

Conference Reports – February 2014

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European Cinema Research Forum Conference 2013: The Other

University of Edinburgh, 1-2 July 2013

A Report by Christian Klesse, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

The European Cinema Research Forum (ECRF) was founded by Graeme Harper (Oakland University) and Owen Evans (Edge Hill University), with the first one taking place at Wales' Bangor University in 2001. The ECRF understands itself to be an "international forum for the discussion of all things relating to European film and European film culture" and runs annual interdisciplinary international conferences on cinema studies. Individual members are also involved in editorial work, such as the production of the journals *Studies in European Cinema* and the *Journal of European Popular Culture*. This year's ECRF conference was organized by Leanne Dawson (University of Edinburgh), and hosted by Edinburgh's School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures. This exciting international conference on the theme of "The Other", the 13th ECRF event to take place, featured over fifty speakers, both practitioners and academics (from postgraduate students to distinguished professors) from five continents.

The rich and diverse programme was organised in eight parallel panel paper sessions over a two-day period. Panel sessions explored the theme of representing "Others" or processes of "othering" from manifold angles, including philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, cultural history, genre, film production, dissemination and audience response; or around certain "content" themes, such as migration, exile, trauma, race, gender, sexuality, age, embodiment, ghosts and vampires. The concern with the "Other" brought to the fore questions of boundary and border crossings and addressed diverse registers, ranging from the territorial, physical, material, spiritual, metaphorical and conceptual to the stylistic. Category confusions or connotations were identified as powerful sources for both definitions and representations of "Others" or "Otherness." Interested readers may want to access programme details and paper abstracts on the conference website (<http://www.ecrf.org.uk/>). Keynotes were delivered by the preeminent film scholar Richard Dyer (King's College London) and the renowned German independent filmmaker Monika Treut, whose work has paved the way for other feminist, queer, transcultural and transnational artists.

Dyer, whose monographs include *Gays and Film* (1977), *Stars* (1979/1998), *Heavenly Bodies* (1986/2003), *Now You See It* (1990/2003), *White* (1997), *The Culture of Queers* (2001), *Pastiche*

(2007) and *In the Space of a Song* (2012), spoke about his current research project: "The Shadow of *M*: Serial Killing and Nazism in Film." Fritz Lang's famous 1931 expressionist feature *M* tells the story of a child murderer and serial killer who is chased by the police and, finally, hounded down by the Berlin criminal underworld. The film staged in form of a screen story the quite common fascination during the Weimar Republic with the theme of serial killing (which spanned from the artistic avant-garde to popular culture). *M* was produced during the last years of the Weimar Republic, and its release coincided with the rise of the National Socialist Party. In the film, Lang powerfully dramatized the appearance of the killer Hans Beckert (played by Peter Lorre) through the use of an overlong shadow image. According to Dyer, the shadow has become an iconic tool for the representation of the murderer in serial killer films ever since *M*'s production. Dyer showed that a range of post-World War Two films have used the theme of the serial killer to reflect upon Nazism. His lecture explored alternate positions on the suggestion that there would or could be a proximity between Nazism and serial killers and addressed the controversy around a form of representation that seems to equate the Holocaust and the state terror of the Nazi movement with individual pathology. Dyer's lecture was animated by his moving enthusiasm for to the subtleties of filmic storytelling.

The second keynote was given by Monika Treut, whose work includes the films *Seduction: The Cruel Woman* (1985), *Virgin Machine* (1988), *My Father is Coming* (1991), *Didn't Do it for Love* (1998), *Gendernauts: A Journey Through Shifting Identities* (1999), *Warrior of Light* (2001), *Tigerwomen Grow Wings* (2005), *Ghosted* (2009), and *The Raw and the Cooked* (2012). She delivered a stimulating oral history of her oeuvre and fascinating personal anecdotes about her life behind the camera in a talk entitled "Same, Same but Different: Filmmakers are Hikers on the Globe and Create Globalisation from Below." Treut told the story of her film production embedded in a chronological narrative of her life story. Her interest in film blossomed during her time as a student when activists of the feminist movement collaboratively explored the potentials of video technology. Her work unfolded within the context of (lesbian) feminist culture and alternative media centers in various German cities from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s. In 1984, Treut founded the film production company Hyäne I/II Filmproduktion, Berlin, together with director and camera artist Elfi Mikesch in Hamburg and Berlin. Together they produced three pioneering feature films though 1992, when Treut continued to run Hyena Films on her own from Hamburg.

In many regards, Treut's films were far ahead of her time. They broke taboos, were perceived as provocations and triggered many angry responses. Her first feature film, *Seduction: The Cruel Woman*, modelled upon themes of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's 1870 novel *Venus in Furs*,

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caused scandal, screaming, shouting and mass walk-outs when first screened in Berlin in 1985. Her second feature, *Virgin Machine*, explored questions of love, intellectual inquiry, erotic longing and lesbian sexuality. It also did not go down well with most German audiences. Lesbian and queer cultures in the USA were more eager to embrace Treut's edgy films, which is why she decided to work in New York from 1989 to 1992. Her third film, *My Father is Coming*, is reflective of this period. Treut later turned towards exploring the documentary medium, which led to productions such as *Female Misbehaviour* (1992), *Gendernauts* and *Warrior of Light*. With *Warrior of Light*, a documentation of Yvonne Bezerra de Mello's work with street children in Rio de Janeiro, Treut started to explore issues beyond gender and sexuality.

The conference closed with a screening and discussion event, attended by conference delegates and the general public, in the independent cinema The Filmhouse. The event consisted of the following elements: a brief introduction by Treut in which she talked about her films on Taiwan, a screening of *Ghosted*, a German-Taiwanese lesbian love story with a twist, a conversation between Dawson and Treut, and a question-and-answer session. Kindly and generously, Treut shared some of her films as gifts to interested audience members.

The conference did not only stage keynotes by a renowned lesbian filmmaker, a leading scholar on sexuality and a film screening of an inter-ethnic lesbian love story. There were also a range of panels on sexuality and LGBTQ issues and a number of other "sexuality papers" in more generally themed panel groupings. The panel "LGBTQ Film in France and Spain" was entirely dedicated towards the findings of the AHRC-funded research project "Queer Cinema from Spain and France: The Translation of Desire and the Formation of Transnational Queer Identities." Darren Waldron (University of Manchester) addressed interesting methodological questions bound up with this transnational and multilingual research in a paper titled: "Transnational Preoccupations: Representations of Ageing in Spanish and French Queer Cinemas and their Reception." In his contribution "French Film, Spanish Queer Culture," Christopher Perriam (University of Manchester) provided a rich analysis of the cultural and sexual political histories that provide the background for the reception of French queer film among Spanish (queer) audiences. These histories also define the paradigms of the "translatability" of this work. Later, in her paper, "Against a Trans Narrative? Transgender Activist Documentary from France and Spain," Ros Murray (University of Manchester,) analyzed the significance of digital documentaries to the politics of representation within current transgender movements.

Another panel, "Sex, Sexuality, The Body," explored filmic strategies of representation regarding sexual practice and identification and sexual or gendered embodiment. Jacky Collins (Northumbria University) explored

stereotypes and changing patterns of representation of lesbians across examples of Swedish and Spanish film productions of the last fifteen years in her paper, "The I is Always in the Field of the Other/The Other is Always in the Field of the I: Lesbian Representations in Spanish and Swedish Contemporary Cinema." In her talk, "Internet – the Significant 'Other' of the Bulgarian Blockbuster *Love.net* (Ilian Djevelev, 2011)," Maya Nedyalkova (University of Southampton) provided a detailed analysis of the interrelated processes of production, promotion and distribution of the recent Bulgarian cinema/internet hybrid production *Love.net*. Nedyalkova insightfully fused perspectives from political economy, cultural analysis, and technology studies. In her paper, "Narrating the Outsider: Storytelling in Neil Jordan's *Mona Lisa*," Francesca Middleton (University of York) engaged in a close reading of *Mona Lisa* (1986) and showed how Jordan's narration draws upon European traditions of both romanticism and surrealism to achieve effects of profound disorientation and estrangement in an attempt to unsettle the mainstream.

Other papers with a strong sexuality and gender focus included Leanne Dawson's contribution, "Ghosting Queer Femininity in Recent Transcultural German Film," and Bex Harper's (University of Nottingham) talk, "Other(ed) Bodies: Female Masculinity and Spaces of Exclusion in Recent German Film." Dawson traced the ghostly figures of dead or absent femmes in three recent transcultural German films (*Gespenster* [Christian Petzold, 2005], *Auf der anderen Seite/The Edge of Heaven* [Fatih Akin, 2007] and *Ghosted* [Treut, 2009]). In her reading of two German films (*Unveiled/Fremde Haut* [Angelina Maccarone, 2005] and *My Friend from Faro/Mein Freund aus Faro* [Nana Neul, 2008]), Harper suggested that complex configurations of otherness (around female masculinity, same-sex desire and "foreignness") in the two films function as triggers for male characters' violence towards queer women.

The panel "Film Festivals and Industries" explored film festivals as sites for the negotiation of geopolitical tensions or cultural politics in the transnational sphere. Elizabeth Ward (University of Leeds) showed how Cannes became an alternative arena for Cold War politics in her paper, "Screening out the East: The Playing Out of Inter-German Relations at the Cannes Film Festival." Minerva Campos (University Carlos III, Madrid) explored the cultural politics of different funding bodies (such as, for example, the Berlinale's World Cinema Fund or Cine en Construcción) with regard to Latin American films in her paper, "Images of Latin America Funded by International Film Festivals." Mariana Liz (Queen Mary, University of London) traced integrationist representations in recent European films in her contribution, "Integrating the 'Other': Universality and Cosmopolitanism in Contemporary European Cinema."

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Sexuality and gender themes provided only one possible entry point into the intellectual debates at the conference. The programme was interdisciplinary and diverse, and contributions clustered also around other themes, such as race and ethnicity, migration and dislocation, trauma, horror and paranormality. The climate of debate was friendly, respectful, unpretentious and welcoming, and the ECRF conference was an ideal place to get rich stimulation after having entered a new field of research. Co-organizer Dawson is also editing a special issue of *Studies in European Cinema* on the conference theme, and Graeme Harper will co-organize next year's conference, to be hosted by Oakland University in the USA.

German Screen Studies Network Symposium: “The Return of the Real – Realism and Everyday Life in Contemporary German-Language Film”

King’s College London, 3-5 July 2013

A report by Elizabeth Ward, University of Leeds, UK

The inaugural symposium of the German Screen Studies Network brought together academics, PhD students, filmmakers and members of the public to discuss the theme “The Return of the Real – Realism and Everyday Life in Contemporary German-Language Film.” Hosted by King’s College London, the event featured three days of lively discussions focusing on the different manifestations and implications of realism, accompanied by a series of film screenings at London’s Goethe Institut. The symposium adopted the all too rare format of actively encouraging filmic discussion and debate among film scholars, filmmakers and members of the public, and the quality and level of engagement over the three days attests to the success of such an approach.

A postgraduate workshop with papers from ten PhD students from across the country and a keynote lecture by John E. Davidson (Ohio State University) opened the symposium. Davidson’s paper addressed the cyclic contemporaneity of realist film theory by drawing on theoretical frameworks of Béla Balázs and applying them to current attempts to negotiate abstraction with realism in a post-indexical world. The theoretical framework of Davidson’s address served as an excellent opening for the first of the days’ three thematic concerns, which explored film from a series of theoretical frameworks.

Following on from Davidson’s discussion of early cinema, André Hammelmann (King’s College London) began the workshop by exploring how Siegfried Kracauer’s *Theory of Film* (1960) can be applied to the films of the Berliner Schule (aka the Berlin School) to consider how such films renegotiate alienation in everyday life. Joanna Gilbert (University of Leeds) discussed notions of discourse, subversion and gender in Alexander Kluge’s *Abschied von gestern* (1966) through an application of Foucauldian discourse analysis to consider how Kluge’s film reconstitutes gender relations through language. Maren Thom’s (Queen Mary, University of London) application of Slavoj Žižek’s concept of the post-political to *Der Baader Meinhof Komplex* (2008) highlighted how the film promotes a post-ideological politics of consensus in its depiction of the RAF.

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A second important theme of the workshop was developments in cultural and national identity. Stephan Hilpert's (University of Cambridge) close reading of Christian Petzold's *Jerichow* (2008) explored performances of cultural identity and negotiations of national belonging in a society marked by immigration, a theme also explored in Sara Kessem's (Birbeck, University of London) analysis of Fatih Akin's *Soul Kitchen* (2009). Kessem argued that Akin's film should be understood as a significant shift in the representational strategies of minorities employed by diasporic filmmakers in German cinema. The dynamics of the national and local were also examined in relation to Austrian cinema through Rachel Green's (University of Leeds) analysis of how the domestic space serves as a site for the exploration of national themes, with specific reference to Barbara Albert's *Nordrand* (1999).

Developments in representation and performance formed the third key theme of the workshop. My own paper examined the changing nature of Holocaust representation on film through Uwe Boll's *Auschwitz* (2011). Developments in genre and the implications of new political realities also underpinned Leila Mukhida's (University of Birmingham) study of the 21st-century workers' film (*Arbeiterfilm*) through an examination of the content and reception of *Workingman's Death* (Michael Glawogger, 2005). Questions of performance and the agency of the actor were highlighted by Verena von Eicken (University of York) in her illuminating case study of the stage and screen actor, Sandra Hüller. Luke Postlethwaite (University of Leeds) closed the workshop with his exploration of the changing nature of the depiction of Berlin in *Wir sind die Nacht*. (Dennis Gansel, 2010).

The second day of the symposium followed on from the discussions of the postgraduate workshop. The session began with a discussion of Christoph Hochhäusler's *Unter dir die Stadt* (2010). Following a contextual and theoretical introduction to the film by André Hammelmann (King's College London) and Alasdair King (Queen Mary, University of London), discussion of the film was opened up to the group. During the discussion, questions of realism were considered alongside the film's concern with the re-contextualisation of finance capital and depictions of the body. The second film under discussion was the East German drama *Barbara* (2012). The introduction to the film was led by Andrew Webber (University of Cambridge), Paul Cooke (University of Leeds) and Annie Ring (University of Cambridge), who situated it within its release context through reference to the often polarized categorization of German cinema into either heritage cinema or the Berlin School. The panel then considered the film's intertextual concerns through reference to Sebald's critique of Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson* and by considering the implications of Petzold's screenplay collaboration with the experimental documentary filmmaker Harun Farocki. The afternoon saw the screening of Andreas Dresden's *Wolke 9* (2008), which was followed by a lively debate about the extent to which filmmakers engage with the full range of

the cinematic body and the impact of that engagement in audiences' own relations to the real world.

Following a screening of *Karger* (Elke Hauck, 2007) at the Goethe Institut, director Hauck herself opened day three of the symposium with a discussion of the film's position within German cultural heritage. Following Nick Hodgkin's (Lancaster University) introduction, which foregrounded responses to the film and cultural assumptions about depictions of East Germany, group discussions built on debates from the previous day through considerations of the realism of the body depicted. Discussion then moved to the implications of the differences between realistic and authentic depictions of the past. The role of the director in selecting an image of the past also underpinned debates of the day's second film, the pan-European documentary film *Abendland* (Nikolaus Geyrhalter, 2011). Given the 170 hours' worth of material from which the director had to choose, questions of selection, inclusion and exclusion formed the focus of the debate, as did the relationship between the state and human agency. The final discussion of the symposium was Yasemin Samdereli's 2011 film *Almanya – Willkommen in Deutschland*, which proved an excellent contrast piece for the previous film. Daniela Berghahn (Royal Holloway, University of London) introduced the film, and the decision to include a film that employs magic realism took the symposium's concern with realism in a new direction, fostering exciting discussions within the group.

The model of the German Screen Studies Network proved to be an excellent one for the discussion of film by individuals within and beyond the academy. The lively and engaging discussions at every stage of the event strongly suggest that interest in German cinema remains high and that the UK can boast an outstanding research network of academic specialists. Given the success of the symposium, one can hope that the event will become a regular fixture in the film-studies landscape.

MeCCSA (Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association) Postgraduate Network Conference

University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK, 2-3 July 2013

A Report by Michael Ahmed, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK

The 2013 MeCCSA Postgraduate Network Conference was held at the recently opened Thomas Paine Study Centre, University of East Anglia (UEA). The conference is designed to bring together postgraduate researchers across the UK working within a range of disciplines.

The theme of the opening plenary was "From Postgraduate to Professional: The Transition," a roundtable discussion with Martin Barker (UEA), Sanna Inthorn (UEA), and Iain Robert Smith (University of Roehampton). Chaired by Tim Jones, the plenary was intended to offer advice and guidance on the transition from postgraduate student to fulltime professional. The speakers were at different stages of their respective careers, and had a variety of experiences to offer. For example, Barker began his career in 1969 as a lecturer in general studies before moving into the field of cultural studies. Inthorn moved from working in political science to media studies, and Smith graduated in 2010 before finding a job as a lecturer in film studies. Barker pointed out that the different experiences of the speakers demonstrated how broad the field of film and media studies was, and that career paths could be mapped out in different ways.

The speakers then moved on to a variety of suggestions for increasing the chance of securing an academic position. Barker and Smith agreed that short-term positions were a good way of increasing teaching experience, as well as building up a list of contacts within academia. Inthorn referred to engagement, including public lectures, as a way of raising academic profile. One of the main suggestions that came out of the discussion was the importance of building an academic identity: this might include developing a five-year career plan, networking at conferences, and using social media to create networking groups.

The question and answer session provoked some interesting debates. Of particular concern was the usefulness, or lack thereof, of previous careers outside of academia. Barker argued that any skills brought into academia from outside organizations would be invaluable following the search for a postgraduate career. For postgraduates who have minimal or no

experience outside of academia, becoming actively involved in as many different aspects of academic life would raise one's career profile.

Each day of the two-day conference was divided into two sessions of three panels and six training workshops. One of first sessions of the morning, "Mediating Gender and Sexuality," was intended to bring to light research into the field of gender studies from sources as diverse as Gainsborough Pictures films to modern celebrity culture. Hannah Yelin (UEA) examined how the differences in two recent memoirs from reality-television celebrities Jade Goody and Paris Hilton raised questions about class perception, and the different treatment received by these women from sections of the media. The paper's argument carefully examined how class bias crept into the diverse criticisms of Goody and Hilton. Although gossip and tabloid media might be viewed as low culture, the different media reception betrayed a class distinction that treated Goody and Hilton in a way that, as Yelin pointed out, was "punitively middle-class." Hollie Price (Queen Mary) presented a fascinating paper on the shift in 1940s attitudes towards women in the bedroom, a shift mediated via the marketing of the single and double bed and mirrored in the films of Gainsborough Pictures, specifically *The Man in Grey* (Leslie Arliss, 1943). Price's textual analysis and archival sources clearly demonstrated how the double bed functioned as a means of containing women's sexuality. The final paper, by Patrick Bingham (UEA), examined the ways in which drama negotiates the teen mystery. Bingham selected the TV teen mystery/drama *Pretty Little Liars* (2010-) to illustrate his point because of the series' uses of generic hybridity as a way of investigating teenage homosexuality. According to Bingham, drama has historically provoked academic debate, whereas "mystery" has not been traditionally linked to genre studies. Bingham used *Pretty Little Liars* as a way of negotiating how teen dramas incorporate mystery into their narratives, and to investigate uses of mystery as a distinctive generic form. Nonetheless, Bingham admitted that as a first year postgraduate he still had a lot of research to carry out to solidify the parameters of his research question.

The second panel, "Exploring Transnational Film and Television," took three very different approaches to their subjects. Stephen Morgan (King's College) examined how Ealing Studios made a series of post-war films in Australia in an attempt to promote the country. Nonetheless, as Morgan pointed out, the five films made during this period (1946-1959) offered narratives that shifted from mythologized rural life and the importance of the group collective to urban individualization. The first three films,

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Morgan argued, represented an idealistic post-war, post-colonialist view of Empire. Anna Martonfi (UEA) analyzed the astonishing success of the British sitcom *You Rang, M'Lord?* (1998-1993) in post-communist Hungary. While *You Rang, M'Lord?* was reviled or ignored in the UK, Martonfi argued that following the collapse of East European communism, Hungary had to redefine its social and cultural identity, and that the representation of the class system in *You Rang, M'Lord* was for Hungarians a nostalgic and accurate (albeit grossly exaggerated for its UK audience) depiction of the British. Jonathan Wroot (UEA) discussed the use on Japanese DVDs of the inclusion of "stage greetings" within the DVD special features. Wroot argued that stage greetings do not form part of the traditional "making of" extras because they do not form part of studios' promotion of films and are to be viewed after the film has been screened. Instead, stage greetings represent a point for the viewer where the film has yet to be seen. In this respect, stage greetings offer a multitude of uses, unlike similar DVD promotional material.

In the afternoon, panel sessions were replaced with three training workshops: "Teaching, Group Work and Debates for Postgraduate Tutors" (Sarah Godfrey and Jon Wroot, UEA); "Engaging Media and Creative Industries" (Keith Johnston and Ed Vollans, UEA); and "Speed-Geeking" workshop (Brett Mills and Stephen Mitchell, UEA). "Speed-geeking" was intended to bring a different way of engaging with academics to the conference format. The workshop group was divided into three groups each with one speaker. The speaker was given three minutes to talk, discuss or offer ideas without interruption. After the time was up, seven minutes were allowed for the group to speak about the topic and to ask questions and debate. The session would then start again but with a different speaker, and continued until the speakers had spoken to each group in turn. As Mills explained, the timings could be flexible; however, the opportunity for each of the speakers to offer ideas in a less informal academic environment was the primary intention. After the "speed-geeking" session ended, the speakers found that the informal approach allowed them to express ideas that might not have been fully formed. However, this gave them the opportunity to explore ideas that they would not normally have had the chance to examine within a traditional academic conference environment. Others in the group felt that the session operated like an icebreaker, opening up more opportunities to talk to other people at the conference, as well as a more informal way of offering issues for debate.

The first day continued with the MeCCSA Postgraduate Network annual meeting and elections. Amongst the various nominations was the election of a new Secretary, won by Charlotte Barlow (University of Liverpool) in a unanimous vote by all of the attending delegates, and a new Chair, won by Rachel Tavernor (University of Sussex), again by a unanimous vote. Following the annual meeting, delegates were invited into Norwich city centre to attend the plenary lecture, "Behind the Scenes: An Introduction to Film Documentation," by Wendy Russell (British Film Institute). Russell's work in the archive section of the BFI brings her into contact with a great deal of archive material, and through the use of numerous slides, she demonstrated how our understanding of the filmmaking process can be challenged by the use of such material. Drawing on the copious amounts of material from the Stanley Kubrick collection, Russell shed a fascinating light on to Kubrick's meticulous method of working, and also demonstrated some of the problems Ken Loach has experienced during his filmmaking career.

The second day began with a panel on "National Film Histories" and demonstrated how the use of archive material could be used to bring different narratives to film studies. Julia Bohlmann (University of Glasgow) had discovered fascinating archive material that sheds light on the uneasy relationship between cinema and children during the 1910s in Scotland. Bohlmann demonstrated how a report by the 1917 Cinema Commission, conducted by the National Council of Public Morals, tried to highlight the tension between cinema as an educational medium alongside the problems of child delinquency and the effect of cinema on the young - a debate that unfortunately continues to raise questions. (Those interested in further information on Bohlmann's research were referred to the website <http://earlycinema.gla.ac.uk/>.) Thomas James Scott (University of Ulster) raised the question of the representation of Irish settlers to America in the early 1900s through the use of film archives and other, previously believed lost, films. Scott argued that the range of stereotypical stock Irish characters in early American cinema began to shift between 1910 and 1930, as longer and more complex films began to be made. My own paper asked for a reframing of the term "British Exploitation Film," arguing that historically the term had a very different currency as used by the British film industry during the late 1950s and 1960s. Drawing on archival research, I explained that during the 1960s, British exploitation was a marketing term by filmmakers and the trade press, and films as diverse as the Cliff Richard musical *Summer Holiday* (Peter Yates, 1963) and quality "kitchen-sink dramas" such as *Saturday*

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Night and Sunday Morning (Karel Reisz, 1960) and *Room at the Top* (Jack Clayton, 1959) were all referred to as exploitation films. My paper argued that exploitation, if used as a generic term, needs to be rethought, a process that can open up for debate questions of British low culture and the quality film. In drawing together these three papers, all three panellists agreed that new narratives and fresh film histories could be constructed through different uses of archival material.

The morning continued with a second set of training workshops: "Expectations and Power Relationships in Interview Research" (Sarah Ralph and Tim Jones, UEA), "Working With Regional Film Archives" (Sean Kelly, East Anglian Film Archive, and Paul Frith, UEA), and "Pacing the PhD: Key Milestones" (Mark Jancovich and Carolyn Ellan, UEA). Sean Kelly gave an interesting and insightful talk on the work of the archive, as well as an overview of other archives throughout the UK. Broken down into a variety of topics, including types of archives and collections, finding material, the question of copyright, and preparing for visits, as well as a list of useful websites (including <http://www.londonsscreenarchives.org.uk/>, <http://filmarchives.org.uk/>, and <http://bufvc.ac.uk/archives>), Kelly's talk gave a great deal of useful material for academics interested in archival research.

The closing plenary was given by Professor Natalie Fenton (Goldsmith's, University of London). Fenton argued passionately for new academics to engage in political, cultural and social debates and to become involved with public life through our academic work. She also spoke of the need for as academics to review our civic identities in response to the failure of neo-liberal economic and political philosophies, and to continually discuss and debate the role of media power, how it works, and how it will develop. Through her work as part of the Hacked Off campaign, Fenton demonstrated the importance of bringing the rigor of academic research and intellectual scrutiny into such debates. Fenton's talk was thought-provoking, entertaining, inspiring and impassioned, and demonstrated how academic life does not stop at teaching and research, but carries wider social and political responsibilities.

Revisiting Star Studies Conference

Culture Lab, Newcastle University, 12-14 June 2013

A report by Anna Malinowska, University of Silesia, Poland, and Mani Sharpe, Newcastle University, UK

With well-developed and firmly established critical approaches, the field of star studies has nonetheless faced the necessity of revisiting some of its dominant perspectives and methods, particularly in light of their applicability to the examination of non-western cinematographic experiences. The demand has been met by "Revisiting Star Studies," an international conference that aimed to reassess some of the prevailing models in star studies, with special attention paid to the functioning of stardom in visual cultural outside Hollywood. Organized by Guy Austin and Sabrina Yu (both Newcastle University) in partnership with the University of Sunderland, this three-day event aimed to reassess some of the dominant models in star studies. In particular, the event focused on how stars and stardom function – and have functioned – in visual cultures outside Hollywood, such as those of Asia, Latin America and Europe.

The conference took at Newcastle University, whose Culture Lab welcomingly gathered over 70 delegates and speakers from twelve countries. The rich and dynamic programme offered a variety of panels, which were opened by keynote addresses of eminent film scholars, including Neepa Majumdar ((University of Pittsburgh), Yingjin Zhnag (University of California, San Diego), Ginette Vincendeau (King's College London), Pam Cook (University of Southampton), Stephanie Dennison (University of Leeds), Susan Smith (University of Sunderland) and Martin Shingler (University of Sunderland). The sessions revolved around recent and past problems of stardom formation, organizing thematic groups that focused on cultural diversity of cinematic art, global and continental-national statuses of film industries, acoustic and old-age performances, meta- and non-normative acting, fandom performativity, and other issues that identified directions for the development of contemporary cinema.

The event began with a thought-provoking and insightful keynote on vocal stardom provided by Neepa Majumdar, whose paper, "Listening to Stardom: Considerations of Voice in Star Studies," discussed the relationship between the voice and star persona in Bollywood cinema. Other highlights of the day included panels on liminality, stars and ageng in transnational film performance, and "The Face and Body of

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Contemporary Male Stardom,” during which Lisa Purse (University of Reading) delivered a particularly interesting discussion on Tom Cruise’s aging star persona and the notion of the “impossible body.” The second day of the conference began with two stimulating keynotes, first by Ginette Vincendeau, who delivered a paper on Brigitte Bardot and also Edgar Morin’s seminal monograph *Les Stars* (1957), which formed a theoretical reference point for many of the discussions and papers delivered during the conference. Vincendeau’s paper was followed by a keynote from Pam Cook, who discussed notions of artifice and postcoloniality in relation to Nicole Kidman’s acting style and star persona. Later in the day, Guy Austin offered some insightful analysis regarding the notions of performance, the body and national identity in relation to the Algerian actress Biyouna. Johnny Walker (De Montfort University) delivered an engaging and perceptive paper analysing Danny Dyer’s (cult) star persona within a broader panel regarding aberrant and unusual stardom. The final day of the conference began with Stephanie Dennison’s keynote, which explored Brazilian star Xuxa’s rise to fame in relation to notions of ethnicity and whiteness. Sarah Harman and Clarissa Smith (both University of Sunderland) explored the multi-layered stardom of American pornographic actor and director James Deen, in a paper entitled “I Want James Deen to Deen Me With His Deen.”

Offering a wide range of topics and slants, the papers presented at the conference raised common issues that pointed to the complexity of cinematographic practices. Problems that dominated the discussion included: the conditions of transmedia and intra- and trans-cultural performance, the status of stardom in non-Hollywood contexts, and cinematographic identity as influenced by cultural factors. The papers offered new analytical insights into the idea of stardom, showing it as an arena for coping with culturally developed standards, social conventions and transnational differences.

The phenomena central to the debate was “mature/elderly acting.” which inquired about the mediation and maintenance of the aging body onscreen. It explored gerontophobia (the fear of growing old or ageism) in light of on- and offscreen identities, audience acceptability, fan recognition and professional survival. Papers on Ava Gardner (by Eva Bru-Dominiguez, University College Cork), Meryl Streep (by Kirsty Fairclough, University of Salford), Gérard Depardieu (by Sue Harris, University of London) and James Mason (by Adrian Garvey, University of London) presented how the presence of aging, being an intrinsically non-Hollywood category, has been negotiated by acting out of corporeal

change and defying standards of attractiveness specific to cinematic performance.

Other forms of subverting Hollywood logic were proposed by Lucy Bolton (Queen Mary, University of London) and Lucy Fife Donaldson (University of St. Andrews). In separate presentations, each discussed the queering potential of excessive performances as manifested by the surplus of ugliness (Melanie Griffith's 1980 roles) and the excess of perfection (Jason Statham's controlled body). Their observations made references to the problem of gendered performing style and the influence the Hollywood cinema has exerted on sexual roles and identities. National cinemas, analyzed in this context, exposed the tension between American (western-world) representations of genders, and the representations generated in non-western productions. Papers by Linda Berkvens (University of Sussex), Sarka Gmitterkova (Masaryk University, Brno), Faye Woods (University of Reading), Catherine O'Rawe (Bristol University) and Rebecca Naughten (independent researcher) covered the issues of role models and social codes of demeanor, discoursing on the archetypes of masculinity/femininity and idioms of gender-related conduct – all in light of the transcultural permeation of ideas and the production of either hostile or assimilative attitudes towards patterns of the dominant (Hollywood) culture.

The speakers presented on cinematic practices of over twenty countries, commenting on the art of filmmaking in a plethora of national contexts, including Japanese, Algerian, Spanish, Polish, Czech, Italian, Danish, Mexican, Indian, Pakistani, Chilean, Brazilian, British, French, German, Australian and American. Significant attention was paid to Chinese and Korean cinemas due to the dynamic development of their increasingly appealing productions that seem to challenge the monopoly of American and European film industries, both aesthetically and as markets. In a keynote address on the first day of the conference, Yingjin Zhang (University of California, San Diego) deliberated on problems and specificities of contemporary Asian cinema. In his discussion of romantic male roles in Chinese films, he pointed to the change in performative qualities of Chinese acting that generate polysemies operating by negotiated diegeses and producing new modes of representation. He highlighted the transitional character of Asian stardom, the discussion of which was continued in papers by Sabrina Yu (Newcastle University) and Yiman Wang (University of California, Santa Cruz), who talked about language abilities, linguistic cosmopolitanism and transcending the limits

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of verbal communication, which supported the panels dedicated to the role of voice in cinematographic performance.

The conference also offered sessions on the origins of stardom, with presentations on the emergence of film celebrity (Andrew Shail, Newcastle University), early acting (such as a paper on Rudolf Valentino by Mariapaola Pierini, Università di Torino) and the status of stars in the silent era (as in Isak Thorsen's [University of Copenhagen] paper on Danish actor Valdemar Psilander). The day-two keynote panel analyzed processes responsible for stardom formation, and the talk given by Martin Shingler and Susan Smith (both of the University of Sunderland) dedicated to their work on the BFI Film Stars Series revealed much about the mechanisms of star and stardom production. Among other issues raised during the conference were the relationship between stardom and race (as in the presentation on whiteness by Jaap Kooijman, University of Amsterdam), cripple performances, or fake/meta-stardom as represented by lookalikes, transvestitism or camp.

Despite the variety of themes, the papers and presentations agreed on the multifacetedness of acting and stardom, sharing a common interest in how bodies have been located on screen to perform and communicate cultural difference, cultural specificity or cultural conditions by means of technological progress and media development. They all exposed the trans-performative character of the cinema (emphasizing its trans-generic, trans-linguistic, transnational, trans-gender, transsexual, transcultural, and trans- or intra-media potentials) and showed how from the very beginning of its existence, cinema has mediated cultural identities by positioning histrionic and fictitious bodies in real contexts and vice versa.

A wide-ranging and thought-provoking conference, "Revisiting Star Studies" ultimately provided a valuable platform from which further academic research into this area of studies might be pursued in the future. The post-conference book, including a collection of articles, is planned to be published as a highly expected follow-up to consolidate the achievements of this event's academically valuable debate.

SCMS 2013: Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference

Drake Hotel, Chicago, 6-10 March 610 2013

A report by Frances Smith, University of Warwick, UK

The worst snowstorm Chicago had faced in over two years heralded the start of this year's annual SCMS conference. At the Drake Hotel over five days in March, researchers from all over the world converged at America's symbolic crossroads to present and discuss their latest work, and debate the latest issues in film and media studies.

In total, 456 individual panels and workshops were held, alongside a further eight special events and screenings involving over 1,800 speakers from across the globe. The size of the conference reflects the diversity of subjects that fall into the remit of the SCMS. Indeed, the former Society of Cinematologists now incorporates the study of video games, television, social media, mobile spectatorship, video art – such as Christian Marclay's *The Clock* (2010) – and even the humble Lego. Rather than diluting the focus of the conference, however, this wide field of interest merely made for a more interesting range of papers. There were noteworthy presentations on all areas of film and media studies, including more traditional areas of enquiry such as genre analysis, issues of gender and class in the cinema, and grappling with new theories of film.

As at previous SCMS conferences, there was no single theme uniting the presentations and events, with the aim being simply to showcase innovative new work in the discipline, and to stimulate collaboration among its practitioners. Nonetheless, it was possible to identify three dominant threads of enquiry running throughout the conference. The first was that of postfeminism and popular culture, in particular the position of girlhood in postfeminism, which came under scrutiny in a number of panels. In "Visualising Girlhood, Girling Visibility," Mary Kearney (University of Texas, Austin) located a potential for subversion of normative gender in the glitter and sparkle attributed to young femininity, while Kate Kapurch (Texas State University) observed points of interest in the postfeminist aesthetic of recent Disney releases *Tangled* (Nathan Greno and Byron Howard, 2010) and *Brave* (Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman, 2012). Noting the recent propensity for franchises centered on girls, Sarah Projansky (University of Utah) proposed to identify and define the "franchisable girl," considering the archetype of the Disney Princess as well as Katniss Everdeen of *The Hunger Games* (Gary Ross, 2012). Aviva Dove-Viebhan (Arizona State University) observed the tension of tough action heroine Alice from the *Resident Evil* film and video game franchise,

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and the cinematic strategies of objectification in which she is located, while Angharad Valdiva (University of Illinois) considered the travel narrative of girl groups in recent Hollywood cinema.

Projansky and Valdiva both argued that womanhood is increasingly “girded” in popular culture, such that even the near-menopausal heroines of the two *Sex and the City* films (Michael Patrick King, 2008 and 2010) continue to identify themselves as girls. Perhaps the most prominent example of this tendency in postfeminist culture is the recent HBO series *Girls* (2012-), written by and starring Lena Dunham, which concerns the lives of a group of women in their twenties living in Brooklyn. Amanda Rossie (Ohio State University) dubbed the series an example of postfeminist girlhood, while Rebecca Wanzo (Washington State University), treated the program’s characters as an example of the abject millennial woman. Additionally, Lauren DeCavalho (Pennsylvania State University) observed the series’ relationship to *Sex and the City*, arguing that the transfer from Manhattan to Brooklyn provides a post-recession-era representation of postfeminism.

A second topic that spread across multiple panels was the discussion of the cross-pollination that increasingly occurs between Hollywood and global national cinemas. The newly established Scholarly Interest Group for the study of Transnational Cinema made a strong debut, sponsoring six panels and workshops, while at least that number again touched on issues related to the transnational. Notable among them, “Contemporary Franco-American Face-Offs” explored the international reception of contemporary French comedies. Audrey Evrard (Drew University) discussed *Le Dîner de Cons* (Francis Veber, 1998) and *Bienvenue Chez Les Ch’tis* (Dany Boon, 2008) and the issues involved in remaking them for Hollywood. In turn, David Petterson (University of Pittsburgh) explored the figure of the French *banlieues* as a structuring presence in *Intouchables* (Olivier Nakache and Eric Toledano, 2011) and *Tout Ce Qui Brille* (Hervé Mimran and Géraldine Nakache, 2010). Petterson argued that the urban structure of the two films affects their respective potential for US remakes. Whereas *Intouchables* provides a representation of the *banlieue* in a manner that reflects Hollywood convention, that of *Tout Ce Qui Brille* does not replicate the representation of urban poverty common to US film and television, a factor which Petterson located as key to its poor reception in North America. Exploring wider issues in transnational cinema, a workshop chaired by R. Barton Palmer (Clemson University) discussed the future directions of this emerging area of enquiry, while Austin Fisher (University of Bedfordshire) led a further debate on issues in researching transnational cinemas.

A third dominant thread observed throughout the conference was the examination of the ways viewers interact with the media they consume. Desiree Garcia (Arizona State University) discussed the sincerity of

attendees at sing-along musicals, who seek communal enjoyment of a much-loved film. Examining more complex engagements with the material, Melanie Kohnen (New York University) described fan reactions and creative resistance to industry-created transmedia campaigns, in which enthusiasts of particular television programmes are actively encouraged to engage. On the same panel, Amanda Klein (East Carolina University) discussed *A Very Potter Musical* (Matt Lang, 2009), a self-consciously amateurish take on the J.K. Rowling novels that exposes their latent comedy and seeks to return a film franchise characterised by elaborate special effects to the more prosaic trickery found in low-budget musical theatre.

Further panels, such as "Spectatorship on the Internet" chaired by Rachel Thibault (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) discussed the new relationships between spectator and media engendered by online viewing. While Verena Kick (University of Washington) discussed how social media allows fans to discuss their reverence of a particular film with other devotees, Dan Hasoun (University of Minnesota) and Thibault observed the internet's more problematic consequences for media consumption, contending that increasing use of the internet has the effect of creating inattentive audiences. The panel "So Bad It's Good," co-chaired by Richard McCulloch (University of East Anglia) and James MacDowell (University of Warwick), explored formations of taste frameworks, discussing how – and with what results – certain media texts come to be appreciated ironically. The number and scope of such discussions arguably makes the case for the creation of a new Scholarly Interest Group on spectatorship, fans and taste cultures in the near future.

Although panels rightly dominate the conference, this year saw the introduction of special events hosted by caucuses and scholarly interest groups. The Queer Studies Caucus sponsored "Remembering Alexander Doty" in memory of the prominent film scholar. Author of *Making Things Perfectly Queer: Interpreting Mass Culture* (1993) and *Flaming the Classics: Queering the Film Canon* (2000), Doty was notable for locating the potential for queer readings of texts that had hitherto been perceived as heteronormative. Julia Himberg (Arizona State University), Patty Ahn (University of Southern California) and Jennifer Malkoun (Smith College) gave presentations describing how Doty had influenced their own scholarship and the development of queer studies more generally. The Urban and Documentary Studies Scholarly Interest Groups hosted "Public Media 2.0" at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art. Open to the public as well as conference attendees, the event consisted of two staged conversations. The first took place between acclaimed documentary filmmaker Gordon Quinn and Allan Siegel, a founding member of documentary film collective Newsreel, the influence of which continues to be felt today. In the second discussion, Michelle Citron (Columbia

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College, Chicago) and Steve James, director of *Hoop Dreams* (1994) and *The Interrupters* (2011), explored the issues in producing urban documentary today and the future challenges facing its practitioners.

The annual SCMS awards ceremony provides a rare opportunity for scholarly work to be publicly recognised. Linda Williams (University of California, Berkeley) was presented the award for Distinguished Career Achievement. Accepting the award, Williams declared herself astonished to be termed “distinguished” and stated that her greatest strength was not raw intelligence, but hard work and the tenacity to want to make sense of that which she did not understand. Heather Hendershot (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) was awarded for her five-year tenure as editor of *Cinema Journal*, while Constance Balides (Tulane University) received an award for pedagogy, in recognition of her transformative work on Tulane’s film studies program.

In addition to the panel presentations allowing researchers to exhibit their latest work, workshops on pedagogy, research methods and career advice were a significant feature of the conference. These workshops provide opportunities for academics to reflect on their everyday practices, and to debate new, contentious areas of enquiry. Among the 42 workshops, one of the most significant was “Surface Tension: The Stakes and Fates of Close Analysis.” Co-chaired by Karl Schoonover (University of Warwick) and Elena Gorfinckel (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee), the workshop brought together some of the most prominent advocates of close textual readings: Victor Perkins (University of Warwick), Jean Ma (Stanford University), Mary Ann Doane (University of California, Berkeley) and Lesley Stern (University of California, San Diego), who attended by video link. Although the continued importance of detailed description was questioned by the increased prevalence of DVD, which enables viewers to pause key scenes, the panellists argued that close description is itself an art. Further, the diversity of the debates prompted by questions from the floor demonstrated the continued importance of close textual analysis for researchers of film and media.

Since taking the helm as editor of *Cinema Journal*, Will Brooker has stated his intention to make the journal more interactive, and to that end has created the podcast “*Cinema Journal* Presents Aca-Media.” In a further move to encourage greater interaction between the journal and its wider readership, *Cinema Journal* dispatched a set of reporters around the conference to tweet panels and workshops as they happened, using dedicated hashtag #scms13, and to document their experiences in lengthier blogs. These innovations allowed those prevented from attending by adverse weather to follow the panels, and permitted those present to keep up to speed with developments across the conference.

Just as Chicago constitutes America's crossroads, so this year's SCMS conference provided significant and innovative crossovers between old and new media, between distinct traditions in national cinemas, and between fans and their media. The diversity and scale of the annual SCMS conference can make it an overwhelming experience. However, it is only as a result of the scale and ambition of the event that innovative collaborations are encouraged. The program's dizzying array of panels, workshops and screenings ensures that the conference can reasonably claim to be a comprehensive representation of current scholarship in film and media studies, and consequently an unrivalled fixture in the academic calendar. Providing opportunities to present and foster collaborations with leading figures from across the globe, SCMS looks set to remain the leading venue to present, and discover, new work in the field for some time to come.

Screening Atrocity: Cinema, Decolonisation and the Holocaust

Culture Lab, Newcastle University, 10 January 2013

A Report by Hilary Clixby and Hedley Sugar-Wells, Newcastle University, UK

This one-day postgraduate workshop was sponsored by the Research Centre in Film and Digital Media, the Newcastle Postcolonial Research Group and the Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France.

Organised by Mani Sharpe and Gary Jenkins (both Newcastle University), the workshop aimed to discuss parallel themes such as complicity, testimony, witnessing, nostalgia, trauma and truth in representations of both the Algerian War in 1960s French and Algerian film, and of the Holocaust in German, Israeli and American cinema. Characteristic of existing scholarship considering the two events is the desire to explore texts in which the two histories collide, and the ways in which films dealing with atrocity frequently appropriate formal and narrative techniques from historical sources that might seem initially foreign or distant. It is these processes of cross-referencing, cross-fertilisation and intertextuality that the workshop was set up to explore. The workshop also provided an opportunity for scholars working in either area to share ideas and theories.

In his keynote speech, "The Subterranean Stream and Palimpsestic Memory: Screening Atrocity in Jean-Luc Godard" Prof. Max Silverman (Leeds University), proposed a new model of "palimpsestic memory," which he defined as the vision of memory taking the form of superimposition and interaction of different temporal traces. These traces constitute a sort of composite structure, so that one layer of traces can be seen through and is transformed by another, producing a chain of signification that draws together disparate spaces and times. Silverman outlined how much post-World War Two research into extreme violence began with Holocaust survivors, the concentration camp interpreted in the immediate postwar period as something specific to the German psyche. However, theorists have since developed different ways of thinking about extreme violence, seeing the Holocaust and other atrocities as interconnected and as integral to the capitalist economic system and to imperialism. Silverman cited the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben,

whose work *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998) suggests that the concentration camp is not separate to the political space in which we are still living. He also referred to the collection *Hannah Arendt and History: Imperialism, Nation, Race and Genocide* (2007, eds. Richard King and Dan Stone) as being in the spirit of exploring the “subterranean stream” that linked imperialism in Asia and Africa with the emergence of genocidal, totalitarian regimes in Europe.

Silverman asked how such interconnections work in film and in fiction, and whether there is a particular poetic favorable to theorize them in a specific way. He proposed three possible models for screening interconnections: Freudian condensation of the palimpsest; Benjamin's “constellation” or “images” (dialectics at a standstill) and the “trace” and “inter-textuality” (Derrida and Cixous) to define the poetics of overlapping sites. Silverman applied these ideas to a sequence from Godard's *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* (1988-1998), a nine-hour, non-narrative, episodic flow of montage. This sequence layers a diverse range of images taken from cinematic archives, including those of extreme violence: a Palestinian soldier, a Rembrandt figure and a Jewish woman with a yellow star. Silverman argued that these images are made not to collapse one into the other, but to connect and comment on each other, challenging specificity and singularity, memories, and the discreet nature of time by suggesting a non-foundational system of links between layers. Meaning is therefore linked to what the image of horror is juxtaposed with. Montage and a non-linear approach open up a different space, wherein images of horror combined with textual images and sounds from elsewhere can shock and propel the spectator into a new relationship with the Holocaust. Thinking in these terms can, Silverman argues, break down binaries between sameness and difference and between unique and comparable, challenging hegemonic discourse on extreme violence and atrocity in the academically divided areas of Holocaust studies and postcolonial studies. This approach further challenges the compartmentalization of metropolitan history, colonial history and the history of European genocide, and re-theorizes languages of race and violence in transcultural and transnational terms.

The event was divided into three panels: “Audience and Affect,” “Testimony and Complicity” and “Presence and Absence.” Panel 1 began with the paper “Hearing Atrocity: Film Music and the Holocaust,” in which Matt Lawson (Edge Hill University) outlined his research into Holocaust film music. Lawson believes that the controversial, ongoing debate

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surrounding Holocaust representation in film academic literature is generally limited to “pure” film studies, with little academic focus on music. He argued that there is a gap in research focusing on the compositional, ethical and political choices that may be considered when composing for films based around such sensitive narratives. He highlighted the need to challenge the “big name” composer approach, such as John Williams’ controversial score for *Schindler's List* (Steven Spielberg, 1993). Lawson proposed that this score, could be seen as Hollywood exploiting the Holocaust by manipulating audience emotion. He offered too the example of the television movie *Escape from Sobibor* (Jack Gold, 1987), which blends pre-existing music to form a blurred diegetic and non-diegetic underscore. Lawson’s research areas include the appropriateness for a Holocaust film of Hans Eisler’s anti-literal and anti-sentimental technique in *Nuit et Brouillard* (Alain Resnais, 1955); questions around music’s inherent meanings; if there is a type of music that can be labelled Holocaust music; if audiences are assumed to have knowledge of certain music; and the contextualization of films, such as scoring traditions in French films in the 1950s. To explore these ideas, Lawson highlighted three contrasting scenes -- from *Schindler's List*, *Nuit et Brouillard* and *Escape from Sobibor* -- approaching them from the viewpoint of musical representational and noting potential effects on audience reception. His initial list of films for study also includes *Life is Beautiful* (Roberto Begnini, 1997), *Imaginary Witness* (Daniel Anker, 2004) and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* (Mark Herman, 2008).

Panel 2, “Testimony and Complicity,” featured Alex Adams’ (Newcastle University) paper, ‘Torquemada, Vichy, Paratroopers: *La Question*.’ Based on Henri Alleg’s 1958 autobiographical account, *La Question* (1976) describes the author’s experience of torture under French rule in Algiers. The adapted film, which uses historical footage, draws comparisons with Godard’s *Le Petit Soldat* (1960) and *Nuit et Brouillard* because of its documentary authenticity. Adams argued that although the film draws important parallels between French colonialism and the Holocaust and Occupation, it is nevertheless problematic due to its claims of universality and positioning of Algerian nationals as the Other.

For Panel 3, “Presence and Absence,” Dr Ian Biddle (Newcastle University) presented the paper “‘Zamelt un farshraybt!’: Collecting, Remembering and Forgetting -- Discourses on Memory in Early Post-Holocaust Yiddish-Language Cinema.” Biddle focused in particular on Zamler-Kultur, the Jewish “culture of collecting” (or the collecting of culture), in Eastern Europe during and after the Holocaust (as in the Central Jewish Historical

Commission's call to "zamelt un farshraybt" [collect and record]). Biddle employs Gilbert's term "eleventh hour ethnography," which both displays a desire to mark the continuity of its culture and to bear witness to the horrors. Taking the last Yiddish feature film, Natan Gross's *Undezere Kinder* (aka *Our Children*, 1947), as his main case study, Biddle explored some of the ways in which memories of the atrocities were enacted in these very early filmic Holocaust responses. He considered the questions of how memory is worked through, thematized or engaged with in the turbulent aftermath of the Holocaust.

Using scenes from *Undezere Kinder*, in which Dzigan and Shumacher, a comedy double act, stage a play for orphans of the Holocaust, Biddle was able to present some of the issues facing Zamler-Kultur in its depiction/recollection of Yiddish-speaking cultures. He questioned whether the Yiddish traditions of stories, theatre and slapstick comedy should be preserved in the aftermath of such barbarism or whether the more naturalistic portrayal of the children's accounts should be more highly valued. The orphans of the film tell a more believable story of their experiences than the comedians, whom they heckle for failing to present a real view of the ghetto. The men romanticize and yearn for their mother's home cooking, while the children's cry of "I want food coupons" highlights the realities of begging for food. Biddle pointed to the epistemological turbulence of such literature of remembrance as it switches between palliative reminiscing and harrowing flashback memories. This is exemplified as the comedians overhear the children discussing distressing stories of survival, and confess that "we came to collect material, but ended up opening old wounds."

Kierran Horner (King's College, University of London) presented the final paper, "Presence and Absence: the Revelation of War in *La Jetée* and *Le Joli Mai*." Horner considered Chris Marker's 1962 and 1963 films as companion pieces, in which readings of the impact of the Algerian and Second World Wars in French society interact with the inherent absurdity of war. Based on theories of motion and stasis expounded by scholars including Mary Ann Doane, Laura Mulvey and Garrett Stewart, Horner argues that in *La Jetée*, Marker seeks to reveal not only the static image at the heart of cinematic movement, but also the death, guilt and repressed knowledge of the Algerian War, as denied by those he interviews in *Le Joli Mai*. To examine this conflict, Horner looked to Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist theory of bad faith, arguing that *La Jetée* is motivated by conflicts between inertia and mobility, life and death, past,

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present and future, and those of war. He also suggested that Marker combines these polarities to expose the latent bad faith he encountered in *Le Joli Mai*, the repression of the Algerian War and, by extension, other wars. According to Horner, after Sartre, this conscious denial is tantamount to collusion. Even whilst rejecting responsibility for the crimes committed "in [their] name" in Algeria -- the torture, terrorism and deaths -- the people of Paris are implicated. Marker's film betrays this hypocrisy, ignoring the persecution of others in order to proceed blissfully ignorant, by exposing a fundamental paradox in cinema, and, by extension, existence.

The workshop was brought to a close by a screening of *La Jetée*, composed almost entirely of black and white stills, which depicts a futuristic, subterranean, world post-WWIII. *La Jetée* has influenced filmmakers such as Stanley Kubrick, Marc Caro and Terry Gilliam, particularly providing the inspiration for Gilliam's *Twelve Monkeys* (1995), and still remains dynamic and rich today. A wide-ranging and thought-provoking workshop, Screening Atrocity ultimately provided a valuable platform from which further academic research can be pursued in the fields of postcolonial and Holocaust studies.

Texture in Film: Interdisciplinary Symposium

University of St. Andrews, United Kingdom, 9 March 2013

A report by Allain Daigle, University of St Andrews, UK

The Texture in Film symposium was an opportunity for attendees to deliberate over the merits of textural analysis through its application to film texts. The conference affirmed the richness of a textural approach, with many of the presenters drawing on the communal phenomenological vocabulary of Jennifer Barker and Vivian Sobchack. However, the symposium's interdisciplinary orientation also directed discussion towards the clarification of textural analysis' scope and use. Individual considerations of texture gave rise to more heated discussions on how to better define and use film texture.

The one-day interdisciplinary symposium was organized by Lucy Donaldson and the Centre for Film Studies at the University of St. Andrews. The morning began with a panel on "Feeling Texture," which emphasized the presence of haptic interfaces across cinematic reception, representation and production. Philippa Lovatt (Glasgow School of Art/University of Glasgow) drew attention to aural haptics in her paper, "Haptic Hearing': Texture and Feeling in the Films of Apichatpong Weerasethakul," noting the overbearing presence of environmental ambience in *Mobile Men* (2008) and *Tropical Malady* (2004). Lovatt holds that Weerasethakul obscures dialogue in favour of an amplified environmental soundtrack in order to normalize and reclaim homosexuality in Thai cinema. She argued that the physical primacy of aural vibrations produced a stronger sense of immersion than visual stimulus. Next, in "'It's Not What I Don't See, It's What I Don't Feel': Texture, The Unseen and Haptic Cinema in *Memoirs of an Invisible Man* and *Hollow Man*," Jonathan Law (University of Kent) traced the persistent figure of the invisible man in cinema, from Méliès's early films to *Memoirs of an Invisible Man* (John Carpenter, 1992), *Hollow Man* (Paul Verhoeven, 2000), and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (Peter Jackson, 2001-2003). Rather than focusing on spectator sensation, Law drew attention to the ways in which invisibility is given texture and to how narrative structures allegorize the presence and lack of body. The final speaker, Gavin Wilson (York St. John University), detailed the changing physicality of media production from the viewfinder to the touchscreen in his paper "Caressing the Screen, Feeling the Moving Image: Mobile Screens and Digit(al) Desire." The focus on the physical interface of the camera sketched a technical history within which to consider the symposium's emphasis on clarifying textural analysis. Wilson suggested that formal relationships were changing as a result of emerging interfaces. While a viewfinder distances the image from the eye, a touchscreen physically connects the

image to touch. The multiplicity of the opening panellists immediately evoked the varied and multi-purpose framework of textural analysis.

The panel was closely followed by a one-hour workshop on textural narratology, "Film Textuality/Film Texture," led by John Bateman and Janina Wildfeuer (Bremen Institute). The workshop offered a more logistic framework through which to consider texture in film. While prior panellists mostly foregrounded the subjectivity of experience, Bateman and Wildfeuer emphasized the necessity of narrative context when considering texture. Bateman argued that the reduction of a film text to isolated terms and patterns of discourse establishes a neutral foundation upon which to conduct film analysis. Without accounting for structural patterns, Bateman claimed, textural analysis would neglect the intentionality of filmic construction. Wildfeuer's analysis of *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* (aka *Amélie*; Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2001) exemplified the use of logic strands to deconstruct the patterns within their narrative contexts, but the study served more as an exhibition of the practice than a practicum on formulating these models.

The afternoon began with a panel on "Surface and Depth," which focused on texture's effect on spectatorial experiences of time and space. In his paper, "Texture and Time in Tony Scott's *Déjà Vu*," Steen Christiansen (Aalborg University) emphasized texture's function of uniting the body of the spectator with the film body. Drawing extensively on the film *Déjà Vu* (2006), Christiansen identified the use of superimposition, spatial montage and screen artefacts within nested media textures. These physical artifacts of distance, resolution and image capture produce simultaneity within the film's body. Lucy Donaldson (University of St. Andrews) expanded articulations of media texture through her analysis of *Vertigo* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1958) in her paper, "Experiencing Space: Attending to Surface and Depth." Donaldson argued that tactility is produced through visual configurations of length, width and depth, and that the character of Madeleine is produced as an enigmatic figure through the ordering of and movement through space. Both panellists drew attention to the texture of media itself and to how media physicalities code our experience of space and time through tactile experiences of light and surfaces.

Christiansen and Donaldson's panel set the stage for the robust discussion that developed out of the workshop on "Visceral Textures and Special Effects" led by Kathrina Glitre (University of the West of England). "Bloody Mess: Visceral Textures and Special Effects" focused on the "messy" property of practical effects that enmesh the spectator through bodily sensation. Glitre proposed that between fake and digital blood lays not only a lack of authenticity, but a lack of felt messiness. Digital blood, she argued, does not present this sensation of messiness, and she hoped to foster a vocabulary with which to discuss why a lack of mess is

bothersome. The first example, that of the wall of blood rushing out of the hotel in *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick, 1980), gave way to a discussion that lasted the better part of the workshop. Blood was a particularly useful catalyst for this texture workshop as it prompted a range of considerations, such as the physical boundaries blood transgresses, the narrative context that orients bloody mess as affective, and the “physical memory” inherent to blood and fluid. One potential consideration that arose late in the workshop was that there are scenes with blood, and there are scenes *about* blood. This distinction can help establish the ways in which blood establishes textual presence, which may be significant to the (non)affectation of digital mess.

The final panel of the afternoon, “Politics of Texture,” emphasized the ways in which texture can be used to articulate sexual difference, reclaim sexuality and problematize neutral spaces. In “Straightforward or Twisted? Queer-ing Phenomenal Space in Film,” Katharina Lindner (University of Stirling) emphasized the use of texture as a means of twisting an otherwise rigid narrative space. Through the use of flexible textures in the *mise-en-scène*, films such as *The Gymnast* (Ned Farr, 2006) access gender politics through texture and create a more malleable space for characters to inhabit. In “Cinematic Textures of Feminine Vision and Sexual Difference,” Kathleen Scott (University of St. Andrews) noted how texture draws the spectator physically close to the space of sexual pleasure, using the example of framing in Claire Denis’s *Vendredi soir/Friday Night* (2002) to illuminate how closeness denies a visual mastery of female pleasure. Andrew Jarvis (University of the West of Scotland) finished the panel with his paper, “Sensing Nation: Texture as Allegory in Recent British Cinema,” a discussion of British national cinema and texture’s reflection of a greater post-capitalist condition. Jarvis’ discussion drew on the *Harry Potter* saga (various, 2001-2011), *Neds* (Peter Mullan, 2010) and *Kill List* (Ben Wheatley, 2011). Such films, he claimed, embodied a larger reflection of an incomplete body twisted by capitalism. Each of the panellists’ discussions was squarely situated within their respective camps of queer theory, feminism and nationalism. However, such stances were not limiting and instead provoked further considerations of how texture could be effectively mobilized beyond these frameworks.

“Politics and Texture” was succeeded by a roundtable discussion led by Alex Clayton (University of Bristol), Sarah Dillon (University of St. Andrews), Ian Garwood (University of Glasgow), and Alistair Rider (University of St. Andrews). The fifteen panellists were primarily from the United Kingdom, although researchers from Denmark and Germany also featured. The discussion established a bearing through the multiplicity of approaches seen over the course of the symposium. The roundtable group noted that texture was crucial to the composition of film texts and

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was instrumental in understanding how (and why) films produced bodily affect. Clayton identified four significant trends during the day's discussion of texture: texture presented in film, texture of film, the patterning of film narratives through its sensory textures, and texture as an atmospheric mood produced by the film. The rough sketching of these spheres will hopefully clarify future discussions in which the term "texture" is used to articulate broad understandings of film textuality. Significantly, Garwood noted the absence of viewing context in the day's discussion of film texture. Examining the location and conditions within which texture is felt was agreed to be a topic that bears further consideration.

The symposium expanded the subject of texture as a critical approach, but in a manner that offered clear frames within which to consider film texture rather than an unlimited consideration of subjectivity. As textural analysis develops over the next decade, it may be worthwhile to consider the technologies and genres within which textural analysis gains immediate traction. The symposium discussed mostly films produced in the last 30 years, largely those in "body genre" categories. These sites suggest that there may be a historical element, either in film production or screening practices, that produces texture as an analytical approach particular to this period of time. The lack of older films did not suggest limits to texture's scope so much as its immediacy. Indeed, Donaldson's discussion of *Vertigo* suggests that the history of texture may be equally significant to understanding the ways texture has come to serve as shorthand for a multitude of approaches.