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HOLLYWOOD: ON STRIKE
Information on three Hollywood Unions and who is calling the shots.

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND
Can reality keep up with the technological changes in film?

GRANTS AND FUNDING YOUR FILM
Do you know there are millions of dollars all around you? Here’s how to get it using resources already at your fingertips.

WHERE MI:2 AND DIRTY DANCING MEET
Not just a woman’s genre, melodrama perplexes films from Half Baked to Die Hard.

HOLLYWOOD’S ANTI-CONSUMERIST NEW WAVE
Masculinity in American Beauty and Fight Club: Are these films as progressive as they claim to be?

SUSPEND YOUR BELIEF
How the “King of Satire” reminds you that it’s only just a movie.

THE DARKER SIDE OF LAUGHTER
Appreciating life through laughing at death.

MISOGYNISTIC ORDINARY PEOPLE
Subtle changes transform Beth Jarrett from woman into “hitch”.

LUC BESSON’S THE MESSENGER
Brianna Lenz confesses her darkest secret about this 1999 retelling of Joan of Arc.

“SQUIGGLÉ PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS”
Film dorm in full effect: An insider’s perspective.

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HOLLYWOOD:

by Nick Selick

Attention film fanatics and movie lovers alike: Read carefully. Hollywood is about to go on strike. For those who tune in each week for Friends, Ally McBeal, or Late Night with David Letterman, prepare for reruns. Waiting for the new Tarantino creation? Don't hold your breath. The Screen Actors Guild (SAG), Writers Guild of America (WGA) and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) are poised to go on strike in the summer of 2001 because they feel they are being treated unequally and taken advantage of financially. As Fox Filmed Entertainment chairman Tom Rothman put it in a recent Entertainment Weekly article concerning the strike, 'We're hoping for the best, but preparing for the worst.'

Many avid filmgoers will soon feel the sting Hollywood writers and actors are about to inflict upon the world. At the heart of the strike are those struggling actors attempting to be discovered in commercials as many have in the past. Present-day commercial actors are paid a one-time fee for their services, unlike musicians whom receive royalties for repetitive play. According to People magazine, 'almost 80% of people in [SAG] earn less than $3,000 a year.' Scriptwriters are paid considerably less than they deserve. Usually in the tens of thousands because their creative talents serve as the basis of the filmed production. Both commercial actors and writers are paid a low flat fee regardless of the grosses reaped by the particular studio. In short, approximately 135,000 'rank-and-file' union actors are receiving the short end of the stick.

Until recently, neither the media nor employers have shed light on the strike threatened by the three powerful unions. Last May the 'starving actors' belonging to SAG went on strike in protest of being underpaid by commercial advertisers. Then, the WGA joined in the plea for better pay and fair credit. When the SAG members realized their cries were going unanswered, they rallied upon their big brothers, i.e., celebrities, to help attract attention to their cause. Hollywood's finest emerged to aid them including (but not limited to) Kevin Spacey, Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon, Malt Damon, Ben Affleck, Harrison Ford, Mel Gibson, Cameron Diaz, and Meg Ryan. Despite the celebrities' multi-million dollar fee per film, they honorably responded to those starving actors are plainly being taken advantage of by donating hundreds of thousands to a striking actors fund.

So far, SAG president William Daniels met with AMPTP president Nick Counte on September 4th emphasizing that 'there's no talk of a strike here.' Nonetheless 'we're anxious to sit down and make a deal.' These are not a very reassuring combination of words.

At the cost of sounding melodramatic, will there ever be a mutual agreement that pleases both studio executives and the little people? After all, the little people who you never really hear about or care to, for that matter, from 'that guy in the background' to the scriptwriter, are vital to the mechanics of the film industry. And studio executives as well as advertisers do not seem to look any further than how much money the completed product will return. In an industry where the production assistant who gets the director his/her coffee is vital to the quality of the shot, studio executives should...
have not made it yet.

I recently discussed the strike with my friend Hank Azarian, a law school graduate turned producer who became attracted to the film industry while working as an assistant in a talent agency. He recently optioned the rights to a book dealing with Armenian genocide during WWI and has had problems hiring a writer to redo the script. Working with the producer of Rush Hour, he showed signs of distress over the strike but understood the unions' point of view: "It's really up to the individuals [whether to strike or not]. The Screen Actors and Writers Guild feels they were left out of the cable deals in the early eighties. They truly do not want to make the same mistake again."

Studios are already anticipating the effects of the actors' strike by doubling up on film productions. Hank states that it is simply a matter of "getting everything done before the strike." As of May 2nd or even sooner, every member of SAG, WGA and AMPTP will go on strike unless an agreement transpires soon. This will mean no new Friends, no new Ally McBeal and no new Indiana Jones installment. To sum up, the members of both unions will not shoot anything. Unfortunately, if people do "cross the picket line" the entertainment community will surely ostracize them forever.

Hank expressed the angst of scriptwriters who are torn between working or not. "If you have everything ready to go, it's tough. As of now, producers have to deal with projects they already have. We need to make money, too." When asked if the strike will open up doors to those who have not succeeded in joining a union, Hank answered, "I'm not sure if their work will be recognized by the unions. It could get to a point where non-union individuals will receive Oscars that will not be acknowledged by the unions."

All in all, the strike will not only affect the actors and writers but also those who make a shot possible, such as the grips. In another recent article in Entertainment Weekly, actor Kristin Davis claims "a lot of people are going to suffer from [the strike], not just the actors, but the crew people. What is the sound boom operator going to do?" Hank points out that a subculture of mom-and-pop businesses and others who rely on the entertainment industry as a means of income will be hurt the most, including stuntmen, animal trainers and caterers.

Despite personal experiences in which I came to realize that actors are over-dramatic cry-babies, I still believe they are being shafted by the same industry that so heavily relies upon them, as well as the sponsors who depend on their services in marketing new products to the public.

Perhaps a strike will awaken Hollywood from its "beauty slumber" and establish a newly restored vision of making movies, not for profit, but for artistic integrity. History has proven that you do not need to spend money to make money. Films like The French Connection and The Blair Witch Project relied solely on content and became goldmines for their respective companies. We don't need a 20 million-dollar actor like Leonardo DiCaprio to tell us which films are good. Many hope that this strike will bring about new talent in every sector of the industry. The strike is simply a reminder that the little people are essential to the intricacies of the entertainment industry, a reminder that money should not and cannot become the driving force of television and film.

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TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

The Digital Revolution and The New Reality

by Jonathan Hamilton

As the opening credits end and the screen fades to black, there is a moment in every film viewer's life when the reality outside the walls of the theater is wiped away. It is in this moment that the human is assimilated into the newly created world of the cinema. What if, emerging from the darkness of this newly created cinematic world, is the image of a human? An image of a human created entirely by computers, but which (for all aesthetic purposes) is the perfect facsimile of a human being. Picture it. What are its implications?

It is in this world of the cinema that a new reality is experienced which resembles the physical world, but which is more exciting, thrilling, compelling and stimulating than the monotony of mundane life at the turn of the century. This is where the lines that separate the human being from the fruits of its creativity, technology, are blurred into a new form: the film itself.

In this new world, it is easy to see that the human is the link between the technology and the film. The film embodies the story of creation. Humans create technology and together they create film. Then technology creates the human in film which is a reversal of roles. The possibility of this being done in film points to the possibility (perhaps inevitability) of this happening in the physical reality of the future. If the reality film represents a graphic representation of the reality which exists outside of the theater walls, then it is possible to see the future of the world through cinema. This is especially true because cinema is a reflection of what is happening in society.

The slow, throbbing, dark imagery of such modern films as The Matrix puts the question into context. This is a world in which the machines have taken over: harvesting and consuming the souls of humankind. The morality of such a world is horrifying, yet intriguing in its implications.

There is something about this possible future, which grips, torments, and most importantly intrigues the modern audience. The something that seizes and mesmerizes is a burgeoning conflict, one which centers on the consciousness of humans and their technology. This is a reflection of the fears of society regarding technology and the future.

The Matrix serves as the perfect example of a modern film, which illustrates: a) computer generated images on screen; b) the issue of technology versus the human and c) a and b's relation to the future. Therefore, the comparison between what happens in The Matrix and what is happening today becomes poignant. The signs of total computer-generated humans becoming a reality (in film) have manifested in recent films with bigger budgets like Star Wars.

In Star Wars: Episode One, directed by George Lucas, where Jar Jar Binks has been created after the fashion of the human form, the problem comes to a head. Will humankind be needed in the future, or will a facsimile of Jar Jar Binks be needed in the future? Or will it be Jar Jar Binks, or a computer-generated character? Will the film also utilize technology to change the physical appearance of the human characters within the film? This affects the nature of the cinema.

The same thing happened a few years ago in the art world. Original paintings were being copied and sold. Everybody was up in arms about what this meant to the future of art. But, the fact of the matter is that the interest died out. People were still more interested in owning an original copy of the work instead of a computer-generated replica.

In the 1939's Rudolf Arnheim, a film theorist, expressed concern about the evolution of film. He stated that film was beginning to grow apart from what it originally stood for as more technological advances changed the medium such as color and sound. He argued that cinema is about artistic expression, and he wrote about this grave concern about the future of the film. The fears that were expressed over seventy years ago have become actualized in modern society. Will the fears that are being expressed today about film in regards to humans and technology become actualized in the future? Will these fears regarding a dark and twisted future in the reality represented by film become a physical reality in the future? Or will the same thing happen which happened in the art world - primarily that a copy does not deviate its original, but instead the two can coexist and evolve together?

People did not take well to the Jar Jar Binks character. His image was very controversial because of the conflict over racial stereotypes which he was seen to represent. Maybe his character was also abhorrent because of the future which he literally embodied. When and if completely CGI humans appear on screen, the only way for them to remain is if there is a market.

The darker argument that involves the theoretical implications of humans and technology, the war being fought on the frontier of film, and what the future will offer is clearly on people's minds today. Film has shown its ability to adapt over time, and perhaps as it grows in conjunction with the technology and the humans which produced it, the medium will evolve into something as yet unforeseen. The interesting questions left by The Matrix are exhilarating, but are they relevant? Only time will tell.
FUNDING YOUR FILMS WITHOUT SELLING OUT

By Marc Ramos

So, you wanna be a filmmaker? After Visa and MasterCard max out and a little help from mom and dad, how are you gonna pay for it? Prostitution? Just kidding . . . Grants! Yea, that's right, if grants were a single company it would rank at the top of Fortune 500 with nearly $150 billion annual budget. The truth is that to be a good filmmaker is to be resourceful. The greatest resource then by all means is the financial stability of your projects. Grants will provide you with a safety net to sustain your work.

A first step in successful funding is to identify all of the prospective grant makers that would support your work. The library is great. It's like a bank vault full of money just sitting there unclaimed. It's up to you, though, to convince the guard that it's really yours. That's where your college education pays off . . . remember all those writing classes you took? . . . Let the writing begin.

The best place to start is table 16 in the Reference section of McHenry Library, where you'll find books on grants. You'll also find self-help books on writing for grants. (Though it is this author's contention, that if the University wanted to produce better filmmakers it would be in their best interest to provide grant-writing courses.)

If the UC library is not your thing, just pick up the phone and call 1-800-424-9636 for the nearest Foundation Center Library. There you'll find all of the pertinent information for a productive grant hunt. But be prepared to give it all you've got in your proposal. Just like in marriage, the proposal is very important. Sure, if you're a virgin in that area, the prospect of sex is somewhat stressful and may add to your panting and whimpering. But, in the real world, it's money we're talking about, and to be without it leaves me open for more unnecessary analogies. The truth is that you must produce a carefully thought out proposal. Most are turned down by the mere fact that, although it may be a good idea, they were poorly written.

As a UCSC student you already have one foot in the vault. The University has several grants and fellowships available to assist you in your efforts on becoming the quintessential filmmaker. First of all, depending on the college you're enrolled in you may qualify for specific funds, but be aware of deadlines. Most of these funds are allocated early in the school year, so doing your research pays off.

Here we have the Committee on Ethnic Programming set up, which distributes funds to support events that promote ethnic diversity. These awards for the most part target the "underrepresented minorities," as defined by the University of California Office of the President. Or, if you're involved with or a part of a campus organization you may apply for a Core Council grant to aid your project. All you need to do is adjust your proposal to fit their criteria. The easy way to get through these loopholes is to play by their game; if funds have been allocated, then they are most likely going to have to spend them.

Another UCSC grant comes from the Council of Provosts, which aids students projects. There is a $500 cap as to how much any given project may receive, but unlike other awards these are reviewed four times a year. So you have a shot at it every quarter but be aware that the funds thin out by Spring. The kicker of all grants comes from the President's Undergraduate Fellowship, which shells out between $200 to $1000 for each project. So, if you're thinking about production for the upcoming year, plan ahead. These awards are reviewed in the spring for the following school term. You must apply at the college which you are enrolled in, but the kind people at the SOAR office can help you find what you're looking for.

A final type of grant for those more inclined to produce exceptional pieces over a lengthy time would be privately funded grants. These grants are a combination of either corporations or foundations. By federal law, a foundation must disperse 5% of its market value assets or interest income each year. This allows the corporation to keep a tax-exempt status. (Example: the Kellogg's Foundation has $5 billion dollars in market assets; therefore, they must give out $250 million dollars annually in grants.) It's a corporate-world thing.

So, finally comes the application. The best thing to do is to condense what you want to create into a few sentences. Yes, the pitch! "The harshest part is describing your project in a very short treatment form," says professor and video artist Chip Lord, when asked about the grant writing process. It is the pitch that'll open the door. Prof. Lord concludes, you must be able to condense your big ideas into a few extremely descriptive sentences. A sure-fire way is to try it out on your friends, family, faculty and whoever will listen to you until you have them all convinced. But in the end you also have to have a "certain amount of luck as an artist," as professor Lord concludes.

By all means, don't take all of this as a way of selling out your ideas. There comes a point when making your art that you must realize that it may not be such a selfish act and getting help is what you need. Once you get out of this piece the help is harder to find, so learning where to find it and how to ask is what it's all about.
MELODRAMMA:
Where MI:2 and Dirty Dancing Meet

by Nicole Justin

What pops into your mind when someone mentions melodrama? Chickflicks! Melodrama has been falsely stereotyped as women's films, but what the average viewer does not realize is that melodrama's boundaries are endless, invading films of all genres. Melodrama is often characterized with romance, although melodrama is really not romance at all. The defining quality of melodrama is excess, when a situation is charged with a conflict of light and dark, salvation and damnation, and the insignificance of the situation is lost in excessive action, motion, plot even excesses within a scene. Me-
drama is when a situation is put under an extreme amount of pressure so the audience loses the reality of the event and that reality in exchange becomes overwhelming.

The art of melodrama is that even though the situation becomes exaggerated, the audience does not recognize how ridiculous the situation has become, taking it as the reality and involving themselves in that reality. Examples of this would be Project Mayam in Fight Club: the audience becomes so involved in the film that they don't realize that painting a smiley face on the side of a skyscraper would be impossible. Not only that but painting a smiley face on a skyscraper is extreme in itself, hence Fight Club is melodramatic. Almost all films hold melodrama that goes unrecognized because the public associates melodrama with romance, ignoring what melodrama really contains. Other examples of such films would be Sixteen Candles, Half Baked, Casablanca, Die Hard, To Wong Foo, Pulp Fiction, American Pie and High Noon. Melodrama invades everything from Dirty Dancing, a classic chickflick, to Mission Impossible II, a 'masculine' action film.

Dirty Dancing is a film about a young girl, Baby, who goes to spend the summer with her family at a country club. Throughout the film she falls in love with one of the dance instructors there, Johnny, learning through her relationship with him what is really important in life and of course how to have a little fun. The plot contains the same elements that every chickflick does. Baby, Jennifer Gray, falls in love with the hottest guy there: yes, Johnny is played by Patrick Swayze, and they fall in love. Of course there are obstacles to be overcome, bringing more and more emotion, even some tears, to the viewers.

Mission Impossible II, on the other hand, is a film about the best of the best fighting to save the world. Ethan is a spy who has been recruited to stop terrorists from spreading a deadly disease. The plot itself is excessively dramatic. Ethan is supplied with a crew of people, one being the beautiful Nia, whom he sleeps with upon the first night of their meeting, therefore reminiscent of a James Bond movies. He is then forced to put Nia's life in jeopardy, now not only needing to save the world but also his love. Well, isn't that exhausting!

The most obvious connection between these two films is the Romeo and Juliet complex. It seems as though you can't find a movie today that doesn't contain some kind of love story. In Dirty Dancing the relationship is "naughty;" Johnny is only supposed to give dancing lessons, and Baby is supposed to date the wealthy businessman. Baby develops a crush on Johnny from the very beginning of the film. The emotional high point of her quest to become involved with him is when she confronts him about how she feels about him. This scene is melodramatic: first Baby gives him a dramatic speech about how she is "scared of walking out of this room and never feeling again the way she feels when she's with [him]."

Come on, they've known each other for a period of no more than three weeks. making it look like there is only one person out there for you. It is completely unrealistic because they hardly know each other, yet alone know that they are perfect for each other.

Then, after she makes it seem like the world will end if they can't be together... they have sex. Not only is this scene ridiculous overdone but it is also a representation of how women in films are depicted as becoming attached and men are usually using women for sex. Creating a parallel between Baby and Johnny's relationship is that of Ethan and Nia in Mission Impossible II. Ethan and Nia also sleep with each other on the first meeting, followed the next day by a fight because unknown to Ethan the whole reason she is helping with the mission is because she is an ex-girlfriend of one of the terrorists. In addition her job is to go into their home retrieving inside information. Ethan is our James Bond, and anyone who has seen a James Bond movie knows that he sleeps with at least 2 or 3 women throughout the film, with whom he has no intention of becoming involved. Although today women in films are less like pretty toys, they are still objectified, and she usually ends up with the guy.

When we watch films like Mission Impossible II it is usually said that "the guy gets the girl." Doesn't the girl get the guy? In both Dirty Dancing and Mission Impossible II it seems that...
Dirty Dancing's Baby is the one to confront Johnny about how he sees feelings, and through the film she is the one courting him. Likewise, Nia captures the heart of Ethan; not only is she beautiful (a case of objectification) but she is also witty and smart, roping Ethan into caring about her.

Mission Impossible II is more melodramatic than Dirty Dancing, but the excess of the love story is surrounded by an excess of violence. This is how the film moves away from being categorized as a love story—because love is not the sole focus. Basically, the audience is deceived. In the scene where Ethan performs a series of acrobatic stunts to get into a lab to destroy the virus, he is confronted by the terrorist, holding Nia hostage. From helicopters and radar to hanging from a rope, he uses the most difficult way to get into the building for dramatic effect. He then loses contact with the rest of his team while the vents are on, and during this time is when the terrorists enter the building. In the filming of this scene, images of Ethan, who is slowly moving through the lab taking 20th floor to end the scene with a dramatic exit. As obvious as the melodrama is within the scene, it seems logical along the lines of the plot and is expressed mostly through excessive violence. This is what makes the film masculine and therefore makes melodrama enjoyable to viewer of all genders.

Dirty Dancing is focused on a love story, and almost all other elements of the plot affect their relationship. The melodrama in the film is basically only emotional. Yet, in Mission Impossible II, where melodrama is used on several levels, the average audience would never consider referring to the film as a melodrama. Characteristically, the public has defined melodrama by romance film, where the plot focuses on Romeo and Juliet, and all the drama revolves around them, becoming entirely emotional. What we don't realize is that melodrama is not romance; it is the extreme pressures placed on a situation, encompassing not only emotional excess but also excessive violence, plot, and cinematography. Mission Impossible II is more of a melodrama than Dirty Dancing. Not only does it contain extreme emotion with the characters' life or death situations, but every part of the film is exaggerated for visual and dramatic effect. Melodrama has been placed in a stereotype that does not do it justice. Whether audiences are unable to recognize the melodrama embodied within many films or just don't want to be associated with melodrama, melodrama needs to be reassessed.
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Dirty Dancing: Melodrama is not romance; it is the extreme pressures placed on a situation, encompassing excessive plot, emotion, violence and cinematography.

EYECANDY | 07
Hollywood's Anti-Consumerist New Wave:
How masculinity in American Beauty and Fight Club get stifled

By Norah Brennan

In the late-capitalist world of corporate buy-outs, where one corporation owns 10 companies, choice is only an illusion of this consumer trend. The Matrix, Falling Down, and Office Space all fit within the "anti-consumer" wave with American Beauty and Fight Club exemplifying the movement. Each of these films is marketed to different audiences and stem from different genres. But, if we take the advice of American Beauty and "look closer," it becomes apparent that the underlying structure of American Beauty and Fight Club is identical (see side bar).

Looking Closer
The films of the Anti-Consumerist New Wave bring up two socially relevant issues: the feelings of emasculation American males hold and the ways in which contemporary identity is constructed through material possessions. The way each of these films deals with these issues is utterly tragic. The truth is that both of these films are well made, thought provoking, and engaging. Unfortunately, all of the important issues each film brings up, whether overt or covert, are subverted in the end.

American Beauty and Fight Club all focus on white males who have figuratively had their dicks bitten off by the emasculating Carolyn Burnham in American Beauty.

The narrative skeleton of American Beauty & Fight Club:
- **Man is unhappy.**
- **Man discovers he is unhappy because society has rendered him a consumer and consumption, traditionally, has been linked with femininity.**
- **Man Wonders: How can he still be a man?**
- **To regain masculinity, Man must: (1) reject all material possessions, (2) form bonds with other men, (3) reject women, (4) engage in ambiguously queer acts, (5) kill off the queer.**
exposed as a "whore," gives Lester the power to tell his wife "you don't get to tell me what to do... anymore."

Carolyn is disgraced with the fact that she has been caught. And the film wants the audience to shake its finger at Carolyn's deviant behavior as well. What was previously a vindictive and empowering sexual relationship with "The Real Estate King" is now a shameful act only because she was caught. Carolyn's adultery was a privately sanctioned act, but now that Lester knows, it is disreputable. What real man would let his wife cheat on him? Labeling his wife a whore for her adultery, Lester gets a piece of his penis back. And, what of Angela Hayes, the purported nymphet Lester lusts after? The film makes no attempt to ridicule Lester for his desire to cheat. In fact the film condones it byaligning his lust for Angela with his struggle to reject from Lester.

Lester Burnham blackmails his boss, Brad, for a year's worth of salary by threatening to tell others Brad tried to blow him. Tired immediately caves in and grants Lester the salary. Locoroc says, "Look, we're not gay! I said that one can't help but place initial homophobia and, consequently, homophobic undertones in these "masculine" texts. Indeed, it is the film's extended titillation and final repudiation of queerness, an act I will dub "killings off," that ultimately bind their characters to homosexual relations.

From Bruno, the murderous fag in Strangers on a Train, to Buffalo Bill, the transgendered women-wearing psychopath in The Silence of the Lambs, it has been a Hollywood tradition to indulge in the woman-hating queer.
is only really condemned near the end of the film. American Beauty's seems to be stigmatized in some form or another throughout.

Suburbia, Similarity, and Sanctioned Homophobia

What is interesting about the two films' suggested method of reclaiming manhood, is how family. While condemnations of homosexuality were hardly new to the nineteenth century, turning the nuclear family into a norm... made homosexuality appear more deviant than ever.

From Ellenbogen's perspective, Lester Burnham and Tyler Durden's questioning of post-modern economic conditions results in their betrayals of masculine virtues, thereby rendering them all explicit deviants of dominant capitalist discourse and implicit deviants of the prescribed sexual norm. It is somewhat of a paradox that each film is obsessed with account for the characters', and the films' brand of homophobia. The films' masculine need to project their heterosexuality only exposes their queerness and their unconsciousness of that queerness. Could, as Colonel Frank Flit in the movie, have been having sexual favors? Are The Narrator and Tyler Durden - hustling around the house, dressing one another, taking baths in one another's presence - more of a married couple than a pair of tough guys?

Killing It Off

Rather than deal with any of the overt issues or currents of sexuality, gender, and consumerism each film simply wraps them under the rug. Fight Club and American Beauty take all of their characters' traits - misogyny, violence, homophobia, and homosexuality - and project them onto an abstract "other" that is conveniently killed off in the end of each film. Specifically, each film clones a house by showing their flirtations with materialist rejection and homosexuality in the closet with one push.

American Beauty decides to kill off its protagonist as some sort of punishment for his behavior. After all, he was out of control, right? But, no matter, Lester seemed to be perfectly happy to die, albeit by the hands of a jealous warm-hearted lover. American Beauty pulls double duty here in Vito Russo's analysis of Hollywood cinema; The Celluloid Closet. American Beauty not only kills off the perceived queer, Lester, but also makes his explicitly queer neighbor the killer.

Fight Club also has a few tricks up its sleeve. In the end not only does the film kill off Tyler, its anti-consumerist revolutionist, it also decides to add the fatal plot twist of making Tyler and The Narrator the same person. And, while this implies that there might be a "Tyler Durden in all of us," it also makes Tyler a fantasy. This twist asserts that a person like Tyler could not really exist and that The Narrator is a psycho for thinking he can escape the trappings of his consumerist heterosexual world.

The killing of the Tyler Durden psyche does much more than muddle the film's two-hour long "fuck you" to Corporate greed and political correctness. The annihilation of Tyler, apparently, The Narrator's flamboyant side, also kills off his tendencies to either bond with or love men. As soon as Tyler dies, the surrounding buildings burst into beautiful flames. Marla Singer, who appears at the end of the film for no reason whatsoever, holds hands with The Narrator. Cut to a wide shot. The camera pulls back. The music kicks in and, jeez, what a lovely heterosexual union we have.

Ordinarily romantic yet totally silly, since it comes out of nowhere. This sudden, awkward ending serves no real direct narrative purpose; it exists solely for the film to return to some remnant of heterosexual normativity. The Narrator says, "You met me at a very strange time in my life." No kidding. But now that you've been cured of your tastes for men, it's comforting to know you're back to normal.
Suspend your Belief
Remembering That It Is Just A Movie

Laughter, they say, is the best medicine. And with a dosage of satire it may just be what the doctor ordered to cure the average moviegoer of a case of suspension of disbelief. Filmgoers are expected to abandon reality, suspend our disbelief, and accept the world put on the screen in front of us. But what if we don’t? What happens if we look at the film in front of us from a particular point of view in which we find all of its fallacies and pure humor? Satire and parody are born.

What is it about parody and its self-reflexive aspects in film that attract viewers? The answer for many is that they make us laugh about things we have taken too seriously. After solemnly listening to Yoda share wisdom with Luke Skywalker, it is a relief to laugh at Yogurt’s ridiculousness in Spaceballs. After seeing western after western in which cowboys take themselves incredibly seriously, we find humor in the ignorant “morons” in Blazing Saddles. Mel Brooks has been called “The King of Satire,” and rightly so being that each of his films in the past three decades has made us laugh at film icons we have accepted with sober puerile faces.

The western. The horror flick. The epic. The sci-fi adventure. Each genre has had its Mel Brooks adaptation. But three films in particular are weighted with self-reflexive moments.

Blazing Saddles, for instance, is a western satire about a black sheriff appointed to protect a town by the very man who wishes to destroy it. This film parodies the overly ignorant, and racist, white cowboy by having a black sheriff who is refined, eloquent, and dignified. Whereas the cowboys are simple minded, incredibly stupid, and awfully crude.

Sci-fi films were also parodied by Brooks, in which he made Spaceballs. This film largely satirizes Star Wars, with a little Star Trek thrown in. Darth Vader becomes Dark Helmet, Luke Skywalker becomes Lone Star, and Yoda becomes Yogurt. The film is rounded out with an android sidestick named Dot-Matrix. the ship “Spaceball I”- which is so long it takes nearly five minutes to move across the screen - sporting a “We Brak for Nobody” bumper sticker, and a beaming device that mistakenly puts the president’s head on backwards.

And it wasn’t until the mid-nineties when Brooks made his adaptation of Robin Hood. But his version was comically titled Robin Hood: Men in Tights. And unlike its conventional originals, this version has musical numbers, castles towed away by the tax collector H. R. Blackheart, and a Hollywood-style “England” sign.

In each of his films, Brooks adds comedic gags to play off of the moments in the original films we accept in suspended disbelief. All the while using the spoof blue print of reminding the audience to not take the movie too seriously. But the deciding factor in putting Brooks on a higher level than any other parody artist is his use of self-reflexivity in order to constantly remind the audience that it IS a movie.

There are scenes in a majority of Brooks’ films in which you are not only told it is a film, but shown. Whereas most films ask you to suspend your disbelief and enter the world of the story, Mel Brooks wants you to remain in reality.

Making references to the film, and even to himself, is Brooks’ most subtle technique of self-reflexivity. After a climatic final right scene in Blazing Saddles, one hero turns to the other and suggests, “Let’s go finish the movie.”

In most cases, these moments occur just as the viewer slips into disbelief and gets lost in the world of the film. A dramatic opening sequence in Robin Hood: Men in Tights is the backdrop for the credits, in which there are flames flying at a village, accompanied with swelling music. The townspeople run from their burning homes, turn to one another and ask:

TOWNSPERSON 1: There’s got to be a better way of doing the credits.
TOWNSPERSON 2: Yeah, every time they make a movie they burn down our village.
TOWNSPEOPLE: Leave us alone Mel Brooks!

And later, when Robin bursts through the door, just in the nick of time, to save Maid Marion, there is a dramatic pause, and then, ”Prepare for the fight scene!” Once the movie is coming to a close, Achon Rohn’s black sidekick, is appointed sheriff.

TOWNSPEOPLE: A black sheriff?
ACHOO: Hey, it worked in Blazing Saddles!

But the one Mel Brooks film that holds the most self-reflexive references would be Spaceballs. This film uses mentions of the film, such as the president, winded up running the expanse of “Spaceballs!” saying, “I ran. If I walk, the movie will be over,” as well as delving into merchandise and marketing for the movie.

In a desperate search to locate Lone Star and the princess, Dark Helmet and Colonel Sanders put into their VCR Spaceballs the movie! After fast-forwarding through the parts in the movie we have already seen, they come across “now.” They stare at themselves on the screen:

DARK HELMET: What the hell am I looking...
COLONEL SANDERS: Now, sir. You are looking at now. Everything that is happening now, is happening now.
DARK HELMET: What happened in then?
COLONEL SANDERS: We passed it.
DARK HELMET: When?
COLONEL SANDERS: Just now.

And later, after Lone Star and his companions meet Yogurt, they ask, "What is it that you do here?" and his reply: "Merchandising." It is now that we are shown Yogurt's souvenir shop, which contains Spaceballs the t-shirt, Spaceballs the coloring book, Spaceballs the lunch box, and Spaceballs the breakfast cereal. "Where the real money from the movie is made!" From here on out, any object shown to us in Spaceballs has the logo on it. The president's bed has "Spaceballs the sheets," the toilet paper has "Spaceballs the toilet paper" written on it, and at the galaxy diner we even see "Spaceballs the place mat." The entire last half of the film contains images which not only satire the synergy of the film process, but never let the thought escape us that this is a film.

A more obvious technique Brooks uses for us to keep in mind that we are watching a movie, is the direct address to the camera by his characters. All throughout Robin Hood: Men in Tights, characters are constantly looking directly into the camera with a raised eyebrow at a joke, or look of confusion after a ridiculous scene. This process brings the audience into the action with the actors and, likewise, brings the characters into the realm of the viewer.

After the villains in Spaceballs go over their evil plot to suck all of the fresh air from planet Druidia, as well as plan how they will go about doing this, Dark Helmet looks directly into the camera and says, "Everybody get that?!" By doing this, Brooks removes the viewers from the world of the film with a sudden jolt and reminds them that they are audience members watching a film.

In Blazing Saddles, this technique is used with both the villain and hero. Hedley Lamar, sitting alone in his office, contemplates his plan to destroy the town of Rockridge. He questions how he will do this, and where he will find the people to do it for him, then finally he looks into the camera and says, "And why am I asking you?" Throughout the film, Sheriff Bart constantly directs his attention straight into the camera. Whether it's a lock he gives while saying a humorous or insightful line of dialogue, or saying to the viewer, "Boy are they dumb!" after meeting the townspeople for the first time. Sheriff Bart is continuously used by Brooks to convey reality to the audience.

As if he couldn't make it anymore obvious to the viewer, Brooks uses a third and final method of conveying reality to his audience by showing them the making of the film, within the film. He uses several different methods to achieve this technique, but all of them make it virtually impossible to suspend your disbelief.

Even after we have been bombarded with Spaceball merchandise, Brooks still shows us the mechanics of making the film. After a powerful bit of dialogue and an extreme close up on Dark Helmet, the camera continues to zoom in on him until it runs smack into his hand.

Lately, while Lone Star and his friends are trying to escape from Spaceball City, they make a courageous dive through a closing mechanical door. In the next scene, we find that guards have captured our heroes. But as they turn around to face us, we realize that these are different people, but in the same costumes. At this point we have been caught up in the excitement and action of the film, only to now be confused. The guard quickly clears that up for us when he exclaims, "You idiots! These are not them, these are their stunt doubles!!" Then, in the final light scene, a smash through the air with a light saber type weapon hits a crewmember. As he screams and falls, we see the filming crew that is supposedly filming the movie.

Robin Hood: Men in Tights makes up for its lack of eye contact with creative behind-the-scenes type effects. In a tall pan of the wedding scene, the priest and his altar boys make their way down the aisle, but the priest's staff is so tall it runs into the camera. And when Robin is puzzled by losing the archery contest and knows that he isn't "supposed to lose," he pulls out his script and says, "I get another shot!" At this, the rest of the cast pulls out their movie scripts as well, and all in cheesy, rehearsed unison say, "Yes, yes he does." And similarly to the Spaceballs light scene, when a sword thrust goes too far, his arrow catches a donut being held by a crewmember to the side of the frame.

Blazing Saddles, a western set in the 1800s, is actually closer to modern day reality than most of Brooks' films. But, just in case the references and eye contact didn't make a big enough impact on the viewer, the characters perform their final fight scene while running through the back lot at Universal Studios. They break through the sets of their movie, only to land in the middle of another one! As the frantic director yells at them to get off his set, a cowboy exclaims, "I work for Mel Brooks!" The scene continues through the lot, down the street via tux and horsing, and ends up in a movie theatre where the film Blazing Saddles is being shown. If at any point the audience had stepped into the realm of the movie and suspended their disbelief, this complicated scene, full of reality as well as comedy, brings them back to their world to stay.

Parody and satire on their own induce laughter and enjoyment from an audience. It's a matter of finding humor in those things that we take so seriously. But even still, viewers suspend their disbelief and slip into this imaginary (yet funny) world. That is why Brooks' technique of keeping the audience in their own reality, and asking, instead, that we suspend our belief so innovative. He wants us as the viewers to enjoy his satirical movie, but to remember that after all, it is just a movie.
It's got twisted humor. It contains oftbeat storylines. Its popularity is rapidly growing as the years progress. It has been christened by the film world as black comedy. Within the past few years there has been an increasing number of sardonic films like Heathers, Pulp Fiction, To Die For, Fargo, Grosse Pointe Blank, The Opposite of Sex, American Beauty and Nurse Betty that are inundated with tongue-in-cheek humor, bizarre plots, and usually some type of ironic social commentary. The common acidic tone of such films has given a harsh edge to the word comedy. Death becomes typical, crime becomes normal, relationships becomes wicked, and together it all becomes funny.

Perhaps as we ease our way into the millennium we are at the same time shifting our humor towards something a little less slapstick, and a little more morbid. While situated between the birth of a new era and the death of an old one, it is understandable that films may gear a person to start rethinking his or her life, relationships, and our own sense of mortality. Black comedies, loaded with distorted morals and snappy dialogue, underscore this type of reevaluation by bringing the dark side we all possess out into the open in order to make fun of it and laugh about it.

With black comedy comes a certain level of blood and gore that questions the value placed on human lives. It's not to say that the delayed since the scenes that follow include a few, last minute murders before he totally kills it quits. By the end of the film, Martin Blank does acquire a new value of life to some degree. Whether its catharsis or not, he has lost his taste for the job that had defined him for so long. He acknowledges the wrong in it, and he makes every attempt to start afresh.

On the other hand, black comedies can make this same commentary without incorporating a character's moral transform-
mation. The film *The Opposite of Sex* (1998) for example, is full of cynical irony that allows plenty of space for interpretation. The entire span of the film has a rather "bitter" tone to it, and Christina Ricci's portrayal of the apathetic protagonist, Dedee Truitt comes off severely harsh. However, after the film exhausts all its elements of deceit, back stabbing, inhumanity, betrayal, and, of course, murder, there is an elaborate birth sequence to and the story. By placing death and birth as the bookends that start and finish the film, one can read it as a way to emphasize the value of life and existence. As the film demonstrates, life is not always great, fair, and certainly not full of happiness at all times. Nevertheless, it is a gift that can be given and taken away and therefore should be valued as such.

Dedee never really becomes Miss Congeniality by the time the film is done, but there is a sense of redemption by the few "moral" acts she performs in the end. She returns the wages of a dead man she had used for blackmail, she finally shows concern for the baby she gives birth to, and she ultimately leaves the child in the hands of someone who can best care for him. Although she is the first to remind the audience she never develops a heart of gold. While her change in thought is not as elaborate and conventional as the sappy moviegoer might hope for, it definitely highlights the reality that change on some level or another is possible. Even Dedee says she was never the same after that summer.

The combination of mixing serious issues within a comical environment may be one of the reasons black comedies are accumulating a larger following. Although they differ from each other, the majority of these films are clever, stylish, and thought provoking. Some people are interested in a little more depth than your average mainstream comedy, and should include a little cynicism, eccentricities, and unconventional humor, then it is for it.

Whether it's dysfunctional families, greed, teenage angst, sexual transgressions, or the value placed on human lives, these films are constantly exploring and commenting on the issues that so much of cinema turns away from. Throw in a few satirical punch lines, and you're laughing in the process.

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Misogynistic Ordinary People: Adaptation & Transformation

By Christopher Talmant
The last twenty years of American cinema and television have celebrated again and again their perceived result of feminism: the bitch. When Laura Mulvey’s 1977 essay “Film and Visual Pleasure” opened up discussion of Hollywood’s depiction of women and visual narratives such as The Mary Tyler Moore Show and An Unmarried Woman, the kind of self-assured women somehow led to twenty years of female icons such as Dynasty’s Alexis Carrington and American Beauty’s Carolyn Burns. The portrayal of the self-assured “bitch” is the result of a subtle but thorough killing of pro-feminist examinations; such as the relationship of women and anger and how ambition is realized inside the confines of western feminine roles. The most precise example of this killing is the changes made to the character Beth Jarrett in Robert Redford’s 1980 film adaptation of Judith Guest’s best-selling 1978 book, Ordinary People. As the title suggests, the book could serve as an allegory about how America was unable to respond to changes in gender role expectations. The story traces a man and husband gaining self-awareness in therapy in contrast to a wife struggling to keep a family dynamic; a dynamic that facilitates the maintenance of her thoroughly inoculated expectation of female selflessness and emotional denial. The film version seems to be a faithful adaptation of the book, however, upon closer examination, takes the character of Beth (as created by Guest) a competent and confident but emotionally remote woman, and makes her weak, mean and myopic.

The book tells the story of the Jarretts, an upper-middle class family that endures two crises. First their older son, Buck, dies in a boating accident. Next, the younger son, Conrad, attempts suicide. When the book and the film begin, Conrad, home from the mental hospital, is unable to find a connection with his mother, for they cannot forgive either themselves or each other. This lack of a connection causes disillusionment for all three of the Jarretts. The book is told from the husband and son’s perspectives, and shows how Calvin’s, the father, journey through grief starts with concern for his son but ends up with concern for his wife. In recent editions of the book, the biography of Judith Guest says that she served as a consultant on the making of Redford’s film, this implies that she may have authorized the changes to the depiction of Beth.

The changes to Beth’s character are made through the changes in dialogue and a larger narrative reconstruction. Guest creates dialogues between Beth and Calvin, which Redford eliminates. In the book, the family spends Christmas day with Beth’s parents, Howard and Ellen. Calvin and Howard planned to surprise gift of a car for Conrad, but his reaction to his new convertible was not what Calvin had hoped. At the end of evening, Calvin and Beth recount the day and Beth examines Calvin’s controlling nature: "You want us all to perform for you," Beth says. "Make the day go right for you..."

"Well, I’m willing to do my share," Conrad replies. "I’ll sing and dance and tell crooked-lylor jokes—it won’t be my fault if it falls apart.

"Or mine, either! Or Dad’s or Mother’s! You didn’t have to close up on them that way, just because your surprise didn’t work out the way you planned it." (...

"I’m tired of you getting your feelings hurt, Cal, because you refuse to see things as they really are.

"And how are things?" he asks, turning around. "How are they really?"

"He’s not your little boy," she says. "He’ll be eighteen years old next month. For some reason, you want to think that he needs your constant coddling and protection..."

Beth tries to make Calvin understand that she feels he is too demanding, and that she, her son, are able to perform for him and fulfill his vision of a family.

Redford replaces the Christmas day scene with one in which the family goes to Ellen and Howard’s house to take family photographs before the swim team argument. Calvin attempts to have Beth and Conrad have their picture taken together (which both Conrad and Beth try to avoid). Beth makes repeated polite but insistent requests to "give me the camera" and...
Conrad finally bursts out "Give her the god-damned camera!"

After this, Beth leaves to go make sandwiches. In the kitchen, Beth tells her mother that she cannot relate to her son anymore and thinks he should go to boarding school. Ellen tells her daughter to be firm with Conrad. The scene closes with Ellen asking Beth about Calvin's opinion about Conrad, and Beth instantly changes the subject.

The discrepancy between Guest's and Redford's Beth is demonstrated in the breakup of Calvin and Beth's marriage. In the book, Calvin is more forceful and Beth as consistent with the rest of the book, is more lucid; her decision to leave her husband is swift and purposeful.

"I don't understand why you're leaving!" Calvin says.

Beth replies, "Because I can't stand the way you look at me. I can't stand that 'poor Beth, poor old you' expression on your face."

Calvin replies, "I don't believe you. I don't believe that it's I'm not looking at you any differently."

Beth's decision to leave is her way of handling a love that is lost, her exertion of control over a troubled relationship. The interaction of her leaving helps Calvin to remember back to one of his arguments:

The night [Calvin] grabbed her, he had shouted into her face, "Do you love me, Beth."

"Stop it!" [Beth] said.

"Tell me! I want to know!" [Calvin demands]

"I feel the same way about you," she [Beth] said, "that I have always felt: You are the one! You are the one who's changed!"

Beth takes the initiative to break free from what she feels is a controlling relationship, to grieve in her own manner. Calvin must move on without her, for he cannot accept her as she is.

In the movie, Beth's independent sensibility and perception of the family situation culminate in a very different, parting of the marriage. Calvin takes control over the emotionally wooden Beth in a calm and frank manner. Early in the morning, Beth awakes to find Calvin not laying next to her. She walks downstairs after nearly tying her bathrobe to find Calvin sitting in the dining room. His face is surrounded by the pre-dawn light coming from the dining room window. Beth standing in the darkened entrance to the dining room clearly seen through the even dimness of the hallway. She asks Calvin if he is crying. He replies affirmatively. He then proceeds to fully dissect his wife's psychological limitations with painful accuracy: "You are beautiful and you are unpredictable, but you're so cautious. You're determined, Beth. But you know something—you're not strong. And I don't know if you're really giving."

Beth stands "in the dark" looking alarmed and overwhelmed as if Calvin has come at her totally unaware. Then, Calvin asks, "Tell me something...do you love me, do you really love me?" To which Beth explains with an expressionless face, "I feel the way I've always felt about you." He then explains that their marriage would have been fine if there hadn't been any mess, because you can't handle mess, you need everything neat and easy. He then proceeds to reveal his emotional state to her:

"I don't know, maybe you can't love anybody. It was so much Buck, when Buck died it was if you buried all your love with him and I don't understand that, just don't know. Maybe it wasn't even Buck...but whatever it was, I don't know who you are. I don't know what we've been playing at. So I was crying, because I don't know if I love you anymore and I don't know what I'm going to do without that."

Beth goes upstairs, pulls out her luggage from the closet and begins to break into sobs as she pulls the cosmetic case off the shelf, leaning against the suit hanger for support. Conrad awakes to see a cab in the driveway. He finds his father sitting outside and they bond, sitting in remorse but happier, free to live without the repression of Beth.

The most powerful aspect of Guest's story was that Beth was not so openly disdainful of her son, and not a "bad wife." Calvin had to struggle to work out a truce, a safe space with his wife. In the end, Beth could no longer withstand his scrutiny and left the marriage. In the film, Calvin's controlling nature is undermined and lie is made almost preternaturally perceptive. Beth's non-perceptiveness is reinforced by the shots that show her staring blankly into space. These are in contrast to the voiceover and flashback filled scenes where Conrad remembers the beating accident and Calvin his son's attempted suicide.

In the final scene of the film, Conrad actually asks his father "to haul his ass more," which was Beth's suggestion to her husband (in the book). Redford's Beth only contributes to the appearance of the family. After Calvin has a breakthrough when visiting Conrad's therapist, he comes home to ask Beth how she was able to make a fashion suggestion to her husband on the day of the funeral, which was the only reference to Beth's contribution to the grieving process.

The film eliminates any of latter scenes from the book that show Beth interacting positively with Conrad or making any contribution to the family's dynamics. While her stylish costumes, shots of her perfectly arranged cloth napkins in the drawer film huffs should also note the strikingly similar mise-en-scene in the dinner table scenes of Ordinary People and American Beauty and her frequent possession of a shopping bag visually reinforce her dedication to superficial correctness. In addition, the question of Calvin's unrealistic desires for his family are never really addressed, instead he examines his "overestimation" of his ex-wife. In the ending scene he reminds his son "not to expect too much from people, because they'll disappoint you sometimes." To which Conrad responds, "I'm not disappointed, I love you, Dad."

Judith Guest's book left it's readers questioning how family relations would change with the times, while Redford's film saved the viewers from doubt by showing how a man can take any situation under control.
Why The Critics Were Wrong

by Brian Long

I have a secret. I like to think of myself as a respectable film student. I watch the films I am supposed to watch, nodding in the right places and saying the right things in lecture and in sections. Most of the time I do agree with the masses and I respect and appreciate the fact that certain films are considered legendary for a reason. But every once in a great while a film comes along that is shunned by the film community but that I hold up and admire. We all have those favorites, right? You all know those films that you suggest to watch that produce a groan from every other person in the room. It is as if the film you suggest is not just being called into infamy but that your very being is. So my secret is this, and I am now going on record: The Messenger is one of those films for me. Now, don’t stop reading. I plan to convert each and every one of you who rolled your eyes or who felt like throwing down this magazine in utter disgust. So, keep on trucking, even if it’s just to prove me wrong.

For the many of you who missed this movie, The Messenger is the story of Joan of Arc. Directed by Luc Besson (The Fifth Element and La Femme Nikita) and released in early 1999, it played in the theaters for an extremely short time and was released to video fairly quickly, mostly because of scathing reviews and low box office sales. Unlike many preceding films covering the life and trial of the martyr, where Joan is canonized again and again, Besson sheds a more critical light on the same old story. Perhaps this is one of the best things about the film, the rediscovery of a well-known story in a different light. It is in this area where many current adaptations of, say, Shakespeare, fail and where Baz Luhrmann’s 1996 rendition of Romeo and Juliet partially succeeded.

Luc Besson’s interpretation of Joan of Arc’s story begins with the heroine as a child. Joan is introduced as a young girl obsessed with her religion. She displays such a fervor for her beliefs that it baffles both her priests and family. Despite this religious compulsion, she is portrayed as an extremely happy and well-adjusted child, illustrated through scenes of her running with reckless abandon through fields of brightly colored flowers. These scenes, although they seem cliché, serve to contrast the world of darkness Joan is about to enter. Her village is attacked, bringing the main conflict in the plot to the foreground: France and England are at war. In this attack, Joan witnesses her sister killed and her dead body raped by an English soldier. It is through this experience that Joan transforms from a contented child into a woman wracked with guilt and hatred.

This change in Joan’s life is effectively illustrated through cinematography: where before we saw medium shots of Joan surrounded by bright flowers, she is now shown in extreme long shots, her person getting lost among the dappled colors of the surrounding landscape as she runs to the church for solace through confession. It is through this dialogue in this confession that we discover that she blames herself for her sister’s death, that she can not forgive the English for what one of them has done to her sister. This scene is instrumental in establishing the film’s main argument that Joan might be using her crusade as an excuse to carry out her personal motives.

What drives this point home is the scene directly before the attack on her village. Joan tumbles down a hill and lays still, laughing. Suddenly, something is different. A montage of abstract images is played before the viewer: clouds moving rapidly, a bell ringing in slow motion, a high angle shot of the cross on top of the church. The camera cranes up from Joan into a long shot showing her, lying in the field, arms outstretched and next to her a sword. Her position is very similar to the sword’s shape but is also reminiscent of Christ’s crucifixion. It is in this symmetry of imagery that the lines between religion and war are blurred. She reaches for the weapon and lifts it skyward, obviously thrilled with its symbolic power. The scene faces into the first of many of Joan’s visions represented in the film. Directly following the vision sequence...
Joan is lead back to her village as it is being attacked. The order of these scenes communicates the threats Bosso is trying to illustrate clearly and linearly. First, religion and war are aligned with the sword scene, and then her vision is linked to the traumatic event she experienced as a child.

Milla Jovovich makes her entry into the role of Joan of Arc about a decade later in the story. Her acting style and abilities are a point of major critical scrutiny. But Jovovich's acting should not carry the entire movie acting is not everything. Half of any character in a film is communicated to the audience through dialogue, camera work, and lighting. In insanity. It is the combination of cinematography and acting skill in the scenes between Jovovich and Hoffman that elevates this part of the film to its pinnacle. Although Hoffman is a more prolific actor than Jovovich, the cinematography creates breathtaking performances for both.

Despite the film's many strengths, there is reason for the bad press it received. A large part of the film regressed into Bosso's action flick style seen in The Fifth Element. This part of the film is too violent, too confusing, and too long. The dialogue retreats into one-liners that are simply not funny. It is obvious that Bosso was attempting to use some of these scenes this aspect, Jovovich's acting skills play no part. She is simply the face, the voice, the body. It is in this cinematic representation that Joan of Arc is dynamic.

She is always framed and lit powerfully even if her voice or hands are trembling. Jovovich can also be seen as playing the role too timidly. Again, Joan is portrayed as a very strong person, albeit not completely through acting. Jovovich supplies the emotion to appear scared; the camera supplies the character's presence to appear strong. It is the conflict between cinematography and acting that breeds a complete character.

Dustin Hoffman becomes a crucial addition to the film later. Hoffman enters in the role of Joan's conscience. His screen presence and performance are excellent as he hovers over Joan, questioning her motives and pushing her further into to place the viewer into Joan's frame of mind during battle. But these scenes do nothing but cause the viewer to detach from the action and quickly become bored.

Some may not able to look past these poor battle scenes and Jovovich's acting, and this is unfortunate. It is extremely difficult to find films with merit today. One must be constantly looking for films such as The Messenger, which may drown in criticism for their flaws but possess excellent film technique. Realize that the examples mentioned above are only a few of the ways in which the film succeeds. What must be taken into account is that directors will try many techniques that don't work. Recognizing these flaws for what they are and exploring why they take away from the film is a way that one can elevate one's viewing experience.

Although Jovovich's acting was highly criticized, her character was largely created through the film's formal axes.

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FILM DORM IN FULL EFFECT!

Get the inside scoop on the new film group.

by Andrew Dempf

Tucked away in the talent soaked cracks of Porter College lies an undiscovered and very new secret. Down the corridors of ugly pastel blue and cream colored painted industrial sheetrock, within every cell-like dorm room, behind every plum drenched door frontally plastered with post-it notes, lies the skeleton in the closet. It’s active, extravedted, and extremely talented residents refer to this mysterious haven as The Film and Digital Media Theme Hall.

If one were to peruse the brochure sent to all fresh applying to Porter College for the Fall 2000 quarter, they would gather that the Film and Digital Media Theme Hall is “a community dedicated to improving residents’ skills in all aspects of video and film production.” The brochure also attests that “community film projects will be a central feature of the living environment.” Upon questioning the residents of the hall, EyeCandy received quite a different story.

Regarding the brochure, Ryan Jones, Coordinator for Residential Education for Porter, remarked, “We provided a loose structure and gave an overall goal.” When the residents of the hall were asked how they felt when they arrived to find that things stated in the brochure were not entirely true, Boris Armchislaievsky, Porter Fresh, replied, “I was disappointed, but I knew that individuals in the hall would want to do stuff, I kind of expected it.”

The general response was that of disillusionment; this was followed by a gut sense of motivation to immediately formulate ideas, projects, and activities for the hall to carry out in the months to come.

For a first year idea in the running, the Film and Digital Media Hall is as persistent as they come. To date, Squiggle Productions and its members have become affiliated with organizations such as Community Access, Student Senate, and the Film Arts Coalition (FAC). The hall also plans to officially become a production company in order to be considered a student organization, so to gain support from SOAR.

Porter CRE’s Jones and Jeanine Cowan told EyeCandy how they felt about the quick response of the film hall in getting active. Jones said, “It’s definitely been great, the activity has been really impressive so far. The students are working together with positive attitudes.”

Similarly Cowan said, “the activity of the hall is a great sign that the students are interested. Right on for everyone involved.”

The rapid level of activity that the hall has created for itself is certainly impressive. “Administration is up in the air about it,” said Liam Cooper, Resident Advisor for the Hall. Both Cooper and Cowan felt that the Hall is a positive addition to the Porter community. Jones replied, “It’s nice for Porter to have its own filmmakers, it’s nice to put people together and have them feed off of each other.”

“We’re like a big happy family” is the general consensus among the hall’s residents. Cooper told EyeCandy, “I am really impressed with the level of energy coming from the hall, everyone is real enthusiastic. No one really knew what to expect but it seems like people are feeding off of each other, and the group togetherness is amazing.”

“The purpose of the theme hall is to gain experience, to produce good material, and to make friends. I’m a theatre major, but the hall will be good for me because it will keep me interested, and give me a chance to figure out what I really want to do,” said Maya Skinder. She then replied, “If I had to describe what I hope to gain from the hall in four words, they would be experience, knowledge, friends, and motivation. I’m pretty excited about the opportunity I’ve been given to be on the hall and the chances I have to work with all these talented people.”

After all this energy, does the FDM Hall have a future? Jones said, “The film hall is in its first year. A lot of where the hall will go in the future will be determined by the actions taken by the students on the hall this year. These students have the ability to make it what they want.” (cont. on next page)
Anchislavsky concluded in saying, "There is definitely going to be a future for the hall. It's gonna' be a big thing!"

Under the name "Squiggie Productions," titled after the famous Porter "squiggie," the hall has already succeeded in filming and marketing edited versions of last month's Porter Cabaret. The hall will present its customers with a complete and edited version of the live Cabaret performance. This includes still photography, dissolves, fades, and animations, as well as shots from multiple camera angles.

Squiggie Productions also currently has plans for a year-long project referred to as the "Porter Video Yearbook." The yearbook will include events of daily life at Porter from the inevitably strange to the normal. "It's projects like these that will bring the hall closer together and allow for those interested in film to get a little hands on experience," said Justin Oliphant, freshman resident of the hall. Individual film projects were also proposed for which a student script will be used, equipment will be rented using hall funds, and student filmmakers will set out to encounter a little extra interaction in film.

Halfway into the fall quarter, Film Hall residents have relayed similar feelings. Oliphant feels, "The Hall is a place to go and talk with anyone about film, it's a place to be inventive, to be creative, a place to share your thoughts and feelings."

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FAMILY QUACKERS

Hey Dad, if Mommy was in films, would we call her “Cine-Mom”?

Dude, this comic is always so darn stupid!!!!!

This comic is not funny and it makes no sense.

Let's go see a David Lynch film. He's so brilliant.