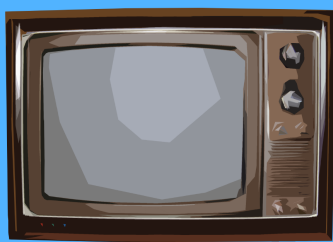


# FOCUS

## MEDIA JOURNAL

VOL XXXV | 2014-2015



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA  
THE DEPARTMENT OF FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES  
UNDERGRADUATE PUBLICATION

# **FOCUS**

## **MEDIA JOURNAL**

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## A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

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On behalf of this year's Focus Media Journal staff, I would like to thank those who contributed their time, finances and effort to making this journal a reality. Being this year's "editor-in-chief" has been a great and challenging experience. I began this process with very little experience, and as a result it has been an arduous one. I would like to personally thank Joe Palladino and Charles Wolfe for their unbridled support and guidance, for I realize that my inexperience has required a superhuman amount of patience on their part. I would like to extend this gratitude for unbridled patience to the rest of the faculty that aided us in the editing process and made this journal a possibility by unquestioningly giving us their time and expertise.

We began the process of putting this issue together by settling on a theme: Progress. We chose such a nebulous and all-encompassing theme to allow for an unrestricted multiplicity of interpretations. The goal was to acknowledge and discuss the ways in which our field of study has progressed to this point, and how it might continue to progress in coming years. As such you, the reader, will find papers exploring new media (such as video games), female representation within film and the film industry, and media policy among others. This issue is the most lean that has been published in years, but this is out of a desire to only include the best this year's undergraduates had to offer.

Having said all this, we are very proud of what we have accomplished, and you should all be too for this issue, like the ones before it, belongs to you all. I had hoped to collapse hierarchy within our editorial team, and the production of this issue achieved just that. This has been a collective effort in every sense of the word. This "Letter from the Editor" is a vestige of that hierarchy, but, at the risk of sounding redundant (and trite), this issue truly is by all of you, for all of you.

Yours in solidarity,

Alberto Lopez

Editor-in-Committee

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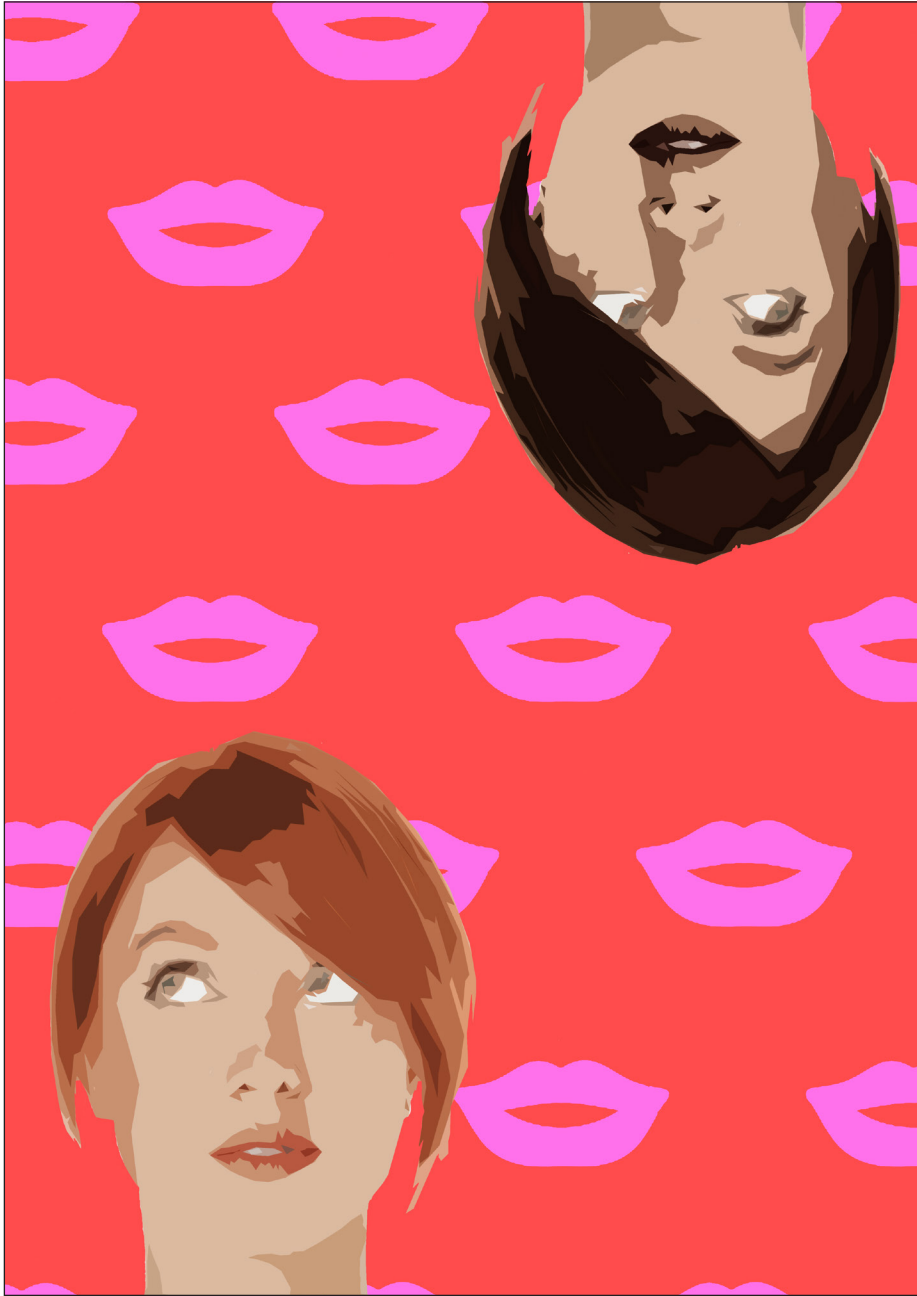
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# SECTION 1: EVOLUTION OF REPRESENTATION

# OPULENT EMPTINESS: WHY SOFIA COPPOLA TRAPS COMPLEX FEMALE CHARACTERS IN ONE-DIMENSIONALLY LAVISH WORLDS

by Suzanne Cimolino

Although a Google search of “Sofia Coppola style” returns images on what the Academy Award and Golden Globe nominee wears (shoes, clothes, etc.)—labeling her a “style icon”—a deeper investigation of her style addresses her filmic style. Linger-ing, dreamlike<sup>1</sup>, and contemplative<sup>2</sup> are all terms commonly used to describe her films. They are so subtle and even occasionally lighthearted in plot (with the exception of *The Virgin Suicides*) but at the same time they are heavy with implication. The scene of the young boys watching Lex Lisbon through the telescope challenges the gaze and, more importantly, the way women are often labeled wanton quicker than men are labeled sexually advanced. Coppola’s larger themes concern alienated and subdued women, while visually they elucidate grandiose, opulent, intricate, and bright geographical characters. For example: Charlotte appears reserved amidst busy, flashing Tokyo in *Lost In Translation*, as Marie Antoinette is despondent living amongst rococo Versailles in *Marie Antoinette*. And while Coppola’s careful style contrasts with Kathryn Bigelow’s energetic edge-of-your-seat action, the two acclaimed female directors ultimately achieve similar goals: depicting women who are trapped—or at least constrained—by their surroundings (physical and otherwise). Therefore, Coppola’s and Bigelow’s films exemplify one of the most critical themes in the larger category of women’s cinema; they prove that essentialism is illegitimate, as there is nothing essential about gender, style, or

story—if a woman can direct an award-winning film about a male bomb-disposal team, everything is up for grabs. Still, female directors are constrained by convention, tradition, and societal standards, just as the main female characters of their films are stifled by cinematic surroundings.

*Lost In Translation*’s Charlotte may not be the positive “role model” Artel and Wengraf advocate, but she does “encourage awareness.”<sup>3</sup> Though she does not fly planes—nor adventure too far outside of the hotel—Charlotte’s physical and emotional space in the film is substantial. Her questions about life verbalize what many others try to ignore; but Charlotte cannot ignore her melancholy, which often leaves her pondering in her underwear or staring out windows (or both at the same time). Perhaps her rolemodel qualities materialize in the way she faces her emotions amidst a society that tells her to ignore them. Moreover, Artel and Wengraf might criticize Charlotte because she “doesn’t know what [she’s] supposed to be,”<sup>4</sup> even though this is a “normal” fear for most women Charlotte’s age. Maybe she makes a truly strong role model for women because of her relatability. In other words, her strength is in her confrontation of her emotions. And equally important, *Lost In Translation*’s main male character is depicted just as sad and emotional as the film’s main female character. According to Artel and Wengraf, Bob Harris’s emotional vulnerability creates a positive image, so why, then, should Charlotte’s emotions detract from this

positive image? In truth, *Positive Image*’s essentialist thesis seems to be what Coppola critiques indirectly; she positions Charlotte as “the other” as a kind of conscious commentary on the way emotional women are (and have historically been) positioned as other. Rather than create idealized non-sexist films or characters, Coppola depicts authenticity.

Charlotte’s and Bob’s muted reality—set against Japanese people wearing bold patterns and bright colors, a loud karaoke club, alcohol, and obsessions with fame and pseudo-fame (e.g. Anna Farris’ character)—is enhanced by Coppola’s subtle attention to detail. For example, John and Kelly’s run-in in the hotel lobby sets Charlotte at a distance, literally and figuratively. The camera positions her directly in the middle of their over-the-top enthusiastic conversation, leaving her awkwardly staring while they smile, laugh, reminisce, and flirt. Plus Kelly’s bright orange blouse and blond-er hair push Charlotte aside to blend in with the pale-gray light. And the only words Charlotte utters (“nice to meet you too”) are drowned out by Kelly and John’s laughter. Throughout the film, Charlotte is overpowered—except by Bob, who actually listens. No doubt Charlotte’s parallel, Bob experiences the same loss in translation, especially when Coppola sets him against the Japanese people directing his whisky photo shoot—and their miscommunication is deeper than just a language barrier. Bob makes a joke out of exactly what his director encourages: “more mysterious!” Then the photographer lists a few major Hollywood stars for Bob to emulate, even though Bob is already beyond blasé about his own celebrity. Although he and Charlotte are unsure of who they genuinely are, others (photo shoot director and John) project specific identities

onto them. Like Artel and Wengraf, *Lost In Translation*’s supporting characters create essentialist notions of what/who Bob and Charlotte ought to be.

If anyone has strict pressures and expectations of who she ought to be—or at least, a performance of who she ought to be—it’s Marie Antoinette. Aside from her royal duties and decorum, Marie Antoinette has a surfeit of expectations to fulfill as a woman—all eyes on her. Unlike *The Piano*’s Ada, who “expresses herself through her Victorian persona,” Marie Antoinette is drowned in the gluttony of sweets, champagne, jewels, feathers, lace... and ginormous wigs. Only material objects and other people create her persona, as expressed by her statement to Duc de Choiseul at the beginning of the film: “I shall never forget that you are responsible for my happiness.”<sup>5</sup> Her individual self is defined by France and, similarly, aristocratic men; her environment, again, is overpowering. For example, the scene in which she first arrives at Versailles—with hundreds of glaring and judgmental eyes pointed at her—situates her as the other. Like the aforementioned scene from *Lost In Translation*, Marie Antoinette is centered in the frame, left to awkwardly command the space. Coppola even uses a POV shot here to further emphasize Marie Antoinette’s otherness. Because she cannot express her real self to all of her people, she is forced to express an image of herself as the new queen: shaky and perhaps unsure on the inside and confident and smiling on the outside (as though she is in a job interview). Throughout, Marie Antoinette’s purpose is to prove herself. Her mother’s letter reminds her that she “represents the future” and must produce an heir, an idea that brings her to look in the mirror and size herself up, recognizing her respon-

sibility—possibly Ms. Antoinette’s Lacanian moment. Coppola certainly recreated the most lavish, opulent world, full of performance, in order to accentuate the struggle of her main character.

It is important to note that Coppola traps her female characters in lavish worlds ironically rather than sincerely. These lingering moments (Charlotte and Marie Antoinette maneuvering awkwardly around people who ignore them) are unique to Sofia Coppola’s style and represent her exploration of women defined by society. Coppola’s films satirize exactly what Molly Haskell finds fault with:

“Then there are ‘ordinary’ women—women whose option have been foreclosed... their heroines are defined negatively and collectively by their mutual limitations... they embrace the audience as victims... the purpose of these fables is not to encourage ‘woman’ to rebel or question her role, but to reconcile her to it.”<sup>6</sup>

Actually, if Haskell were to explore a semiotic approach, she may find that Coppola’s “victims” are just heroines in disguise; for Coppola, there is more than one way to depict women, one of them being an authentic depiction. It seems Artel and Wengraf and Haskell have only a narrow, too-perfect idea of the “positive” woman.

Kathryn Bigelow’s films help to further delegitimize essentialism in analyzing women in/and film. Another director who is often discussed first for her appearance, Bigelow represents, perhaps, an even deeper subversion of gender norms than Coppola; first, that Bigelow directs “male” genre films (action, thriller, war, etc.) and second, that she often features women in roles typically reserved for men. More explicitly than Coppola, Bigelow “questions rigid conceptions of gender by thematically emphasizing the instability and ‘deconstructability’ of

the female/male polar opposition”—she does this in part by employing some androgynous characters (versus the immensely “feminine” Marie Antoinette and Lex Lisbon).<sup>7</sup> But like Coppola, Bigelow’s characters “find a way to articulate their downplayed subjectivities.”<sup>8</sup> Coppola and Bigelow may work in different genres, but their films represent the same “othered” female. Charlotte and Jean (*The Weight of Water*) are both intellectual, contemplative, and a bit tousled in appearance, set against ditzy femmes fatales, while Marie Antoinette and Megan Turner both hold significant positions of power and must perform accordingly (both in behavior and in dress). Still, Coppola’s and Bigelow’s very different styles both undermine essentialism. If weaker feminine and stronger masculine female characters can both exemplify the way society confines women, then who’s to say that there is a single way to depict women in film?

Speaking of identity, it is worthwhile to mention who Sofia Coppola and Kathryn Bigelow are as directors and the ways in which journalists tend to compartmentalize both of them according to certain connections, stylistic choices, or even physical traits. First, *Interview Magazine* labels Coppola a “legend,” highlighting her place in the esteemed Coppola family as though her success is entirely attributed to her name alone.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, articles on Bigelow—like the harshly critical one by Hanna Rosen of *New Republic*—often put questions about a woman directing war films at the forefront of any real issues.

Rosen opens with: “how improbable that, of all working Hollywood directors... Kathryn Bigelow should be the one to best channel the global war on terror.”<sup>10</sup> Like the nameguessing game the royal partygoers play in *Marie Antoinette*,

Coppola and Bigelow are more than the limiting adjectives many articles use to describe them. They—along with Cheryl Dunye and Rose Troche—are certainly the best possible people to be directing films featuring women because they are often set aside and made other as female directors. Actually, these directors’ personal characteristics cause many scholars and journalists to doubt their films. Coppola and Bigelow somewhat reflect their own characters: Charlotte, Marie Antoinette, Megan, Maya, and so on.

Like *Lost In Translation* and *Marie Antoinette*, almost all of Coppola’s films juxtapose opulence in setting with subtlety in character, even as she shifts genres or explores different types of relationships. Namely, *Somewhere* depicts the hollow and distant relationship between a girl and her celebrity father, set in Los Angeles’ most exclusive, elegant, VIP hotel: Chateau Marmont. Like Bob Harris, Johnny confines himself mostly to his hotel, drinking alcohol and being mildly entertained (or distracted) by a couple of strippers/dancers/hooks/working girls. Even as Coppola’s female characters vary from child to young wife to queen, her themes of constraint and desolation remain consistent.

Overall, Coppola’s and Bigelow’s films are sometimes met with the same criticism: that they produce style over substance. *Vulture*’s Amanda Dobbins even has a piece under the “Unpopular Opinions” section titled, “In Defense of Sofia Coppola’s *Marie Antoinette*.”<sup>11</sup> It seems to be a trend that critics have to defend why they like women’s films, as opposed to why they dislike films directed by men, as if it is unfashionable or nonconformist to dislike a man’s film. Dobbins is thus guilty of the same shallow readings Artel, Wengraf, and Haskell offer—even reducing *Marie Antoinette* to a “highschool mov-

ie.”<sup>12</sup> She describes the film’s characters as “over-privileged young women who refuse to speak in full sentences or really at all.”<sup>13</sup> Dobbins mistakes “frivolity” with irony, thus rendering her blind to... any other way of seeing the film. But *Senses of Cinema*’s Anna Rogers seems to get it. She too advocates a more complex reading of Coppola’s films, noting: “her approach demands that she match this extravagance in the film’s very construction.”<sup>14</sup> Rogers continues, “Whilst her considered approach to mise en scène... creates an affecting and primarily visual style... this same style also serves to cover the spectre of something dark and insidious.”<sup>15</sup> She notes Coppola’s attention to the “person in transition”<sup>16</sup> (or translation) rather than a preoccupation with complicated plot—something Martin Scorsese has said he prefers when he is watching a “picture.”<sup>17</sup> Interestingly, Rogers stresses the importance of the fact that some of Coppola’s films—though they are often considered “specifically female”—actually consider male melancholy (*The Virgin Suicides*, *Lost In Translation*).<sup>18</sup> Considering this point on an even deeper level, Coppola’s depiction of both male and female otherness is even more truthful than simply depicting one or the other. Again, she challenges essentialism, and specifically, the misconception that a female director will only depict females. Instead, Coppola directs gendered issues as human ones.

Of course, Coppola’s and Bigelow’s Golden Globe and Academy Award acclaim quiets many of the bitter critics. But they represent only a small portion of female directors, while many others are left out, without even much harsh criticism—let alone positive review. The study of women in/and film is important because representations are always in flux, which reflect fluctuating social environments. Sofia Coppola’s films are especially im-



portant, as they challenge what many feminist film theorists before her have so adamantly upheld. Coppola paints a different, more realistic positive image of

women: intellectually and emotionally complex, even if seemingly muted by her bright, busy surroundings.

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#### Endnotes

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4. *Lost In Translation*, directed by Sofia Coppola, (2003; Focus Features), DVD.
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10. Hanna Rosin, "The Auteur of Unease," *New Republic*, 6 February 2013.
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## NORA EPHRON: THE CREATION AND VALIDITY OF A FEMALE WRITER/DIRECTOR IN HOLLYWOOD

by Lisa Gumm

Nora Ephron: writer-playwright-screenwriter-director extraordinaire. It is not very often that a Hollywood writer becomes a household name, let alone a female Hollywood writer, and Ephron has become more than that. Ephron has become a brand in cinema. She is the wit and the marketing strategy. She is one of the few to successfully navigate romantic comedy and her films mark a temporary revival in the art form; for even though aspects of her films have formulaic elements, she has brought to the table a fresh female perspective rare in cinema. This paper attempts to explain Nora Ephron's rise in Hollywood: how she became a marketable brand in Rom-Coms, and how in doing so was able to bring a valuable, relatable and surprisingly honest female voice to a male dominated industry. Her rise in Hollywood and her branding will be examined by taking an in depth look at the mass appeal and marketing of her first romantic comedy, *When Harry Met Sally*, and at the success of this film, which contributed to her shift in production roles from writer to writer/director (a shift that also affected how her films were marketed). Her value as a female filmmaker will be appraised by observing her self-reflective sensibilities which establish exceptionally strong and relatable female protagonists.

Traces of Ephron's success are still lingering today. Just this past February New York Magazine posted an article on their website that was titled, "The 25 Best Romantic Comedies Since *When Harry Met Sally*." It seems that Ephron's biggest

hit has become the standard by which all subsequent romantic comedies are judged, at least in the world of pop culture. The article begins by claiming that romantic comedy has been around since the dawn of cinema, but that Nora Ephron and Rob Reiner brought something new to the table and "We've been living in its wake ever since."<sup>1</sup> This is quite a bold statement, in that it skips quite a lot of what was happening to get to this point in romantic comedy, such as trends of the eighties and even earlier work by Woody Allen. However, this article does bring a very important point to light and that is that Ephron (alongside her collaborators) hit a sweet spot that was so widely loved and so widely marketable that it enabled Ephron to create many more films of that form within romantic comedy. Much of this has to do with the broad array of demographics that this film creatively appealed to. When *Harry Met Sally* achieves this mass appeal in a number of ways: 1. the film follows Harry and Sally through about a fifteen year period of their lives. The film begins just after their college graduation as they embark on a journey from Chicago to New York City. This unlikely duo is united by Sally's friend who happens to be Harry's girlfriend at the time. Beginning the film in this way appeals to members of the population who are in college or who are finishing up college by giving them something to identify with. The film hooks younger viewers at the beginning who might have otherwise thought, "How is this relevant to me?" But this film is so loved

and adored because it does not only appeal to younger audiences (a quality that many contemporary romantic comedies are lacking), but also to a variety of older demographics. After Harry and Sally part ways when they arrive in New York, the film races forward in time and visits them in their mid twenties. Each of the protagonists has established themselves successfully in New York City. Sally works for a prominent New York newspaper, and Harry as a consultant. This appeals to young people who are themselves pursuing careers. During this section of the film Harry is getting married and Sally has been in a relationship for about a month, a typical relationship spectrum for those in their mid twenties. The film then jumps ahead again to Harry and Sally in their early thirties, both burdened by quite a bit of relationship baggage. Sally and her boyfriend Joe have broken up mutually because Joe does not want to have kids, and Harry's wife has left him for a lawyer at work named Ira. This appeals to a gen-

eration of thirty-something's who themselves, like the characters, are getting back into dating. For those happily married couples who may not currently be feeling any insecurity in their sex lives, the film is intercut with couples describing how they met and were married. Additionally, each of these couples are elderly which appeals to yet another demographic.

While this film appeals to nearly the entirety of adult white America in terms of age (it is apparent that the culture that is being marketed to is that of successful, middle-class white Americans since both protagonists, the supporting roles, as well the majority of the intercut elderly couples embody this demographic), this film is marketed to anyone in any of these demographics that might enjoy watching a couple of friends sleep together to see what becomes of their friendship. To put it in simple terms, this film is marketed using sex. Luckily sex appeals to members of all generations. Allow me to illustrate my point: the poster places Sally

on the left across from Harry on the right, New York City at their feet beneath the title and in between Harry and Sally are the words "Can two friends sleep together and still love each other in the morning?" (see fig. 1). Sex is appealing and a great tool for getting people to see movies, but this advertising is a bit of a misrepresentation because this statement implies that this film is about attempting to have a friends-with-benefits relationship instead of what the film is really about: whether or not men and women can be purely platonic friends. This is a deceptive marketing strategy because Harry and Sally don't sleep with each other until near the end of the film, and even when they do the actual act is filmically reduced to an implication formed with a few tears, some kisses, and Harry's concerned look afterwards with his friend Sally tucked under his arm under a blanket. This is hardly the casual sex filled spectacle that is implied by the poster. This same sort of sex-marketing occurs in the trailer of this film in which nearly every line of dialogue that occurs has to do with sex. To reiterate my point, these are the majority of the lines in the trailer. The trailer is broken up by titles in a white-on-black style followed by bits of scenes from the movie. The titles are bolded below:

### Ingredients of a Great Relationship

#### Harry

Men and Women can't be friends, because no man can be friends with a woman that he finds attractive. He always wants to have sex with her.

#### Sally

So you're saying that a man can be friends with a woman that he finds unattractive.

No you pretty much want to nail

them too.

### Meaningful Communication

A faceless guy rips off your clothes and that's the sex fantasy you've been having since you were twelve? Exactly the same? Well sometimes I vary it a little... Which part? What I'm wearing.

### Sensitivity

You tell her about other women? Yeah. Like the other night, I made love to this woman and it was so incredible, I took her to a place that wasn't human. She actually meowed. You made a woman meow?

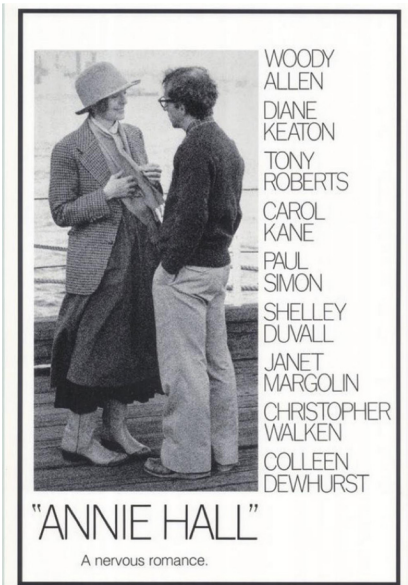
### Sexual Compatibility

(A chest up shot of the naked Harry and Sally in bed) Are you comfortable? Sure.

### Supportive Friends

I need to talk. What happened? What's the matter? Harry came over last night. I went over to Sally's last night Because I was upset that Joe was getting married. And one thing led to another. And before I knew it we were kissing and then... To make a long story short... We did it. They did it!

Well you get the picture. The first minute and a half of the trailer is just sex related talk. But, after these bits of dialog and after Meg Ryan and Billy Chrystal's names appear, that's when the clever hardly sexual relationship humor that



Nora Ephron is known for is showcased:

You're challenging.  
I'm difficult! I'm too structured.  
I'm completely closed off!  
But in a good way.  
And I'm going to be forty!  
When?  
Someday!  
In eight years.

#### When Harry Met Sally...

It's not the same for men. Charlie Chaplain had babies when he was seventy-three.  
Yeah, but he was too old to pick 'em up.<sup>2</sup>

Nora Ephron's screenplay has much more of this sort of clever non-sexual dialogue that is full of emotion and inspired by real life experience with failed relationships, which is what makes this marketing seem a bit inaccurate. A great scene that could have been used in the trailer is the scene in which the soon-to-be wed couple is fighting about the iconic wagon wheel coffee table. Harry loses it and screams that it doesn't matter because when they get divorced they'll be suing each other over eight dollar dinner ware, this is the stuff that Ephron is famous for. This misleading marketing strategy worked however, as can be seen by the film's gross of approximately \$92 million.<sup>3</sup> After the success of this film, the hyper-sexualized approach to marketing was no longer used. This can be seen when looking at the *Sleepless in Seattle* trailer that appeared four years later. There are plenty of passing conversations about sex in *Sleepless in Seattle*, certainly less, but still enough to make its trailer resemble the *When Harry Met Sally* trailer. However there is a shift to showcasing more of Ephron's non-sexual relationship comedy. These are the only two remotely sexual lines of dialogue in the trailer that

I could find:

Tiramisu  
What is Tiramisu?  
You'll see.  
Some woman is going to want me to do it to her, and I'm not going to know what it is.

And:

I mean you can't even turn on the news nowadays without hearing about how some babe thought some guy's butt was cute.  
So how's my butt?  
Not bad  
Really?  
Yeah.  
Is it cute though?  
Are you grading on a curve?<sup>4</sup>

Even at its most lewd, the content of this trailer is about as sexual as the least sexual bits of dialogue showcased in the *When Harry Met Sally* trailer. Part of this could be attributed to the overall less sexually-explicit premise of *Sleepless in Seattle*: the film largely involves the son of the Tom Hanks character trying to set up his dad with a partner after the death of the boy's mother. This starkly contrasts *When Harry Met Sally's* primary question (emphasized by marketing) of whether or not two friends can sleep together and still love each other in the morning. While this milder content is partially the reason for the lesser amount of sexual content in the marketing, there is something else at play here. Nora Ephron, in the four years after *When Harry Met Sally* (her first romantic comedy), landed herself two other screenplays before making *Sleepless in Seattle*. By this time Ephron had proven herself as marketable in the major motion picture market (especially thanks to *When Harry Met Sally's* box office). Because of this, Nora Ephron was given the opportunity to direct her romantic comedies and in



doing so her name gained weight as did her power over these films. Ephron recalls her shift to directing in these words, "I moved into directing for a couple of reasons. One of which was that a couple of my scripts were made into movies that were disappointing, and it occurred to me as I watched them that I could have done just as terrible a job directing as the people who did and gotten paid quite a lot of money for it. The other reason was that when you write movies about some of the things I write movies about, the hardest part about them is not writing the movie, but getting a director to direct them. Because it doesn't take you very long to write a screenplay but it takes a director a year. And most directors, I discovered, need to be convinced that the screenplay they're going to direct has something to do with them. And this is a tricky thing if you write screenplays where women have parts that are equal to or greater

than the male part. And I thought, why am I out there looking for directors? Because if you look at a list of directors it's all boys. It certainly was when I started."<sup>5</sup> Even though the writing for *When Harry Met Sally* was done by Ephron, she was listed second to last in tiny print in the trailer, but because she wrote and directed *Sleepless in Seattle*, her name appeared twice in much larger print in the trailer. A similar thing happened in the reviews of these films: in Caryn James' *New York Times* review of *When Harry Met Sally*<sup>6</sup> Ephron's name is referred to only twice, once in the body of the review and once in the credits, but in Vincent Canby's *New York Times* review of *Sleepless in Seattle*<sup>7</sup> Ephron's name appears five times. Obviously she has a larger role, so this is not a strong enough case to argue that she is becoming more of a brand, unless you look at the fact that she not only landed the deal to do the screenplay for this film, but has also now moved on to directing (which is no easy feat in Hollywood, especially for a woman, unless there is a market for you). Ephron makes a statement that backs up my claim: "I don't think that you are gonna get a whole lot of creativity, as you're using the word, in the major motion picture business where movies are costing \$90-\$100-\$110million. I think everybody's scared and everyone's trying to do things by the book or by the formula. I don't



know how any actor ever gets cast in a part for the first time, because all anyone wants to do is use someone who's been used before. It's amazing to me when someone like Eric Bana appears. I think 'How did he do it!' 'How did he do it?' Because all they really want to do is you know, that horrifying moment when the studio calls and says 'hey we'd love to make this movie and we'll send you a list of who we'll make it with' and then they send you this unbelievably short list that says something on it like 'Tom Hanks and Tom Cruise. Well great, that's not wanting to make the movie.'<sup>8</sup>

Ephron has a point, it is a very nepotistic business, and her own trajectory is perhaps evidence of that (her father and mother were screenwriters). However, she did become a director in Hollywood, where every choice is a risky chance, proving her worth enough to land herself a directing role. After this transition took place, Ephron landed herself seven more screenplays and six directing credits over the course of her career, and she also wrote a few books (which seems like an obvious direction for her because she considers herself a writer above all).<sup>9</sup>

So while Nora Ephron is a household name, it is important to take a look at whether or not she brought any value to the table. Many of her films had a mixed critical response. Upon her death, David Rooney of *The Hollywood Reporter* wrote an article in which he shares his input on this very topic,

"Directed by Rob Reiner from Ephron's screenplay, *When Harry Met Sally* ... was released in 1989 and dismissed by many of the more serious critics as Woody Allen lite. The 1993 *Sleepless in Seattle* was directed by Ephron from a script she co-wrote with David S. Ward and Jeff Arch, inspired by the 1957 Cary Grant-Deborah Kerr vehicle, *An Affair to Remember*. It

also drew a blah response from many major critics, who objected to its transparent emotional manipulation. But, call them cutesy or featherweight, those Ephron films -- with their central questions about whether friendship can spawn a couple or whether true love can surmount any obstacle -- struck a popular chord. Tapping into a hunger for old-fashioned romance and sophisticated wit, they acquired classic status for many in their generation. And when measured today against the overwritten Hallmark porn of, say, *Crazy, Stupid, Love*, the ostentatious lifestyle marketing of *It's Complicated* or the insufferably glossy treacle of those Garry Marshall holiday movies, *Valentine's Day* and *New Year's Eve* (What's next? *Rosh Hashanah?*), Ephron's best romantic comedies do hold up."<sup>10</sup>

Many times the comparison of Ephron to Woody Allen has been brought to my attention, especially involving the debut of *When Harry Met Sally*. So is it true? Is Ephron just a very good practitioner of types of characters based on previous successes? Some would consider her more of a craftsman than an influential artist. Some might consider her to be someone who is good at implementing a formula and creating a satisfying result instead of someone worth noting who created something new and beautiful. It is true that there are striking similarities between the marketing of Ephron's films and Woody Allen's films. In *Annie Hall* and *When Harry Met Sally*, the trailers are constructed the same way: blips of witty dialogue intercut with titles and actors' names in a white word on black background format all accompanied by jazzy piano music fitting to artistic shots of New York City. Even the posters look nearly identical (see figures 1 and 2), Sally is dressed very much like Annie Hall: in a blazer and baggy clothes. Harry has

his hands in his pockets and is looking at Sally with a mystified interest almost exactly like the Woody Allen poster. And in terms of Ephron being a practitioner of character types, the aforementioned *New York Times* writer Caryn James is very accusatory, "in Nora Ephron's screenplay, Harry and Sally are defined by their witty, epigrammatic dialog and so never become more than types. Sally is a journalist who occasionally sits at her home computer and stares into space; Harry's job as a political consultant is even more shadowy."<sup>11</sup> But there are a couple of problems here. Ephron wrote the screenplay for *When Harry Met Sally*, she didn't direct it and she wasn't in charge of marketing. A person could consider the protagonists to be types, but that is quite reductive given that each of these characters is much deeper than wit and occupation. These characters are based on real people and even share the same quirks as their models. In her published script of *When Harry Met Sally* Ephron discusses her inspiration for these characters:

"So I began with Harry, based on Rob, And because Harry was bleak and depressed, it followed absolutely that Sally would be cheerful and chirpy and relentlessly, pointlessly, unrealistically, idiotically optimistic. Which is, it turns out, very much like me. I'm not precisely chirpy, but I am the sort of person who is fine, I'm just fine, everything's fine. 'I am over him,' Sally says, when she isn't over him at all; I have uttered that line far too many times in my life, and far too many times I've made the mistake of believing it was true."<sup>12</sup>

Ephron's characters are built from her own life experience, and yes, they may be journalists who are picky eaters, but Ephron was a journalist and a picky eater.

The truth is that there is value to the perspectives presented and the characters

that are invented by Ephron. Ephron is in the characters. Marsha McCreadie in her book *The Women Who Write the Movies: From Frances Marion to Nora Ephron*, puts it this way, "In Ephron's other films, you could make a very good case for the intrusion of her own persona into the female characters she has created, at least in her contemporary comedies. All writing is autobiographical of course, even if it's not 'all copy.'"<sup>13</sup> It is evident in each of the films I am discussing that there are certain traits that each of the female protagonists share, and yes some of this may be stylistic (costumes, apartments etc.) and may be marketed in such a way that appeals to the quirky art/romance film and yes Woody Allen lovers, however it is Ephron's touch that makes these protagonists seem honest. These women are believable because they are inspired by a real woman, a real woman with anxieties, a real woman trying to balance a career and relationships, and a real woman with real flaws. Allow me to be more specific: An aspect of this personal touch can be found in the occupation of the female protagonists. McCreadie further notes that "Sally, like the Meg Ryan character in *Sleepless in Seattle* (and like Ephron), is a journalist. In *When Harry Met Sally*, she works at the News; in *Sleepless in Seattle* she works at a Baltimore paper."<sup>14</sup> But it goes even farther than that. These are not the only two characters with this writing emphasis, for also in *You've Got Mail*, Kathleen Kelly (Ryan) owns a children's bookstore, in which she meticulously selects the best books for her customers. She KNOWS children's books.

#### WOMAN SHOPPER

Do you have the "Shoe" books?

#### SALESPERSON

The "Shoe" books? Who's the author?

#### WOMAN SHOPPER

I don't know. My friend told me my daughter has to read the "Shoe" books, so here I am.

#### KATHLEEN

Noel Streatfeild. Noel Streatfeild wrote Ballet Shoes and Skating Shoes and Theater Shoes and Movie Shoes...

(she starts crying as she tells her) I'd start with Skating Shoes, it's my favorite, although Ballet Shoes is completely wonderful.

#### SALESPERSON

Streatfeild. How do you spell that?

#### KATHLEEN

S-T-R-E-A-T-F-E-I-L-D.

#### WOMAN SHOPPER

Thank you.<sup>15</sup>

And it is evident that this character, Kathleen Kelly, is inspired by a very personal part of Ephron's life: her own mother. Ephron discusses her mother in an interview, "My mother was a real piece of work. She was something. She was so powerful. She was a screenwriter with my father and she was so determined that all of her children would be writers, without ever being stupid enough to say 'I want you to grow up to be a writer' because that, she knew, was never going to work. So she, she basically, you know, she brought us the greatest books and turned us into passionate readers and taught us to tell stories in her own completely twisted way, okay. I mean, what she would say to you, if you went to my mother and you said 'Oh the worst thing happened to me today,' she had no interest in it, she only wanted to hear about it when you had turned it into a story with a good punch line. And so she always said 'Everything is copy. Everything is material. Someday this will be a funny story, it doesn't seem

funny now, but trust me, someday it will be funny."<sup>16</sup>

Kathleen Kelly has this inspiring feature that Ephron attributes to her mother. She sees the inspiration that a child can get from reading books and how books help create more beautiful stories, beautiful people and hope.

More interesting similarities between the characters and Ephron herself are that of dress. Yes, Sally Albright resembles Annie Hall (and that is used for marketing purposes), but it is striking how similar the styles of these three of Ephron's protagonists are, and the clothing style is not entirely unlike Ephron's own style. The most obvious comparison is that of the Kathleen Kelly character to Ephron, since she has the boyish messy short hair and the all black wardrobe of Nora Ephron (see figures 3 and 4). How much she had to do with these costume choices, I cannot be certain; however writing characters based on personal expertise has never hurt, and who could a person be a better expert on than themselves. This is what makes Ephron's characters so well loved: they are relatable because they are the creation of a woman, and so when each of these characters shuts themselves in, when each one cries in bed, when each one walks around in pajamas, when each one overreacts, each one is 100% woman. Ephron's thoughts on being a female screenwriter say it all, "As a woman screenwriter, my job is not to write some idealized woman, but to write women who are real, whatever they are like, who are lovable or not lovable, but who are at least as comprehensible and as complicated as men are in the movies."<sup>17</sup> In a review of *You've Got Mail* Janet Maslin captures in words the appeal of these films: "When Meg Ryan's character gets the sniffles and retreats from the world in *You've Got Mail*, she puts on pajamas and

curls up in bed with her trusty laptop or a favorite book. Someday, when this cozy romantic comedy becomes a videocassette, it too will be a comfort object perfect for such moments."<sup>18</sup>

In conclusion, advertising with sex and Woody Allen style helped Nora Ephron's films reach an established market. The appeal to multiple adult demograph-

ics, established by visits to various time periods of the protagonists' lives in *When Harry Met Sally*, gained Ephron a fan base that demonstrated her marketability in the industry and enabled her to move into directing. Directing allowed her to make more influential films that bring a personal female perspective to the romantic comedy genre.

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# THE UNFETTERED PRINCESS IN DISNEY'S SNOW WHITE

by Annahita Ashe

Disney's *Frozen* (2013) has been celebrated amongst fans and film critics for being Disney's most progressive Disney princess movie of all time.<sup>1</sup> The film, which grossed \$1.3 billion at the box office, has also sparked incredible revenues from Disney merchandising. An estimated 2.6 million *Frozen* princess dresses were sold after Halloween in 2014, each dress priced at about \$49.99-\$99.95 at Disney stores.<sup>2</sup> The success of *Frozen* exemplifies the profound effect that the Disney princess has on today's audiences. Young girls flock to Disney merchandise outlets in order to emulate their favorite Arendellian sister, while conversations circulating online in film reviews and newspaper articles praise the film for its treatment of strong, progressive princesses. But why is the concept of a Disney princess such a prominent topic in today's discussions of cinema? Has this always been the norm? How can we look at the treatment of the very first Disney princess, *Snow White*, in a way that opens up new opportunities for discussion?

Before I embark on an analysis of *Snow White* in Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), it is imperative that I foreground my historical position in relation to the trajectory of the Disney Princess concept and franchise. My historical inquiry takes place fifteen years after the origination of the Disney princess franchise as a moneymaking machine. In 2000, Disney executive Andy Mooney was in the audience at a Disney on Ice show when he noticed that many of the little girls alongside him in the au-

dience were dressed up like princesses. This observation inspired an entire line of merchandise that became the core of the Disney princess franchise, consisting of Disney princess dresses and accessories. The franchise grew into a revenue-gaining giant for The Walt Disney Company, encompassing activities surrounding Disney princess merchandise, special events, and even Disney Princess coronation ceremonies at Walt Disney World.<sup>3</sup>

Along with this recent commercial emphasis on the Disney princess, there also have been many critiques of the representation of Disney princesses, especially from a feminist point of view. Laura Sells, in her essay "Where do the Mermaids Stand?," criticizes the story of Princess Ariel by dissecting the gender-related tensions of the film such as the moment where the little mermaid must give up her voice in attempt at upward mobility and access to a white male system.<sup>4</sup> In his essay "The Whole Wide World Was Scrubbed Clean," Patrick Murphy voices an argument derived from "ecofeminism" in relation to the Disney princess—a common strategy amongst Disney princess critics. Murphy applies ecofeminism's claim that, "the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature are inextricably linked in the history of western and other patriarchal civilizations" to Disney's princess films.<sup>5</sup> Kathi Maio, in an article in *New Internationalist Magazine* seems to sum up the arguments of critics like Sells, Murphy, and many others when she writes, "It's prototypical Disney. Young women are natural-born

happy homemakers who lie in a state of suspended animation until a man gives them a life."<sup>6</sup> Feminist critiques such as these began to surface in the late 1980s and early 1990s, most likely catalyzed by the new ways of thinking that followed the second wave feminism movement of the 1960s – 1980s. This movement opened up for debate issues of sexuality, family, the workplace, official legal inequalities, and was marked by the Roe vs. Wade case of 1973.<sup>7</sup> Disney responded to such feminist critiques with the release of films that featured "second wave" princesses, beginning with princess Belle from *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), who loved to read.<sup>8</sup> Since then, Disney has introduced more "progressive" princess characters, covering a greater range of ethnicities and personalities, and the Disney princess franchise has grown significantly with each new addition.

The question then becomes, how can we locate *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* within this history rather than simply read it in a way that anticipates the Disney princess franchise and its contemporary critique? How can we be mindful of all potential routes the Disney Princess concept could have taken? In the analysis to follow I reposition *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* as a film whose significance does not lie in its gender coding of a Disney princess, but in its technological advancements and in its playfulness with pre-existing Disney features such as endearing animals and caricatured, comic characters.

Though much of discourse today surrounding Disney princess movies revolve around the representation of the princess, at the time of the production and exhibition of *Snow White*, 1934-1938, the princess was not central to the thinking of those creating the film, nor to the thinking

of audiences and critics viewing the film at the time.

In the Walt Disney Company's 1938 Pressbook, "Still the Fairest of Them All!", the Disney Company provides a variety of publicity strategies, posters, articles, and statistics for *Snow White*.<sup>9</sup> This book was given to exhibitors in order to provide them with material for and ideas of how to best promote *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1938. In this Pressbook, there exists an article in which Walt Disney describes his reasons for adapting the story of *Snow White* into a full-length animated feature. In "Urge to Film 'Snow White' Founded in Disney's Youth," Disney ascribes his desire to make *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* to six major factors.

First, Disney describes having seen a silent film version of *Snow White* when he was a small boy, and always having liked it since. Second, he mentions that the story is well known and "beloved in practically every country."<sup>10</sup> This would allow for the film to enjoy great success both locally and internationally. Third, Disney explains that "the seven dwarfs, we knew, were naturals for the medium of our animated pictures. In them we could instill humor, but not only as to their physical appearances, but in their mannerisms, individual personalities, voices and actions."<sup>11</sup> The characters of the dwarfs provided Disney with an outlet to practice the same kind of caricature comedy that he had explored in his short Silly Symphony films. For example, in *Arctic Antics* (1930), the features of arctic animals, such as penguins' bellies and a walrus' whiskers, are exaggerated for comedic effect.<sup>12</sup> Dwarfs, already extreme in their height, provided much room to experiment with caricature. Furthermore, Disney recognizes that humor could be

instilled in each dwarf's individual personality, following a pattern found in *The Three Little Pigs* (1933), a Silly Symphony in which each pig has a unique personality that is played with for comedic effect. In this regard the dwarf characters were a significant driving force in Disney's decision to make *Snow White*.

The fourth reason Disney provides in the article also has to do with furthering experimentation with past successes. He explains that with most of the animation taking place in the woods, there would be "great opportunity for introducing appealing little birds and animals of the type we've had success with in the past."<sup>13</sup> Silly Symphonies like *Birds in the Spring* (1933) that featured charming little animals set a precedent for Disney's future animated films, including *Snow White*.

The fifth reason Disney provides is that the human characters in *Snow White* were "fanciful enough to allow us a great deal of leeway in our treatment of them."<sup>14</sup> This statement is the only indication Disney gives as to the significance of the princess. Note that the focus is not on the fact that she is a princess; rather, he emphasizes the fact that all the human characters—princess, prince, evil queen, witch, huntsman—are "fanciful" fairytale characters, and because of their imaginary, fairytale nature, they allow the animators to depict these figures creatively. Disney's ambition was to create realistic human characters that could still be played with creatively due to their fairytale identities. In Disney's Silly Symphony *The Goddess of Spring* (1934) he experimented with creating a realistic, human animated character, and in this regard the goddess was a kind of precursor to *Snow White*.<sup>15</sup> The animated Goddess, an attempt at a realistic girl, is also a mythical character, allowing some creativity in the same way that Snow White as a fairytale princess allows

creative leeway. The princess is just one of the many possible human characters that provide this opportunity of experimentation for Disney.

The last reason Disney provides for making *Snow White* into a full-length animated feature is that the company had been receiving fan mail for years asking for a longer picture.<sup>16</sup> *Snow White* as the first full length animated Disney film was partly a response to this fan mail.

Among all of the reasons Disney provides for choosing to turn *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* into a full-length animated feature film, there is no indication that the princess was central to his thinking. However, we must take into account that this information comes from a pressbook that is inherently biased in that it is meant to present all aspects of the film in a positive light for its potential use in publicity. Because of this bias, some information was likely excluded, and the Pressbook article should not be considered a complete representation of the entirety of Disney's thinking about the film. Keeping this in mind, further analysis of the Pressbook and other primary sources must be conducted to achieve a deeper understanding.

In a newspaper article from 1938, a reporter comments on the great amount of publicity that preceded the release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. The article, "A Tremendous Pre-Release Build up Such as No Other Picture Ever Won!" comments on the astounding amount of promotional material presented in a variety of papers and magazines. Reproductions of scenes from *Snow White* were displayed as full-page color spreads in the "more important periodicals," such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Photoplay*; commercial trade magazines such as *Playthings* and *Toys and Bicycles* were packed with advertisements for "concessionaries

who crashed the market with novelties based on 'Snow White'; radio broadcasts of songs from the film and announcements from Walt Disney himself flooded the radio stations; and department stores all over the country displayed life-size character and setting cut-outs to promote the film.<sup>17</sup> There is no doubt that there was an immense effort by the Walt Disney Company to advertise the film, but is there anything in these advertisements and publicity strategies that reveals the driving forces behind the film and how significant a role a princess concept played?

A page in a 1938 issue of *Motion Picture Herald* was devoted to "Denver Snow White Ads." The page displays images of nine posters that were used to advertise Snow White in Denver in 1938. Each poster depicts the seven dwarfs alongside the title of the film and some information about it. Nearly all of the posters include the same information, advertising the film as "Walt Disney's first full length feature production...Three years in the making...All in Marvelous Technicolor!"<sup>18</sup> Almost all of the advertisements for *Snow White* I have found in trade journals and fan magazines of the time follow this formula. They focus primarily on the dwarfs as the most appealing characters of the film; if any characters are depicted on the advertisements, it is nearly always a few or all of the dwarfs. If other characters are included, the animals from the film are often depicted as well. Also, the technological advancement of "Technicolor" is emphasized in nearly every advertisement in these magazines, usually accompanied by a statement highlighting the novelty of the fact that it is the first ever feature-length animation film made by Disney. Another common theme of the advertising is the exceptional amount of time and effort put into the making of the film,

as illustrated by the statement the *Snow White* was "Three years in the making!" in an advertisement that appeared in the same *Motion Picture Herald* issue.

The focus of these advertisements mimic the ideas presented in the 1938 Pressbook. Many strategies from the Pressbook use the dwarfs as the key figures of attraction. For example, a strategy entitled "Dwarfs as Ballyhoos" encourages exhibitors to employ "dwarfs" to act as messengers for the theater for a week before the film premiere. They would then deliver personal invitations to prominent members of the local community to attend the film's premiere, as well as hand out advertisements for the film in popular public areas. Another strategy, called "Novel Merchandising Plan for Community Snow Build Up," instructs exhibitors to make partnerships with local stores, which would hand out a card with a dwarf on it to a customer who spent one dollar at that store. A collection of a complete deck of dwarf cards would earn the customer a color still of the film. Other common strategies focused on the animals of the film. For example, "Pet Matinee" was a strategy that "emphasize[d] the appealing animal angle of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*" by hosting a matinee for children in which they could bring exotic pets with them for free admission, and earn prizes for the most interesting pets.<sup>19</sup>

Though advertisements in primary source papers and trade journals of the film largely lack mention of a princess, the Pressbook does recommend some publicity strategies that use the princess as an advertisement angle. For example, in a stunt labeled "Celebrate Snow White," exhibitors are instructed to send a "beautiful girl, clad in Snow White's simple garb" to visit local shops on horseback, led by an employee who is dressed

like the prince.<sup>20</sup> The fact that the girl is required to be “beautiful” does raise questions that anticipate contemporary feminist critiques of *Snow White*. However, it is also imperative to understand the stunt was a marketing strategy, and marketing strategies have almost always used the sex appeal of beautiful women and men to advertise a product. Attributing the requirement that a “beautiful” girl be featured in this stunt to the gender coding of the princess ignores this key factor. Also, though strategies like “Celebrating Snow White” are recommended as publicity stunts in the Pressbook, a great majority of the stunts in the book, as well as most advertisements in papers from the time, focus primarily on the animals, the dwarfs, and the technological advancement in the form of Technicolor.

Technicolor is a color motion picture process that was invented in 1916, but had not yet been widely used. The “three-color” Technicolor process introduced in Disney’s *Silly Symphonies* in 1932, and used in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937, allowed for a much more broad spectrum of color range.<sup>21</sup> Another new technology that employed in *Snow White* was the multi-plane camera, which allowed for a new three-dimensional effect in animation.<sup>22</sup> The combination of these two new technologies was stressed in the advertisement of *Snow White*, especially the use of Technicolor.

These same points of emphasis are also the focus of reviews written by critics of the time. Charlie Chaplin, who was one of the many celebrity guests at the film’s premiere in Los Angeles, told the *Los Angeles Times* that *Snow White* had “surpassed our highest expectations. In Dwarf Dopey, Disney has created one of the greatest comedians of all time.”<sup>23</sup> Chaplin’s favorable opinion of Dopey echoes one of the factors that many critics of the time cel-

ebate in their reviews: the appeal of the dwarfs. In his review, critic Jimmy Elder wrote concerning the dwarfs, “In all my nineteen years of reviewing I have never met screen characters that more completely captured my heart.”<sup>24</sup> The dwarfs from *Snow White* even began to influence fashion trends. In an article from *Picture Play*, a reporter described a new trend of women’s hats inspired by the dwarf’s hats in the film. In keeping with the topics prominent in the advertising and publicity for the film, reviews not only focused on the dwarfs, but also on the technological achievement of the film. A reviewer in *Box Office* called *Snow White* “the most important picture from a production perspective since the advent of sound. It has unusual appeal, seldom, if ever, attained in the realm of celluloid entertainment.”<sup>25</sup>

Many other critics mused about the appealing woodland animals featured in the film. Frank Nugent, in his review for the *New York Times* in 1938 said, “No child, of course, could dream a dream like this. For Mr. Disney’s humor has the simplicity of extreme sophistication. The little bluebird who overreaches itself and hits a flat note to the horror of its parents; the way the animals help Snow White clean house, with the squirrels using their tails as dusters, the swallows scalloping pies with their feet, the fawns licking the plates clean, the chipmunks twirling cobwebs about their tails and pulling free; or the ticklish tortoise when the rabbits use his ribbed underside as a scrubbing board—all these are beyond a youngster’s imagination, but not beyond his delight.”<sup>26</sup> The dwarfs, as well as the other celebrated features of the film such as animals and Technicolor, are praised over and over in fan magazine, trade journal, and newspaper reviews of the film—without much mention of the Disney princess.

The great effect that the dwarfs had

on audiences of 1938 could be attributed to The Great Depression of the 1930s. The Dwarfs, whose main song in the film consists of the chorus “Heigh Ho! Off to work we go!” as they head off to their job in the mine, are hopeful characters for audiences suffering through the depression. The Great Depression meant an immense decrease in demand for, and few alternate sources of, jobs. Areas dependent on primary sector industries such as mining suffered the most.<sup>27</sup> Depictions of the cheerful dwarfs at work may have provided an escape for audiences from the harsh reality of massive unemployment, and also could have offered something for audiences to hope for. One of the most popular songs to come out of *Snow White* was “Whistle While You Work,” which topped the singles charts in 1938.<sup>28</sup> The success of this song could also be attributed to the Great Depression for the same reasons. The Dwarfs also were the comedic characters of the film, providing audiences with opportunities for lighthearted laughter in the midst of an economic crisis.

By examining the environment in which the film was received, audience preferences can be more deeply understood. Because of the Great Depression, the dwarfs rose above the other characters in popularity. The concept of a Disney princess franchise and critiques of *Snow White* as a flawed representation of a woman were not issues on the mind of most audiences during the Great Depression; work, excitement about new technology in film, and the enjoyment and escape of daily reality that the comedy of the film provided much more likely shaped the frame of mind in which audiences viewed the film upon its release.

Contemporary critiques do open up interesting areas of discussion in relation to *Snow White*, even though they were not

present at the time of its debut. However, these contemporary arguments obscure historical details related to the film’s publicity and reception. Critics today cite the one-dimensional, sexist representation of *Snow White* as the main weakness of the film. However, it would be more accurate to assert that all of the human characters in the film are weak in this regard. The Prince is charming, *Snow White* is beautiful and pure, the queen is evil and vain, and none of these characters develop in the film in a way that escapes or explores these stereotypes. A reviewer for *The Monthly Film Bulletin* at the time picked up on this notion, noting that, “the characters lack urgency.”<sup>29</sup> However, even this critique superimposes a more modern understanding of film upon *Snow White*. The characters are one-dimensional as a result of the story; it is a charming, triumphant fairytale story meant for children. As the first feature-length animation film, there was no reason to believe at this time that a feature-length animation film should have multi-dimensional characters; there was no established form to model such a feat after. Disney’s *Fantasia* (1940), whose soundtrack was its key feature, did not include complex characters, and explored new ways that animation could be played with. This stands as proof that Disney was still exploring the many directions a full-length animation film could go. *Snow White*’s purpose, as an experiment with a longer animation format, was not to encourage deep exploration of the human psyche, but to showcase technological developments in animation. Understanding this helps us to deepen our understanding of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, unfettered by contemporary lenses. *Snow White* was created, publicized, and received with attention to the likable animals and comedic dwarf characters in combination with the technological



achievements of Technicolor and the less novel but still relatively new technology of the multi-plane camera. Immediately following *Snow White* Disney produced a series of films centered on popular characters such as *Pinocchio* (1940), *Dumbo* (1941), and *Bambi* (1942). It was not until 1950, thirteen years after *Snow White*'s release, that the Disney princess was resurrected in *Cinderella*. Furthermore, it is not until after the second wave feminism movement of the 1960s through the 1980s, decades after the film's original release, that *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was examined through a new lens that found the Disney princess deficient from a feminist perspective.

*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* is discussed in contemporary discourses in ways that superimpose feminist concepts the significance of a "Disney princess" that did not exist at the time of the production and exhibition of the original film. Lost in many of these contemporary discussions of *Snow White and Seven Dwarfs* is the historically grounded significance of Disney's achievements in technology and of creative approach to feature film-making. That is not to say, however, that

contemporary discussions of the Disney princess are not constructive for they prompt us to ask: Why did a shift occur away from dwarfs and animals as main features of focus, and toward the Disney princess? The princess's ascension into cultural popularity did occur. Could it be that many classic stories and fairytales include a princess, and this created a cumulative "princess effect" so that by the time of the third or fourth princess movie, the princess became an important point of focus in Disney's films? Might we also attribute the cultural prominence of the Disney princess in part to critiques that arose after the second wave feminist movement? Looking deeper into the circumstances of this shift could help us to reconstruct an even richer cultural history than a production and reception history of *Snow White* alone provides. It is clear that the concept of the Disney princess was not yet central to the planning, advertising, or the reception of *Snow White* at the time of its premiere. In 2013's *Frozen*, the princesses were the point; in 1937, the princess was a byproduct of other production concerns.

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## SECTION 2: EVOLUTION OF CONSUMPTION

# THE POLITICS OF PENETRATION: CENSORSHIP, HOMOPHOBIA, AND A REIMAGINING OF THE PENIS

by Justin Minor

In his extensive treatise on censorship history in American film and how it relates to feature-length hardcore pornography's decline in the early 1970s, Jon Lewis notes that content regulation "must be read not in terms of objective criteria or empirical studies," but rather in the context of the ideological and systemic apparatus that governs film censorship in Hollywood.<sup>1</sup> Lewis traces a compelling economic explanation for Hollywood's renaissance and "porn chic's" decline in the 1970s; however, I raise issue with his assertion that objective criteria should not be quantified when faced with systemic and much more illusory concepts, such as "morality, ideology, and politics."<sup>2</sup> As this book locates its argument around the distinctions between Hollywood and hardcore pornography, it is crucial to discuss the very content that defines such industrial differentiation. Since the hardcore pornography trade represents the "flesh factory" so demonized by Hollywood, we must examine the currency of this trade and its relation to body politics. By studying the material that becomes censored by governments and self-monitored NGOs, like the MPAA, we can see that a very specific emphasis is placed on how bodies can be displayed—particularly male bodies. The penis is the most heavily censored appendage in Hollywood. Feminist discourse has traditionally tied this fact to patriarchal hypocrisies in the interest of maintaining phallic power; but, I will argue that the censorship of the penis—and primarily, its function of penetration—represents homo-

phobic fear of arousal. I will also argue that gay male pornography's power lies in deconstructing the image of the phallus as social dominance and repression. This argument is furthered by the notion of "corporeal feminism" and the liberating power of embodiment; after all, in order to understand body politics, we must examine the specific imagery that offends—you guessed it—"the body politic."

Historical conceptualizations of the human body lend insight into the mechanical or objective view of the body as a complex system of neurological responses. Rene Descartes introduced the concept of the human body as an "automaton," or a machine that, like the workings of a clock, was "subject to improper care and management."<sup>3</sup> This critical distance between men and the workings of their body suggests our capacity for assigning specific values to certain appendages that can incite moral objection. By viewing the body in these objective terms, it becomes clear how the commodification of human bodies in pornography lends itself to enacting specific criteria judgments for what is censored by content regulation organizations, like the MPAA. Descartes's formulation of the "automaton" connects specifically to the male sex and the nineteenth century study known as sexology, because the male body was not to engage in "inappropriate sexual acts or perversions," because bodily fluids were "a limited commodity" that were "not to be wasted on unnecessary sexual discharge"—that is, non-procreative sex.<sup>4</sup> It follows that when men view their sexual

attractions as pathological, dissociation must be created between men and the natural, physiological response of their penises to sexual stimuli: an erection. The erection becomes something to be scrutinized when it corresponds to sexual stimuli that the man deems to be unnatural or abominable. If a man develops an "unnatural" sexual attraction, or paraphilia (much like internalized homophobia), we can assume that an inner turmoil is created that disembodies the penis and renders it an object wholly separate from the man. This idea is echoed by the "penis run amok," a popular comedic trope in (heterosexual) pornographic film. In an example of an alternative approach to body acceptance, we can see that much of the work of feminist discourse pursues the notions of empowerment through embodiment.<sup>5</sup> To bridge the gap between men and their penises, the same considerations must be applied when considering male bodies—deconstructing the phallus by uniting man and penis.

A critical dissociation between the penis and phallus demonstrates the difference between the organ and the power differentials that it personifies. Mels Van Driel deconstructs the defining features of "manhood" in his history of cultural conceptualizations of masculinity. He describes the penis in terms of its symbolic meaning, going so far as to liken the penis to a "well-trained dog," that under the best circumstances becomes erect when the man desires it; however, the man must account for the consideration that this "dog" may refuse him, "despite the fact that it is trained, or in more human terms, socialized."<sup>6</sup> Although his tone is humorous, by describing the penis in terms of its phallic association with "determination, effectiveness, penetration," Van Driel contributes to the familiar notion of the

penis as a wholly separate entity from the man, implying its destructive power by labelling it in terms that anti-porn feminists would likely deem exemplary of phallic hegemony. The patriarchal power exacted by the commonly-held conceptualization and obscuring of the penis is echoed in Laura Mulvey's sentiment that "the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification."<sup>7</sup> To understand the importance of male objectification and the manners in which men can be objectified, we can look no further than examples from contemporary Hollywood films. After all, Hollywood is an industry that defines its separateness from the pornography industry by its refusal to depict hardcore penetrative sex, and instead, represents the penis as a comedic spectacle.

Attempts to normalize filmic representations of the penis and the specifications surrounding their depiction have implanted the appendage within the realm of comedy. Hollywood places strictures on penile representation to the extent that it constantly reformulates and evolves its premises on how penises can be shown in films, if at all; the Motion Picture Association of America operates on a case-by-case basis that has led some filmmakers, like Nicholas Stoller, to exaggerate penile depictions in their films in order to push the boundaries of what can be accepted. In a *Buzzfeed* interview, Stoller describes shooting his film, *Neighbors* (Stoller, 2014), and his understanding of what censors will allow in terms of penile depictions: "The rule that I heard was that you can show a penis in an R-rated movie; it just can't be above 90 degrees. So even if it's flaccid, like if you're flopping it around, if you flop it side to side, it's fine. If you flop it up and down you can get into trouble."<sup>8</sup> The writers of the film also note feeling a

sense of “activism” when it came to the script they were writing. For their film, *This Is the End* (Rogen, Goldberg, 2013), Evan Goldberg and Seth Rogen intended to push their depictions of sexuality and nudity into absurd territories in order to procure a rating of NC-17 from the MPAA so that they would receive an R upon re-submitting a “slightly cleaner” version of the film for rating.<sup>9</sup> Ideas about the seemingly arbitrary nature by which, however, penises are censored by the MPAA are not isolated to the United States. In the United Kingdom, there is a commonly-believed myth that the British Board of Film Classification used the “Mull of Kintyre test,” a comparative test by which British film censors would determine that a man’s penis could not be shown if its degree of erectness exceeded the angle by which the Scottish peninsula, the Mull of Kintyre, protruded into the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>10</sup> The comedic tone of these content regulation strategies is reflected in the pervasive presence of comedy in pornography. While Hollywood self-censors and shies away from depictions of the penis, pornography embraces the idea that “laughter, as a neutered redirection of anxiety, delivers rich spectatorial rewards for what I will argue is its most preferred consumer: not the male viewer, but male viewers.”<sup>11</sup> The comedic inclinations of pornography—such as the idea of the “penis run amok”—reflect the notion of man’s separateness from his penis and make such a representation more palatable for male audiences. In a short animation film, *Eveready Harton in Buried Treasure* (“Hardon,” 1929), the protagonist’s penis willfully attaches and detaches itself from its owner’s body, getting itself and Eveready Harton in all kinds of mischief in the penis’s “search [for] the penetrable.”<sup>12</sup> The un-corporeality of the penis in this short film reinforces the idea of

the penis as at once lovably mischievous, and conversely, capable of destruction for demonstrating phallic power as wholly separate from the corporeality of the being attached to it.

The phallus’s ultimate objectification of the man is made apparent in heterosexual pornography. A common argument among anti-porn feminists and socially conservative politicians focuses on pornography’s “deleterious” representations of women. These groups argue that representations of women in violent pornography (particularly images that portray women “enjoying” rape) send misogynistic messages that encourage men to rape and commit other violent acts against women;<sup>13</sup> however, some research suggests that heterosexual hardcore pornography tips the burden of negative representations toward men, precisely because “the genre cannot tolerate a small, un-erect penis because the sight of the organ must convey the symbolic weight of the phallus.”<sup>14</sup> Stephen Prince notes that a study conducted by the University of Pennsylvania’s Annenberg School of Communications on a sampling of heterosexual pornography found that 36% of men featured in these films were anonymous (lacking dialogue or clearly defined character) compared to 19% of women, also noting that only 69% of men have major speaking roles compared to 83% of women.<sup>15</sup> Stephen Prince concludes that this study proves that because male performers “have no name, no occupational or social features... no dialogue” that their contribution to the film “is a strictly sexual one.”<sup>16</sup> This contributes to the principle of the penis as a pleasure-giving, rather than a pleasure-receiving organ in these heterosexual pornographic representations—the penis’s function in heterosexual porn is merely to penetrate. The penis is the object of female plea-

sure not because it expresses dominion or commands the slavish attention of the women in the film, but because the man’s worth is determined by his ability to penetrate. In a sense, if the man is unable to perform sexually (or as an actor) he has lost his manhood—he has been castrated. This assumption contains overtures of Freud and the “castration myth,” but the connection I draw here is much more literal. Feminist discourse that distances the penis from its literalness by creating the concept of the “phallus” contributes to the objectification of men in heterosexual pornography. Considering that the audience for hardcore heterosexual pornography is presumably straight and male, this excision of the eroticized penis makes sense, assuming that these viewers are deriving pleasure from gazing at the female bodies on display. In this formulation, the penis is summarily de-eroticized because its value in hardcore heterosexual porn is its ability to penetrate and stimulate women.

This development reveals that pornography hinges not solely on the politics of bodies and their display (because pornography has represented almost every imaginable body), but on the politics of penetration. The politics of penetration are predicated on the penis, the dividing line that separates soft-core from hardcore, and straight from gay. Placing the porn industry’s premier trade publications, XBIZ and AVN, side by side, one notices a clear division between two sides of the industry, “straight” and “gay.” AVN and XBIZ both classify any content outside the realm of heterosexual sex as falling under the broad banner of “gay:” XBIZ features a gay section on its main website,<sup>17</sup> while AVN devotes an entire sister site to the decidedly queerer side of the industry.<sup>18</sup> Neither publication allows for the intersectionality of pornographies within the realm of “straight” porn regardless of

explicit gay or lesbian elements—mostly acts of female bisexuality, acts between multiple partners of either sex—and instead forefronts penetrative sex between men and women as the primary defining characteristic of the “straight” brand of pornography. Any other penetrative act falls within the realm of “gay”—or, more aptly termed: “everything else.” Industry-based divisions in porn represent a clear divide between male-to-female and male-to-male penetration. Sex between women who identify as straight is not explicitly deemed “gay” porn, even though it features two women engaged in sexual play; whether or not the authenticity of the lesbian attraction between the actors is blatantly apparent, this pornography falls under the straight umbrella.

For example, the AVN website’s straight porn webstore contains such selections as *Wet and Oiled Nymphos* (Powers, 2014), a film featuring an extended lesbian sex scene (complete with strapon penetration) between Layla Price and Jodi Taylor.<sup>19</sup> Although this specific scene might conceivably locate the film on the LGBT side of the industry, it is categorized among the straight films. It is worth noting that another film in AVN’s straight webstore, entitled *This Is My First: A Gangbang Movie* (Powell, 2013), features double vaginal and anal penetration of the film’s two female stars, Adriana Chechik and India Summer, by the film’s predominately male cast.<sup>20</sup> While double penetration requires the entry of two penises into a common orifice, the explicit homoeroticism of such an act is downplayed in order to divert focus to the apparent pleasure of the women in the film—the men are merely there to penetrate the women, not to exhibit any semblance of homosexual desire. Male-to-male penetration or explicit homosexual male desire—whether authentic

OR “gay-for-pay”—is not present in the straight section of either publication’s website. To illustrate this point further, a successful division of straight pornography is the “cuckolding” selection, which features men watching their female partners engage in sexual intercourse with other men—this genre is not deemed gay because there is no penetration between the male performers. As of June 11, 2014, the number 5 top-selling “specialty” rental featured on AVN’s front page is *Mean Cuckold 4* (King, 2014);<sup>21</sup> however, in this film and others, like *Forced Bi Cuckolds 2* (Baren, 2009), the homoerotic sexual acts are used to emphasize the man’s degradation for the woman’s sexual gratification. Interestingly, *Forced Bi Cuckolds 2* is covered in GayVN, the homosexual sister site of AVN.<sup>22</sup> Although this film adheres to some conventions of the cuckolding genre found in the straight section of AVN, it is located in the gay section precisely because the men in the film are “forced” to engage in penetrative sexual acts with each other at the woman’s behest. Presumably, pornography featuring lesbian content can intersect with straight pornography precisely because the attractions between female actors are coded in performance, rather than the outward display of an erect penis or penetrative act.

Homosexuality or homoerotic attraction between men remains a taboo in Western culture precisely because male-on-male penetration represents the rejection of the corporeal distance between man and his penis. Industry divisions that separate “straight” and “gay” pornography reflect the difference between “traditional” heterosexual sex and the “other”—a dark continent focusing on penetrative acts between men. When the penis penetrates a woman in heterosexual porn, it operates within the dominant

cultural confines of what is considered acceptable sex; such a compartmentalization of sexuality teaches men that heterosexual attraction is to be taken for granted—men are merely at the mercy of their “natural” physiological responses. This echoes patriarchal ideas about the non-perversity of heterosexuality when compared with homosexuality. Freud notes the operation of homosexuality outside the bounds of “civilized” sexuality; for Freud, the expression of homosexuality and other “perversions” represents the crucial deprivation of a stage in a subject’s psychosexual development and, therefore, “cultural sublimation”—or acceptance into the civilized realm.<sup>23</sup> This distinction places heterosexual sex (male-to-female penetration) on the level of a cultural ideal; homosexuality and other “perversions” are caused by infantile fixations in psychosexual development. Freud believed that a male’s fixation on the “phallic stage” was a core contributor to the development of homosexual feeling.<sup>24</sup>

By examining the ways in which sex and homosexuality have been classified through history, we can understand the subordination of penetrative homosexual acts in modern society and pornography; however, efforts to enact a crossover between “straight” and “gay” audiences for pornography have been attempted, most notably by Wakefield Poole—director of *Boys in the Sand* (Poole, 1971), a homosexual “porn chic” film predating *Deep Throat* (Gerard, 1972). According to Jose Capino, Poole made an attempt to steep his film in “ornate and often ethereal images” in order to make the aesthetic dimensions of his film pleasing to “not just gay men but ‘straights.’”<sup>25</sup> While the film is a sprawling hardcore feature showcasing all male sex, Wakefield Poole’s attempts at making his film appealing to straight audiences and

gay audiences alike marks a significant difference from the goals of straight pornography as evidenced by the selections cited from AVN and XBIZ. For Capino, specific attention to “meat shots” (close-ups of male genitalia) and male “sexual acrobatics” would benefit mise-en-scene analysis in regard to Wakefield Poole’s “expertise.”<sup>26</sup> For it is when considering homosexual or “gay-for-pay” performances that the psychological distance between man and his penis is closed.

While homosexual men do not have any more control over their erections than heterosexual men, homosexual sex in pornography represents a radical—and by some measures, very feminist—rejection of patriarchal ideas about normal and “perverse” sex. The censorship of the penis and the penetrative act lends itself to industrial and economic concerns and this implies that the commodification of these phenomena can be quantified, as in the study analyzed by Stephen Prince. When the penis penetrates a man, it represents a willful denial of the strictures placed on masculinity by society at large. Homosexual men must negotiate these societal (and sometimes legal) restrictions on their sexuality while also coming to terms with the physical response of their penis to “perverse” sexual stimuli. Heterosexual men must merely come to terms with the phallus and its phallic power; if a heterosexual man’s erection coincides with a stimulus he deems as “perverse,” then a duality is created between the man and his penis. Representa-

tions of the penis in pornography must be scrutinized because the penis’s form and function have been divorced in feminist critical discourse—the physiology of the penis renders erections involuntary (reflected in the “penis run amok” phenomenon) so men must negotiate their physical penis and the phallic power associated with it. If that man were to act on that “perverse” sexual attraction, his sexuality—a penetrative act—would represent a willful denial of patriarchal society and bridge the separation between man and his penis. This embodying of homosexual male desire is reflected by the penetrative act in hardcore gay pornography and its subjugation to the gay male gaze. I argue that the benefits Capino speaks of can be found in further analysis of the gay male gaze, or the rejection of Mulvey’s principle that “man is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist like.”<sup>27</sup>

The censorship of the penis is, therefore, not an explicit obscuration in the interest of retaining patriarchal power, but a rejection of authentic homosexual feeling or homosexual attraction between men in a display of the discriminatory and puritanical ideals of homophobia rampant throughout Western history. The sexing of the man—and, more importantly, the penis—is a radical rejection of patriarchal norms, rendering gay pornography as an indispensable social commentary worthy of further critical discourse that should focus not on the penis, but on the complexities of penetration politics.

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# MUSIC COPYWRONG

by Nicole Johal

Any piece of creative work takes time, energy, resources, and skill to make. Imagine you want to write a song of your own after gaining inspiration from listening to a Beatles song. The song you have created, however, has a similar sound to that Beatles song, which makes you subject to copyright infringement meaning you can be sued for up to \$200,000. Copyright and the music industry have a marriage that has made it nearly impossible for new works to build upon those of the past. Culture builds and expands upon its past to bring it back to social relevance, but copyright does not allow this to happen. In the age of 21st century technology, song remixing, media streaming, and downloading have made copyright law become more intrusive than ever before. Modern technology makes it easy to download a song for free off the Internet or to remix and mashup several songs. With the Copyright Act being written in 1976, copyright law is not up to date with this technology. With its outdated laws, copyright has halted the advancement of music by locking up any past musical work to be built and expanded upon to move into the future in a modern context. Copyright has allowed for the music industry and their corporate allies to maintain ownership and control, while artistic freedom is confined behind bars with little wiggle room.

Copyright often has a negative connotation and associates itself with lawsuits, money, and industry. The invention of copyright, however, did not have the initial intent to hinder innovation; it wanted

to inspire innovation. The invention of the printing press brought about the birth of mass production (Eisenstein 121). According to Eisenstein, copyright came about because of the printing press. The evolution for an original work to be printed rather than written, however, created a line of ambiguity. The concept of printing raised the question of differentiating between what was composed and what was copied. Copyright essentially enabled the for the author's interests to be protected in order for their work to not be recited or reciprocated.

The printing press, although leading to mass production of original work, did not benefit the authors because they did not receive a profit. Specifically in relation to the digital age, technological advancements, such as the radio, the television, and the internet, contested copyright by creating an uneven balance between authors and the public; it let the public acquire more access to these works than ever before, void of copyright law (*RiP!: A Remix Manifesto*). With the digital age of technology beginning to rise, the fear of losing ownership brought about the copyright extension. According to the United States Copyright Office, the Copyright Term Extension Act of 1998 extended the terms of the original 1976 Copyright Act by allowing for copyright terms to apply to the author's lifetime plus 70 years and for a corporation to own copyrights for 120 years after creation or 95 years after publication (U.S. Copyright Office). With this extension act, complete ownership was achieved for corporate interests,

essentially. The corporate need to want unwavering ownership over content has made it nearly impossible for the public to now have access to most works. Due to the 1998 Extension, the public domain mostly contained works from the 1920s and earlier. Culture builds off the past and if the past cannot be touched, then how can culture move forward? Corporate interests have put the music industry, among several other branches of creativity, at a standstill.

In the music industry, record companies and the corporate giants that followed copyright law supposedly wanted to maintain “ownership” for the artist. However, corporate interests rarely included the artists in these situations. This has been seen as far back as the 1960s and 70s between the Beatles and their record label when the label sold additional albums “out the backdoor” without the band’s knowledge (Pilato). Issues of ownership have also been seen in the late 2000s, when Eminem sued his record label over manipulated digital royalties that the record company put into a category of the contract that gave the company more money and less to the artist (Michaels). (This occurred because most contracts were written before iTunes and various digital distribution. Rather than rework a contract to take these methods into consideration, the label dealt with it “as they saw fit”.)

Brett Gaylor, the director of *RiP!: A Remix Manifesto*, states how the deejay Amplive remixed several Radiohead songs the band had released online after leaving their label, EMI (*RiP!: A Remix Manifesto*). After Amplive launched his material online, he was sent a lawsuit threat by EMI’s governing corporate group Warner/Chappell, not Radiohead, who parted ways with the company. In the midst of the corporate thirst for money, the artist

was left out of the equation. Radiohead band member Ed O’Brien revealed that because the corporate giants in charge of the record label sought a larger profit, the problem of “ownership” existed as the issue between the band and the label, to which the issue was not settled (Kharas). Corporations originally did not care much about those that were using samples and parts from other people’s work until they saw the monetary value. Ownership meant everything and if anyone was going to profit off that, corporations wanted it to be them.

Ownership has become a major battle within copyright law. Corporations have used copyright as an intermediary reason to sue artists and consumers for illegally acquiring the music created by others. The age of sampling (when a portion of a song is used in another song) and remixing (when an original work’s parts are reworked to create a new song), however, did not happen overnight. Decades of music have been under the influence of sampling and remixing. In *RiP!: A Remix Manifesto*, Gaylor reveals how a well known blues artist named Muddy Waters had acquired inspiration for a song he wrote in 1938 from the 1937 record of another blues artist named Robert Johnson. Waters admitted he had heard the tune before hearing it on Johnson’s record from the blues artist, Son House, who also released a record in the mid-1930s (*RiP!: A Remix Manifesto*). Sample and remix culture has progressed music beyond its original years; Son House’s work inspired Robert Johnson, which then later inspired Muddy Waters. A cycle exists between the work of the old inspiring the work of the new. Gaylor further emphasizes this musical progression by divulging how a song written in 1959 by the Staples Singers titled “This May Be the Last Time” was remixed by the Rolling Stones in

1965, then by the Andrew Oldham Orchestra in 1966, and finally again in The Verve’s “Bittersweet Symphony” in 1997. Through this apparent inspiration, the development and creative capabilities of music have pressed forward. The expansion of new developmental technology and techniques in music over the years has enabled this cycle of influence to occur, but once the value for this work was actualized, corporations saw copyright as their right to the prize: money.

In accordance with the corporate stake in copyright and music culture, innovation’s stunt through the exercise of corporate power in copyright law has put music on a short leash. Modern artists face the trouble of having more obstructed access to practice the same artistic freedom artists of the past could practice with ease, especially in relation to the 1998 Copyright Term Extension Act. This is seen through the innovation of hip-hop. Hip-hop and the popularity it gained from certain artists, such as Public Enemy and De La Soul, caught corporate attention. New technology, such as turntables, allowed these hip-hop artists to remix and sample older music with the beats, sounds, and rap lyrics that they created and overlaid on top of the older tracks (*Copyright Criminals*). In the documentary, Hank Shocklee of Public Enemy states that the turntable (from the deejay culture) helped create hip-hop because it enabled them to find the right beat to build a song with. However, once corporate interests realized the music the company had distributed was being remixed into another artist’s songs, a red flag went up. This red flag was not due to the company’s desire to want to protect its artists and intellectual property; instead, it was because hip-hop artists were making profitable music with their remixing. The corporations did not just want a piece of

the action; they wanted all of it. Music remixing and mashups (compilations of several songs to create a product) were not new. They took past works, rewired them, and let them tell a new story. They simply added to the conversation of music culture. Through the exercise of copyright, however, corporations saw it more as a means to earn a greater profit rather than as a negative force for pushing music forward.

Developmental technology in music posed a problem to outdated copyright laws, but digital and distribution technology of music also increased this issue. The creation of the Internet unleashed an entirely new monster: piracy. Although digital technology enabled for more efficient production, the ability for a work to go “viral”, and the creation of a dense, digital storage, a vast fear of losing ownership arose (Peters 50-51). Peters states that “these new technologies make it easier for pirates and those who want to compete illicitly with that author to make and distribute infringing copies of the work”. Although digital technology helps spread original work, its creators are left feeling jeopardized and “at risk” because of the powers digital technology and the limited restrictions the internet facilitates.

Piracy in the distribution technology of music in the digital age was largely visible with Napster. In *Communications of the ACM*, Joel Waldfogel describes how the invention of Napster in 1998 allowed for peer to peer (P2P) sharing of music through the Internet and that “Napster illustrates that copyright’s effectiveness depends crucially on technology [and] while the recent technological challenge to copyright could have affected any product that can be digitized—text, audio, or video—in reality the recorded music industry was the first to face the new challenge” (Waldfogel). Napster es-

essentially targeted a war on copyright by saying that technology is the key to public freedom of accessing content. With Napster, there was no single connection needed to download this music; the music was all shared amongst the library of its millions of users. The idea that a library of music could be shared with a simple Internet connection was unprecedented. Thus, the monster of piracy was born and still persists today through various websites, such as Beemp3 and emp3world. The music piracy and illegal downloading that Napster allowed for permitted the corporations to come down on Napster's users hard when the company was shut down. Jammie Thompson, a Napster user, was sued by the Recording Industry Association of America (the highest corporate giant of the music industry) for downloading 24 songs. The answer to copyright infringement is continually a lawsuit and owing payment to a corporation of a large interest group. As Napster pointed out, copyright in the music industry is dependent on technology. Technology continues to promote these infractions against copyright law, but nothing has been done to update these laws to diminish the amount of copyright infringement lawsuits that have occurred. Napster alone had over 24,000 copyright infringement lawsuits (*RiP!: A Remix Manifesto*).

Although copyright in the music industry is out of date, in some sense it can be justified. Artists and the companies they work with want to protect their work. The rock band Metallica argues that since millions of dollars were used to create that work, the artist should be the ones to profit because they are the creators of the content (*RiP!: A Remix Manifesto*). Essentially, their creative ability, compositions, and resources were used to launch that song into the world. In other words, Me-

tallica asserts that those who worked on it should have the means to have protection over their original thoughts and ideas; but, if copyright laws completely halt any further use that is not associated with that artist, then how can music progress and move forward?

The *Ateneo Law Journal* states, "In the mid-20th century, musical artists started not only to borrow sounds and compositions from other artists, they also started to 'manually alter those sounds themselves'" (De Jesus). Many popular songs have spawned from remixes, such as MC Hammer's "Can't Touch This" which was remixed from Rick James' "Super Freak," and Stevie Wonder's "Pastime Paradise" was remixed to create Coolio's "Gangsta's Paradise" (*Copyright Criminals*). Both of these songs were created by remixing their ancestors, and both became iconic hits. By reworking the songs previously produced, those sounds of the past were brought back to the forefront. Some may argue that using samples and remixing older creations is not creative at all and is strictly copying, which is why copyright is an important form of protection. This method of creating music, however, works both ways. The popular Etta James song released in 1962, "Something's Got a Hold On Me", has been remixed and sampled in modern artists' work, such as by Christina Aguilera and Flo Rida. Sampling and remixing not only allows for the new to build on the old; it also allows for older music to once again be celebrated and brought back to cultural relevance. Yes, the music from the past was never forgotten, but with these newer techniques of music, a younger audience can become knowledgeable of artists of the past. It is a cycle: new works build on the old and old works rise to the foreground and again with the new.

As Lawrence Lessig, a legal scholar

and strong supporter of the introduction of new copyright law, put it in his book *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity*:

"The consequence of this legal uncertainty, tied to these extremely high penalties, is that an extraordinary amount of creativity will either never be exercised, or never be exercised in the open. We drive this creative process underground by branding the modern-day Walt Disneys "pirates." We make it impossible for businesses to rely upon a public domain, because the boundaries of the public domain are designed to be unclear. It never pays to do anything except pay for the right to create, and hence only those who can pay are allowed to create" (184).

Lessig essentially proclaims that copyright law and the need to regulate its implementations puts creators largely at risk. Lessig largely questions what good these laws are really accomplishing if copyright's original intent to protect the creator's original creativity is now being exploited. In an interview for *Billboard*, Lessig states that copyright law needs to be changed because it is more concerned with those illegally accessing the material, rather than updating it to fit 21st century technological activity that makes it possible and easy to illegally access it (Bruno). New creation, development, and ideas should not be the victim of copyright infringement and lawsuits because copyright law is out of date. Copyright needs

to be changed; otherwise, anyone who downloads a song off the Internet, uploads a video with copyrighted music on YouTube, or creates anything with content they do not explicitly own is technically a criminal. There is an extent to how much copyright law can be exploited, and with its crumbling relevance to how society, as consumers and artists, now functions, the old laws have overstayed their welcome.

There is no escaping the past. History has always built on itself and has learned new ways to govern and act by doing so, and music should be no different. In modern day society, a remix culture that wants to create or a consumer that wants to download a song without paying for it is inevitable. Technology has made these avenues possible because now all that is needed is a computer and an Internet connection. The culture of remixing and sampling is far wider than perceived to be and cannot be stopped. Many people download music illegally off the Internet for free not because they lack respect for the artist or those who have a stake in its contents, but rather because technology facilitates it and makes it easy. Copyright stops the progression and movement of music as well as artistic freedom. The laws are outdated and do not help those who want to create new music by building on the old. Copyright allows for the industry and corporate allies to remain in control and maintain ownership, while artists and consumers are left to pay the price.

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# FOX NEWS NETWORK: INACCURATELY INFORMING THE PUBLIC ON CLIMATE CHANGE

by Jacqueline Kane

A major source for the public's knowledge on current events is the mass media. The public's reliance on TV news and reporting gives news broadcasting companies' enormous power when it comes to influencing the public. They can't always control what people think, but they can control what people think about. Events can either be shoved into the limelight or can be neglected and never heard of. News broadcasting plays a pivotal role in the way the public perceives climate change, specifically human induced global warming. As an issue that was nonexistent before the transformation of the Industrial Revolution, climate change has become a prominent phenomenon that affects societies across the planet. Due to the ill-suited reporting norms that surround the journalistic milieu - most saliently balanced perspectives - climate change is falsely represented, and often misinterpreted. Under the cover of 'balanced reporting', FOX News inaccurately portrays climate change by giving equal time to supporters and refuters of climate change, choosing to host non-scientific or minority scientists, misinterpreting and issuing false scientific data, and reporting on climate change from political angles.

To better understand the topic at hand, some background knowledge on climate science will be helpful. Greenhouse gases are particles that trap heat in the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is the most influential greenhouse gas on earth, due to its abundance in the atmosphere. The burning of fossil fuels and deforesta-

tion increase the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Since the industrial revolution, humans have significantly increased the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation, thus impacting the extent to which heat is trapped in the atmosphere. Although this does lead to an overall global warming, not everyone will see warming. They will see more intense weather, including flooding, droughts, tropical storms and blizzards. Climate change has become a heated topic for debate in the past decades with strong believers on both sides. However, the majority of the scientific community has argued that the greater part of climate change is directly and indirectly a result of anthropogenic activities. Scientific consensus supports human induced climate change with ninety-seven percent of scientists firmly confirming the notion (Laboratory n.d.).

In the U.S., the general public "learns much of what it knows about science and policy from the mass media," most notably television (Boykoff 2007). Certain reporting norms have developed, forming the framework by which broadcasters report on information. The most prominent practice that has become characteristic of reliable reporting is an unbiased viewpoint - a source that does not include their own opinion, but simply and solely the facts. In order to represent a 'fair' perspective, reporters typically give each side equal attention, limiting their biases. For example, when a reporter airs a story about the social effects of putting a park into an urban neighborhood, he or she

would get the opinion of someone who was in favor for the addition and someone who was not in favor. This strategy is effective in giving viewers the pros and cons of the full story. However, when discussing climate change, giving equal time to those who argue climate change is due to anthropogenic influences alongside those who believe climate change is either non-existent or due to natural causes, depicts the issue as being inconclusive and unclear. This contradicts the stance of the ninety-seven percent of the scientific community arguing in favor of human influences.

This paper will focus on addressing FOX News, to examine specific examples where news broadcasters address climate change. FOX News has been the most watched cable news network for the past fifty quarters as of July, 2014 (Wilstein 2014), averaging 1.779 million viewers during primetime hours (Kissell 2014). FOX News is known for being conservatively biased and an advocate for Republican ideologies. As a major player in the mass media news outlet, FOX has “the potential to effectively communicate anthropogenic climate science, as well as the potential to misrepresent, misunderstand, distort and misinform to varying degrees the climate science they cover” (Boykoff 2007). Often, FOX uses ‘balanced’ reporting and other journalistic norms to ultimately amplify the minority stance on climate change.

One of the most significant characteristics of fair reporting is giving equal time to both sides of an issue. If a network airs five minutes of a person arguing why the city needs a park, but only one minute for someone who does not want the park, the argument for why the city needs a park is likely to be stronger. The argument would be more in depth and supported by exceedingly developed points,

thus causing viewers to more likely agree with that person who wants the park to be put in. Exploiting this balanced reporting strategy, FOX aired a debate, commented by Bill O’Reilly in 2010, between Bill Nye the Science Guy, a human-induced climate change supporter, and Joe Bastardi, a meteorologist who denies human involvement. In the seven-minute debate, Nye had been given 185 seconds where he explained data gathered about global temperatures and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Bastardi was given 165 seconds, in which time he blamed the hot temperatures on El Nino. While Nye did have a mere twenty seconds extra to develop his argument, Bastardi frequently interrupted Nye to refute his statements. This may seem like a fair and balanced debate, and it would be if climate change was truly a debatable issue. However, with scientific consensus at ninety-seven percent, the debate illuminated the façade that there is no firm stance on climate change, and that experts have not agreed whether or not climate change is occurring. This falsely depicted the beliefs of the scientific community.

This debate was considerably liberal compared to many of FOX’s other climate change debates. In 2014, Doug McKelway commented a debate between three journalists about President Obama’s funding of one billion dollars to the San Joaquin Valley to help overcome the severe drought in California. Steve Hayes and Charles Krauthammer, both of whom are FOX News contributors, saw a combined air-time of 390 seconds, claiming that there has been no temperature increase in the past seventeen years and that the intense winter in the east was due to the fact that it was, indeed, winter. This is nowhere near equivalent to Juan Williams 90 seconds, in which he distinguished between climate change

and global warming, arguing language is the main discrepancy when discussing climate change. Both Hayes and Krauthammer’s claims were inaccurate; the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report states “the past three decades has been successively warmer at the Earth’s surface than any other preceding decade.” Giving eighty percent of the airtime to two reporters whom provided inaccurate information drained out the legitimacy of Williams’ statements. To make matters worse, McKelway, who was only meant to moderate the debate, jumped in to support Hayes and Krauthammer. Anyone watching the debate who had not seen other reports on the subject would think the climate change deniers were in the right, and likely adopt their stance. Giving equal time to believers and deniers of climate change is dangerous because it radiates the concept that climate change is debatable, and misconstrues the facts.

The types of people FOX News chooses to host also plays a role in determining how accurately they portray climate change. In the debate referred to earlier, commented by Doug McKelway, three journalists were hosted, not one of whom fully understood or sufficiently interpreted the scientific elements of the debate. Krauthammer brushes off the increased intensity of winter by saying the cold weather is simply a natural part of the season. For someone who does not have a scientific background, it seems logical to think that some winters will naturally be worse than others, and that is true. However, there is a distinct difference between weather and climate; weather is local conditions of the atmosphere over a short period of time, while climate is how the atmosphere behaves over a wider region and a longer period of time. So when you look at the climate as a whole over many

years, it is clear there has been a global change in weather patterns, something Krauthammer overlooked. This is why hosting scientists in debates concerning climate change is beneficial, as they serve as sources who can understand and translate scientific data accurately. Having politicians and economists debating the validity of climate change is comparable to people from New York debating whether or not a park should be added in Los Angeles. Sometimes, hosting professionals from other fields is suitable, but only when it can be discussed with scientific facts and political opinions. FOX did not host or quote a scientist once in 2014 (Kalthoefler 2015). This illuminated the FOX networks’ biases to refute the effect climate change is having globally.

It is not only possible to go wrong choosing to feature politicians instead of scientists. It can also be harmful to selectively host particular scientists. One of FOX’s most frequent guests to discuss climate change is Joe Bastardi, a meteorologist who works for the weather forecasting firm Weatherbell. FOX utilizes him as an expert on weather and global atmospheric conditions, continuously being asked about them in relation to global climate change. Neil Cavuto, an anchor on the FOX Business Network, hosted Bastardi on his show, referring to him as “my friend... a WeatherBell chief forecaster, one of the best and more accurate reads of things that are going on [in the atmosphere]” (Theel 2013). In many segments, Bastardi offers his reasons why global temperatures are not increasing (when in fact, they are). He has even said carbon dioxide cannot cause global warming (which is completely inaccurate) (IPCC 2013). Since he has no training or experience in climate science, his beliefs are a product of his perceptions on weather. This is where the differences

between weather and climate become an important distinction. The statements he gives on climate issues are based off weather interpretations, therefore will not always foster appropriate conclusions. In the debate between Nye and Bastardi, Bill O'Reilly says "so once again you have a meteorological explanation for this." He may have a meteorological explanation, but that does not mean a meteorological explanation will produce an accurate answer.

Misinterpretation is another big issue with reporting, especially for people who are not familiar with the scientific community and their jargon. In two separate segments FOX mislead viewers by downplaying the global temperature increases. In FOX's *The Five*, "The Debate Over Climate Change Gets Heated," commented by Doug McKelway on September 30, 2013, it is stated that global temperatures have not risen in the past fifteen years. While the rate of temperature increase has slowed down, it has not stopped completely. *The Five* reports also neglect the global increase in ocean temperatures. The oceans are capable of holding a vast amount of heat and energy that would otherwise be in the atmosphere. This still has an effect on salinity levels, current flows, and evaporation rates, transversely affecting global climate. The FOX reporters made statements that could easily be misinterpreted from complex data, if they were read through carelessly. On October 27, 2014, during *The Kelly File*, reporter Megyn Kelly and founder of the Weather Channel, John Coleman, discussed how studies have found carbon dioxide to be a non-significant greenhouse gas and that it does not play an important role in warming the atmosphere. When Coleman stated carbon dioxide "is an tiny, incy bitsy greenhouse gas, but it's not in any way significant," he is referring to carbon

dioxide's low global warming potential (GWP). A low GWP means that one molecule of carbon dioxide does not trap as much heat as a molecule that has a larger GWP, such as methane. However, since the concentration of carbon dioxide is much greater than that of methane, it has a very significant impact on the warming of atmospheric temperatures. Coleman misinterpreted carbon dioxide's low GWP as meaning it is not a significant heat trapping gas. This flawed analysis was then passed on to FOX viewers. A study conducted by the Union of Concerned Scientists, found that in 2014, FOX News had fifty segments that covered climate science, seventy-two percent of which contained misleading portrayals (Kriegsman 2014). Fifty-three percent of the misleading coverage came from *The Five*.

The context by which topics are discussed can have positive or negative effects on interpretation of facts. In an analysis done on cable news networks that was posted on Media Matters, they found that "in 2013, 73 percent of climate change coverage on Sunday shows was driven by politics" and in 2014, 52 percent (Kalhoefer 2015). FOX News Sunday had only two segments with substantial coverage of climate change over the course of 2014, and both focused on politics. In a segment called Climate Change Chaos, Bill O'Reilly opened with a clip of California Governor Jerry Brown issuing a statement saying that the wildfires in California were due to climate change. The majority of the segment emphasizes how even if California did cut back on carbon dioxide emissions, it would have little impact on global warming due to China's vast quantity of emissions. The report claims "some corporations pollute to make money... they have to be held to account, but those standards should not be

punishing or the U.S. economy will sink even further" (O'Reilly 2014). However, all regulations can be seen as punishing, since they limit a company's ability to use whatever practices they want. This report uses politics to twist climate change regulations into an unnecessary evil that will harm the U.S. economy. O'Reilly goes as far as to say that the U.S. needs to keep up with China, India, and Russia, encouraging companies to continue polluting in order to not lose ground in the global economy. It downplays the impact U.S. pollutions are having, claiming it will do nothing as long as other countries are polluting and comparing it to the setbacks regulation will cause to U.S. corporations. By discussing climate change in regards to its relation to public policy, O'Reilly undermines the role greenhouse gas emissions play in changing the climate, and neglects the seriousness of the issue, thus withdrawing concern from the public.

FOX's inability to accurately report on climate change is in part due to their conservative framing. Bill O'Reilly's *Climate Change Chaos* segment displays him criticizing liberals' actions concerning climate change. He claims that climate change is an "issue fueled by Al Gore, who literally made a fortune scaring folks about climate... liberals are crazed over man-made climate change... pounding the table to save the icebergs" (O'Reilly 2014). 'Scaring,' 'crazed,' and 'pounding' were all dramatically emphasized with lingering vowels, and sarcastic intonation. When stating "some conservatives scoff at [scientists who say that pollution is changing the Earth], they should not," O'Reilly has a straight face and an even tone, as if it is something he had to say

to appear unbiased. In FOX News' September 30, 2013 edition of *The Five*, Greg Gutfeld asks "who is the flat earther?... if only Obama had taken science classes instead of bong hits" after reporting that experts hid the news "that the Earth had not warmed in fifteen years despite the increase in emissions." He continues on, calling meteorologist Eric Holthaus 'crooked,' a "dweeb... drama queen... [and a] dishonest hysteric" after Holthaus tweeted he would never fly in a plane again due to their obscene amount of carbon dioxide emissions. There was no hiding his act of framing the issue to convey that "this is what dooms environmentalism" and that "their views are extreme turnoffs." Anyone viewing this segment would be led to believe environmentalists are lunatics and out of their minds, and that there is no threat of global warming or climate change. The entire segment is misleading and contributes to the FOX networks' framing of climate change.

In conclusion, FOX News misrepresents the consensus of the scientific community's view on anthropogenic induced climate change by utilizing 'balanced' reporting practices, choosing unqualified professionals to host on their programs, misunderstanding and falsely reporting scientific data, approaching climate change from a political perspective, and framing topics conservatively to illuminate the downfalls of climate change. Their broadcasting often contradicts the ninety-seven percent of scientists who agree that human activities significantly impact change to the climate. As an agent of the mass media, FOX News has the ability and power to impact the beliefs of the public by instilling their skewed perspectives on climate change.

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# THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE: ROME AND THE DUALITY OF MODERN LIFE

by Berthold Wahjudi

In 2014, Paolo Sorrentino's sixth feature film *La Grande Bellezza* won the triplet of BAFTA, Golden Globe and Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film. However, some critics reject the films for its stark similarities to Federico Fellini's magnum opus *La Dolce Vita*, calling it an "incoherent pastiche" (Sicinski 2013). Sorrentino himself denied all allegations of stealing from *La Dolce Vita*: "I didn't have any references for this movie. In *Il Divo* there was reference to Fellini and nobody recognized the inspiration. For this movie, I didn't have Fellini in mind" (Donadio 2013). This essay will compare the two films and evaluate whether the 'charges of theft' are justified. The discussion is structured in three sections. First the essay will analyse and juxtapose the films' subject matter. Second, it will dissect and compare their narrative structure. Third, it will look at how the films portray Rome not only their setting, but also as a metaphor for the protagonists internal struggle. This essay will come to the conclusion that *La Grande Bellezza* is undeniably a homage to Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*. Still, Sorrentino's film exists in its own right. This essay will argue that *La Grande Bellezza* transposes the themes of *La Dolce Vita* to the 21st century and re-evaluates them in a post-Berlusconi Italy setting.

One could easily think of a log line that would describe both films equally well: "A series of stories following a week in the life of a philandering journalist living in Rome". The two protagonists of the films display very similar character traits.

Marcello Rubini (played by Marcello Mastroianni in *Dolce Vita*) and Jep Gambardella (played by Toni Servillo in *Bellezza*) are both notorious womanisers. Both are writers suffering from a lack of inspiration and both like to spend their time in what Jep refers to as the "whirlpool" of the Roman high life (c.f. 'il vortice della mondanità'). Jep and Marcello live their lives free from financial worries in material affluence surrounded by the rich and the famous. Yet, both characters are profoundly melancholic and always followed by an air of sadness. *La Dolce Vita* and *La Grande Bellezza* reveals the emptiness of the "sweet life" by focusing on characters that are lost amidst the excesses of hedonism of the decadent Roman high society. The two protagonists wander through a series of ephemeral, disjointed episodes longing for inspirational moments of true beauty but repeatedly get distracted by a never-ending stream of decadent parties. Both filmmakers show their protagonist navigating the duality between bitter and grotesque moments of excess and sweet, almost innocent, moments of self-reflection. In their own words, both directors identify this portrayal of modern urban life as the philosophical core running through their narrative. According to Sorrentino, *La Grande Bellezza* "is trying to say that everybody can find a form of beauty in all the moments of his life and also in the moments where there is vulgarity and squalor" (Donadio 2013). Similarly, Fellini expresses the core idea behind *La Dolce Vita* as follows: "[I] simply meant to say that in spite of everything, life had its

profound undeniable sweetness" (Fellini 1983, p.136).

The narrative structure of *La Dolce Vita* has often been interpreted as being influenced by modernist ideas. Fellini's reflections on the filmmaking process reveal the impact of constructivist thinking on his understanding of cinema: "We have to make a statue, break it, and recompose the pieces. Or better yet, try a decomposition in the manner of Picasso. The cinema is narrative in the nineteenth-century sense: now let's try to do something different" (Kezich 1978, p.25). *La Dolce Vita's* disjointed narrative reflects these Cubist principles (Ricciardi 2000: 201). Marcello Rubini's struggle to find beauty and inspiration is not told in one coherent, linear plot. Rather, the film consists of a various broken up and reassembled narratives. This allows the audience to see Marcello from a wide array of viewpoints and places him and his internal struggle (i.e. the subject of the film) into a greater context. Each episode in *La Dolce Vita* pieces together with the other episodes and creates a cubist piece of cinema that reflects on the hollowness of contemporary life from a multitude of angles. This fragmented narrative structure is characteristic for modernist fiction and features in influential novels such as Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Joyce's *Ulysses* (Ricciardi 2000, p.204). Sorrentino's *Bellezza* also follows these modernist principles. Like Marcello in *Dolce Vita*, Jep is a flaneur, who aimlessly wanders through the streets of Rome, stumbling from one episode to the next. Both stories are reminiscent of the works of Charles Baudelaire, the father of modernist literature. Jep and Marcello's voyeuristic gaze on Roman life can be interpreted as a direct analogy to Baudelaire's descriptions of Parisian life during the Haussmann era (Ricciardi 2000). Even though both protagonists recognise

and acknowledge the emptiness of their own lives, they simultaneously take "an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite" (Baudelaire 1964, p.9). In both films, the disjointed narrative structure serves a dialectical purpose. Both films represent the duality of fascination and alienation with the vulgarity of modern urban life. The two main characters stumble from episodes of vulgarity and decadence into episodes of 'sweetness' and innocence only to return to self-indulgence afterwards. Fellini regarded it as a moral imperative to interrogate this dilemma of modern life in all of his films (Wood 2005: 216) and Sorrentino's *Bellezza* seems to have followed suit.

Although both films critically examine the excesses of Roman high society, both filmmakers refrain from passing normative judgements about the hedonism they depict. Fellini always carefully asserted that *La Dolce Vita* is not supposed to put forward a moralistic argument. Instead, his aim was "to film a trial as seen not by a judge but by an accomplice" (Alpert 1986, p.151). Paolo Sorrentino assumes a very similar perspective in *La Grande Bellezza*. This is mostly embodied by Jep's cynical attitude towards life. In one particularly striking scene, Jep humiliates a female friend who criticises Roman society and thus elevates herself to a moral high ground. Jep counters by exposing the underlying 'untruths and fragility' that underpin her own personal life. He concludes: "instead of acting superior and treating us with contempt, you should look at us with affection. We're all on the brink of despair, all we can do is look each other in the face, keep each other company, joke a little..." (Sorrentino 2013). Both Fellini and Sorrentino refrain from passing moralistic judgement on the

debauched Roman society, instead they look at it with affection.

When he was asked about the similarities between his film and *Dolce Vita* Sorrentino once commented: "Of course, Roma and La dolce vita are works that you cannot pretend to ignore when you take on a film like the one I wanted to make. They are two masterpieces, and the golden rule is that masterpieces should be watched but not imitated" (Willen 2013: 4). Given the similarities pointed out in the discussion above, one could jump to the conclusion that Sorrentino broke his own 'golden rule'. Still, the two films are different in one decisive aspect: their portrayal of Rome. In both films, Rome plays a central role not only as the setting of the stories but also as a metaphor for the characters' inner struggle. Fellini overtly stated that his representation of Rome in *La Dolce Vita* functions as a metaphor: "I have always said that the Rome of *La Dolce Vita* was an internal city and that the title of the film had no moral or denigrating purpose" (Fellini 1983: 136). In fact, Fellini originally intended to name his film "Babylon, Two Thousand Years After Christ" (Adams 1995: 110). Babylon is widely agreed to be the biblical metaphor for Rome and as a symbol for all sorts of evil. In the Book of Revelation, Babylon stands for a society steering towards its own destruction. This gloomy outlook towards the future underpins Fellini's film. "The prospect is catastrophic, but I accept it from several points of view: because as a filmmaker I find it enticing, and because of the Catholic harassment we have borne for 2000 years" (Fellini 1983: 140-41). In *La Dolce Vita*, everything modern and futuristic is a symbol for the rottenness of Roman society. This is made evident by the way in which Fellini uses architecture to symbolise the stark contrasts of the sacred and the profane. Rome's mod-

ernist architecture, the Fascist vision of the "Esposizione Universale", is used to embody Marcello's alienation with the modern world: the church in which Marcello meets Steiner, the apartment that Marcello shares with his paranoid lover Emma and the brutalist urban landscapes in which the prostitute Ninni lives. The fleeting moments of 'sweetness' in *La Dolce Vita* take place in more classical settings: the Via Veneto, the Caracalla baths, the Fontana di Trevi, and the sixteenth-century Odelscalchi castle at Bassano di Sutri (Ricciardi 2000: 211). This use of architecture to represent the sacred-profane dichotomy in *La Dolce Vita* is most striking in the episode in which Marcello's father attends the esteemed Kit-Kat club and drives off with a beautiful young dancer but as soon as he reaches the dancer's home in a modernist apartment complex, he suffers from a heart attack. Modern Roman architecture in *La Dolce Vita* stands for the mass-produced reality of modern times. Fellini's message is clear: Marcello's chronic melancholia is an ailment of recent times - a modern malaise.

Paolo Sorrentino on the other hand shuns any modernist architecture in *La Grande Bellezza* (at least for exteriors). His vision of Rome is that of a living museum. The floating camera work of his cinematographer Luca Bigazzi lets our gaze wander past countless numbers of statues, pillars, arches and Renaissance paintings. Sorrentino makes a point to represent Rome as the 'eternal city'. Consequently, he found another mean to symbolise the clash of the sacred and the profane in his film: music. The soundtrack of *La Grande Bellezza* combines modern liturgical music with Italian bubble-gum pop. The cuts between these two extremes are sometimes drastic, e.g. the cut between the first scene in which a Japanese tourist dies from a heart attack (overwhelmed by

Rome's beauty) to the second scene, depicting Jep's excessive birthday party set to the tune of Bob Sinclair's "Far l'amore". Whilst this cut is a clear reference to *La Dolce Vita* (in which Fellini cuts from a wide shot of the Vatican to the screaming face of a Javanese dancer), Sorrentino's juxtaposition of the two extremes almost seems like a hyperbole of Fellini's motive. Also, by using music instead of architecture to represent the banality of life, Sorrentino signals that the dreariness and emptiness of life is all-pervasive and not just linked to certain geographical spaces of the 'new and modern' Rome. Sorrentino takes the argument that Fellini makes in *La Dolce Vita* and expands it. Fellini seems to convey the feeling that Marcello's struggle is a modern malaise, i.e. a result of the rapidly changing physiognomy of the city. However, by linking the same sentiment back to the image of Rome as the eternal city, Sorrentino reveals that Jep's chronic melancholia is not a consequence of modernity, but an integral part of life itself.

The discussion above has clearly shown that the two films share too many similarities to deny the influence of *La Dolce Vita* on *La Grande Bellezza*. Sorrentino himself somewhat acknowledges that he has to pay tribute to Fellini: "*La Dolce Vita* is a film that tries to understand the meaning of life in a world that is losing this meaning. That is a sensation I can feel right now in Rome, the sense that life is futile, that you can't find a real sense of purpose." (quoted in Burr 2014) However, it would be unfair to shrug Sorrentino's film off as a mere imitation of Fellini. Rather, the film should be seen as a transposition of Fellini's ideas into the 21st century. As such, the film confirms and expands Fellini's reflection about urban life. Instead of interpreting the absurdity of urban life as a result of modernity, Sor-

rentino shows that this was always an integral part of life in the eternal city. Again, this idea can be linked back to Charles Baudelaire.

"Paris change! mais rien dans ma mélancolie  
N'a bougé! palais neufs, échafaudages, blocs,  
Vieux faubourgs, tout pour moi devient allégorie,  
Et mes chers souvenirs sont plus lourds que des rocs"

- (Baudelaire 1968: 168)

Loosely, this can be translated to: "Paris changes! but my melancholy did not go away! New palaces, scaffolding, blocks, old suburbs, they all become an allegory to me / And my dear memories are heavier than rocks". In the same sense, Rome changed in the over 50 years that lie between the two films. But nothing changed about the absurdity of life in Rome. Sorrentino adds a postmodern twist to Fellini's modernist vision. The journey of the two characters Jep and Marcello runs parallel only until the very end of the two films. Fellini does not grant Marcello any sort of redemption. In *La Dolce Vita*'s last episode, the audience is led to falsely believe that Marcello might find some sort of closure by running into Paola, the young girl, on the beach. But ultimately, Marcello enters and exits the story without having become any smarter. Jep Gambardella on the other hand recognises the subjectivity of his malaise. In the end he concludes: "After all, it's just a trick". Sorrentino grants his protagonists a form of catharsis. Jep Gambardella learns to embrace the absurdity of life and eventually finds the inspiration to write a new novel. For this reason, *La Grande Bellezza* is not just a mere pastiche of *La Dolce Vita*. Rather, Paolo Sorrentino re-evaluates Fellini's ideas in the 21st century. But after all, one thing is clear: *La Dolce Vita* can exist with-

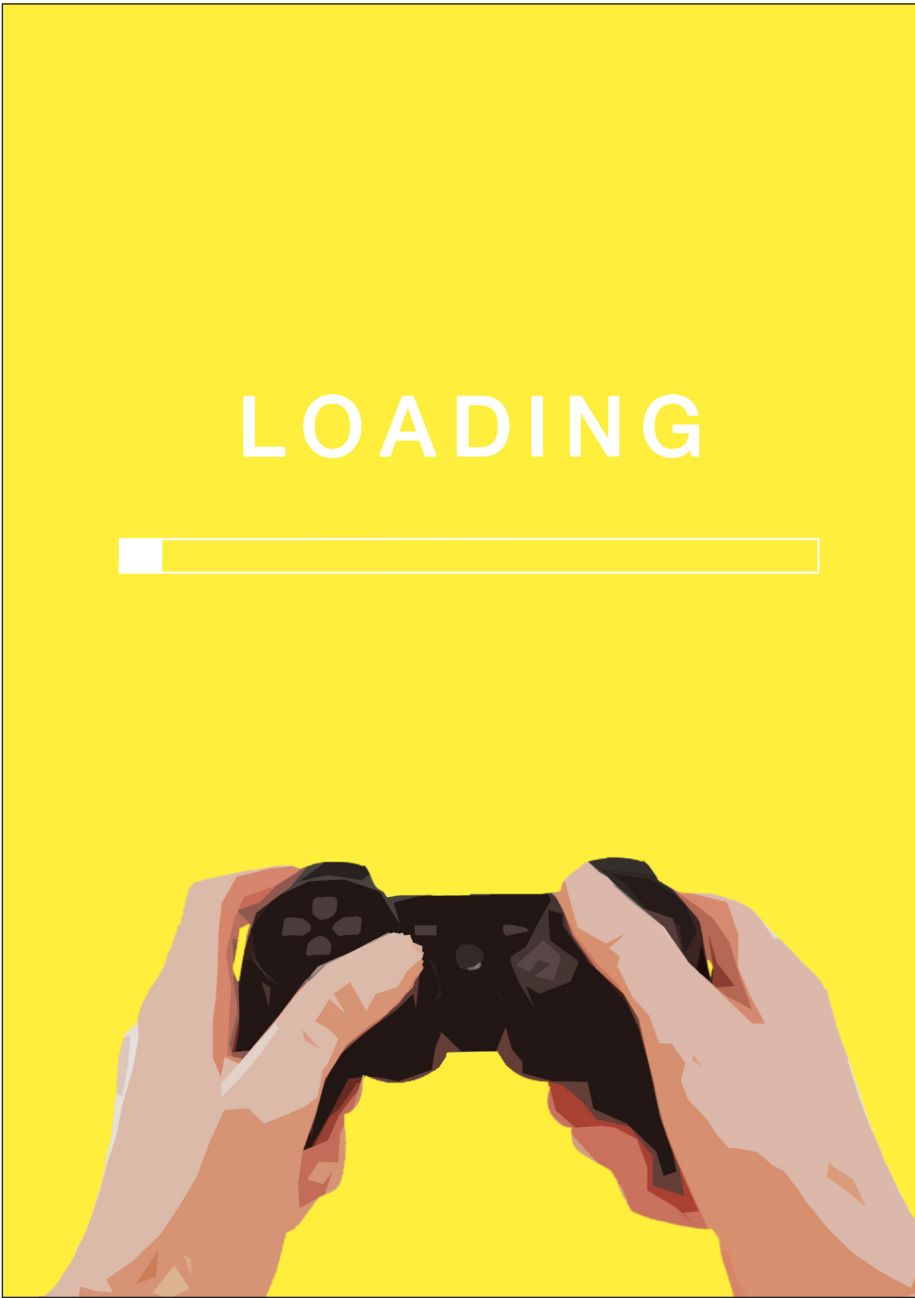
out *La Grande Bellezza*, whereas *La Grande Bellezza* would never have been made without *La Dolce Vita*.

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LOADING



# SECTION 3: EVOLUTION OF INTERACTION

# VIDEOGAMES AS ART: BEYOND THE LIMITS OF FILM DISCOURSE

by Alberto Lopez

It is important to consider the critical discourse surrounding film during its infancy to gain a better understanding of the critical discourse surrounding videogames now. Emerging art forms are always compared to their closest predecessors. In the case of film it was, in its infancy, compared to and spoken of in similar terms as theater; now it is videogames which are being compared to and spoken of in similar terms as film. In identifying this parallelism between film and videogames we can continue this trend in ways that are beneficial to establishing a critical discourse for videogames divorced of filmic critical discourse by applying the same broad artistic theories which helped establish film as an art form independent of its closest predecessor.

These theoretical parallelisms include the way in which the technological reproducibility of films and videogames alike complicate the notion of their auratic qualities, and the way in which their respective formal limitations are the source of their artistry.<sup>1</sup> Videogames, in accordance with these theories, are an art form because they possess an aura same as any other art form, and because they possess limitations which the artist must either overcome in the process of recreating reality or exploit in the process of artistic expression independent of reality.<sup>2</sup> We must clarify auratic qualities and formal limitations unique to videogames because it is necessary to speak of videogames on their own terms, to establish a discourse surrounding videogames independent of filmic discourse (or that of any other

preceding artistic medium), to better understand the medium itself: to understand and judge it in relation to itself and not in relation to any other medium, for then our understanding of videogames as a medium will necessarily be limited by our understanding of whatever medium we are comparing it to. Having made that statement, it seems counterproductive that this paper attempts to establish an artistic discourse of videogames by relying on theories applied to film. However, the theories taken from filmic discourse and here applied to videogames, are broad enough that they can be applied to media other than film. Furthermore, in speaking of videogames in relation to film and enumerating the many points of divergence between each medium (instead, as has been the tendency, of enumerating the many ways in which videogames resemble film) we can begin to develop a language and method for discussing videogames independent of other media.

In its infancy, cinema was spoken of in terms similar to those used to discuss theater.<sup>3</sup> It was compared to theater, which was the standard by which cinema was judged, as theater was cinema's closest predecessor. V. O. Freeburg considered that comparing cinema to theater was erroneous (and, like Arnheim, he believed its limitations were not necessarily detrimental).<sup>4</sup> Of course at the time that Freeburg wrote, "It is a common error to judge the photoplay by the standards of the stage drama, and to condemn it because it cannot do what the stage drama can do," he was speaking of silent cinema, but the

statement still holds: to judge the artistic merit or success of any given work of art by the standards of a totally different medium is misguided and counterproductive.<sup>5</sup> Similarly to compare videogames to cinema, or any other narrative- and character-driven medium, and then to claim that videogames are deficient as an art form based on the fact that they do not meet the same artistic criteria associated with the said medium, is misguided and detrimental.

If the critical success of a videogame is dependent on how cinematic it is, the possibility remains that those qualities which are unique to videogames as a medium are given less importance than those which make them cinematic. The degree of interactivity in a game is sacrificed for a cinematic aesthetic which can only be achieved through an increased constraint on the player's agency. This can already be seen in the increasing trend of incorporating quick-time events (or QTEs) into videogames: in portions of games that play less like normal games and more like filmic scenes, complex motion, indeed all motion, is reduced to a few simple button presses, and the intricate, often elegant, control schemes used to play the game proper are made obsolete. It is often the case that videogames are at their worst when they strive to be more cinematic; the same way that films which merely recreated a theatrical experience, whether by simply filming a stage play in progress or affecting a stage-like aesthetic, are neither great films nor great theater (one exception that comes to mind is Lars von Trier's *Dogville*, though he could not recreate that success in *Manderlay*).<sup>6</sup>

V. O. Freeburg went on to state, "the photoplay as an art medium [...] inherits something from each of the elder arts, and yet differs essentially from them all."<sup>7</sup>

He articulated precisely what it was that cinema inherited from theater: "it inherits from stage drama the power of delineating human characters in a series of actions interpreted by actors," and from acting "the methods of this visual representation."<sup>8</sup> In the same way videogames inherit something from all other art forms, including cinema, while remaining essentially different. From cinema it has inherited cinematographic techniques of depicting action and perspective, as well as methods of sequencing narrative information from film editing. Just like an entire discursive language evolved around film allowed for a more adequate and complete discussion and understanding of film, a new language must evolve around videogames lest it remain limited as a medium by the language which we use to discuss it. As mentioned before, we must enumerate many elements unique to videogames so as to help formulate new ways of discussing them: these include identifying those auratic qualities and formal limitations which make videogames different from other art forms.

Technological reproducibility eliminates the aura of the work of art being reproduced because it does away with its singularity, the here and now (especially in performance) which is the basis for its authenticity.<sup>9</sup> Film, whose process of creation is that of technological reproduction and which must necessarily be reproduced many times over in order for a wider audience to be reached, therefore lacks these auratic qualities twofold. Videogames are an interesting permutation of film in terms of their technological production and reproduction in relation to its auratic qualities. First, I argue, their mode of production, which is a process closer to animation than live-action filming (particularly in a modern context in which



most animated films produced are now animated digitally), is similar to the production of more traditional art forms, although the process of production is technological. Secondly, the interactive nature of the medium lends it an aura closer to that of theater or performance art.<sup>10</sup> The interactivity of the medium means that the progression, linear or multi-linear, is one dictated by the player so that the experience of playing the game varies from player to player and from play through to play through. It is this variation that produces the medium's aura, an aura that is similar to that of a live performance (in this case the player is simultaneously audience member and performer).<sup>11</sup>

The aura of a live performance is lost when technologically reproduced on film or otherwise recorded.<sup>12</sup> However, the live performance given every night after the first is itself a reproduction of that first performance: among a constantly morphing sea of myriad minutiae, which has the effect of duping us into thinking that any one performance is different from the last, the true and static performance which has been the same since the very first can be found. Paradoxically the reproduction is not physical but thematic and historical, yet it is the physicality of aging that undoes the aura of the live performance. The same applies to videogames because although each play through can never be exactly the same as the last, there is in fact a predetermined structure and temporal geography which the player must inevitably adhere to, even in non-linear, multi-linear or open-world games. Progression has been predetermined long before the player begins engaging with the text: there is always a beginning, an end and a series of predetermined conditions which must be met for progression to be possible. In most cases there is no real spontaneity, only the illusion of spontaneity:

enemies re-spawn in the same places after being triggered in the same ways, and it is only the actions of the player that change the conditions of the game world. Thus the true and static performance contained within the text can be found among the myriad minutiae of the game world (all of which have been predetermined) and the player's behavior within this game world (which is limited by the parameters of the game world itself, parameters that, again, have been predetermined).

The move towards perceptual realism in film is a trend mirrored in videogames (in fact, there is a lot of overlap in terms of the technology used to achieve greater perceptual realism in film and videogames: technology such as motion capture and rotoscoping, two techniques which lend video games some of the indexicality of film, if in a very watered-down way). That film mechanically reproduces reality was precisely why many art critics denied film the status of art in its infancy, a view which Arnheim echoes at the beginning of *Film as Art*.<sup>13</sup> Arnheim argues that the limitations of silent film, and film in general, are precisely what qualified it as art: in fact film does not reproduce reality all that well, and thus, the objection of its function as the mechanical reproduction of reality gone, it is an art form.<sup>14</sup> This theoretical through line can be applied to videogames, which in their infancy possessed many limitations. Of course most modern games, particularly those by big developers, can be described as cinematic, a quality which they strive for, and thus share many of the same limitations with film which Arnheim articulates in that essay.<sup>15</sup> That those limitations apply to videogames is reason enough to label videogames art; in fact other scholars have concluded that since under any contemporary definition of art film and animation qualify as art forms,

videogames, which share many similarities to these art forms, can thusly also be considered an art form.<sup>16</sup> Of more interest are the limitations unique to the medium of videogames.

Game designer Warren Specter has stated, "We're still making (and remaking!) *The Great Train Robbery* or *Birth of a Nation* or, to be really generous, maybe we're at the beginning of what might be called our talkies period. But as Al Jolson said in *The Jazz Singer*, 'You ain't heard nothing yet!'"<sup>17</sup> If one is to apply the analogy of silent film to the chronology of videogame history using silent film history as Specter has done, one might say that early videogames such as *Pong* or *Space Invaders* constitute nothing but a cinema of attractions, and earlier proto-videogames such as *OXO* and *Spacewar!* constitute nothing more than zoetropes. If this analogy illustrates nothing else it illustrates how many of the limitations faced early on were and still are technological, to the extent that the technological challenge was not how faithfully can reality be recreated, but can it be recreated at all. To ask what the artistic merits of early film and proto-filmic devices were in relation to their limitations is moot because these devices could scarcely reproduce natural motion much less a naturalistic reality. One must get more creative to find the true defining limitation of videogames, and look into what is unique to videogames: motion through a virtual world.

Motion in a videogame is determined not by laws of nature, but by the physics which have been programmed by a programmer. Though physics within a game are always getting better (read, closer to real-world physics), programmers can not yet account for the infinite qualitative and probabilistic factors which affect matter and motion through space and time, nor can they simulate every kind of

motion. Indeed, they don't have to; the programming of realistic physics is one of many aesthetic measures taken to increase the illusion of reality. However, if desired physics can be programmed to be utterly unrealistic.

Unrealistic physics are integral to the gameplay of games like *Gravity Rush* and *Goat Simulator*. In the former, gravity is controlled by the player: the unrealistic physics which are so integral to the gameplay of the game as well as the narrative arc of the game can only be achieved when the limitation the medium imposes on the recreation of real-world physics is embraced.<sup>18</sup> In the latter, ragdoll physics and bugs (errors in software), two traditional hallmarks of a deficient game, are embraced for their ability to produce comedic moments, essentially transforming the game into a meta-text that dismantles the notion that physics and motion in games must be realistic and naturalistic in order for gameplay to be a rewarding experience: it exposes the fact that everything in a game is the creation of an artist, and it is she, not reality, who dictates the conditions of the game world.<sup>19</sup>

Another limitation which arises out of the interactivity of the medium (already a source of the medium's aura) is the illusion of choice. Every real-world experience is directed by free will, by our ability to decide how the experience will progress in space and time or otherwise the ability of others to impose on our free will and ability to choose their own so that the experience becomes a negotiation of opposing wills. A videogame experience in its entirety is a continuous negotiation between the will of the player and the will of the game designer. Rather than attempt to create the illusion of choice, and thus spontaneity, dynamism, chaos and entropy (for paradoxically whatever chaos the player encounters in the game world has

been perfectly orchestrated, and is therefore not true chaos, by a game designer and her team), this limitation must be embraced.

*The Stanley Parable* is one such game that embraces this limitation and makes it integral to the gameplay. The player's actions are narrated by an unseen narrator who often narrates what the player will do before the player does it, at which point the player can either choose to do what the narrator has stated she will do or do something completely different.<sup>20</sup> In some cases the player's choices change the course of the game's narrative, in other's the player is returned to the predetermined track of the game and progression is only possible once the "correct" choice is made; the narrator often comments on the player's choice.<sup>21</sup> Of course the game only gives the illusion of choice, something that the narration is aware of. As with *Goat Simulator*, the way in which the game embraces this particular limitation and comments on it makes it a meta-text.

Ultimately, what these games show us is that just as the best, and most artistically gratifying films are those which embrace their limitations as strengths, the best, and most artistically gratifying videogames are those that embrace theirs,

for they reveal the necessity of the artist, dismantling the notion that technological media can operate autonomously in capturing reality.<sup>22</sup> In fact technological media such as photography, film, audio recordings and now videogames are not autonomous, and their use can extend beyond the mere representation of reality. The same theories which helped establish the status of film as art can be applied to videogames, as I have done, leading to a better understanding of the medium as an art form and to the emergence of a language or discourse unique to the discussion of this medium. Of course, much work can still be done: in terms of the theories which I have applied (this paper only exposes the tip of the iceberg, one might also ask what the limitations of independently produced games are and what they mean in terms of artistic production, for example), in terms of the application of other theories, and in terms of subsequently analyzing my analysis and those of others so that gradually videogame discourse can be refined to a point where comparison to film and other mediums is not a necessity (for example, analyzing why it is that my examples of artistically successful games are almost exclusively meta-texts).<sup>23 24</sup>

#### Endnotes

1. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility: Third Version" (1936-39), in *Selected Writings*. Vol. 4, 1938-1940, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 251-283.
2. Rudolf Arnheim, "Film as Art," in *Film: An Anthology*, ed. Daniel Talbot (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959), 294-323.
3. Ricciotto Canudo, "The Birth of a Sixth Art," in *French Film Theory and Criticism*, 58-66. Canudo is just one example of cinema being spoken of and judged in relation to theater. Munsterberg is another.
4. V. O. Freeburg, "The New Art," in *The Art of Photoplay Making* (New York: MacMillian, 1918), 1.
5. Ibid.
6. Hugo Munsterberg, "The Purpose of Art," in *Hugo Munsterberg on Film*, ed. Allan Langdale, 113.
7. V. O. Freeburg, "The New Art," in *The Art of Photoplay Making* (New York: MacMillian, 1918), 1.
8. Ibid.
9. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility: Third Version" (1936-39), in *Selected Writings*. Vol. 4, 1938-1940, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 253-256.

10. Ibid., 253-256, 259-261.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Rudolf Arnheim, "Film as Art," in *Film: An Anthology*, ed. Daniel Talbot (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959), 294.
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24. And finally, I would not argue that Goat Simulator is great art.

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# GUIDING LIGHT:

## HOW MODERN 3D GAMES DIRECT THE PLAYER ALONG THE INTENDED PATH

by David Wills

The video game is a relatively new medium for artistic expression, and the three-dimensional video game is even newer. The three-dimensional video game, or 3D game, is unique from other media of artistic expression in that it asks the viewer, or player, to not only watch and listen to the game, but also to interact with it and move through the 3D space within the game. Currently, however, the 3D game is limited to a two-dimensional plane in the form of a television or a monitor. 3D game designers need to account for this when they develop their games. Players have to orient themselves within the 3D space of the game through the two-dimensional plane on which the player is experiencing the game. This can prove to be difficult, much more difficult than if the player were experiencing the 3D game through a virtual reality headset where total immersion is simulated. Because of the two-dimensional plane by which current 3D games are restricted, players are asked to immerse themselves in 3D space the same way a film or television show would: through a flat rectangular image within the player's real environment (e.g., a living room).

Despite what may seem like a complicated problem for the 3D game to overcome, game designers have been solving the problem for the past 30 years, bringing artistic experiences and narratives that often resonate with players more than film or paintings because of how much they ask of the player. The best 3D game designers construct experiences that players can explore without losing orientation or

direction of where to go next. Direction is an especially complicated problem for modern video games, and it is the focus of this paper.

Even though the 3D game allows the player to explore three-dimensional space, there are limits to where the player can go or what the player can do. Designers only code as far as they want the player to move, however they have to make the environment look and feel real or else it will break the immersion. A first-person shooter like *Half-Life 2* (Valve Corporation, 2004) will render an entire city while only allowing the player to move in a small portion of that city.<sup>1</sup> If the game only rendered the area in which the player can move, the player would not have the feeling that they are within a big city full of skyscrapers and thus the immersion and intended emotional response would be broken. However, this introduces a new problem: if the 3D game renders the entire city, how can the game designer direct the player along the proper path without breaking the player's immersion? How does the player know where to go next and where not to go next? These are the central questions I will address in this paper, and I will attempt to answer them by analyzing how critically acclaimed modern 3D games direct the player on where to go.

Note that I will be focusing my attention on games where the player controls the position of the camera (i.e., the viewable game space). There are some 3D games out there, such as *Super Mario Galaxy 2* (Nintendo EAD Tokyo, 2010), which

orient the camera automatically for the player and guide the player in the right direction by facing the camera where the player should proceed.<sup>2</sup> However, games that give the player complete control of the camera often require much more nuanced methods of directing the player, which is why I will focus on those games instead.

Like with any visual media, the 3D game works best when it establishes patterns and conveys those patterns to the player in a subtle, non-intrusive way. A notable example of this in another medium is how film might use non-diegetic jazz music to indicate that two characters are falling in love. Video games require pattern recognition because many of them often have the player doing similar things repeatedly. Each game introduces its own set of patterns that distinguishes itself from other games, and to analyze all of these in-depth would require an essay per game. However, there are common patterns and cues that are ubiquitous across many critically acclaimed 3D games which direct the player in the intended direction in an immersive, non-intrusive manner. These common patterns are what I will be looking at.

I will start by getting the obvious cues out of the way. As I said before, game designers will often only code as far as they want the player to move, despite what the game may visually render. Because there is only so much explorable space within the game, designers need to come up with ways to ensure the player stays within this space. Some games utilize invisible barriers that keep the player from moving in a particular direction, despite that 3D space being visible within the game. This method is generally frowned upon, though. It does not give the player any directional cues other than "you cannot

go here," which just ends up making the experience feel restricted and ultimately breaks the player's immersion. Another way that some 3D games overcome this obstacle is by killing the player's avatar if they stray too far from the playable space. This method is commonly seen in multiplayer games where the player's avatar will die if they fall off a cliff or if they stray too far away from the intended space. In *Battlefield 4*'s multiplayer mode, if a player moves to the edge of the playable space, a countdown will appear and inform the player that their avatar will die if they do not return.<sup>3</sup> While this method is not as frowned upon as the invisible wall, it still has the potential of breaking the player's immersion in the 3D space due to its hands-on approach of directing the player.

The most common (and most obvious) way games keep the player from straying too far from the playable space is by creating physical barriers that keep the player from moving any further. Many games take place in interior areas, which makes creating these barriers as easy as creating walls that block the player from moving any further. *Portal* (Valve Corporation, 2007) is an excellent example of this, as most of the game takes place within a series of large testing labs that are each sectioned off by walls.<sup>4</sup> The player is restricted to the level's walls, however the rooms created by these walls are large enough for the player to move around in without getting claustrophobic or losing their sense of orientation. For games that take place in wide open spaces like a city, game designers often wall off players by creating visual barriers within the environment that block the player from proceeding in that direction. This can often be a tricky task because if the barrier looks noticeably out of place in the

game's environment or if it looks like it is only there to block the player, it can break the player's immersion. The military shooter series *Call of Duty*<sup>5</sup> often does this by having barbed wire that restricts the player from proceeding in a certain direction while allowing the player to see past the explorable 3D space, all in a way that is believable within the series' war-torn setting. All of these elements establish the boundaries for the maze-like structure of many modern 3D games which is essential to keep players in the intended space. However, game designers still need to direct the player through that 3D maze so that the player does not constantly question what to do next.

Environmental design is crucial to directing the player, as it can be an effective hands-off method of guiding the player in the right direction without outright telling the player where to go. Because the 3D game is so dependent on the visual sense to navigate the 3D space, most of the ways environmental design directs the players are visual. One common way that game designers indicate a certain area is more important than another is by rendering it in higher detail or in higher focus. The most common application of this is with doors, especially in *Half-Life 2*. Lower-resolution doors without protruding doorknobs are a sign to the player that they should keep moving, whereas high-resolution doors with protruding doorknobs signals that it is an important door the player can open and walk through. Some game designers also place geometric markers within the environment that guide the player in the proper direction. These are often very subtle and work mostly to guide the player's eye towards areas of significance. The opening sequence of *Batman: Arkham City*<sup>6</sup> (Rocksteady Studios, 2011) contains a solid white line on the ground of the prison

that starts in the middle of the room and continues off-screen towards the right, which is the direction the game wants the player to move. (Figure 1) This line does not appear to be out of place in the setting, and it is a simple way of guiding the player in the proper direction.



Figure 1: *Batman: Arkham City*

One of the most significant environmental cues that modern 3D games use to direct the player is lights, specifically non-natural lights. Lights illuminate the proper path in a hands-off way that does not break the player's immersion. *Half-Life 2* uses lights for subtle direction very effectively; if an area in the game is illuminated by a ceiling light or wall light, especially blue-tinted lights, chances are that is where the game wants the player to go. Conversely, if an area is not illuminated by light, it signals to the player that there is probably nothing there and that he or she should proceed to an area that is illuminated. Color works in both in conjunction with lighting, establishing patterns that the player will intuitively recall. Games often use the traditional green and red colors to indicate "go" and "stop," respectively. *Bioshock*<sup>7</sup> (2K Boston, 2007) is a perfect example of this; when a door is sealed off, a red light will appear, and when a door is open, a green light will appear. However, some games will establish their own color patterns that players may recognize without even realizing it. *Half-Life 2*, for example, uses blue-tinted lights more than any other color to guide the

player in the intended direction. Humans are especially acute to color recognition, giving game designers a simple but effective way to establish patterns and direct the player in the right direction.

A well-designed game can often direct the player through the game's 3D space entirely through visual cues like color, as it is not uncommon for players to play a video game without sound (something that is practically unheard of in other audiovisual media like film). However, many games do use audio cues that compliment visual cues to help guide the player on where to go. In *Bioshock*, for example, the player is told via radio to find the "Emergency Access route" in order to proceed. If the player looks around in the environment, he or she can find a door with a sign over it that says "Emergency Access," indicating the route the player needs to go. While the player may not necessarily utilize this method of direction, it is there in case the player really needs it.

Another method of player direction that game designers use works in conjunction with a given game's overarching design philosophy. Many modern games are designed in such a way that the more the player progresses, the more skills or abilities they have at their disposal. Oftentimes, the game will introduce a new ability and then immediately introduce an obstacle that the player can only overcome with that ability. In *Bioshock*, for example, there are areas within the game space that are blocked by huge chunks of ice. (Figure 2) The player cannot pass this area until they receive an ability that lets them shoot fire from their hands and melt the ice away. Any game that uses this particular design establishes its own visual cues that indicate to the player which item the player should use to traverse that particular obstacle. Therefore,

when a player comes across this particular cue, they will know that area is accessible, but only if they can reveal the path themselves. Players of *Bioshock* will recognize that whenever they see a large chunk of ice, they can and probably should go there at some point, but they can only go there when they use the fire ability to melt the ice.

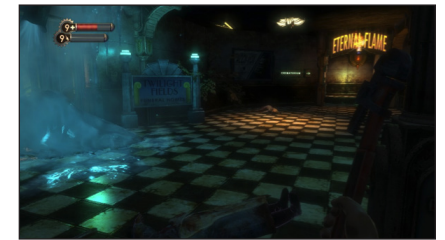


Figure 2: *Bioshock*

Most of the methods of direction I have mentioned thus far are subtle, hands-off ways of directing the player in the right direction. However, there are games that use very overt, hands-on methods of guiding the player, especially open world games (i.e., games that allow total freedom of all of the game's explorable space from the very beginning). Most open world games provide players with a map of the game's explorable space, complete with a legend and markers for areas of interest. These maps serve as a constant reference for players if they ever need an easy way to locate where they should go next. Many of these games also let players to set their own waypoint, allowing the player to customize the destination exactly and let the game tell the player how to get there. *Grand Theft Auto V*<sup>8</sup> (Rockstar North, 2013) utilizes this system by allowing the player to set custom destinations on the game map. When a player does this, a GPS-like navigation on the player's mini-map (i.e., a condensed version of the game map that is viewable while the play-

er plays the game) highlights the shortest driving route that the player can take from their current position to the destination. Some games use an even more overt way of guiding the player using some indication that guides the player exactly to the next area in the game that the he or she should go. *Bioshock*, for example, uses a yellow arrow at the top of the screen (which can be turned off) that guides the player to the next important area in the game. *Dead Space*<sup>9</sup> has something similar, although instead of an omnipresent arrow, the player can press a certain button and make a line appear within the 3D space that leads to the player's current objective. (Figure 3) Generally speaking, most games only use such hands-on cues of directing the player if they contain complicated level structure or large explorable spaces, as without these cues the player may easily be overwhelmed and succumb to misdirection.



Figure 3: *Dead Space*

The last method of direction I will look at is arguably the most common, which is the use of non-playable characters, or NPCs. Nearly every game contains NPCs, as they serve narrative purposes as well as gameplay purposes. In many shooting games, the player will need to shoot and kill enemy NPCs to proceed to the next area. Many of these games use the mere presence of these enemies as a sign that the player is moving in the right direction. The *Call of Duty* series is a prime ex-

ample of this; in order to proceed to the next area, players have to clear out the enemies that are occupying the space that the player wants to proceed. The player repeats this cycle until he or she reaches the end of the level. This method has become something of a cliché in modern video games, but it is still used quite often. Games also use friendly NPCs as a way of guiding the player along the intended path. Again, the *Call of Duty* series is a prime example of this, as the player often has friendly NPCs in their squad that tell the player where they should go next. Sometimes these friendly NPCs will even guide the player towards in the proper direction and simply ask the player to follow. These non-playable characters are hugely important in modern games because they often flesh out the game's narrative while simultaneously directing the player where to go, and nearly every game out there utilizes them.

No game only utilizes one of these methods to direct players. The best games use these in harmony with one another, and there are far more ways available for developers to direct players than I have covered in this paper. Nonetheless, the methods I have covered are the most fundamental and the most common. Of course, many games offer secrets or bonuses for players who stray off this directed path, such as extra health packs or in-game currency. However, these directional cues and patterns serve as a guiding light for any player who needs to know where to go next.

Directing the player is just one of the many problems game developers have to take into account, though, and many of these problems are worthy of papers themselves. Among other things, developers need to ensure that the directed path is engaging enough to make the player even want to continue in the first

place. However, the video game as a medium for artistic expression is still incredibly young, as is its discourse. Like film

and all other media before it, there is a lot of room for the medium to continue to evolve and mature.

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# TWITCH: THE SIDELINES OF VIRTUAL GAMING

by Christopher Risdén

From the comfort of his Maryland home, former professional gamer Michael Santana, better known by his gamer tag “*imaqtpie*,” is living my childhood dream. From the time he wakes up to the time he goes to sleep, he plays videogames—and his mom doesn’t even yell at him. Wow.

Michael Santana became a professional gamer in 2011, when he was just a year out of high school. Unconvinced that playing videogames for money was a practical career path, Santana was reluctant to dedicate his time. Not only do pro gamer careers run incredibly short (on average their careers flame out faster than NFL players, which last 3.3 years), they also offer very few skills relevant outside the bubble of videogames. However, the allure of playing games for money proved too seductive to turn down; so, in what looked like a short-sighted decision, he took a break from college to play videogames full time. Like the Kenny Smith of video games, his playing career is largely forgettable, but his post-professional gaming career has truly shined.

As people sleepwalk through their mornings before their first hit of caffeine, Santana starts his day in the world of *League of Legends*, the game he once played competitively. He furiously clicks his mouse and clacks the keyboard on an intensely single-minded mission: to eliminate his enemy. In a dichotomy of sorts, he is incredibly aggressive in game while he maintains a relaxed demeanor—always cheerful, never mad. All of a sudden, he makes an amazing play and kills

two opponents by himself. He smiles like it’s effortless as he crows at his screen, “Get fucked!”...and the crowd goes wild! It turns out, Michael “*imaqtpie*” Santana has actually been broadcasting his games, and nearly 30,000 people are tuned in to spectate! Thirty thousand people?!

First of all, aren’t video games meant to be played? What confuses me even more so, *League of Legends* is free. Everyone can download and play for free, but apparently many would rather just watch. “Live streaming,” as the kids call it, is now a billion dollar industry. In August of 2014, Amazon acquired Twitch.tv, the platform that hosts almost all videogame streams, for \$970 million.

Twitch is a spin-off of a now-defunct general video streaming site, Justin.tv, which hosted live feeds of people doing anything from eating Vaseline to being drunk. Like a live version of Youtube, the website created no content—it merely provided a platform for users share their own. As Justin.tv grew, the videogame section grew even faster. It soon outgrew the rest of Justin.tv so, in 2011, a spin-off website was created solely for streaming videogames. By exclusively producing videogame content, Twitch does an excellent job of narrowcasting—catering to the gamer demographic.

Narrowcasting is a phenomenon that arose with the emergence of cable and premium cable as a response to the serialization and mass market appeal of broadcast TV. On narrowcasting, James Curran, Professor of Communications at Goldsmiths University, writes “media

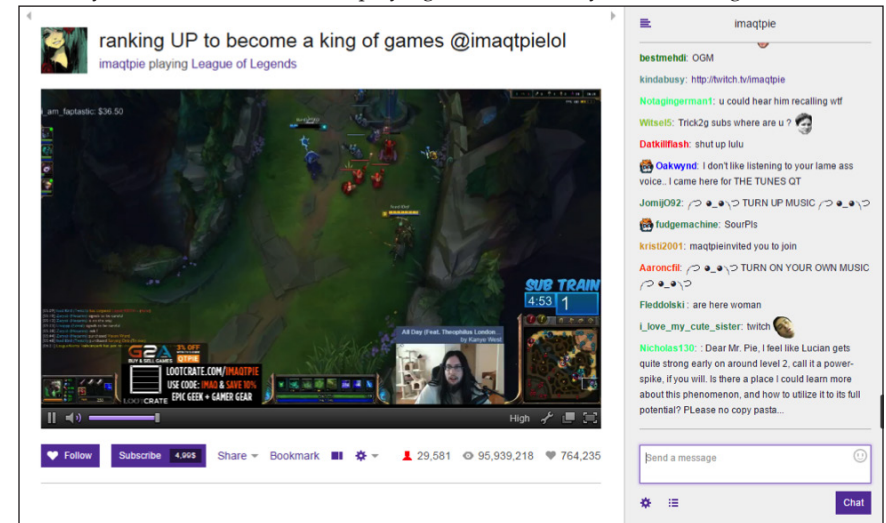
consumption... is being customised by taste.”<sup>1</sup> Channels like Lifetime and Spike exemplify this belief and demonstrate that each demographic must be treated differently. Although the term ‘narrowcasting’ originally referred to television, streaming services such as Twitch.tv (for gamers) and NBA.tv (for basketball fans) are the pinnacles of this new Internet age of narrowcasting.

Through narrowcasting, Twitch can appeal directly to gamers. In trying to understand gaming culture, Adrienne Shaw, Assistant Professor of Media Studies at Temple University, notes that in our society “there is a pervasive sense of video game culture as separate from constructed mainstream culture.” Popular culture treats gaming fans just as *Newsweek* treated *Star Trek* fans: like geeks that are “a problem to be solved [and] a mystery to be understood.”<sup>2</sup> The fact that Twitch averages over seven hundred thousand viewers at any given time proves that gamers would rather see something they are very interested in, someone playing

videogames, than something they are only decently interested in.

Twitch stands out in the media landscape because of its fully immersive user experience. Each broadcast has its own connected chatroom, which acts like a virtual space in which viewers can interact digitally with each other and the streamer. When gamers like *imaqtpie* make amazing plays, the chat rooms explode violently with activity. Thousands of spectators create a virtual arena, and their voices can almost be heard echoing over the game play. In response to *imaqtpie*’s solo kill, the chat room vibrates with the energy of thousands of voices. The messages scroll by too quickly to even scan, besides a few glimpses which read “LOL” and “REKT” (wrecked.) Fans have the option to donate to streamers, and many fans use that as an opportunity to develop a more personal connection with their favorite personalities.

Donations help devoted fans stand out, but streamers almost always interact with anyone watching. While other



Michael “*imaqtpie*” Santana pictured here streaming to nearly 30,000 viewers.

media forms, like books and movies, can stand independently from their auteur, live streams are intimately connected to the personality of the streamer—which we can see through each broadcaster’s chat room. In the case of imaqpie, his Twitch chat is often filled with memes or inside jokes and lighthearted discussion that reflect his jovial nature. In the case of Alex Ich, a current Russian professional gamer, his stream houses a community of Russians. The communities that form within the framework of Twitch.tv can be referred to as virtual “third places” or “informal public spaces where people engage sociably to form and maintain communities,”<sup>3</sup> because they represent

places away from the home (place one) and workplace (place two) where people gather and discuss common ideas. Not everyone speaks, but everyone is a participant since everyone sees the chat constantly scrolling next to the video.

One year ago, Michael Santana was a middling player on a middling *League of Legends* team. Now, he is a star within the video game world. In the next evolution of narrowcasting, he streams himself gaming for over eight hours every day and attracts a community of like-minded individuals who love to watch him play games and crack wise. Twitch.tv is the platform that makes it all possible.

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**Christopher Ridsen: Editor**

**David Wills: Editor**

**Maria Nguyen: Layout Editor**



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Anna Ashe is a third year double major in Film & Media Studies and English. Her other interests include entrepreneurship, environmentalism, reading, hiking, and spending time with friends!

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Suzanne Cimolino is a senior film major at UCSB. When she is not studying Bordwell or analyzing films required for class, she goes to the movies (for fun)... or she rides her horse, Jovi. After graduation, she plans to do something in Hollywood (she will let you know when she figures it out) and she won't forget the little people along the way.

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Lisa Gumm is a graduating senior in the Film and Media Studies major and the Theater Production and Design minor. Her recent credits include: The Talented Ones (assistant sound designer), The Importance of Being Earnest (assistant lighting designer), AXIOM (lighting designer), and Soundscapes (sound designer). She is also a singer/songwriter and performs at coffee shops and festivals around the Central Coast. Upon graduating from UCSB she plans to become a children's book author and a theatrical sound designer.

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## Jacqueline Kane

Jacqueline Kane is a second year at UCSB double majoring in Film & Media and Environmental Studies. In her free time she enjoys going on hikes, hanging out with friends, and contemplating the life of inanimate objects. After graduating she hopes to join the Peace Corps.

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Nicole is a first-year Film and Media studies major. She hopes to move to Los Angeles or New York to work with a production group and various non-profits as a director, writer, and creator. She believes that you haven't done anything until you leave this world a better place than when you found it.

# ABOUT

## Alberto Lopez

Alberto Lopez (writer, staff) is a fourth-year Film & Media Studies major. He hopes you will read this issue of Focus Media Journal in its entirety.

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## Justin Minor

Justin is a graduating senior, part-time fry cook, former radio personality, and filmmaker. He wrote and directed 'A Ghost Story,' a comedic short that received the Best Writing award at the Santa Barbara Digital Film Festival. He is currently co-directing a documentary about the environmental issues involved in Bigfoot hunting, entitled 'Saving Sasquatch.' He plans to pursue a career in screenwriting and freelance film-making, with an emphasis on wine tasting and Netflix.

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## Maria Nguyen

Maria is a third year at UCSB who is majoring in Film & Media Studies. In addition to creating the layout for this year's Focus journal, she created the graphics, as well. She's from San Diego and enjoys movies, music, great food, and staring at her laptop screen for long periods of time.

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Chris Riden is a fourth-year Film and Media Studies student. He lives slow so he can die old.

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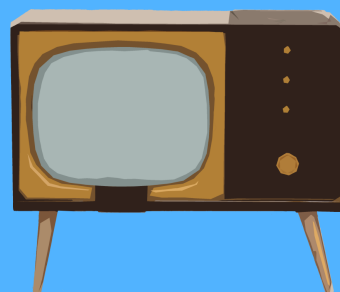
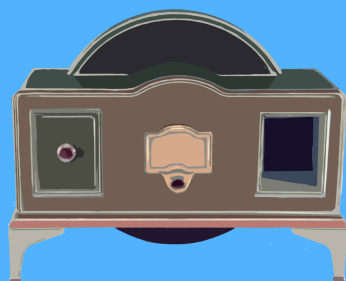
Berthold is a student in interdisciplinary studies. He spent a year studying at UCSB, where he snuck into a bunch of film classes and produced 'A Ghost Story' for Film 106 and this year's 10-10-10 winner 'Grounded.'

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## David Wills

David Wills is a third-year film and media studies major who spends most of his time browsing Reddit or playing video games. After he graduates, he wants to get into writing and/or video production, preferably somewhere in the video game industry.





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