I do not represent them unless I find a specific project where I think I know I can take it...As a writer, money is more miserable. I'm a good leader, my discernments are very good – I think primarily because of my education at UCSB. I know talented people when I see them work.

Why did you decide to be a producer?

When I found out that writing is a profession I don't enjoy at all. I studied with Paul Lazarus. It was the focus in my

education. I'm a person who's very gifted at putting ideas in order, but not so much words in order. Producing is about dealing with people, and a part of my personality feels that's a happier place to live. The shift from being an employee to working freelance has been interesting, in a good and challenging way...Different mindset, different focus. I had to make peace with the idea that a producer is a creative person...Just because you have Final Draft, doesn't mean you understand that whole process. People underestimate the value of creative producing, the discernment of material, and the understanding of the market. The genre courses at UCSB have helped me the most with that. If, when I hear a pitch, I can see everything from beginning to end...if there's a compelling story with a market, if you can sell to a distributor and convince them that the public will buy it. Refining the story to the point that it works from beginning to end, which is all the way to the marketplace. When I see one that I believe really is marketable, I get really excited.

How do you decide what products you want to produce? Are you looking for big Blockbusters or art house types of films?

When I started writing, I stopped watching movies. Which is another reason writing doesn't work for me. I look really closely at box office tallies. Not nec-

essarily the top ten, but the list published in *Variety* where you track the life of the film, how much the film costs, and you get an understanding of what's doing well in the marketplace. Carry what you learn from school into the real world. Why does a film tank? They may have done a good job on part of it, but not all of it, or they have just missed the market. We're also in the midst of a huge shift as far as where the money comes from.

Is this a youth produced business? As a producer, are you looking for young writers specifically?

I'm looking for good writers, age doesn't matter. One of my clients worked on *Gargoyles* and *Batman Beyond*. Good material is hard enough to find. I read for contests as well, and one of the projects I'll possibly take on was a contender for a contest I read last year, and it was an older writer.

Do you feel it's more difficult as a woman to thrive in this industry?

I don't pay attention to gender in the industry. I made a decision not to pursue writing because I'm not that aggressive, but that has nothing to do with me being a woman. The two most successful T.V. writers I know are women. I'd rather just ignore whether that makes a difference or not. It's just another problem. To solve problems is the role of a producer, as in life. When I pick up a screenplay and see the name in front of it, it doesn't make a difference. Most of my clients are men.

What was your "plan" when trying to break into the film industry?

To get my first job on my cold call, it spoiled me. My first job was with Greg Schell who was a UCSB alum, who was a development executive. I met with him and producers. By the time I got home, I

got an offer on my answering machine as a receptionist and script reader. I worked with that producer for 12 years, and I still keep in contact with him, but one should change jobs every two or three years to make contacts to meet more people. But it appealed to the writer nerd in me. I was all set to hear "no," and I was in battle mode after just finishing graduate school. I did have other jobsI knew from my personality at the time that I would barely survive and not thrive in an agency...the other end of the spectrum from creative. I knew that the environment would be very toxic for me. I made a very conscious decision at the time that I would not expose myself to that, I'm not that into politics. I really am a writer at heart, and you need to do things your own way.

Where did you go to graduate school?

The University of Miami, with an emphasis in screenwriting, because at heart I really am a screenwriter. Producing is all about storytelling.

Do you think graduate school has helped your career?

It did, because at the time my number one priority in life was writing...The producer I worked with for 12 years was an entertainment attorney and producer. I learned how to read a contract, which was very important. I had a great marketing course with Freddie Goldberg, who'd been the head of marketing at Columbia. Between him and Paul [Lazarus]...I got a very market-focused perspective on my writing career. You start marketing the movie the moment you decide to make it. As a screenwriter, that starts with a log-line. The course about genres at UCSB really helped me; I'm a specialist at genre as a consultant. I was destined to be a producer because all my writing teachers were studios executives...I like [real]

people, not just the fake ones. I don't like to move back and forth between the two spaces. I'd rather sit down with the writer. I offer writers very gentle, very professional guidance.

Which genre classes at UCSB benefited you the most?

I can't remember what I took, I really can't. I know I took German films, national cinema, classes on auteur directors. Whenever you take a group of films and compare and contrast them, that's very helpful. Genre is about the similarities of films which are unique in their own way. The genre classes gave me the ability to discern patterns in genre and in the marketplace.

Are there any professors you want to mention that were particularly knowledgeable?

Edward Branigan, Janet Walker, and Chuck Wolfe. Branigan's aesthetics of film is what I do with screenwriters, because I am looking for a movie in a screenplay. It was only after I was out here for years that I understood the importance of what I'd learned at UCSB.

What have been your most memorable experiences in the film industry? Are there any you'd like to forget?

Meeting a couple of my heroes. Irv Kershner, who directed *Empire Strikes Back* (the best of the *Star Wars* movies). I remember people, like being in story meetings with Mike Medavoy. He's run a studio longer than anybody in the history of Hollywood. He's an amazing producer. His memoir is called *You're Only as Good as Your Last One*, and it's a good retrospective of the business. But the business is changing, you learn as you go...

Any experiences you want to forget?

I think I've already forgotten.

What are your future goals?

I'm producing, which may include stories. If I have an idea, I can hire a writer I like to realize the idea. But I want to realize the stories. I look forward to the premiere of the first feature length movie that I've produced.

What advice would you give UCSB students who want to pursue similar goals?

Allow your goals to change if they need to. Be in it for the long haul...Don't assume you have to know everything, learn as you go and don't be afraid to try, and don't get discouraged. Learn what you can, and don't lose track of what you're trying to do...but don't get stuck. Be willing to change your goals, but not compromise.

Could you explain the documentary you are currently working on?

A writer that I worked with on one of my short films is a producer in his own right. He grew up in South Carolina, and there's something there called the Myrtle Beach Pavilion, an old seaside amusement park. They're closing that down, and I wanted to do a documentary on that. I've always had a journalistic impulse, to make movies that educate people or make them reflect on life in a different way. This story ends up reflecting the kinds of choices communities make, how they change and grow, including the changing of family entertainment. Things like branding, a cultural movement, and franchises on the differences of culture. It's not an easy answer; it's not a bad guy, good guy story. The people who are closing are the same who opened it, and it's all about change. Story is change.

When will it be done? What is it called?

It'd be nice if we have a cut for Sundance this year. It's called *The Becoming Attraction*. I also have other projects in development.

JAPANESE REPRESENTATION:

JEAN NEGULESCO'S *THREE CAME HOME*

by alyson osterman

I. Introduction

Three Came Home (dir. Jean Negulesco, 1950) was released only a few years after the end of World War II, and thus presents an interesting case study of how Americans rendered depictions of themselves as well as their Japanese “enemies” shortly after this turbulent time. The film *Three Came Home* focuses on Japanese prison camps, with a story told through a white female prisoner’s (Agnes Newton Keith, portrayed by Claudette Colbert) perspective. It is based on an autobiographical account by Agnes Newton Keith, originally published in 1948. Through looking into both the production as well as reception of *Three Came Home*, I have gained insight into the nature of negative portrayals of the Japanese in the American cinema. I believe that although the filmmakers did try to present a “balanced” portrayal of the Japanese and Caucasians, the film ultimately represents the Japanese as an almost merciless people to an American audience.

II. Political Climate and Brief Analysis of *Three Came Home* as a Primary Document

According to historian Donald Richie, immediately following the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, the majority of Americans were happy they seemed to have won the war (21). Yet Richie also argues that soon after, Americans viewed the bombings with more horror than perhaps the Japanese. Firstly because Japanese did not think in the same terms as Americans culturally, and secondly be-

cause these two cities were still just two of many that had been destroyed (21). Perhaps Americans also felt more horror towards the bombings because they felt guilty, whereas the Japanese were not implicated in this event. Richie proceeds to discuss the differences between the Japanese approach to depicting the bombings versus American portrayals of the same events through cinema. With the release of the Japanese documentary *Hiroshima* in 1950 displaying a distanced attitude towards the events (Richie 22), the American feature *Three Came Home* was also released. By 1950, historians Robert Jay Lifton and Greg Mitchell argue that many Americans had years ago empathized with the Japanese: “[...] soon, questioning the morality of the Hiroshima attack would receive a public airing that surpassed all that preceded it” (79). Since it seems that American guilt drove American feelings towards the Japanese, it is slightly surprising that *Three Came Home* does not depict the Japanese in a more sympathetic light. Perhaps vilifying these people was not only an important aspect of the earlier war propaganda, but also acted to justify the bombings after the fact. Another possibility is that the filmmakers felt they depicted the Japanese and Americans/Europeans in an even-handed light; however, having only one sympathetic Japanese character in the film certainly does not balance these differing ethnic portrayals. In fact, the film does not express any American guilt. In the film, Agnes Keith is the embodiment of American values – virtuous, noble, brave, and ever-faithful to her (white) men, including her husband Harry Keith

(Patric Knowles) and son George Keith (Mark Keuning). One cannot characterize Agnes Keith's sensitivity to Colonel Suga (Sessue Hayakawa) after losing his family as indicative of American feelings as a whole, just as one cannot take Colonel Suga to represent all Japanese. In a letter to *The New York Times* written by the actual Agnes Keith (published on March 26, 1950), Keith writes, "The Japanese in *Three Came Home* are as war made them, not as God did, and the same is true of the rest of us." Perhaps the filmmakers should have striven for the film to depict this more evenhanded approach as Keith did when she penned her autobiography (echoing the majority of American sentiment), rather than merely presenting the "noble" American. However, it should also be noted that Keith's autobiography presents a less pleasing representation of Colonel Suga, whom the filmmakers sought to make more likeable.

From what I have gathered, the majority of the popular press felt *Three Came Home* presented a relatively balanced portrayal of both the Americans and the Japanese. I think otherwise. In *Three Came Home*, not one "bad" American is represented; whereas only one Japanese man (Colonel Suga) may be characterized as "good" (sympathetic to at least one American, Agnes Keith). The remarkably uneven representation of "good natured" Japanese people negates the film's authenticity and apparent attempts to present an accurate portrayal of war and the people involved. Also, Colonel Suga has little screen time in the film, and the majority of time is given to white women. Furthering the problem of accurate Japanese portrayals, Colonel Suga has been educated in America. As the only Japanese man identified as having such an education, he apparently possesses a superior knowledge to the "inferior" Japanese that were edu-

cated in their own country, and this qualifies Suga's kind attitude towards Agnes Keith. Essentially, *Three Came Home* stereotypes the Japanese as malicious and almost inhuman, while Colonel Suga represents a man of at least limited compassion

(a rarity amongst these "brutal people"). He potentially redeems the Japanese for their aggressive behavior and violence against women (an act considered far worse than crimes against men). What eventually defeats the Japanese is American masculinity, and Colonel Suga symbolizes the possible reprieve of the Japanese through Americanization. However, an omission of the filmmakers is the way in which Colonel Suga treats the other female prisoners – viewers merely witness his interactions with Agnes Keith.

Another example of anti-Japanese sentiment is present in a scene in which Betty Sommers (Florence Desmond) calls a Japanese sergeant names such as "frog face" and "repulsive," poking racist jokes at him, which he cannot understand because of the language barrier. He plays with Betty's hair and smiles stupidly, unaware of the rude comments these white women make. It is only when the sergeant hears the women laugh at him in unison, that he is framed alone in a medium shot, looking back and forth between women, that his utter humiliation is highlighted. It would seem that Betty's attitude is made even more brazen and demeaning towards the soldier because she is a woman (especially during this time period). While the women seem to have little power over their white male counterparts, they do maintain some brashness while being im-



Three Came Home

prisoned by the Japanese. The Japanese man is in a sense feminized, and the only way for the sergeant to regain his masculinity is through slapping Betty, which he eventually "must" do.

Also, an opening text of *Three Came Home* begins with the statement that, "This is a true story," which is misleading in several ways. Agnes Keith's original account of her time in Borneo is not completely accurate. According to Sheila Johnson of the Society for Japanese Studies:

In addition to her dislike for interviews, Mrs. Keith also seems to shun research [...] Historians will be dismayed to see that she has located the great period of contact between China and Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries instead of the sixth and seventh [...]. (442 - 443)

Keith also might have altered her book for entertainment and readability purposes to better sell her autobiography, or her account may also have been skewed by memory. In addition, if we take the majority of Keith's text as accurate, then the filmmakers' omission of her accounts about brutal Caucasian soldiers should be duly noted as a possible example of racism (this matter will be discussed further in the following section), or propaganda.

Not relating to the text of a film but rather its music, W. Anthony Sheppard discusses anti-Japanese music propaganda in various films. According to Sheppard, in *Three Came Home*, when a cue was marked for a Japanese man's "'Hey,'" Hugo Friedhofer instructed his arranger to make the "'Jap' color not too heavy (only one small Jap!)" (322). Another version of this same material is scored for a "heavier 'Jap color'" and is entitled "The Enemy" (Sheppard 322). Friedhofer even

created a chord he called the "'Brutality'" chord for scenes in which Agnes Keith is being tortured by the Japanese (Sheppard 322). Thus, even the music in *Three Came Home* has possible racist undertones.

Although I am focusing my paper on Japanese representation in *Three Came Home*, I would briefly like to address the stereotyping of Anglo Australian men as basically sex driven beasts (especially in juxtaposition to the feminized Japanese soldiers). In one scene, Australian Prisoners of War sneakily speak to the ladies in their camp during the night. Deprived of sex for months, even after the women lie about their age (claiming they are teenagers), the Australians remain hungry for sex, saying that age does not matter. As a dozen or so Australians try to jump over the barbed wire fence separating them from the women, they are brutally shot by the Japanese soldiers. Here, it may seem that the Japanese are punishing the Australians for their excessive masculinity (almost bestiality), while trying to take back some of their own by killing the Australians. Also Australians are depicted as an "Other," though of a different type than Japanese: one extremely masculine, while the other feminine (unless wielding a gun). It seems that only through violence can Japanese attain any strength; thus, they are forced to become "cruel."

III. Production and Promotion

Since *Three Came Home* was made in the late 1940s, the filmmakers had to get numerous approvals from the Production Code Administration. Many of the revisions concerned the women's costuming and representation, as well as instances of rape (any scenes involving this act had to be cut) and excessive violence (Breen). However, in a letter dated March 7, 1949, Joseph Breen did recommend the phrase, "'You dirty Jap!'" be taken out of the

script. Apparently, the Production Code Administration was somewhat sensitive to the portrayal of the Japanese people and/or Japanese feelings and American response to this derogatory expression (more so than the actual filmmakers). Perhaps this enhances one's views of the Production Code Administration as not an organization which censored films unnecessarily and arbitrarily, but an administration which was in fact sensitive to the depiction of the Japanese minority.

Most likely the depiction of war itself (and presumably the representation of the Japanese people as well) was not only in the hands of the Production Code Administration, but also those of General Douglas MacArthur. In a letter to Joseph Breen, Jason S. Joy (presumably a representative of *Three Came Home*) writes:

[...] The War Department said that they had no objection to the story itself – as a matter of fact they liked it very much [...] While our crew was there they permitted General MacArthur's Chief of Staff to read the script, who in turn discussed it personally with MacArthur, who wrote Mr. Zanuck a personal letter commending him for understanding such a picture.

Thus, the film was not only in the hands of the filmmakers and the Production Code Administration, but also in the Department of War. Perhaps this is why there were no scenes depicting American and/or European brutalities against the Japanese. Yet in actuality, Agnes Keith portrayed not only Japanese acts of violence, but crimes by Americans.

In John Mason Brown's film review, he describes how *Three Came Home* would have been better if it had been "more faithful" to Agnes Keith's autobiographical book of the same name. Although Brown acknowledges authenticity is an impos-

sible feat, he feels that the film should have included further brutalities Keith addresses in her novel, including when an American officer conducted a speech that was as "inhuman as the worst of Japanese jailers." If these scenes had even been suggested, it is questionable whether the Production Code Administration would have approved them. According to Keith, an American soldier said, "[...] if you don't behave I'll put you in the brig on bread and water for seven days," and to ignore a statement such as this seems to be a gross omission of the film merely to appease the American public (Brown). According to Brown:

One of the distinctions of Mrs. Keith's book was that it had the honesty to deal with the Japanese as war made them, but with Americans, too. As a picture, '*Three Came Home*' is unwilling to go that far.

Due to the film industry's need to appease the public and essentially deliver pro-American propaganda to the masses (to perhaps alleviate American guilt), the truth of the matter is ignored. However, it seems worthy to note that even condemnations of the film such as these do not question why events such as the Japanese American internment in the United States or the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (annihilating thousands of people rather than a few individual soldiers) were not depicted. It seems even progressive reviewers would rather the film have included the wrongdoings of a few white soldiers rather than the crimes committed by the government and military of the United States...perhaps completely acknowledging that they are subject to a government that would perform such a genocide was simply too much for readers to handle.

Another interesting matter regarding

the film's production is that the Japanese actors playing minor roles got paid less than white actors playing minor parts. For instance, the man who portrayed the Japanese Captain was paid \$175 per week, while a woman portraying a female prisoner was paid \$250 – \$300 per week (Anon. 16 Feb. 1949). Also, while the director considered numerous other actresses and actors to play the roles of Agnes Keith and Harry Keith, the list of those considered for the role of Colonel Suga was only limited to three: Sessue Hayakawa, Richard Loo, and Peter Chong (Anon. 24 Feb. 1949.). This reveals the limited number of working Japanese actors in comparison to white actors. Similarly, there are still few working Japanese actors today.

In a promotional brochure beckoning distributors, audiences, or both to display and/or view *Three Came Home*, Arthur H. DeBra (presumably of Twentieth Century Fox's Community Relations Department) writes:

In any great war [...] hatreds develop which outlive the peace [...] one becomes the victor – one becomes the vanquished. The ferment of hate is brewed in the areas of occupation, in concentration and prison camps [...].

Once the word "hate" is introduced, we may assume the idea of a fair representation of the Japanese is unattainable. The promotion for the film seems to directly refute Agnes Keith's idea that war shapes the attitudes of both the Japanese and Americans/Europeans.

Keith was beaten by Japanese soldiers, but did not harbor an everlasting hatred for them as a people. Also, the brochure appeals to an American sense of pride, and perhaps comforts the guilty public by insinuating that the mass extermination of a people is necessary in war. After all,

one is either a "victor" or "vanquished." Yet while the American and European victors are indeed clearly displayed, little reference is made to the American losses. In fact, the only Caucasians killed in the film by the Japanese are Australian men. Hence, the promoters set the film up as pro-American propaganda, rather than a balanced presentation of the Japanese and Americans/Europeans.

DeBra proceeds to state, "At this time when," as Trygve Lie insists, "public opinion is the greatest single force for good in the world...to keep peace, such a picture as *THREE CAME HOME* is not only timely but topical." It does not seem that the film promotes peace, so it is noteworthy that the press claims it instills ideas of this notion. The majority of the film focuses on the brutalities Japanese men commit against Caucasian women. This would seem to rally more distrust towards the Japanese than understanding. This suspicion is amplified through the Japanese soldiers' possible raping of women, which actuates American masculinity into action as part of an honor based conflict. That is, to defame a country's women is to defame the country itself and the men who live in it. In other words, it taints the possibility of a pure lineage. By hailing the film as "timely and topical," it would seem that the film was produced as a prestige picture (practically begging for various awards and honors), and one not to be taken lightly.

IV. Reception

Except for a few references to the earlier matter of omitting Keith's accounts of white against white violence, the majority of the print media reviewers' reception to the film was one of immense praise. *The New York Times* writer Bosley Crowther praises both the film's star (Colbert) and

the film itself, describing how the film honestly portrays war and provides a true depiction of the brutal Japanese who imprisoned innocent victims in their prison camps. While we may assume Crowther was aware of the Japanese American internment, it apparently was not a topic he wished to address. Perhaps Crowther did not want to create feelings of guilt for his readers.

In the first line of his article, Crowther describes Agnes Keith as brave, and hails the film as "heroic" (22). The writer immediately casts the Japanese in a brutal manner when he discusses how Keith "bravely endured" her struggles at the camp. Crowther proceeds to discuss how the film "...bids fast to stand as one of the strongest of the year, and notes that "This should be eminently encouraging not alone to those who are looking for real dramatic substance but to those who are anxious about the screen's embrace of war" (22). While Crowther asserts his high opinion of the film, he also acknowledges this film as representative of reality. I find this problematic, especially as he continues to discuss the allegedly accurate portrayal of Japanese in the film: "They have fully conveyed the stark brutality of the arrogant Japanese [...] they have left no doubt as to the moral culpability of the Japanese" (22). Crowther identifies the Japanese as seemingly being the only ones responsible for the horrors that took place during World War II. He even proceeds to discuss how this film rightfully vilifies the Japanese and holds them accountable for their "culpability" in the situation (22). Towards the article's end, the film is once again praised for its realism, and concludes, "[*Three Came Home*] will fill you fully with a great respect for a heroic soul," and ends with solely acknowledging the white heroism (which Colbert embodies) involved in World War II (22).

This article merely promotes the film in a one-sided superficial manner, perhaps to assure readers that the film's portrayal of the war is completely accurate and to leave them guilt free. Crowther seems to beckon readers to neither ask questions of him, nor the film.

Another writer, Howard Barnes of the *New York Herald Tribune*, expresses the film's strength as a picture, and feels that it holds a "strange promise of a better world." Apparently, this "better world" includes one in which no questions are asked, and no European and American culpability in the war is depicted. Similarly, in a letter addressed to Darryl Zanuck, Charles Einfeld writes of the film's honorable depiction of "equality," and how it is one of the best films ever made and will be acknowledged for its huge significance. Thus, the film received tremendous praise from various film critics. *Three Came Home* won various honors, including the dubbing of Negulesco's directorial efforts as one of the best of year by the The Exhibitors of America voting in the Annual Laurel Awards Poll (Anon. 1950 approx.). The film also garnered international prestige, winning prizes at the French Vichy festival (including an award given to Hayakawa) (Ascarelli). As discussed earlier, the film seemed to be promoted as a prestige picture made for these honors. *Three Came Home* was hailed for its triumphant portrayal of "real" war through depicting a woman's struggle based on autobiographical accounts.

V. Conclusion

Three Came Home, although it appears to strive to depict Japanese fairly through the character of Colonel Suga (especially due to the filmmakers' relatively kind take on that character), ultimately presents them in a negative light, as a people

who persecute a kind hearted white minority. However, it seems that even today in what is deemed as a progressive film, these same Japanese representations still exist. In *Letters from Iwo Jima* (dir. Clint Eastwood, 2006), a “Japanese” film directed by an American director, the only Japanese man initially sympathetic towards Americans is General Tadamichi Kuribayashi (Ken Watanabe). Although the only American whom Colonel Suga is sympathetic to is Agnes Keith, both Kuribayashi and Suga share a striking similarity: they were well educated in America. Though Eastwood attempts to shift the perspective of typical American films portraying World War II in the sense that the film is told mainly through the Japanese language and is thus subtitled, filmgoers still are seeing a portrayal of the Japanese through an American perspective. Eastwood attempts to shift Americans’ ideas of the Japanese as a people and as individuals, as the film focuses on the Japanese soldiers’ perspectives of war more so than American perspectives (which he addresses in the 2006 film *Flags of our Fathers*). While Eastwood’s efforts at attempting an “accurate” portrayal may partly have been done in earnest, much of the film seems to have been made with an attempt to win an Oscar (and has, at its heart, what most western war films depict). Although the writer of *Letters from Iwo Jima* is a Japanese American (Iris Yamashita), the story was written by an anglo American (Paul Haggis, who also wrote and directed Oscar winner *Crash* in 2004). What is today deemed as progressive may serve as an example of outdated stereotypes fifty years from now. *Three Came Home* was a progressive film in its time, as it was told from a female perspective; however, it remains problematic in its depiction of the Japanese during wartime. This only serves to remind us that a “bal-

anced” portrayal is impossible. For future research, I would like to more thoroughly explore how *Three Came Home* and other American films of this nature compared to Japanese films dealing with the same subject matter during this time period.

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THE NEO-SPECTATOR:

HOW PRODUCERS LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING & LOVE THE SPECTATOR by Laura Palmer

According to Robert Stam and Ella Habiba Shohat, modern technology is so expensive that “the power [still] resides with those who build, disseminate, and commercialize the systems.” These power-holders are the professional producers of texts. The internet, however, has created a mythology of the democratization of media and information. The individual now appears to have gained agency and importance through such sites as iTunes and MySpace. Everything is designed to be configured according to “my” tastes or likes. Thus, in place or in addition to demographics, these producers of information or products have realized the power of giving consumers choices, rather than making choices for them. “I” or “My” has become a market of its own.

This theoretical “I” also indicates a major shift in spectatorship, which spectator theory has not dealt with yet. In the era of the internet the spectator has become the “I” and “the user.” Both of these names indicate that the spectator is not only actively participating, but also has ownership or involvement with the production of what he participates in. With the proliferation of alternative technologies to cinema, such as VCRs, MP3 players, and personal computers, there has come a proliferation of alternative ways of interacting with a text, cinema or otherwise. Hence, the term “spectator” is no longer sufficient. Instead, I intend to use the term “neo-spectatorship” to describe the interactive and selective participation that these new technologies allow. The neo-spectator is not a universal term for all consumers of media. Instead, it refers to a tech-savvy consumer that utilizes his

power of choice, and also seeks direct interaction with the producers of a text. What is most important for a neo-spectator is an agency to choose and change texts, thus creating a sense of engagement. It is this enthusiasm that professional media producers are attempting to channel and harness in order to maintain their power. So, who has the real control over this relationship: the neo-spectator or the producer? Has the neo-spectator been proactive and taken the power of choice out of the corporation’s hands and into his own, or has the producer succeeded in maintaining power by creating the illusion of choice? To answer this question, one must first understand the development of spectator theory and how that relates to the neo-spectator. Once the root and definition of the neo-spectator is clear, then this paper will demonstrate how this power-dynamic is enacted through several examples.

Spectator Theory In Brief

The term “spectator” suggests a flat, inactive acceptance of the information presented. Theodor Adorno of the Frankfurt School declared that “every visit to the cinema leaves me, against all vigilance, stupider or worse.” He felt that the mechanized production of cinema was “caught up in the world of commodification and exchange value” and so “stupefies, narcotizes, zombifies, and objectifies” the consumer or spectator. While Walter Benjamin, his contemporary, disagreed through his admiration for the mass appeal and anti-elitism of cinema, Benjamin assumed that the producer creates the text, and the subject accepts that informa-

tion as the producer presented it.

David Bordwell attempted to nuance the concept of the spectator, but he only allowed for the spectator to act as an individual in processing the text. While the spectator may be in a theater with a hundred others, he does not interact with them or with the text. The spectator only interacts with his mind's interpretation of the text based on the history and social status the spectator brings with him. There is no room for interaction between producer and spectator, nor for spectators to produce their own physical versions of the text. Even Judith Mayne, who attempts to open up discourse on questioning the "ideal spectator" does not allow for the spectator to interact directly with producers of the text. She claims that "readers and viewers are always active producers of meaning," but seems to remain inside the Freudian framework under examination. This Freudian framework, involving the spectator seeing himself inside of the text, still does not allow for direct interaction with the text. Written a few years before the rapid proliferation of the internet, but after the boom of the VCR, Mayne's article "The Paradoxes of Spectatorship" ignores the fan's paradox of being both a spectator and producer of the text.

Henry Jenkins begins to tap into the complicated interaction between the fan, the text, and the producer with his article "'In My Weekend-Only World...': Reconsidering Fandom." While this does not quite encapsulate the complicated ways by which the "user" or the "I" interacts with the text, it does acknowledge the dialogue between the producers and fans, and the fans with the text. Jenkins breaks fan participation into five categories: (1). Close and undivided attention while watching the text, with intent discussion with other fans later. (2). An understanding of the 'meta-text' created through the

"critical and interpretive practices" of the fan community, (3). "Speak[ing] back to the networks and producers" directly, through letter-writing campaigns and internet forums. (4). The production of their own texts, or fan-fiction, related to the original text. (5). The growth of fan communities that allow not only for a forum for discussing the text, but also for "an alternative social community ." Noticing this far more active role in experiencing a text, Jenkins acknowledges that fans are more than spectators. They are participants.

The problem with Jenkins' exploration of fan culture is it is concerned with the network and producers "portray[ing] the fan as radically 'Other.'" Though the network and producers market the text's products to the fans, they do not consider fans as representative of the mass audience. Thus, according to Jenkins, the producers ignore fan input or suggestions, thinking that, as producers, they know what the anonymous demographic of the "mass" would rather watch. This is where the "I" and "the user" that constitute the neo-spectator complicate and contradict these theories of spectatorship.

The "I" and "the user" are the result of the development of technology in creating avenues for consumer choice. When there was only live theater or cinema, media possibilities were limited by the theater location and its program. Then, radio and television created a continuous programming in the private sphere. However, it was still not possible to choose what to watch. With the popularization of the VCR came the possibility of watching any text at any time. The spectator no longer has to keep to the schedule as dictated by television broadcasters. They can buy a video-cassette of a film they like, and choose what scenes they want to watch. The DVD player and TiVo only simplify

the ability to take advantage of these possibilities. The VCR also allows the consumer to begin editing and producing his own texts at a relatively low cost. This ability to be both producer and spectator marks the advent of the neo-spectator. The possibilities of choice and being producer and spectator expanded exponentially with the personal computer and the internet. However, these technologies all cost both time and money. This creates a question of how much is the neo-spectator willing to spend in order to have this agency.

Modern Media & The Neo-Spectator

In an era where approximately five corporations own most businesses and media in the entire world, the agency of the neo-spectator becomes easy to dismiss as impossible. Three of the top businesses are Apple, Google, and American Idol. All three harness the enthusiasm of the neo-spectator through encouraging involvement and individuality in the text or product. Of the three businesses, Apple's C.E.O., Steve Jobs, is now on the board of directors for Disney, Google relies on advertisement funded by branches of these five corporations, and American Idol is owned by Fox, which is owned by Rupert Murdoch's Newscorp. Thus it appears that the revenue from neo-spectator participation goes into the same massive bank accounts.

Apple, Google, and American Idol create an appearance of consumer-agency through offering customization and apparent independence. Apple has the iPod, iTunes, and iMac, all of these names suggesting the individuality that is achievable through the customization of these products. "I" choose the type and color of "my" iPod or iMac, and then "I" choose what pieces of music or videos to put on

"my" hardware. Then, there are the many accessories that can further individualize "my" i-pod. American Idol allows the "I" to choose "my" idol. By choosing that idol the neo-spectator will then choose to buy the products associated with that idol. This includes CD's, t-shirts, concert tickets, and now short videos, or podcasts available for two dollars per download on the show's official website. Google allows the neo-spectator to upload data to its mainframe, keeping an open information system that allows everyone to participate, and watch advertisements.

Currently, video game companies are attempting to mimic Google's open interaction as they are launching the next-generation of consoles. Video games are a major part of neo-spectatorship, in that they require the active participation of the player. In the game the player places themselves in the text and acts as a character in the game. Due to the popularization of the internet, this activity is moving towards direct interaction with the producers of games. As the next-generation of video game systems are completing their release within the next year the "Big 3," Sony Playstation, Microsoft X-Box, and Nintendo, are all attempting to dominate the market by finding ways to create avenues for the neo-spectator to be part of the development of games.

To begin, Nintendo is releasing the Wii. This odd name is supposed to refer to "we" or the people. The two I's are similar to the "I" in iPod. On the actual system, these two eyes will look like two people, thus promoting the idea that the Nintendo Wii is the console of "the people" or the citizen. Also, Nintendo hopes to engage the neo-spectator through fun, active gameplay with their remote-control-like controller. This controller is a drastic move away from the 20-button joy-pad of previous systems, where non-gam-

ers felt they had to have three hands to use it. Instead, the new controller mimics the simplistic but sensitive controls of the i-pod, having only three buttons. It is also motion sensitive, requiring the player to actually do the movement they want the character to do. While this does not allow for feedback directly to game designers, it does encourage a more active participation than sitting and staring at a screen.

On the other hand, the Microsoft's X-box 360 and Sony's Playstation 3 (PS3) are relying on the neo-spectator's technical and internet savvy. First, they are utilizing the downloading capabilities of the new systems to create an additional market in which gamers download additional games, maps, and virtual equipment, such as super-lasers, for a few dollars per item. This creates the same sort of customizable features that Apple offers on iTunes. Also, there are customizable face-plates available for the X-box 360. Second, Microsoft and Sony are also opening up the possibilities of user-to-user interface in the transferring of game content. Besides multi-player interaction, there can also be the transfer of information and tips, with the corporation's network as the hub connecting various neo-spectators. At first, this appears an openly sharing, utopian ideal. But, the corporation is still attempting to retain control of data around their game.

This conflict between the capitalistic aims of corporations and the socialist, utopian ideals of the neo-spectator is betrayed in an interview with Playstation Magazine Phil Harrison, president of Sony Worldwide Studios. In explaining the online service Sony is planning for the up-coming PS3, he stated that:

"On one side, you've got Microsoft... with their 'walled garden' approach. And on the other extreme, you've got Google or the open Internet, with uncontrolled,

unregulated access to all. And where do we sit on that continuum? Well, it's definitely more the [Google] way than the [Microsoft] way. Having said that, we will obviously obey and be governed by ratings organizations, whether [they regulate] films or games."

Harrison defends and promotes the PS3 against Microsoft's X-BOX 360, its toughest U.S. competitor, by claiming to do things in the more utopian, "Google" way. However, by stating the government and corporate restrictions that will be placed upon the content, he clearly believes in the importance of the producer as the central base of power, rather than the neo-spectator taking charge. Being a business executive, his bottom-line is not the cooperative, utopian interface available through the internet. Instead it is the amount of profit that can be made through this interaction. He even adds that "[Online gaming] is not going to replace retail, but... it grows the market." He attempts to appease the players by adding that "it enriches the experience" and "everybody wins." When asked about "user-created content," such as "user-created maps," Harrison avoids the topic and touts how Sony is discussing working with smaller game-design firms to create minigames directly for download. This would create a revenue of "\$10 or 20 million" to be invested into a larger production, which would, of course, theoretically create even more revenue for Sony.

Harrison also references how television utilizes internet forums to create show content. For example, the writers of the Fox show 24 do not have an outline for the overall season. Instead, "they're looking at the forums, they're looking at the newsgroups, they're looking at the community on the Web." Using this as a feedback loop, the writers change the content of the show, and the arch or em-

phesis of characters. Thus, they channel the power of the neo-spectator. Part of the show's success is its relevance, and that relevance is created by listening to the consumer. The consumer then goes to the video store and buys 24 on DVD, or watches it in syndication, thus adding to the show's profit margin.

What these examples show is corporations purposefully manipulating the ethos of the neo-spectator. However, there are many free programs, such as LimeWire, that attempt to get around the system by connecting users-to-user. Also, no matter how carefully a corporation plans to popularize their product, there is no way to predict exactly what neo-spectators will be drawn to. Charts can be made, consumers can be broken into demographics, but all of this is similar to riding a bull at a rodeo. One can never know where one will be thrown.

The neo-spectators, especially those involved in the internet community, can choose to make anything popular through blogging, instant messaging, and other forms of discussion, even ones outside of the internet. This is what happened with the *Saturday Night Live* (SNL) sketch "Lazy Sunday," which is a rap-video about going to see *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Within 24 hours of its first airing, the sketch was posted on YouTube.com by a multiplicity of fans. This created an enormous response online, to the point that this was mentioned in Time Magazine, Entertainment Weekly, and various other non-internet publications. This instant, free advertising skyrocketed the careers of the two performers, and rejuvenating an almost thirty-year-old television program. Furthermore, this "digital short" has spawned fan versions, in which fans do their own re-enactment of the sketch, shot-by-shot, word-for-word. All of this occurred spontaneously, without SNL or

NBC's involvement. The sketch itself was filmed by Andy Samberg, without asking Lorne Michaels, the producer of SNL. This independence is the dream of the neo-spectator. However, this utopian moment of the spontaneous flexing of neo-spectator power is complicated because "Lazy Sunday" aired on *Saturday Night Live* on NBC, the first radio and television network, and part of the much larger GE conglomerate.

As high-powered technologies become less expensive and enthusiasts begin making more free software, the continued dominance of corporate media remains uncertain. The internet creates more opportunities for 'the independent' to produce technology. However, it is still corporations who manufacture the hardware where the independence of the neo-spectator is flexed. In order to pirate a film from the internet, or to upload a pirated film, or to burn a DVD of the film, one needs a computer. In order to watch this media, one needs some sort of screen. Even those individuals tinkering in their garages and building their own computers have to buy the raw materials from corporations. So, the neo-spectator remains in a negotiated position of having more interaction with a text than previously possible while being reliant on corporations for the media to interact with. This interaction and power, however, only stems from producers having realized that there is money to be made in listening to the masses.

As of today, new media, such as television, MP3 players, and video games, are more likely to utilize the agency of the neo-spectator, while cinema remains isolated, still believing that the producer knows better than the consumer who is going to buy the product.

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THE HYPERSEXUALITY OF GRACE PARK

by ryan fung

Two Asian dancers baring cleavage perform a striptease onstage in a nightclub. During their performance, they caress each other's bodies, an erotic French kiss, and engage a split-second nipple slip. The male spectators are more than pleased. This is a scene from *Romeo Must Die* (dir. Andrzej Bartkowiak, 2000), and one of the Asian dancers is Grace Park. At the time of the film's release, Park's only credit in her IMDB.com filmography was *Romeo Must Die*, as "Asian Dancer." As of 2007, she has at least eighteen titles on her filmography. She is currently best known as the sexy Cylon, Sharon Valerii, in the hit Sci-Fi Channel television series *Battlestar Galactica*. Whether intentional or not, the popularity and critical acclaim of *Battlestar Galactica*, along with Grace Park's hyper-sexuality and star status, bring new perceptions for Asian-American actresses, especially when it comes to visibility and representation in the entertainment industry.

Although neither the producers, writers, or even Grace Park herself intended to instill "Asian-ness" into the character of Sharon Valerii in *Battlestar Galactica*, spectator theory has taken precedence over their intentions or lack thereof. In the words of Helen Lee, "Race is always loaded on the screen—it's there, it's visible, there's a lot of baggage attached to what all the spectators bring to their particular reading of the image; it's more than any one filmmaker can calculate." *Battlestar Galactica* is known to be a political allegory, containing metaphors and themes from actual world history and current events. Sometimes the events depicted on the show coincide with similar events going on in the world. Grace Park comments on SciFi.com:

I'm absolutely thrilled to be on a show

where we do not shy away from current events. I think it's a very intriguing way to look at our world and to explore the things that I think a lot of people would rather not face and would rather escape from. And it's kind of funny because we're doing a T.V. show on space, or in space, so in a way we're kind of escaping, yet we go, you know, we leave Earth or the planet, all that, and go to the next frontier and it turns out that we have the same problems, anyway. I love that we explore a lot of issues based on politics.

Thus, there is a certain real-world intertextuality between *Battlestar Galactica* and world events. Based on this phenomenon, the events pertaining to Sharon Valerii in *Battlestar Galactica* can be read in the context of Asian/American women's history of hypersexuality.

In *Battlestar Galactica*, Grace Park plays many copies of a particular model of robotic machine called Cylons. The Cylons have evolved to look exactly like human beings and decide to invade the planet Caprica, forcing a colony of human beings to flee from their home in pursuit of a mythological planet called Earth. Depending on which copy of the character Park plays, her character is either known as Boomer, Sharon, or Number Eight. Park happens to be the only Asian actress on the show. However, her character is not written as an Asian character because in the context of the show there are only two races—the human race, and the Cylon race.

In Grace E. Jang's cover story on Grace Park in the April 2006 issue of *KoreAm Journal*, BSG producer David Weddle comments on how the character he helped create as a writer subsequently evolved:

"It's been one of the most satisfying story lines, writer-wise, for us to create," says Weddle. Jang notes that Weddle "doesn't necessarily write for, nor about, Boomer as an Asian American part, per se, because BSG posits a multiracial society." Weddle elaborates on his comment:

She doesn't have the issues that an Asian person from Earth would have; she has Cylon issues. What we do talk about in terms of race and ethnicity is what Grace's character really dramatizes. In war, it's about, how do you make your enemy less than human so you can do terrible things?...Grace's character forces our characters in the show to realize that the Cylons are more complicated and have almost as much humanity as we do. They think of [the Cylons] as machines, and then [Grace's character] explodes that. All the people involved with her, they can't fit that into their head because that paradigm doesn't work. In that way, we're addressing ethnicity issues, but not Asian particularly. It's more universal issues of ethnicity and bigotry and so on.

When asked if she tries to bring an element of "Asian-ness" to her character, Grace Park responded:

Funny cuz Boomer is still not written as an Asian character! I do not consciously try to bring an element of "Asian-ness" to my character, especially for the sake of that. I bring what I know, explore and imagine and, well, I am Asian.

Naturally, as an Asian-Canadian actress, what Grace Park knows, explores, and imagines sometimes has elements of "Asian-ness." In one particular scene, Sharon "Boomer" Valerii caresses a starship while humming an unusual tune, signifying a precarious "other-ness" as a potential Cylon. Through

the undercurrent of the scene, Sharon subconsciously gets in touch with her affinity with machines. On the Sci-Fi Channel website, a fan asks Grace Park in a Q&A session where the tune came from. Park states



Grace Park, *Battlestar Galactica*

that the tune was a Korean lullaby that her mother sang to her when she was a kid, and thought it sounded appropriate for the scene.

Another fan asks about the interracial relationships going on in *Battlestar Galactica*. Park says:

I love that Sharon and Helo, to us, you know, on Earth, we say that they are a mixed-race couple. I guess they are actually a mixed-race couple, too, because we have one Cylon and one human. We have that a few times in our show. I really do like how ethnic race is a non-issue. I embrace it. I love it. I'm really glad I'm not with, like, one other Asian character and it's just us two together like—I totally have to roll my eyes at that. Not that there's anything wrong with it, because I'm actually married to somebody who is Korean, even though I did tell my parents I wasn't gonna marry anybody that was Korean. He, yeah, he won me over. So, I do love that.

Feminist scholar Laura Kang, in her book *Compositional Subjects: Enfiguring Asian/American Women*, talks about interracial romance and narrative desire when it comes to the Asian female body, particularly in movie scenes that depict Asian women making love to white men.

In *Battlestar Galactica* Sharon Valerii exudes a certain exoticism that attracts

two characters in the show, both of whom happen to be white.

During the first season of *Battlestar Galactica*, Sharon makes love to her comrade Helo in a forest. She makes the decision to sleep with him as part of the Cylons' master plan, which is eventually revealed to be the creation of the very first Cylon-human hybrid offspring. In this sex scene Sharon is on top of Helo who happens to be Caucasian. She appears to dominate him, and her spine emits a red glow, indicating her identity as a Cylon. Helo, at this point, remains unaware of her Cylon identity.

In an interview with Grace Park, Jordan Riefe of *Maxim Magazine* asks, "Now the crucial query: Do Cylons get it on?" Park caters to Riefe and the *Maxim* readership with the following story:

I had to do this one sex scene for *Battlestar* that wasn't a bedroom scene. It was outside in a forest under a lightning and thunder shower. I was like, "So you want some crazy forest sex? OK, I gotcha." In the end they had to totally edit it down and take out all my moaning.

Even though the producers, writers, and directors of *Battlestar Galactica* are comprised of people (both male and female) with different feminist views, the sex scene bears significance in relation to Professor Celine Shimizu's comment in *Signs*, about the depiction of sex acts between racialized actors:

They (the sex scenes) are significant in the sense of what they produce in the film narratives—for example, biracial babies. What I aim to accomplish by focusing on overt dramatic sexual interaction between racialized actors is to show racial sex acts as a lived process of identity formation and thereby to challenge a visual regime in which

bodies of color seem to naturally and biologically exude a particular racialized sexuality. As filmmakers, we can portray the sex act with an awareness of the ways people of color are fetishized as innately sexual. In my work I investigate the sex act as a site where we can see how racial identities form and transform rather than simply showcase supposedly innate traits.



Grace Park in *Battlestar Galactica*.

The scene is also a testament to the effects of explicit sex acts on the characters in the narrative of a story, especially in the context of the hypersexuality of Asian/American women. Helen Lee states that in her films, "sexual expression or a sexual act often acts as a pivot—in story or character or thematic terms." She elaborates further by saying, "Sex can surely complicate matters, but it can also clarify." Applying Lee's rationale in the context of *Battlestar Galactica*, it is after the sex act that Sharon begins to question her loyalty to the Cylons in favor of the humans. Sharon is a machine who discovers the concept of love and begins to gain humanity. When she discovers that she is pregnant with Helo's child, the Cylons and the humans theorize that love enables a Cylon to procreate.

The scenario also reinforces Laura Kang's comment about interracial romance and the narrative desire of the Asian female body:

If their bodies and faces may initially mark them as alien and exotic, their unfolding personal stories involve familiar tropes of socioeconomic mobility and forbidden love. In each of these films (cited in the essay), the female protagonist comes into comprehensibility and narrative significance through her

romantic/sexual liaison with the white male protagonist. To varying degrees, all three films (cited in the essay) appear to pose the central narrative conflict as her dilemma of having to choose between her filiation with her natal family and ethnic community, on the one hand, and her desire for (hetero)sexual liberation and romantic fulfillment promised by the white male protagonist.

Sharon does face the same dilemma in *Battlestar Galactica*. She ends up choosing Helo and the humans, even though they do not trust her. Eventually, Sharon gives birth to a hybrid daughter but has a Lotus Blossom moment when she gets taken away because of the potential danger it may cause the human race.

Meanwhile, the other Cylon copy Grace Park plays in *Battlestar Galactica* is known as Boomer, a pilot in the colonial fleet who does not know she is a Cylon, but has suspicions. In the first season finale of *Battlestar Galactica*, Boomer's suspicion about her Cylon identity is finally confirmed when she encounters naked copies of herself in the Cylon base star. This scenario relates the psychoanalytic notion of "splitting" that Homi Bhabha has used to describe subjectivity in colonial discourse. In his essay, "The Other Question," he writes:

In the objectification of the scopic drive there is always the threatened return of the look; in the identification of the Imaginary relation there is always the alienating other (or mirror) which crucially returns its image to the subject; and in that form of substitution and fixation that is fetishism there is always the trace of loss, absence. To put it succinctly, the recognition and disavowal of 'difference' is always disturbed by the question of its re-presentation or construction.

The repercussions of being a Cylon are more than overwhelming to Boomer, because of the baggage that comes with that identity. In orientalist terms, Cylons are considered to be the "Other." They were machines created by humans. Eventually, they evolved and rebelled, establishing themselves as the enemy of the human race. Humans look down upon the Cylons, as ethnocentric orientalists would upon the Other. They even have a derogatory name for them—toasters (the heads of early Cylon models resembled toasters).

Upon discovering her Cylon identity, Boomer undergoes what Bhabha calls the process of subjectification, in which we learn about ourselves as perceived. "I am not a Cylon," Boomer disavows while staring at her naked Cylon copies face to face. Her subjectification leads to her ambivalence. She remains loyal to her human friends and family in the colonial fleet, but her inherent Cylon programming compels her to act against them, even against her own will.

Boomer instantly becomes an intergalactic "Dragon Lady," in Renee Tajima's terms, when her subconscious Cylon programming forces her to shoot Commander Adama in an attempted assassination. Later, she becomes a "Lotus Blossom" when she gets shot and dies in the arms of her human lover, Tyrol, who happens to be white. Boomer's assassin, Cally, happens to be a white girl, as well as Boomer's rival for Tyrol's affections. This scenario relates to Marina Heung's essay, "The Family Romance of Orientalism," when she talks about the drama of the "other" woman and the Anglo-American rival, citing examples from *Madame Butterfly* and *Indochine*. The drama of the "other" woman is subtly perpetuated in *Battlestar Galactica*.

Another compelling scene in the second season of *Battlestar Galactica* manifests

the undercurrent of colonial discourse, including power relations, other-ness, and difference in race and sex. Cylon Interrogator Lt. Thorn exemplifies the dehumanizing ethnocentric attitudes against Cylons when he attempts to rape Sharon during an interrogation. To him, Cylons are not human beings, therefore they do not have human rights. Sharon's difference in race and sex interpellates her under the "Orientalist subjectivity." Furthermore, Lt. Thorn's orientalist mentality enables him to justify his interrogation method. Fueled by his sexual desires for the exotic, he uses rape as his apparatus of power over the Cylon prisoner. In Homi Bhabha's words:

The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction.

Actress Grace Park elaborates on the shooting of the interrogation/rape scene in another Q&A session on Scifi.com:

[Director] Michael Rymer asked me how far I wanted to take it, because it was supposed to stop before there's any penetration, as you can tell, because this was T.V. and this was Michael Rymer, and so it was like, "You want to shoot it?" "Why not?" So, we shot it that way. And you know, I think it actually adds an element of intensity, drama, and fear to the cut...You get the sense that something very dangerous is about to happen...It's something that happens to one in three women in the world, and we can throw each other out of an airlock and torture each other, but when it comes to something that happens all the time, it's like, "Oh, let's pretend this never happened." So, I think as a woman, and/

or for any man who loves women, I think that it's an important thing to explore.

While she continues her work on *Battlestar Galactica*, actress Grace Park explores her Asian roots by taking on other projects related to Asian/American culture, (*West 32*, a Korean-American film, is coming soon throughout the film festival circuit). Even with the success and popularity of *Battlestar Galactica*, Park is humble to believe that she is not a star. She is just an actress trying to get work and to make the best out of her performances. In About.com, she talks about the expectations of women and minority actors to lead the way in social behavior:

I think there is an inherent pressure to represent the population -- and for me, there's really that Asian pressure. You have to be PC, and all you want is for people to look at you as a person and as a character.

Now Boomer, she is the rookie and she's not as tough as Starbuck, so I don't have as much pressure to be...well, people want to see that my character would be strong, able, smart. But at the same time I'm starting to see that people's strength is also their vulnerability.

Taking acting classes, you go deep inside and you're crying and you hate life, but after a while it's not that bad. Sometimes I feel that calmness in that state, and then so I realize that everyone feels pressure to "be a certain way" to hold on their values, but I think it's because everyone's really scared. So if you get to that place where they're scared and live through it and be brave, because you can't have courage without fear, I think that's a kind of statement for humanity. It doesn't matter how you do your hair, or if we look like Playboy Playmates, or the other

extreme. It's really good to show people you can go through your weakness and succeed.

I think that's what I like about *Battlestar Galactica*: everyone is the most scared they've ever been, and yet somehow they manage to make it through.

At the San Diego Asian Film Festival in October 2006, she affirmed that there are difficulties for Asian-American actors to find substantial roles in the film industry. During an interview, journalist Lee Ann Kim of the San Diego Film Festival inquired, "Two other Asian Canadian actors, Sandra Oh and Kristin Kreuk, have also become high profile stars on American television. Is it a coincidence that many of the top female actors in American television are from Canada, or is the environment in Canada more favorable than Hollywood for actors of Asian descent?" Park responded:

All this time I thought it had to do with hard work and talent! I can only guess if the environment is more favorable in Canada than Hollywood, but then how would you explain away the fact that we have a minute fraction of the amount of production in Canada than in the States? Logically Asian actors would succeed in Canada but not in the American market.

Aside from speaking of *Dragon Ladies* and *Lotus Blossoms*, Renee Tajima, in "Lotus Blossoms Don't Bleed," alludes to hope, when it comes to "the growing number of filmmakers emerging from our communities." In a panel called "Asian Americans in Hollywood: A Celebrity Panel," at the San Diego Asian Film Festival, Grace Park took on a philosophy similar to that of Renee Tajima's. As her concluding remark, she implored to the audience, "Go out and make films,

people!"

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BIENVENIDO MISTER MARSHALL

by jayson lantz

Following World War II, the United States gave loans to sixteen European nations in hopes of repairing Europe's war-torn economy and avoiding another global depression, like that that following World War I. Although Spain was ruled by Francisco Franco's Fascist regime since 1939, it maintained neutrality throughout World War II. Surprisingly, it was excluded from Marshall Plan aid, which the U.S. gave even to its wartime foes, Italy and Germany. In the time between Spain's exclusion from the Marshall Plan, and the U.S. and Spain's agreements for aid in exchange for military bases, Luis Berlanga directed *Bienvenido Mister Marshall*. It is a satire which portrays a small town preparing itself excitedly to welcome Marshall Plan representatives, only to have its hopes dashed and dreams denied as the Americans' cars do not even slow down as they pass through the town.

This film has received a fair amount of scholarly attention in articles which discuss both the film's place in the history of Spanish cinema, and extended historical analyses of the film itself. Both Peter Besas and Marsha Kinder discuss the film as an example of Spanish neorealism, influenced by Italian filmmakers like Vittorio De Sica. Wendy Rolph discusses in depth the film's landmark status within Spanish cinema, a frequent subject in discussions of the film in the context of the Spanish film industry. Kathleen Vernon went further, examining the film's use of Hollywood genres in its film sequences as signatory of globalization and the influence of Americans on the Spaniards, while dismissing the film's connection to and dialogue with the Marshall Plan. When

examined alongside the history of Spain's exclusion from the European Recovery Plan (E.R.P.), however, it is evident that this theme is more important than Vernon acknowledged.

When examining the film closely, new perspectives arise which place the film as a direct response to, and dialogue with, the decision to exclude Spain from the Marshall Plan. This context for the film offers a unique perspective of the way in which the film satirizes the American and Spanish people which, while mentioned in France, has been grossly misinterpreted within the United States.

To be able to look at the film in this context, one must first look at how the Spanish people came to have their hopes of aid raised, only to be squashed for bureaucratic and political reasons. Although the Francoists had been supported by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy during the Spanish Civil War, the shaky political foundation of this new dictatorship led Spain to stay neutral during World War II. Despite this, the authoritarian government made Spain an outsider within Europe, and it was often regarded as a socially, politically, and economically backward place by many Europeans.

Although Spanish leaders made multiple requests for aid and the U.S. had no objection to Spain's inclusion, the decision was not left up to these parties, but instead to the sixteen other countries which were to receive aid. But accusations in Spain of France keeping Spain out of the Marshall Plan and British opposition to the inclusion of Franco's government made the prospect of aid doubtful for the Spanish people. Spain continued to push for inclusion though, reopening

the Spanish/French border while also calling attention to their ardent opposition to communism, and to their trade relationships with nearly half of the nations receiving Marshall Plan aid. At the end of March, the U.S. embassy in Madrid was flooded with calls from an elated Spanish populace looking to confirm reports that the U.S. House of Representatives had voted to include Spain in plans for European aid. The report was correct, but the decision immediately met sharp criticism from several European workers' groups.

French and British groups voiced opposition to Spain's inclusion. The British Government's steady opinion was that Franco was keeping Spain from its revival and, ironically because of Franco, they too foiled Spanish success by rejecting U.S. approval of financial aid. Likewise, Spain's inclusion incited both communist and non-communist groups in France, which threatened to withdraw from the plan arguing that Spanish inclusion was simply an American military ploy against Communism. Similar objections came from within the U.S., warning that the government seemed to be hiding strategic defense under the guise of "promoting democracy" while not taking any steps to disarm the authoritarian government ruling Spain.

Despite European opposition, right-wing and military leaders in the U.S., and the Spanish government both continued to push for aid. Franco himself called the Spanish exclusion from Marshall Aid an act of "rank stupidity," offering the analogy of Spain as an eighth starving man on a desert island when enough food arrives for seven people. He also called attention to Spanish neutrality and its help during the war, as well as alleged broken promises of support from Britain. Moreover, U.S. military leaders still met with Franco and recommended that aid go to Spain, as did

former Postmaster James A. Farley. But despite all this, in August 1949, the Senate rejected the bill to include Spain in the E.R.P. and thus finalized the decision that Spain would receive no immediate aid.

Less than one year later, *New York*

Times reported a food crisis in Spain and falling production rates, insisting that Spain's industry could not recover without the help of a large-scale loan. It was not until two years later that the U.S. and Spain would finish negotiations for a private loan separate from the Marshall Plan. It was during these rough two years for Spain that two young filmmakers, Luis Garcia Berlanga and Juan Antonio Bardem gained recognition for their first film together, *Esa Pereja Feliz* (1951) and were commissioned by a new production company, UNINCI, to make an 'españolada', starring Lolita Sevilla. After writing the film together, Bardem opted out of the picture for financial reasons, leaving Berlanga to direct on his own. Berlanga had traveled to the Soviet Union in support of Franco's anti-communist Blue Division, but was not a Franco supporter. He described himself as an anarchist, Christian, liberal.

The film that would result was *Bienvenido Mr. Marshall* (Berlanga, 1952), an exploration of how Marshall Plan representatives may have been greeted, had they followed through in bringing aid to the people of Spain. Upon hearing that Americans planned to visit the town and distribute Marshall Plan aid, the indistinctive Spanish village of Villar del Rio transforms itself with the help of Manolo (Manolo Moran),



Bienvenido Mister Marshall

who once visited America for ten days, promising to welcome the Americans in typical "Spanish" fashion with "the song-bird of southern Spain," singer Carmen Vargas (Lolita Sevilla). Following Manolo's advice, the town transforms into a prototypical Andalusian town, complete with costumes and false cardboard facades. As the excitement of the town grows, the townspeople's dreams of the "Yankee dollar" emerge. As the town's citizens welcome the American cavalcade, the cars speed through without slowing, leaving the town to return to its normal way of life, now in debt from the cost of the elaborate production put on to welcome the Americans. Several aspects of the film are especially significant when looking at the film as a direct response to the events between 1948 and 1951 which led to Spain's exclusion from the Marshall Plan.

The film, through the absence of a single protagonist, aligns itself directly with the Spanish people, an angle often ignored in Spain's request for Marshall Plan assistance. From the very first expository scene, the film introduces several "important men" of the town rather than focusing on a single protagonist, immediately signifying the community, as a whole, as the protagonist of the film. The community includes characters which would be typical in any small Spanish town, including the priest, the mayor, the tobacconist, the teacher, and a conservative old-timer, while the film also introduces others, like the newspaper seller and gossiping old women who have little involvement in the remainder of the film. This focus of the film on the entire community, along with the way in which the film places emphasis on the normalcy of the town, make very clear that this town could be any Spanish town and that its inhabitants could be any Spanish people.

One very interesting aspect of the film which has been scarcely discussed is the

film's treatment of government officials within Spain, which although given limited screen time, recounts a popular Spanish view of the ruling government. In the first sequence in the film, a government official appears; in the second scene of the film, four well-dressed men, looking like political executives, descend from a large black automobile, standing out immensely in the square of Villar del Rio. The four men walk single file across the Square to the mayor's office, satirizing spectacles of authoritarian power exhibited in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, and exemplified by *Triumph of the Will* (Reifenstahl, 1935). This portrayal of the government, not to mention such things as the delegates' unwillingness to shake the mayor's hand, underscores the separation which exists between the Spanish people and their government. The second portrayal of a government official again suggests that the official has little regard for the town or its people, as he confuses Villar del Rio with a neighboring town, Villar del Campo, and pays no attention as the mayor corrects him. Though these sequences have been all but ignored in the American forum, French sources did acknowledge diplomatic Spain as one of the satirical targets of the film.

Juxtaposed with this brief but weighty depiction of Spanish government, the kind satire of the American way of life suggests that Berlanga knows Spain's exclusion from aid was not based on the United States' position, but in the bureaucracy surrounding the country's own government. Fittingly, one comment on the film which was present in nearly every review of the film was that it was "gentle" or "good humored." The film was even the recipient of the "Prix international du film de la Bonne Humeur" at the 1953 Cannes Film Festival. Although both Americans and Spanish are satirized in the film, Ber-

langa does so “with a love in his heart” that is not malicious towards the Americans, despite the response of one American actor. Within the film, the American Delegates are in no way responsible for the town’s deception and disappointment, since it is always the officials of the Spanish Government, who inform the people of the Americans’ visit. This is interesting because Berlanga seems to acknowledge that it was not the goal of Americans to exclude the Spanish from Marshall Plan aid. The satirization of American culture seems to show interest in the American way of life, rather than maliciousness towards it. In the first scene of the film, we are informed that one of the important men delivers an American western film, a large attraction in the small Spanish town. Lastly, and most interestingly, the film’s use of conventions from American genres in its dream sequences suggests that the Spanish citizens, while having limited knowledge of Americans, unconsciously exoticize a sanctuary from a repressive government.

Bienvenido Mr. Marshall places the entire community of Villar Del Rio as the protagonist of the film, initially signaling that the film portrays the response of the Spanish population. This response through the focus and mood of its satire, places the blame not on the Americans who speed through the town, but on the government officials who walk single file through its square, analogous to the government in Madrid which pushed Europe’s bureaucracy to exclude Spain from aid.

Unfortunately, since Spain was in the early stages of shaky dictatorship, although at least one Spanish film journal, *Objetivo*, was printed at the time, no copies are available for study locally. More study into the Spanish response to the film would be warranted and interesting for someone with access to contem-

poraneous Spanish newspapers and film journals. Interesting differences do arise, however when comparing the film’s warm reception in France to its misinterpretation in the United States.

In France, following the film’s screening at the Cannes Film Festival in 1953, critical reception praised both cinematic and thematic aspects of *Bienvenido Mr. Marshall*. Cahiers du Cinema calls attention to the solid construction and strong rhythm of the film as well as its “liberte d’esprit.” Along with this adoring review, Berlanga was invited to Paris after the festival to dine and mingle with famous directors such as Vittorio De Sica and Rene Clair. Another sign of respect was given to the film several years after its release, when Image et Son published an in-depth review of the film, complete with scene by scene description as lengthy discussion of the film’s satire and cinematography. Along with praise of the film, the articles also present a thorough analysis of the film, calling attention to the film theme actually being more anti-Spanish government than anti-American.

Although *Bienvenido Mr. Marshall* was well received in France, the film was grossly misinterpreted and thus nearly ignored by Americans. Controversy began when American actor and judge at Cannes, Edward G. Robinson, objected to the film, calling it anti-American and managing to have two scenes cut before the film’s screening: one featuring the Ku Klux Klan, and the other of an American flag floating downstream after the decorations are taken down (a Spanish flag also floats downstream). In October of 1953, *Variety* reported with surprise that a company was looking to buy the American rights for the film, claiming that it had been “roundly denounced as anti-American propaganda” despite the fact that just several months prior, *Variety* had called

the same film a "light-hearted offering." A press packet including a synopsis, a collage of images from the film, a listing of its awards, and clippings from various newspapers, was used in the late 1950s to try to sell the film to theatres in the U.S. It offers an interesting example of how the film was misinterpreted in a variety of ways. A clipping from the *Evening Star* in Washington D.C. offers examples of how the film was misinterpreted from its smallest details (the author confuses the three Kings who deliver the tractor to the farmer as a "crew of Santa Clauses"), to the film's overall theme (the claim that the film's thesis was that American aid would be "comic rather than anything else" for the village). The pamphlet also offers an enigmatic quote from Edward G. Robinson that avoided his objections to the film. Assumedly due to its misinterpretation, the film has been all but ignored by the American public, a fact evident when considering that the only viewing copy of the film in the University of California's holdings did not even have English subtitles.

Looking at *Bienvendio Mr. Marshall* next to Spain's exclusion from Marshall Plan aid brings to light the film's response to Spanish exclusion, from the perspective of the Spanish people, placing the blame on an apathetic, business-like bureaucracy surrounding the Spanish government rather than the American people. Unfortunately, Americans seem to have misinterpreted this olive branch resulting in the film's virtual unavailability in the U.S. today. This is, however, only one context in which to explore *Bienvenido Mr. Marshall*, though, and the film offers an abundance of areas for research. Plenty more research could be done into how this film not only changed the Spanish cinematic form of the *espanolada* but also introduced political themes into Spanish cinema hidden under the veil of comedy.

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