this issue:

Horror!

Eye Candy

FILM JOURNAL AT UCSD
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Xena Warrior Princess
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from the directors:

Thanks for taking a look at Eye Candy. We're here to bring information on all aspects of the film world. We'll cover the local, Hollywood and international scenes. We'll discuss trends, genres and movements. Every month we'll highlight a theme and print various points of view, like this month's Horror genre pages. In addition, you can count on us to highlight the cool films, videos, TV, etc. that we think you should see.

We hope you'll enjoy our first issue of Eye Candy. Tell us what you think: email:

ucscyelecandy@yahoo.com.

-Sarah, Nikki, & Beth

p.s. thank-you to everyone who has helped us get Eye Candy going: Will, Shelley Stamp, Eli Hollander, Mary Hiatt, Linda Potzus and the UCSC Film Department, UCSC Arts Division, Robin Shannon and the UCSC Press Center, Jason Dreier, Trish Brock, the Saturn Cafe, Bay Discounts, Community Television, Polar Bear Ice Cream, and our great crew.

eye candy credits: cast & crew

Directors ............... Sarah Ogletree
                   Nicole Brock
                   Elizabeth Bourg
                   Advisor ............... Shelley Stamp
                   Crew ............... Kevin Crook
                   Jessica Galetaey
                   Ryan Reyes
                   Emily Schultz
                   John Davis

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crime and family in THE LIMEY

What is montage? The Limey is montage. British ex-con Wilson, played by Terence Stamp, has come to Los Angeles to avenge the death of his only daughter. A scrupulous criminal on leave of absence from prison (get it), Wilson won’t take no for an answer. Soon he’s making trouble for Valentine, an aging music executive—played by Peter Fonda—who is more of an ex-hippie than a treacherous villain. Through Wilson’s eyes and accent we see a seedy Los Angeles (as always) that holds scars of murder and pain.

Directed by Steven Soderbergh—whose past credits include Sex, Lies, and Videotape (1989), the amazing black-and-white Kafka (1991), and most recently Out of Sight (1998) with George Clooney and Jennifer Lopez—the film uses and experiments with an interesting technique of editing. Crosscut with off- and on-screen gunfire are momentary shots of Wilson slowly getting ready for his forays. Shots of him sitting in his cheap Airport Motel room, with smoke slowly rolling off his cigarette are spliced together with scenes of intense search of Wilson’s daughter’s killer.

Also starring Luis Guzman, another ex-con who befriends and helps Wilson, and Lesley Ann Warren, a friend of his daughter, the film has several scenes when the contrast between Wilson, who has spent the last nine years in jail, and a very trendy L.A. become fairly humorous.

Soderbergh's direction is light and Stamp’s acting is excellent. The film incorporates several shots of the British film Poor Cow (1967), which is about a young mother whose life becomes embroiled in pain and instability when her husband is sent to jail. The shots used are of a rather young Terence Stamp who in that film played a criminal who, also, went by the name of Wilson. Using these brief segments of Poor Cow as flashbacks to Wilson’s younger years in England The Limey truly solves into the damage that a life of crime and punishment can cause to not only the criminal, but also his or her family and loved ones.

- John Travis

Three Kings Gleams

Writer, director David O. Russell—whose past credits include the romantic comedy Flirting With Disaster, and the intense Spike Lee’s Monkey—brings a picture of the Gulf War unlike those of CNN. Three Kings starring George Clooney, Mark Wahlberg, Ice Cube, Mykell Williams, and SNL veteran Nora Dunn is the story of four U.S. soldiers who don’t want to go back home empty-handed. The war is over, the president has promised a cease-fire, and the four under the blue skies. Their plan is to steal, already stolen, gold bullion, from an Iraqi bunker. The film at first seems to be working, but of course it does not.

Although, the film seems to be a remake of the Clint Eastwood flick Kelly’s Heroes it is far less interested in showing grand scenes of war. In fact, the climax of the film heart no violence. Some critics have written David O. Russell is reinventing the war movie. However, the basic idea behind the film is not so different from many other films. This idea that in war things get confused, ideas blurred, and morals and ethics frustrated by sheer immortality and fear is not a new one in motion pictures. And yet, three Kings, using stark depictions of violence and death as well as a dark, satirical humor, makes for excellent filmmaking.

The film itself, thanks to the cinematographer Tom Siegel (The Usual Suspects, A Fish Called Wanda) looks very interesting and adds to the overall feel of the story. The film stock, exposure, and focus are all played with making the movie stand out. There is a high use of grain that heightens the grittiness of the picture.

The script, also, includes several very poignant details. In a brutal sequence a G.I.’s mouth is pried open with a CD case and motor oil is poured into his mouth. While he struggles to keep the thick liquid from choking down his throat it is hard not to realize the symbolism. And, the entire character of the TV reporter shows the callous deals of the media that brought the war to the States by satellite. In one scene she looks out across a large pond filled with oil and dying birds, and says that she has already covered this story, but then bursts into tears. Although her character is there to help along the plot of show how hardened and war weary she is, her character also shows how it can be next to impossible not to be affected by the war. The television station she works for in NBS—National Bull Sh*t is easily identified.

George Clooney is great as the leader of the resident wild bunch, who plays a Special Forces Office. His character is sharply contrasted with the three other soldiers who have mainly seen the

(continued 15)
AN EVENING OF HORROR

THE SHOCKING SAGA OF A FILM MAKER'S QUEST TO ENLIGHTEN A FILM FAN...

By Kevin Crook
Sunday. October 31, 1999. Film Fan and Film Major are sitting on a couch. "So whadidya rent?" asks Film Fan, gesturing to the three Westside Video cassette holders. Film Major turns to Film Fan, flashes a smile and throws the okay sign. "R Classic!"
"Alright," says Fan, "Start it up."
Major plops in the film.

Leaden German music plays.
A faded black and white title appears: Das Kabinet des Doktor Caligari
"What the hell is this?" yells Fan.
"It's a Classic!" protests Major, slightly hurt.
"What happened to Slaughter High?!" demands Fan.
Major calms his friend and informs him that they are about to take a magical journey through three fantastic horrors films. Fan is suspicious. He does not like the looks of this black and white film with Germans and he certainly does not like the way Major said, 'magical.' Luckily, Major had anticipated Fan's reluctance and offers him a pilsner, which Fan quietly accepts.

HOW MAJOR GOT FAN EXCITED ABOUT
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)

The pilsner helped. Major found it at Trader Joe's and had been assured of its German authenticity. As Fan blew off the frothy head, Major told something close to this:

If you like any horror film, you have to start with the roots. The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari is the originator. It may not have the haunting, ch-ch-ch, ah ah ah soundtracks of Friday the 13th, nor the gore of Hellraiser, but it has the dark and scary set; the spooky Dr. Caligari and the even spookier Caesar the Somnambulist.

Caligari keeps Caesar in a box, a cabinet if you will, and feeds him something closely related to Gerber baby food. Now watch as Caesar wakes up for the Gerber, he rises stiffly just like a certain later infamous horror figure, Michael Meyers (Halloween). Michael, like other later horror monsters, almost certainly stole some moves from Caesar. Furthermore, Caesar has got the look. Flat and sexy, almost part of the scenery. Two-dimensionally was very in for monsters in the 1920s and Caesar has it, complements German Expressionism.

Expressionism, a highly influential art movement of the time, is actually responsible for the film's entire style. Exaggerated angles and levels, and high black and white contrast (chiaroscuro) are all elements of Expressionism. The look carries over to the castles and abatorious of American horror films and even up to contemporary style of directors like Tim Burton. Why expressionism? Because folks were depressed, as in post-World War I economic depression. The outlook was so bad, everyday things were looking distorted. Those in power seemed higher (note the law officials in high chairs) and those disempowered are in the huddled collective mass at the Somnambulist show.

Let us not forget Caesar's murderous tendencies. It would appear that Caesar is puppeteered by Dr. Caligari since he is the one obsessed over creating the Somnambulist. However, Caesar's first victim is Alan and recall that Francis and his buddy Alan were in friendly competition for the love of Jane. If you had a good look into Francis' head, twenty dollars says he wanted Alan dead and Jane for himself. Is it coincidence that Caesar acts out those very deeds? Caligari may be the caretaker of Caesar, but who is narrating the story? Monsters can often times represent another character's unconscious desires.

Film Fan finished his beer, mildly convinced of the film's importance, when suddenly he witnessed the surprising final plot twist, reminiscent of The Sixth Sense. The trap had been sprung. Film Major celebrated, and so they watched on.

ZOMBIES! GORE! Night of the Living Dead (1968)

Zombie! A night of horror is incomplete without them. Slow, clumsy, yet relentless, the zombie finds its strength in numbers. Working collectively, zombies are able to flip cars and bust into houses because nothing sounds better to them than warm human flesh.

The zombie film offers great commentary on human cooperation, or rather the lack thereof, in America. While the zombies are beating at the house...
ten, twenty, thirty strong, the humans inside are each driven by their own agendas. Ben thinks it is best to stay upstairs where at least they will have a fighting chance and a possible escape route. Mr. Cooper thinks the basement concealment is key to human victory. Overall, the humans lose (and lose bad) because they quarrel too much, whereas any zombie will unite around the common cause of mouth-watering flesh.

It is no coincidence a horror film depicting the lack of cooperative effort appears in 1968, during the height of civil unrest in America. Paranoia about the cold war, for example, placed people in the same us vs. them mentality. The issue which shines through the strongest, though, is civil rights. Casing a black actor (Cuone Jones) as the lead role of Ben was a progressive step not only for the horror genre, but film on the whole. Ben is the most level-headed of anyone and is able to handle stubborn-dead and stubborn-alive white people alike.

Ben’s fate makes for the most powerful and eerie moment of the film. When you watch this film, make note of the end (which includes the still photography sequence) and see how the line between human versus zombie, cops versus zombies, and whites versus blacks is blurred. The film mixes horror and social commentary together and leaves us with a real crease-out feeling.

1968 also saw the termination of the ultra conservative Production Code, makers of the separated marital beds since 1934. Night of the Living Dead wasted no time in healing the navel systems waters by pioneering the element of gore. Good, wholesome, down home gore. Rotted intestines, gnawed arms, and torn stabbings. If you want see some freaky stuff, watch what happens to Tom and Judy. If you want to see some freakier stuff, follow the Cooper’s daughter. This is Halloween film viewing at its finest.

THE BEST HORROR FILM EVER: The Shining (1980)

Around the time that Wes Craven was preparing to make Nightmare on Elm Street and the pen was being inked for Friday the Thirteenth, Stanley Kubrick emerged from his recuse hut somewhere in Canada to deliver The Shining. Because Kubrick always made it a point to rarely interact with society, he was unaffected by the new slasher trend and probably did not care. He had the desire to make a really scary movie and he just did it.

In a recent informal interview conducted at the University of California at Santa Cruz, The Shining was voted the most popular film of the horror genre. The average age of UCSC’s student body was five when the film was released, and by the time we were ready to leave our first horror film experience, we were approximately the age of the film’s featured kid, Danny Torrence.

We could all identify with Danny. He watched Road Runner cartoons, drove a mean Big Wheels, and he had an imaginary friend. We seethed with envy as Danny did a full lap around the hotel’s grand lounge with his Big Wheels, feeling the surface change from hardwood floor, to carpet, to linoleum and back to hardwood floor. Kubrick, always a fan of the tracking shot, went wild with the Steadicam which allowed the continuous smooth movement of the scene as well as the corner-hugging, maze sequence. The silent yet headlong pace of the Steadicam creates a powerful effect of anxiety—the possibility we might run right into danger. And Danny sees things that have been forever etched in our minds. Things like:

"Come play with us, Danny! (If you don’t remember the twins, mint this movie now).

The Shining also features a great monster, one which emerges not from the outside world but within the family. Jack Torrence (Jack Nicholson) is the daddy who acquires a bad case of the axe-murders. Is it writer’s block? Is it the house’s evil spirit? Is it impotence? Not clear, maybe a combination. However, Nicholson’s performance merits the status of Popular College Poster and he continues to be one of the best monsters in cinema.

The Odyssey was complete. The Shining reached the end of its readers, automatically shutting off the VCR and throwing on the abrasive feed of channel three. Fan and Major, sapped of all energy, fell asleep to the frantic sound of the salt and pepper wares.

What happened tonight? Certainly Fan and Major learned that best way to watch a Halloween film fest without interruption of those pesky trick or treaters is to post a sign on the front door that says, "We’ve got Oatmeal and pennies!" But besides that:

1) Caligari can be enjoyed.
2) Zombies are cool.
3) The Shining is feaky.
a sequel to end all sequels
Michael vs. Jason vs. Freddy vs. Billy and Stu
by Ryan Reyes, edited by Elizabethe Bourg

What is the fascination with horror films? Some of them have so many sequels that the amount starts to parallel that of Gizmo's multiplication in the swimming pool from Gremlins, and there is always some fatuous gimmick that the film makers come up with in order to keep the horror from being bludgeoned. Sometimes, while watching a hand-held camera chase a blonde through the woods, our minds start to wander as we desperately search for meaning. I've often wondered, as I watch the blonde get hacked after tipping on a branch, which killer would win a fight when pitted against each other? Would Michael Myers win a fight against the masked murderers of Scream? Who would you bet against?

I personally have twelve dollars on myself. There is nothing more horrific than my own mangled body and monstrous features after I smell my own breath. In one battle, the mutant rodent thing from Critters would probably bite off the Alien's middle limb, but in the sequel it would grow back from some sort of new scientifically discovered goo. Yes, the plots of horror films are often ridiculously preposterous and as they become more and more mundane, their plots worsen. Check out the "final" addition to little cute Chucky's films where he gets a female doll partner. I mean the plots were never believable to begin with, but this is too much (especially for my grandma and her poor heart: I love you). Expect to see the sequel Divorce Bride of Chucky hit theaters this Christmas, where Chucky's Bride goes after him with a Play School chemistry set because he has an affair with Barbie's younger sister, Skipper.

Some of the scariest aspects of horror films are the ideologies lurking beneath the surface of the plots, most having to do with fear of queers, female sexuality and foreigness. It is the villain that stands out as being different, or foreign, and it must be destroyed in order to re-establish and re-instate tranquility within the film's environment. Characters like Norman Bates, Michael Myers, and Jason Voorhees seem to have major problems with the expression of sexuality, suggesting a sort of sexual innuendo in themselves, a characteristic that could be read as homophobia or perversion. Even scarier than these morally questionable ideologies is the way they are ignored in the conclusions to each film. Although the monster has been killed, nothing has really been solved; no character takes the time to comment on the nature of the murders and murderer, unless you count Psycho, a very pathetic example.

An interesting fight in the battle of evil vs. evil would be Jason Voorhees vs. Freddy Krueger since it seems they are immortal. Are they gods, incarnations of Satan, expressions of humanity's evils, American icons, or do they simply play upon viewers fears in order to create capital fear? Is this the answer to the enigma? Can it be that horror sequels are made only because the producers and filmmakers know the films will generate money, already having a guaranteed audience? Yes, I think this is the answer. Should I be upset about this? Perhaps, because other films may be more worthy, entertaining, thought provoking, or simply better than these cheap horror film sequels or their tired concepts. However, there is a conflict in which I must confess. Admittedly, I enjoy the phenomenon. I mean, would you rather sequels be made predominately in the western-musical genre? Probably not, unless the main character had an obsession with collecting and teaching dead people's souls to sing in order to preserve his own sanity, while his group of male and female lovers went around methodically shooting oxygen into suburbanite veins.

It may very well be that the only way to see who would win a fight between any of the legendary slashers would be a horror villain edition of MTV's Celebrity Death Match. Who could survive Leather Face's roasting chainsaw? Or, better yet, would Pinhead triumph over The Thing? Would the Living Dead through the forest with a steak knife?

Personally, my money's on Michael Myers: either he's running on Energizer or he's immortal because he never gives up. And besides, he's been around longer, and looks pretty scary for a guy in coveralls and a William Shatner mask. How do we judge these fights? Do we use the criteria for which Vern justified his answer in Stand By Me? When asked who would win a fight, Superman or Mighty Mouse, he answered, "Superman, because he's a real guy." Is that what makes a villain more powerful, a "real" guy? If this is true then where does Michael Myers fit in? He seems to inhabit both aspects of the real and immortal. Dr. Loomis's answer is that Michael is no man, just simple, "pure evil." Pure evil would have to win, especially since the "real" Billy and Stuart end up bleeding all over the kitchen, allowing Sydney to escape death.

Sequels will continue to be in a marriage with the horror genre (probably for eternity), so we can hope for more interesting titles, plots, and acting to come our way. Who knows, who the rumored picture, Freddy and Jason may actually be made into a movie, and perhaps one of our fictional battles will be settled in the process.

Horror Films That Never Even Went Straight to Video (they were too damn scary):
1. Richard Simmons's Afro is Alive!
2. Annoyed Sweat: Richard Simmons's Afro is Alive!
3. Illegitimate Harriet of Gore
4. Illegitimate Harriet of Gore 2: Revenge of the Foster Home
5. Yodel: An Alps Massacre
6. My Sister's Pet Guillotine
7. Giving Head: My Sister's Pet Guillotine 2
8. Pat Sejamack Makes Coffins
9. Cupid: Darts Dipped in Poison
10. Cupid 2: Darts Are Bullets, Now
11. Cupid 3: Cupid Wingless in Hell
12. Debbie Does Ebert: Two Thumbs Up!
The Slasher Film Still Deserves its Place Amidst the Horror Greats

By Elizabeth Bercy

It is the way in which *Halloween* can inconspicuously draw in the audience through the blending of the killer and the camera, making us see through the killer's eyes. It is the way that Freddy can invade dreams, just seconds after the victim falls asleep. It is the way Jamie Les Curtis always seems so surprised that she is, yet again, being chased by a psycho in a costume. It is the way the slasher film brought the killer into everyday life. And it is the reason we never get tired of watching sequel after sequel of one recycled plot: the madman set free amongst a group of promiscuous teenagers. Slasher films are pure delight.

What is interesting about the slasher film (what I consider to be a sub-genre of the horror film) is that no one film is more popular than another. Each horror fan has their favorite, and the titles are hardly limited to the standard *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (Wes Craven, 1984), *Friday the 13th* (Sean S. Cunningham, 1980), and *Halloween* (John Carpenter, 1978); other popular titles include *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, 1974), *Scream* (Wes Craven, 1996), *Slumber Party Massacre* (Amy Holden Jones, 1982), *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960), *Candyman* (Bernard Rose, 1992), *976 EVIL* (Robert Englund, 1998), *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (Jim Gillespie, 1997), *Sleepaway Camp* (Robert Hiltzik, 1983), and *Prom Night* (Paul Lynch, 1980). Fan favorites can also come from any of the follow-ups to these films, since each of the above listed films has at least one sequel to its name, some better than the original.

The film *Halloween* may have arguably been the first slasher film (as well as the best), but it certainly echoes films of the past. The brutal murder of the sister in the opening sequence of the film closely resembles the shower scene in *Psycho*, for instance. The film also recalls circumstances familiar to *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*: a young girl terrorized by a psychopath that likes to wear a white mask. The film also fits with the idea of placing the audience behind the camera, paying the road for that to become common and later parodied. *Halloween* also borrows from films outside the horror genre. A scene where Laurie (Jamie Lee Curtis) slowly approaches a house from across the street similarly parallels a scene from *Meet Me in St. Louis* (Vincente Minnelli, 1944), where Tootie slowly walks up to the scariest house on her block Halloween night.

Where Carpenter differed in his approach to *Halloween* was to move the location away from the farmland atmosphere into the present suburban neighborhood. You no longer had to run out of gas in the middle of nowhere to meet a killer, he could be living right next door. The setting was now more frightening to the average viewer because they could place themselves inside the film and empathize with the victims. *A Nightmare on Elm Street* took this even further by placing the characters in a suburban setting, and then placing the killer inside their dreams, providing less chance of a possible escape. Also, by putting the viewing audience behind the camera during certain scenes, we are almost forced to assume the point of view of the killer as he stalks his victims. Ultimately, while we are recognizing the killer's perspective, we are creating conflict within ourselves: do we choose to identify with the killer or the victim?

Most slasher films hint as to possible reasons why the killers might have these murderous personalities, further blurring the boundaries between slasher and slasher. In *Halloween*, for example, the first scene shows a five year old Michael Myers creased up in a clown suit watching his sister and her boyfriend involved in heavy foreplay on the living room couch. Most viewers would take this to mean that Mom and Dad aren't home, an assumption proven true at the end of the first scene; poor Michael has a child abandonment case that would hold up in any court. Freddy Krueger was burned to death by the parents of the kids on Elm Street, and Jason Voorhees watched his mother beheaded.

Halloween will always be a home for the bizarre, freaky, gruesome, heinous, ugly, and terrifying side of humanity and reality, something the slasher film creatively captures. Yes, they are gory, inadmissibly violent, downright silly, and thoroughly exploitative, but they manage to put it off.
RED PANTIED MARTIANS AND MASKED MEN

Delving into the world of Tim Burton

by Sarah O'Flóine

This Thanksgiving, after a summer of spectacular teasers attached to not so spectacular films, Paramount in association with Mandalay Pictures will finally release *Sleepy Hollow*, the newest re-make of Washington Irving's classic horror tale.

A quite promising picture, *Sleepy Hollow* even has a clever release date, for what more perfect a time than Thanksgiving to release a film about decapitations? Adding to the promise is the film's director Tim Burton who's career has catered to expressing the unusual. In his cinematically distinct gothic style such a gory fairytale with a hero, heroine and a headless horseman couldn't be in better hands.

Further fueling this theory is Burton's past implausible triumphs of turning clay into a musical, men into bats and a bike into a major thematic element. In his inventive style Burton has been able to establish a feeling of the surreal in suburbia by contrasting reality. For example in *Beetle Juice* Burton contrasted the afterlife and the country life and in *Edward Scissorhands* there was the track housing with a castle at the end of the street. Even the short glimpse in the trailer of *Sleepy Hollow's* elaborate scenery and set designs indicate a significant change in environment for the protagonist, as he is sent from the brutish streets of New York to the mysterious town of Sleepy Hollow.

But how did Burton's Batman and Edward Scissorhands, Pumpkin Kings and Pee-Wee's become protagonists? In this case, Burton was the beginning. Breaking into the industry with his student film *Stalk of the Calamity Monster*, Burton became an animator for Walt Disney Studios. There he was assigned to work on his first feature film, *The Fox and the Hound* (1981), which coincidentally is also when he discovered his disdain for the Disney style declaring in his autobiography *Burton on Burton* that his foxes turned out looking more like "roadkill than cute."

Despite his disinterest in the job Burton remained with Disney working himself into a less limiting creative space while displaying at times what he calls in *Burton on Burton* "rather odd behavior." His next project, *Vincent* (1982), a short animated film about a child who idolizes Vincent Price, is the first indication of Burton's present trace mark obsessions. Although the short was never released commercially - the themes of future films (of the outsider and of the unusual) are easily recognizable and the visual composition is consistent with that Burtonianque feel, (the gothic colors, the extremely sharp lines, the surreal comparisons between the fantasy and the surburban.)

With such a preoccupation it's no wonder that *Frankenweenie* (1984) would be his next project. Well, perhaps you might wonder. In any case, Frankenweenie is a gothic but also very endearing story about a boy who brings his dead dog back to life and the adventures that follow including a run in with a white poodle who has a rather suspicious black streak in her hair.

Originally set to release with *Pee Wee's Big Adventure* (1985), a story about the unending love between a man and his bike. Although very much a larger version of the children's show, *Pee Wee's Playhouse*, the film still has Burton qualities with it's surreal post-modern environment, talking furniture reminiscent of childhood fantasies, stop motion animation (Large Mare/escape convict truck driver/ alien) and Danny Elfman composing.

Surprising more than just me, *Pee Wee's Big Adventure* was a box office succ.
Deconstructing Violence

the films of Kathryn Bigelow

by John Travis

Talk Radio Host: "Now, just so the, the rest of us know how much time is left, when is the rapture supposed to hit exactly? Is it midnight New Year's Eve?"

Lori from Encino: "That's right."

Talk Radio Host: "Aha. Is that midnight L.A. time or, or Eastern Standard time, or what? I mean, what time zone is God in anyway?" (Strange Days)

Kathryn Bigelow is a woman film director whose movies are violent and dark. She films stories about cops and criminals. Sometimes exploiting violence and sometimes using violence to make a point, Bigelow is supremely interested in how motion pictures portray violence and why its depiction is so seductive. Possibly, her violent pictures break certain backwards, pathetic stereotypes that women are weak and submissive, while men are loud and violent. However, I believe after reading the above quote that one can fairly accurately guess that she is not interested in breaking those stereotypes. Kathryn Bigelow is interested in making movies that provoke an audience. She wants to make movies, regardless of what people think of her.

The second shot in the film Strange Days (1995), directed by Bigelow and written by her ex-husband James Cameron, appears to be from the perspective of a young, white male who is somewhat recording what he is seeing. All of a sudden him and his small group of friends jump out of their car, armed to the teeth, and proceed to rob a small restaurant. In the middle of the loud and frenzied heist the police show up and a foot chase ensues. The camera rocks, jerkily, up and down as the young man chased by the police. Every so often the camera spins around and the young man's arm comes into frame as he watches his friend shoot at theirchasers. Soon he is on the roof of the building trying desperately to escape. He tries to jump to another building, but ends up falling to his death. As he falls, the audience fails with him. His screams of fear and panic enhance the jumble of images of the street coming closer and closer. Just as he has the pavement the screen goes black for a half second, and then a steady shot of Ralph Fiennes comes into focus.

The story of Strange Days revolves around ex-police Detective Lenny Nero, played by Fiennes, who has become a sort of twenty-first-century pimp. His merchandise is actual-recordings of human experience via a device that fits into the user's head and laptop into their cerebral cortex. Lenny is a lowlife, but in a city that seems to be going straight to hell (a darkly lit Los Angeles on the eve of 1988) he comes off as a nice guy. Also starring in the film are Tom Sizemore, Julia Lewis, Angela Bassett, and Vincent D'Onofrio who plays a psychotic (yes) Los Angeles Police officer. The movie is a murder mystery with enough violence to make most cringe. However, the first long-take (aided by computer cuts, and switch pans) of the film and subsequent other long-takes of 'recorded life' point to the fact that this movie might be something more than just an ultra-violent take on the action movie. The fact that many of the violent scenes (including a rape and murder of a prostitute) appear from point-of-view shots illustrate the director's interest in exploring why audiences like and want to see violence on the screen. Bigelow, through the use of the first-person perspective, is making a point about violence in the media. And, her point is that people want to see violence, audiences find it satisfying and seductive. With the long, first-person, takes the film is not only allowing the audience to play a role in the action, but also to have a chance to see how it might look if it was really committing these acts. The result has directed four other films including Point Break (1991) starring Keanu Reeves and Blue Steel (1990) starring Jamie Lee Curtis. She, also, directed several episodes of the brilliant Barry Levinson and Tom Fontana T.V. series Homicide: Life On The Street, and one episode of the T.V. mini-series Wild Palms.

Bigelow's next feature, based on the novel The Weight of Water, tells the story of a news-
in focus: Amelie Hastie

Dialogue with UCSC's newest Film Prof.

Amelie Hastie has recently joined the UCSC film department as an assistant professor. She received her undergraduate degree in Literature in Society from Brown University. After spending four years out of school, she went to Graduate school at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee with a focus on writings in film history. In spending the afternoon with Amelie, I could sense her intelligence, as well as her lack of pretense during the interview.

Q) Why pursue a higher degree?
A) I wanted to teach at the college level. I tried teaching when I was in New York. I taught English at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee with a focus on writings in film history. That was before, when I assumed that going to graduate school meant that I would get a job as a professor, which fortunately turned out to be the case. But it was a couple of years into Graduate school when I learned that it wasn't an automatic thing, which was a shock. I think that most people going into Graduate school now know that it's a risk.

Q) So you didn't necessarily look at Santa Cruz, or the area.
A) Well, I applied to all of the jobs I was qualified for and some that I guess I wasn't. I had certain hopes and aspirations, but it's also kind of a pot luck where you come. I was making a list of the places where I wanted to teach, Santa Cruz was in the top three places. And as I got to know the campus more, I think the UC system is marvelous; being on the west coast was important to me, as well as the commitment to undergraduate education. The potential for teaching at the graduate level eventually was also a huge draw. Also, the amazing resources; UCSC has the third largest media collection in the state.

Q) Does it make a difference being in a relatively new and small department?
A) I think that is a big part of the draw. Already, there are internationally known film makers and scholars in the department, but I don't think of it as a really small program because it's so much bigger than the film program at UMM. It's huge with its massive resources and the production facilities are amazing. And then you have a lot more attention because of the size from the faculty, and then some of the larger programs. That was a big draw, the discussion with the faculty, what the future of the program would be, as well as the connection, the unity within the department which is probably forged out of it recently becoming its own department. That is really nice, and so there is a unity in the development of a graduate program or improvements made to the undergraduate program. It is certainly not a place where a new faculty member would be lost. There is this immediate invitation on the part of the other faculty members for me to be a part of what these developments are so that's nice.

Q) So what do you think you will add to this department?
A) This next quarter I'm teaching a class on Hong Kong New Wave. And Chinese Cinema, especially contemporary Chinese Cinema, is an area I'm developing interest in. We're trying to think of ways here that I can offer a National Cinemas course around this area. Hopefully I'll also teach a course on Women's authorship that's not just about film direction, but the role of the stars, authors, and writing by women, and how that's also an authorship of images through words. I'd like to also eventually do a class on film makers who produce theory... I would give students a really practical way to think about theory.

After interviewing Amelie twice, I got the impression that she is a valuable asset to the film department, her interests offer a diversity that will be important for the future of the department. Her teaching style incorporates a personal atmosphere within the intellectual environment, which makes students feel more comfortable speaking their mind, while still allowing for a higher degree of discussion. I enjoyed the interview, and would like to thank Amelie for her cooperation, and would like to welcome her to the department.

—Jessica Gardiner

(Edited by Elizabeth Bourg)
Lesbian Xena: Warrior Princess?

Xena and Gabrielle - are they or aren't they? In the universe of Xena: Warrior Princess, the question of whether Xena's relationship with her sidekick, Gabrielle, is of a Sapphic nature provokes debate. Certainly superheroes and their sidekicks have always been fodder for speculation. Who hasn't snickered at Batman and Robin's special friendship? Yet Xena and Gabrielle have a relationship beyond stereotypes in its depth and intimacy.

Xena chronicles the adventure of a fictional woman warrior and her companion in ancient Greece. The syndicated show is popular with a variety of fans of all ages, genders, and sexual orientations, and particularly loved by young girls who enjoy strong and independent female role models.

Another major Xena fanbase resides in the queer community. Despite the growth of gay male characters on shows like Will & Grace, since the demise of Ellen, TV no longer has any openly lesbian protagonists. Xena and Gabrielle's intense relationship, never explicitly made queer, still provides one of the only cutlets for any kind of lesbian self-reflection.

Xena and Gabrielle's early gay vibes weren't intentional. Interviewed for the e-zine Shoot the Messenger, Xena producer Liz Friedman said, "Honestly, we didn't write the characters to be explicitly lesbian... I think what we really wanted to do was to make a very strong and real relationship between the two of them in that their friendship does not consist of them talking about their boyfriends and what kind of sanitary protection they like, which tends to be what you see on television when women talk. They have a real concern and respect for one another." Despite the fact that mainstream texts have always been subject to queer readings, Friedman professed surprise at the response: "I thought it was unlikely anyone would ever think that Gabrielle and Xena were lesbians. My feeling was that lesbians are pretty much invisible - I should know, I've been invisible... The first place we got feedback that people were having that interpretation was from the Internet, and then we started having fun with it."

When the Xena producers realized the show was being watched for queer subtext, they began to support this with intentional moments in the show. Asked about this in an interview with The Advocate, Xena star Lucy Lawless responded "Ah! You mean do we play it up to it?... We do have fun with that aspect, but I never want to shove it down people's throats because it can also be alienating and we don't want to do that to any sector of our audience. But we don't want to alienate our lesbian following. We love 'em all... I think I can speak for some of the people who work on the show - we all like pushing the boundaries... We try to make highest common denominator viewing."

The intimate moments between Xena and Gabrielle include bathing and sleeping together as well as frequent verbal expression of affection as explicit as, "I love you." The characters have been shown to kiss, but only under a pretense of heterosexuality. A typical example of a kissing scene occurred in the episode Quest when Xena's spirit inhabited a man's body. In a dreamlike communion of their spirits, Xena and Gabrielle

Xena and Gabrielle, just buddies?

banned in to kiss. Just as their lips were about to touch, the shot cut back to Gabrielle kissing the man in whom Xena's spirit resided. This kind of pretense protected the dense viewers who refuse to acknowledge the lesbian subtext. So the nature of Xena and Gabrielle's relationship remains officially ambiguous.

One of Xena and Gabrielle's famous "almost" kisses in a dream-like sequence.

Xena and Gabrielle, playing with fruit.
American classic

First time director Sam Mendes shows the audience a vision of the American family that is hard to ignore. American Beauty starring Kevin Spacey, Annette Bening, Thora Birch, Peter Gallagher, and Chris Cooper is as amazing as the plot’s simplicity. Two neighboring families in a quiet Los Angeles suburb, normal on the outside, are filled with doubt, anger, fear, intolerance, and pain. Each family member is excruciatingly complex even though on the outside they are all carefully trying not to make any kind of individual disturbance. At the beginning of the film each character wants nothing else, but to be left alone. They are all steeped in depression and loneliness. Lester Burnham, played brilliantly by Kevin Spacey, is a sedated, middle-aged Father who is possibly the worse off at least on the outside. The other characters might just be better at hiding their own self-loathing. Lester lives in a loveless, sexless marriage and his only daughter is too ashamed of him to really love him. He hates his job and openly compares his life to hell. But, that is all about to change.

The film’s direction is smooth and the conceit of the color red is well used. The Burnham’s house seems to have a bouquet of red rose (called American Beauties) in each room. The front door, Lester’s new Fire Bird, color of the neighborhood Lofta’s lipstick, and he over-head light in the garage where Lester begins to work-out, hang-out, and smoke-out are all a deep red. Real beauty in this calm American suburb is and has been slowly been covered up and lost to the appearance of happiness, and lies. When Lester says his ‘marriage is just for show,’ the idea that everything in this neighborhood is ‘just for show’ is very easy to grasp.

If you’ve seen The Ref directed by Ted Demme then you know that Kevin Spacey can play the part of Lester, but what you might not know is how much emotion or lack of emotion Spacey can show from just his shrugged shoulders and bloodless stare. Several critics have stated that Spacey’s acting job is well worth an Academy Award nomination. I would have to agree. But, of course, I might just be a little biased. I yelled out of joy when Spacey won Best Supporting for his work on The Usual Suspects, and I also got depressed when he wasn’t nominated for L.A Confidential.

American Beauty is well worth an afternoon.

Now and Again TV gives us something good

For once TV has given us a new show, all season loaded with more promising new shows than awful new shows. Though you may have checked out several of the most “hyped” of these, you may have missed my favorite of the new TV crop, Now and Again. (No to be confused with another new show, Once and Again.)

The premise of Now and Again is fairly ridiculous. The show is about a middle-aged man, John Goodman in a guest appearance for the pilot, whose brain is transplanted into a government bio-engineered body. The procedure saves his life. Yet he has lost much too, as the top-secret program requires that he must never contact his wife and daughter, who believe him dead. While this may sound like The 6 Million Dollar Man meets The Fugitive, its actually much better, particularly as the show has a sense of humor about itself. Created by Glenn Gordon, who also did Moonlighting, it has a cast of likeable characters, a good mix of action, humor and romance, and an often interesting cinematic style.

Once you set yourself into the premise, Now and Again is a lot of fun. For me, the biggest drawback is that it airs Friday nights so I’ll only get the chance to see Now and Again, now and then. However if you find yourself sitting home some Friday night, give Now and Again a try. (Now and Again airs on CBS, Fridays 8pm.)

Now and Again co-stars: Eric Close as brain-transplant recipient Michael Wiseman (right) and Dennis Hayabarti as Dr. Theodore Morris, Wiseman’s government handler.
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