Robert W. Rieber · Robert J. Kelly

Film, Television and the Psychology of the Social Dream

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Introduction

Cinema is a form of mass communication, and thus, might be considered a somewhat superficial enterprise. Nevertheless, there is much in this medium that is complex and psychologically interesting. If there is one word that has been associated with motion pictures since their inception it would be "entertainment." There are serious movies and edifying movies and movies that teach and promote ideologies or beliefs. But generally speaking, we go to the movies to be entertained, to be amused, enthralled, and diverted from the issues of everyday life. And it is this very capacity to effectively deliver entertainment—bypassing our critical faculties—that make movies so powerfully influential for better and for worse, in ways that we may not even be aware of. Consider what Shakespeare taught us in what is widely regarded as his best play—*Hamlet.* Here, Shakespeare helps us to gain insight into the process of what is actually involved in our entertainment. Hamlet's dialogue with the players highlights three possible forms of entertainment: as history, comedy and tragedy. In the play within the play he famously makes his intentions clear, asserting, "The play's the thing/wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King." But theater and film also have the capacity to capture consciousness as well as conscience. Both conscience and consciousness are essential factors as they constitute the foundation of what we call the cultural psychology of the cinema—or what may be thought of as the social dream. How entertainment can reach our conscience and affect our consciousness will become the leitmotif (the cinematic techniques) and "heavy" motifs (the impact of the content conveyed by means of those techniques) throughout. We begin by tackling the question of how cinema's evolution enabled movies to create an ever more palpable illusion of 'reality' for viewers, holding them captive in the artificial worlds that films create. After all, our conception of reality is not based exclusively on what our senses tell us, it is also what takes place in our heads—specifically in our imagination and the associations that surface in our memory. And films have brilliantly succeeded in getting into our heads. As Richard Aberdeen puts it: "Film gives us the dreams we never

had, the dreams we yet await. …Film's overwhelming images invite a return to that state in which the ego dissolves" (Eberwein 1984).

By the canny (or uncanny) use of such techniques as flashbacks and flash-forwards, jump cuts and montages, the technicians of cinema have been able to imitate to some extent the way memory works and how emotion alters the way we perceive the external world. But movies have also proven to be remarkably efficient vehicles in duplicating dreams. Indeed, surrealists like Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel were among the first to exploit the use of film to create dreams on the screen (think of the iconic image of a razor slitting an eyeball in *Un Chien Andalou*). Bunuel has stated that film seems expressly designed for exploring the subconscious, noting that the images, as in dreams, can appear and disappear through 'dissolves' and fade-outs while the laws of time and space are routinely violated (Brunel 1972).

Movie experts and students of psychology alike have long observed the similarity between the state of dreaming and the state of the viewer's mind watching a movie. "An analogy between cinema and dreaming has long been drawn, film appearing to us as dream-like, while our dreams are experienced—at least to our waking minds—like movies," observes Elizabeth Cowie, a British film scholar. Even though we are conscious when we sit in a theater, she says, we are still in a passive position—"immobile, silent and … attuned to only those stimuli arising from the film performance… oblivious to other events around us, while the exigencies of reality, and the demand to test for reality, are placed in abeyance" (Cowie 2003).

But we will also look at the ways in which film has become a means of recording and transmitting the collective dreams of culture and society—what Roland Barthes called "collective representations"—whether or not the filmmakers understand what those dreams are. We will then proceed to examine a sampling of the cinematic dreams that have haunted our collective unconscious over the past several decades and focus on three of the principle types of characters or archetypes that have figured prominently in these dreams, indeed, have effectively defined what the dreams are really about.[1]

Pinpointing the origin of cinema is more difficult than might be imagined. It depends largely on which invention you identify as the first movie making device. Some scholars choose the camera obscura used by Renaissance painters. Others favor a device known as a phenakistoscope, a spindle viewer invented by a Belgian physicist in 1832 or opt for the zoetrope invented a year later by a British mathematician. More weight probably should be given to Edison's kinescope, which was introduced at the Chicago Exposition of 1893. To operate the device you dropped a nickel into a slot, triggering a small motor that allowed you to peer through a magnifying glass and watch a girl dancing or boys fighting. Your nickel bought

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[1] Our use of the terms 'collective unconscious' is not meant to imply that a Jungian approach. However, for the purpose of this discussion it is a convenient and apt description of the kind of social dream that films can embody.

you half a minute of entertainment. However rudimentary, these devices all had one thing in common: the capacity to create the illusion of movement out of a sped-up sequence of still images.

Psychology in the Cinema

The Lay of the Land and the Flow of the Stream

Early Psychological Views of Cinema

Just exactly how films can operate on our minds was a question that psychologists were already grappling with in the early part of the twentieth century notwithstanding Freud's belief that it was impossible to "graphically represent the abstract nature of our thinking in a respectable form." (Freud rebuffed offers to write a photoplay on several occasions, even turning down an offer of $100,000 from Samuel Goldwyn, a fortune at the time.) Modern cinema and psychoanalysis both emerged around the same time. Freud and Joseph Breuer's pioneering *Studies on Hysteria* was published in the same year (1895) that the Lumière brothers were screening films they had produced using their new 'cinematograph.' The two explorations had a great deal in common. Freud and Brueur were investigating the phenomena of hysterical fits among patients at Salptrière hospital, examining behavior that they characterized as 'automatism'—spontaneous verbal or motor behavior or acts performed unconsciously. Meanwhile the Lumieres were bringing the inanimate to life on screen—or at least the representation of life—in a jerky, uncoordinated manner that recalled the uncoordinated movements of the patients Freud and Breur were observing. The new medium illustrated what Freud called the uncanny—a juxtaposition of the familiar and the strange, the animated and the lifeless.

It appears likely that the first experiment to assess the impact of film on the spectator was conducted in 1916 by the eminent Harvard psychologist Edwin Boring. In his "picture-test" viewers composed of children and adults of both sexes were presented with a one minute scene from an Edison film entitled *Van Bibber's Experiment.* The clip depicted a confrontation between a "gentleman and a burglar." The test was designed to measure the accuracy of reporting by the viewers—what they retained of what they saw. A sex difference in suggestibility emerged from the study especially among the adults: "The men exceed the women in range of report, range of knowledge, accuracy of report, assurance (and) reliability of assurance…" The results led Boring to conclude that "in general the men appear to be superior as witnesses to both women and boys, whereas between women and girls and between girls and boys there is a much less striking difference." He did not hazard a guess as to why men were so much superior reporters; perhaps men were more susceptible to the new medium than women or responded to the subject matter more enthusiastically. It would have been interesting to learn

whether a similar 'picture-test' showing two women in a domestic situation would have yielded the same results (Boring 1916).

Munsterberg on Film

If Boring was in the vanguard of psychologists examining the influence of film it is safe to say that the German philosopher Hugo Munsterberg is the medium's first significant critic and analyst. Munsterberg's seminal contribution is found in an almost forgotten monograph published in 1916 called simply *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study*. Not content with being a critic, Munsterberg flirted with filmmaking himself. In 1916 he approached Paramount Pictures with "material for a series of psychological test demonstrations in moving-picture form," noting that movies "have stirred up a very considerable interest for mental life in many cities." As an example of what he meant, he proposed to present the Montessori educational system in a cinematic form. If he were in charge of film studios, he wrote, they would specialize in particular categories because otherwise how were audiences to know what they were getting when they walked into a movie theater? "I think the greatest trouble in the moving-picture world today is the lack of discrimination and differentiation," he wrote, attributing "the crude state of the moving-picture industry" to this inconsistency. Instead he favored "a clean division of labor" among production companies (Munsterberger 1922, p. 125). History has shown that he proved more prescient in his role as critic than he did at postulating a viable business model for Hollywood.

It should be pointed out that Munsterberg had no interest in the way in which cinema might embody a social dream. In what is arguably his most famous statement he declared: "The story of the subconscious mind can be told in three words: there is none" (Munsterberg 1909, p. 125). Munsterberg's inner philosopher, his daughter Margaret wrote, never allowed the inner scientist the final say on any problem of real life (Munsterberg 1922, p. 283). If the philosopher didn't believe in the existence of a subconscious no scientific data to the contrary was going to cause him to change his mind. So it follows that in his consideration of the cinema he didn't take any interest in the way in which it affected a part of the mind that wasn't immediately accessible to our awareness. According to the critic Giuliana Bruno, Munsterberg conceived of psychic life "as a mechanism to be unraveled—a technology of sorts" that led him to recognize "the psychic function of the film apparatus." Bruno writes that he regarded cinema as an "actual 'projection' of the mind." Our minds, he believed, acted like screens in which a motion picture was rolling whether the subject was awake or asleep (Bruno 2009, p. 190–191).

All the same, his pioneering study on the nascent medium provides us with valuable insights about the ways in which films do in fact infiltrate and embody our individual and collective dreams. He foresaw—correctly—that film had the potential of uniting the sensibilities of both the highbrow and the lowbrow and characterized the directors and screenwriters as photo poets who "recognize the special demands of the art" (Munsterberg 1922, p. 283). It is a tribute

to Munsterberg that he was willing to credit cinema as an art, not as a mere novelty. "What we need for this study is evidently, first, an insight into the means by which the moving pictures impress us and appeal to us," he wrote. "Not the physical means and technical devices are in question, but the mental means. What psychological factors are involved when we watch the happenings on the screen? But secondly, we must ask what characterizes the independence of an art, what constitutes the conditions under which the works of a special art stand. The first inquiry is psychological, the second esthetic; the two belong intimately together" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 21).

In his monograph the philosopher tackles the subject of film in two basic ways. First he considers the influence of film through its technology and cinematic techniques—what he terms 'processes of perception and attention'—developed by early masters like D. W. Griffiths. Second, he examines the impact of these processes on the spectator in terms of his or her "interest, memory, imagination, suggestion, and emotion" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 40). Whatever the limitations of Munsterberg's outlook—we are all constrained by our time and place, after all—his views stand up to scrutiny even now. He is similarly perceptive when it comes to the impact these technologies and techniques have on the viewer's

Emotion was central to Munsterberg's theory of film. It represented an "inner venture" and "an intimate voyage—a tour of the emotions." Motion pictures were composed of "emotion pictures" and provided the psychic terrain in which feeling could be navigated "and charged cinema with the 'moving' power of emotion" (Bruno 2009, p. 191). Depending on the context, Bruno writes, the audience will interpret the same shot of a facial expression with different emotional responses. One might, for example, "project" onto the same expression sadness or joy, love or hate, hunger or satisfaction. The test of a filmmaker's ability to reach his audience was the effective use cinematic techniques as "a form of empathy" (Bruno 2009, p. 102).

How do Movies Operate on the Consciousness?

In Munsterberg's view, the success of the motion picture is directly related to the processes of the mind. The objective world, he maintains, shapes and molds the mind; the mind in turn uses the stuff of the external world to develop "memory, ideas and imaginative ideas" and then "in the moving pictures they become reality." He goes on to say: "The mind concentrates itself on a special detail in its act of attention; and in the close-up of the moving pictures this inner state is objectified. The mind is filled with emotions; and by means of the camera the whole scenery echoes them" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 21). The mind perceives the world on the screen in a different manner than it does the external world. "We perceive the movement; and yet we perceive it as something which has not its independent character as an outer world process, because our mind has built it up from single pictures rapidly following one another. We perceive things in their plastic depth; and yet again the depth is not that of the outer world. We are aware of its unreality

and of the pictorial flatness of the impressions" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 21). In other words, the spectator becomes a collaborator of the filmmaker. We understand that what we are seeing on the screen is not objective reality but "a product of our own mind which binds the pictures together." The illusion of movement results from a dynamic between our perceptions and the deployment of the technical repertoire of the filmmaker. Consider, for example, the close-up. "The attention turns to detailed points in the outer world and ignores everything else: the photoplay is doing exactly this when in the close-up a detail is enlarged and everything else disappears." His assessment remained valid even as films developed over the years. Roger Manvell, a noted British critic, said almost the same thing in the 1950 s long after film was a nascent art form: *"One of the first tests of filmmaking is the degree to which the camera is used to assist the spectator to select what there is to see, that is, when the camera is used to help interpret the action"* (Manvell 1955, p. 23).

The ways in which the camera is used to shape the spectator's movie-going experience, as described by Munsterberg, informs the next part of our discussion.

The Techniques

In Munsterberg's scheme there are five principal techniques that filmmakers make use of to produce their movie magic: depth, composition, movement, the close-up, and what he calls the cut-back. To this list we also need to add sound, an innovation that didn't come about until several years after the monograph was published.

Depth, or rather its illusion, provided cinema with much of its effectiveness—so much so that "some minds are struck by it as the chief power in the impressions from the screen." Munsterberg compares the impact of depth as conveyed by film with depth as perceived by theater audiences. (The theater, for obvious reasons, was the medium closest to the film.) He cites the poet Rachel Lindsay who wrote that "the little far off people on the old-fashioned speaking stage do not appeal to the plastic sense" with anywhere the same impact as the "dumb giants in high sculptural relief" on the screen. Of course, the 'dumb giants' on the screen would find their voice soon enough with the introduction of the talkies, a development that Munsterberg didn't live to see. All the same viewers were not deceived; they certainly didn't mistake the depth of a scene they were watching on the screen with "true depth and fullness," but on the other hand, they were perfectly content to be taken in. This illusory reality "brings our mind into a peculiar complex state; and we shall see that this plays a not unimportant part in the mental make-up of the whole photoplay" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 40). (When Munsterberg refers to the photoplay he means the film as a whole and not just the screenplay).

Depth is only an attribute of space; how it is used by the filmmaker to evoke a mood, establish character, and advance the plot is another matter entirely. (I am using the term filmmaker as a convenient term to refer to the director, cinematographer, and film editor, all of whom play a role in determining the shots that wind up in the final footage.) This brings up the "problem" of pictorial composition. As Marvell observes: "Composition can, either consciously or unconsciously, greatly affect the attitude of the audience to what is going on in the story" (Manvell 1955, p. 31).

Unlike the problem of depth, which can be easily ignored by audiences, Munsterberg wrote, movement "forces itself on every spectator." Explaining motion in film is "the chief task which the psychologist must meet"—essentially resting on his ability to account for the complex mental process that creates the impression of movement from a series of still images. The mind is fooled into perceiving motion, a happy illusion. At the same time, the philosopher points out, the spectator also realizes that the actors' movements are not continuous; we see a hand reach for a gun and then the gun is in his hand and yet the interruption doesn't trouble us at all.

Filmmakers have other tricks up their sleeves in addition to the use of depth and movement to make audiences sit up and pay attention. They also know how to employ the close-up to optimal effect. "An unusual face, a queer dress, a gorgeous costume, or a surprising lack of costume, a quaint piece of decoration, may attract our mind and even hold it spellbound for a while." What was a small detail on the screen, easily overlooked, can be made to fill the entire screen, obliterating everything else, so that we have no choice but to focus on it. In underscoring the importance of the technique Munsterberg once again uses the theater as a basis for comparison: "*The close-up has objectified in our world of perception our mental act of attention and by it has furnished art with a means which far transcends the power of any theater stage*" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 56).

The last technique that Munsterberg examines in his discussion of the power of the film is what he calls the cut- back and what we now refer to as a flashback. Noting that the cut-back may have "many variations and serve many purposes," he is mainly concerned with the flashback as "an objectification of our memory function." He believes that the cut-back and the close-up are complementary or parallel functions. "In the one we recognize the mental act of attending; in the other we must recognize the mental act of remembering." Here again the film has an advantage over the theater where mental states can be suggested but seldom shown. *"It is as if reality has lost its own continuous connection and become shaped by the demands of our soul."* The film has reversed the natural order: the external world has become "molded in accordance with our fleeting turns of attention or with our passing memory ideas" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 89).

The introduction of sound revolutionized the development of the new medium. The first commercial film with fully synchronized sound was shown in New York in 1923. "The film owes its power to the mobility of its images combined with the selective use of sound, and its aesthetic derives from this," Manvell writes. "Its poetry lies in the richest use of these potentialities by the artist, as the power of literary poetry derives from the potentialities of words used in the service of emotional experience." (Manvell 1955, p. 91–92) Sound—excuse the pun—amplified the illusion of reality on the screen, making it in Manvell's words "an extension of our own world," something the silent film could never be. (The strength of silent film was principally found in its depiction of fantasy, its other-worldliness.) While sound can represent reality, the British critic goes on to say, it is also "a highly artificial form of expression which the artist can control at every point" (Manvell 1955, p. 35).

Psychological Component

As I stated earlier, the spectator is a silent, but not necessarily passive, collaborator of the filmmaker. If the spectator isn't engaged nothing on the screen is going to have much of an impact. In Munsterberg's theory, the filmmaker is deliberately trying to fool the audience but the audience is in on the game, indeed, wouldn't have it any other way. As Gregory Bateson puts it in his essay "Steps to an Ecology of the Mind," "Conjurors and painters of the trompe d'oeil could concentrate on acquiring a virtuosity whose only reward is reached after the viewer detects that he has been deceived and is forced to smile or marvel at the skill of the deceiver. Hollywood filmmakers spend millions of dollars to increase the reality of a shadow" (Bateson, 182).

So "depth and movement alike come to us in the moving picture world, not as hard facts but as a mixture…. They are present and yet they are not in the things. We invest the impressions with them" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 4).

If we consider both the "outcome of esthetic analysis" and "psychological research," Munsterberg writes, than it is possible to combine the results of both into what he calls a unified principle that he defines thusly: "*the photoplay tells us the human story by overcoming the forms of the outer world, namely, space, time, and causality, and by adjusting the events to the forms of the inner world, namely, attention, memory, imagination, and emotion.*"

We will now turn to the ways in which the actions of the inner world can enhance the effectiveness of a representation of the outer one.

Munsterberg is like a visionary who has seen the future and the future is cinema. Here he is extolling the power of the medium in almost ecstatic terms: "*The massive outer world has lost its weight, it has been freed from space, time, and causality, and it has been clothed in the forms of our own consciousness. The mind has triumphed over matter and the pictures. It is a superb enjoyment which no other art can furnish us*" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 173).

How does our mind achieve this remarkable triumph over matter and the pictures when it is the pictures that are the very source of that triumph? Consider: Although we may suspend our disbelief when we walk into a movie theater that doesn't mean that we relinquish our identities. We come to each film armed with our memories and our imagination. The film has the capacity to stir *our* memories (sometimes of a previous film we've seen no less than memories of our own experiences). And, as Richard Eberwein points out, it also has a capacity to bring us into "greater contact with a character's mental life" because of the way that film resembles individual dreams while simultaneously having the ability to evoke a social dream. "To this screen we bring memories of how we experience the rapid jumps, incoherent connections, and ambiguities of our own dreams. They serve as constitutive psychic coordinates helping us to follow through the dreamer's experience…In this sense, our involvement in the filmic dream seems to be part of a collective dream experience" (Eberwein, 54).

At the same time through its use of flashbacks (cut-backs in Munsterberg's parlance) a film can also evoke the memories of the *characters*. "Memory breaks into

present events by bringing up pictures of the past…" Similarly, film goads and provokes the imagination, heightening expectations or even imposing a narrative on the film that might not be what the director originally intended. For the characters, however, "the imagination anticipates the future or overcomes reality by fancies and dreams." Film is uniquely able to mimic the mental processes—the way in which "our mind is drawn hither and thither"—by showing "intertwined scenes everything which our mind embraces" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 171).

Munsterberg argues that filmmakers have managed to abolish time or at least manipulate it so that it can be attenuated, compressed, or chopped up into bits and pieces, served up on screen at intervals when they're likely to pack the most punch. "The temporal element has disappeared, the one action irradiates in all directions," Munsterberg avers although he's quick to add a qualification, noting that the technique can be overdone, especially "if the scene changes too often and no movement is carried on without a break." As an example, he notes that at the end of *Carmen*, starring the legendary Theda Bara, the scene changes no less than 170 times in ten minutes, an average of a little more than three seconds for each scene, which, he admits introduces "an element of nervousness." When Munsterberg talks about time he is really talking about cause and effect or more simply, the concept of causality. The film makes a mockery of causality by interrupting one series of events on screen with another series of events that don't immediately lead to the consequences they would have in the real world. "A movement is started, but before the cause brings results another scene has taken its place. What this new scene brings may be an effect for which we saw no causes." As a result, different objects can fill the same space, a physical impossibility in the world we have left behind when we entered the theater. "It is as if the resistance of the material world had disappeared and the substances could penetrate one another." You're unlikely to find someone who buys a ticket to a movie because he wants to "experience this superiority to all physical laws." But that, says Munsterberg, is what he is really doing (Munsterberg 1916, p. 185).

Munsterberg seems to understand that the movies don't quite cause time to disappear as much as they play havoc with our sense of time by speeding it up or slowing it down. Films have a particular rhythm; in that respect they are similar to music, a point made by the director Ingmar Bergman (who pointed out that the film has more in common with music than it does with the novel in spite of the fact that both usually rely on narrative). "The melody and rhythms belong together," Munsterberg writes, observing that "as in painting not every color combination suits every subject… so the photoplay must bring action and pictorial expression into perfect harmony." The images "*roll on with the ease of musical tones*" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 176). Manvell agrees: "Because the film as a whole takes the form of a succession of many different shots, the timing as well as the order of the shots must be considered. Just as variation of rhythm in music has a great effect on the listener, so the tempo of the cutting of a film affects the audience." The rhythm of the film depends largely on the film editor. Indeed, in his study *The Technique of Film Editing* the director Karl Reisz contends that the

development of a true principle of editing helped the medium discover its real powers. (Manvell 1955, p. 26).

That films are free to leave the "world of space and time" behind and dispense with causality, Munsterberg writes, doesn't mean that films aren't bound by certain laws in much the same way that music is governed by rules of harmony, melody and rhythm. These rules are established by rigid esthetic criteria, he argues. In music "everything is completely controlled by esthetic necessities." Even a creative genius can't get away from "the iron rule that his work must show complete unity in itself. "Film, too, for all freedom it permits filmmaker to play with "the physical forms of space, time, and causality," if not escape them completely, "does not mean any liberation from this esthetic bondage…" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 184).

Anticipating the current argument about multitasking—whether it's possible to attend to or effectively carry out several different tasks simultaneously—Munsterberg notes that the psychologists of his day were debating the question. Could the mind "devote itself to several groups of ideas at the same time" or was it a "rapid alteration" of attention? In either case, he maintains that "this awareness of contrasting situations, this interchange of diverging experiences in the soul, can never be embodied except in the photoplay." This brings him to the idea of association. The scenes on the screen trigger a mental process by means of suggestion. A suggested idea, he says, takes root in our mind in much the same way that ideas do that are inspired by memory or the imagination. When we see a landscape depicted on the screen, for example, it can evoke any number of associated ideas based on the memories and fantasies that already exist in our minds. While the filmmaker controls what we see on the screen we are in control of how we perceive and react to the images and sequences. The suggestion, he writes, is "forced on us" but what we do with that suggestion is another matter entirely. The "outer perception," is not just a starting point but "a controlling influence" so that we never mistake the associated idea "as our creation but as something to which we have to submit." Taken to an extreme, the film acts as a hypnotizer, keeping us spellbound in the theater or at the very least keeping us in a "in a state of heightened suggestibility." Once again we are straying in the direction of the dream and the idea that film is a medium which invites its audience to share the dream it presents. "*It is as if reality has lost its own continuous connection and become shaped by the demands of our soul*" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 95).

What really excites Munsterberg—and spurs him to make such impassioned declarations—is the film's capacity to connect a variety of "parallel currents" on the screen and in the minds of the spectators. (With its multitude of links the Internet has a similar property.) We may be confined in a single room, he writes, but every phone call we receive in that room brings news of the outside world. Film provides us with that same sense of interplay and connection. "There is no limit to the number of threads which may be interwoven. A complex intrigue may demand cooperation at half a dozen spots, and we look now into one, now into another, and never have the impression that they come one after another." Once again he is eager to show us how the film can abolish the temporal element and sabotage our traditional conception of causality.

The juxtaposition of images or the rapid succession of images and scenes that Munsterberg is talking about is now referred to as a montage. The foremost proponent of the montage was the great Russian director Sergei Eisenstein. "At its simplest," says Manvell, the theory of montage boiled down to "the axiom that, in editing, one plus one equals not two, but two plus; in other words, that the total effect t of a series of shots purposefully placed in sequence is the creation in the audience of an entirely new train of thought and feeling, different from anything that could arise out of those shots seen as a number of separate units" (Manvell 1955, p. 191–192). Montage, as opposed to mere representation, Eisenstein contended, "obliges spectators themselves to create" and arouses emotions in a way that a film that simply conveyed information cannot (Eisenstein 1943). In effect, Eisenstein is advancing the same argument that Munsterberg does when he refers to 'emotion pictures.'(Eisenstein propagated his theory in a 1923 essay called *The Montage of Attractions*). But credit for the use of montage (or free association if you will) belongs to the pioneering French filmmaker George Melies who believed that every image on the screen "possessed the element of magic." (And he should know; he was also a magician by trade). By splicing in parts of different films, clever editing and altering scenes to create "illusion of magical transformation, appearance and disappearance," he was able to turn a human into an animal, or separate a man from his head and track them as they went on their separate ways. "He could make anything happen at all so long as it didn't violate the laws of everyday life." So at the end of the film man and head would be reunited. "Melies sensed or knew that fantasy and magic, like dreams and nonsense language, have a structure and logic of their own, and to deviate from them is a sure way to lose an audience" (Sklar 1994, p. 137). Here again we can see the resemblance between film and dreams. The unconscious seems to make liberal use of montages—it's possible that every dream *is* a montage—and the filmmaker is simply tapping into the same emotions and associations that fuel our dreams.

In the final chapters of the monograph Munsterberg turns his attention to the emotional impact of the medium. It is safe to say that today's audiences, growing up with TV and accustomed to watching video on the Web, are not quite so strongly affected by the film as the audiences of Munsterberg's time. He notes that "neurasthenic" spectators were known to experience hallucinations and "illusions" after watching a movie and remarks on the "strange fascination" of film that could induce audiences—especially among the "rural population"—to applaud "a happy turn of the melodramatic pictures." Movies also had "a profound effect on fantasy life," writes Robert Sklar in his book *Movie-Made America*. These cinematic fantasies "provided rich materials for dreams about sexual partners, settings and passions far removed from the reality of one's environment" (Sklar 1994, p. 307). Sklar isn't quite as alarmed by the potentially pernicious effect of film on audiences as Munsterberg who warns: "…it is evident that such a penetrating influence must be fraught with dangers." When one thinks of the impact of Nazi propaganda films like Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935) it's hard to say that Munsterberg was exaggerating. The Nazi propaganda machine was run by a great film admirer, Joseph Goebbels who was especially impressed by

Hollywood films and adopted many of their techniques for his own malign ends. (Color films enthralled him even though most politicians of the time who used film to disseminate their messages found them too unreliable.) Although he disdained detective movies and comedy reviews, he was fascinated by documentaries, appropriating their cinematic vocabulary to create the illusion of veracity, most notably in the notorious anti-Semitic film *Jud Süss* (1940), a box office sensation across Germany and Europe, based on a novel by Lion Feuchtwanger.

In spite of these 'dangers,' Munsterberg insists that the depiction of emotions (and by extension the evocation of emotions in the spectators) "must be the central aim of the photoplay" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 66). Words are not necessary for film to achieve its effect (recall that he's writing before the advent of talkies) since "the actor whom we see on the screen can hold our attention only by what he is doing and his actions gain meaning and unity for us through the feelings and emotions which control them." The film sets in motion a kind of feedback loop in which the actors display emotions on the screen, stirring emotions in the audience which may, of course, be entirely different. By the same token the emotions evoked in the spectator may color how he or she reacts to the film. Here's how the author puts it: "If we start from the emotions of the audience, we can say that the pain and the joy which the spectator feels are really projected to the screen, projected both into the portraits of the persons and into the pictures of the scenery and background into which the personal emotions radiate" (Munsterberg 1916, p. 83).

Dream Language

We have seen that the 'language' of film is very similar to and may have borrowed from dreams. This language consists of montages, flashbacks, and close-ups and it is characterized by the abolition of the temporal element and the subversion of causality. Let us now try to examine more closely what the language of dreams consists of and how it differs from the languages of logic, mathematics, and software programs. Leave aside for the time being the controversy as to whether dreams have a psychological function. (I suspect, though, that dreaming performs a very useful psychological function by helping us understand and resolve our problems.) The languages we use in our waking life and that we rely on to keep our computers running require rules. These rules allow users to produce statements in a limitless number of variations that can be understood on one or more levels, literally or implied. Such languages rely on symbols whose meanings transcend the symbol that represents them. The word 'chair' stands for a real chair even though it doesn't convey anything particularly chair like in terms of its appearance or sound. (In computers the symbols consist of two numbers—1 and 0). We call these languages discursive languages. By contrast, in the privacy of our minds, when we tell ourselves stories or engage in reveries or dream we are using a distinctly different kind of language which we call nondiscursive. That isn't to say that nondiscursive languages don't have a given set of rules or a lexicon of sorts—they do—but they do not use symbols in such an abstract manner.

Nondiscursive languages tend to favor metaphors, similes and analogies. But where we are most likely to find the use of nondiscursive languages is in myths, folklore, fairy tales—and dreams. Symbols in nondiscursive languages may be pan-cultural insofar as they are found in many different cultures (Not surprisingly, the sun and moon have been deified by any number of cultures.) But symbols can also be culturally specific like flags and logos; the cross, the swastika and hammer and sickle are cases in point. Finally, symbols can be accidental or idiosyncratic in that they are more personal. Individual dreams tend to be filled with accidental and deeply personal symbols (Rieber 1997, p. 110–111).

Some film theorists believe that our way of perceiving and absorbing the images we see up on the screen and those we see in our dreams at night both have their origin in the way that we as young children navigated the world, relying on visual and sensory experiences without regard for logic of space or time—which is to say, in a nondiscursive language. Cinema, in their reading, can lead the viewer "into a dreamlike world where regression is possible and where one senses a unity with the external world" (Eberwein 1984, p. 24–25). In other words, we are reverting to a childhood state of consciousness, if not unconsciousness, when we sit in a movie theater: "Given the replication of the dreamlike state in the viewing process, our sense of ego differentiation is at first heightened: those characters up there on the screen are 'not-me.' … That is, the dreamlike film, the film as sensed and perceived as being like a dream, brings us back to a state…in which we are more susceptible to the loss of ego, and, hence, to identification with those characters who are 'not-me'" (Eberwein 1984, p. 41).

The use of discursive and nondiscursive languages is not discreet nor is there a firewall between their domains. Sleeping and waking are bipolar elements that the human organism needs in order to develop an ability to exist cognitively, affectively, and volitionally as well as to assimilate diverse sensory experiences. Communication between these two polar states—being asleep and being awake—takes place in both nondiscursive and discursive dialects. Human knowledge is a continuum that moves between these two states while daydreaming represents an intermediate state which shares attributes of both poles (Rieber 1997, p. 111).

What I call 'knowledge' isn't exclusively confined to the intellect. In addition to cognition, minds also are a crucible of emotions and instincts. Dreams share these components to varying degrees so that one dream might be influenced by an individual's emotional problems whereas another might yield a solution to a vexing work-related problem. A society also responds both affectively as well as cognitively to sensory input. Scientific and technological knowledge is the domain of cognition, transmitted by means of documentaries, nonfiction, and academic papers. (Mathematics is a good example; the same equation or algorithm can be understood by a mathematician anywhere in the world.) But society also dreams, so to speak, through its artistic expression. That expression takes the form of intrasocietal nondiscursive communication. And like individual dreams, society's can be used—intentionally or unconsciously—to present and resolve conflicts (Rieber 1997, p. 111).

The act of dreaming functions as a kind of symbolic process, revealing not only an individual's intellectual and emotional development but also involving the play of imagination and the state of his or her physical and mental health. Dreams can often be serous experiments whose outcome depends on an understanding of the dream language—e.g., its symbols and images. There are seldom one-to-one correspondences where each symbol has an easily identifiable counterpart in real life. Instead, a symbol's meaning usually involves a dynamic complex rather than a simple entity. It is a part of a Gestalt pattern. Human nature attempts to transcend culture and actualize itself by self-examination and criticism, a dialectic process developed in the waking state by means of objective discursive introspection. In the sleeping state, however, this process takes place when we dream—using non-discursive images (Rieber 199, p. 111–112).

Films and dreams have something else in common: their evanescence. "Like dreams, the screen resists physical scrutiny; touch it and it breaks," writes Robert T. Eberwein in his book *Film & the Dream Screen A Sleep and a Forgetting,* "If we want to retrieve the images from dreams or cinema, we must rely on memory. In both cases, we must be content with fragments—the images left in our minds of what we experienced" (Eberwein 1984, p. 23). While they may offer "us a momentary triumph over our isolation from the world," films also exert a spell that is difficult to break when the movie is over, as he points out: "…reentry into reality after we awake from the dream or conclude our viewing of the film plunges us back into our alienation from our perceptions" (Eberwein 1984, p. 23).

The types of social dreams can vary widely and almost invariably depend on the cultural context. Social dreams certainly don't require film to express them. For instance, the dramas of Sophocles and Euripides represented the social dreams of ancient Greece and B.F. Skinner in *Walden Two* represents the social dream of a psychologist as realized in a fictional ideal community. Myths and dreams expose ideas by means of images. Because social dreams express anxieties, prejudices, and desires that often are not articulated—or cannot find adequate expression in words (e.g., discursive language) film may prove the best medium for exposing the dreams to the light of day (Rieber 1997, p. 108).

"Film language" is something of an oxymoron since language is antithetical to film. The spectator receives images on the screen, watches the actors, observes their behavior and facial expressions, registers the background music, and understands what's happening. Movie going is an act of inference. (Dialogue may or may not be necessary to comprehension.) It is in that sense that films are illiterate events. But if we consider film language as a kind of dream language we can draw some valuable insights about these social dreams.

The Dreams that Money Can Buy

I've stated that films can function as social dreams that express the dilemmas and anxieties of a culture; by the same token interaction with the culture can affect the dreams of the individual filmmaker. We can think of the culture as a dream

machine or factory. Those creators who are able to benefit from the fruits of this machine can produce works with the power and the resonance to bring unconscious longings and fears of their audiences to the surface.

Film factories are most closely associated with Hollywood. The major production studios were interested in two things: entertainment and the bottom line. Exploration of the psyche was largely left to the avant garde films—what film critic Philip Sitney in his seminal history of the genre *Visionary Films* called 'trance films'—that enjoyed something of a golden age in the 1940s and 1950s. According to Sitney, trance films were "an erotic quest" and its quest figure was "either a dreamer or in a mad or a visionary state." In their investigation of the unconscious these films broke taboos that the big studios would never address—homosexuality in Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* (1947), masturbation in Stan Brackhage's *Flesh of the Morning* (1966), and the premonition of and desire for death in Maya Deran and Alexander Hammid's *Meshes of the Afternoon* in which the end of the dream also represents the end of the life of the dreamer (Sklar 1994, p. 307).

Perhaps no trance film exemplifies the interaction between the artist and the dream machine than the aptly titled *Dreams That Money Can Buy*, a 1947 film which is both about dreams and is in its own way a dream itself. It is difficult to think of any dream that relies so much on the nondiscursive language of a dream. The film is the creation of the German modernist artist Hans Richter. He didn't start out as a filmmaker but rather as a painter strongly influenced by surrealism and Dada. However, many of the same preoccupations and themes that informed his painting found their way into his moviemaking as well. "But even if I recognized film as a form of expression independent of painting, I still felt how closely related these two arts were," Richter wrote, "Problems of the one seemed to touch on the other…Roads lead from painting to film and from film back to art…Film was not only a region for a painter's experiments, but a part of modern art, the expression of a new total experience" (Richter 1965, p. 35).

In service of his vision Richter marshaled new photographic and technical skills such as extreme boom shots, zoom shots, enlargements, photo montage, extreme angles, transparency and negative, and multiple exposures (von Hofscker 1998, p. 129). Richter wasn't just trying to be a virtuoso with the camera. Here's how Richter put it: "The technical liberation of the camera is intimately interrelated with psychological, social, economic and aesthetic problems" (Richter 1965, p. 46).

Richter was particularly interested in the effects of juxtaposing elements that didn't logically fit together—just as dreams do. "Richter's method was to establish relationships between similar and similar actions by improbable association," noted critic Marion von Hofscker. "Movement from frame to frame is continuous and their associations are surprising." In one of his earlier films, for example, a scene showing two men shaking hands abruptly changes into two boxers shaking hands. In another sequence, the moon's surface is transformed into a man's bald head. In a series of rapid cuts we are shown legs pedaling a bike, a child kicking, a small plane flying, a high diver and a pigeon in flight—a series of associations

that are meant to duplicate the kind of phenomenon we experience in our dreams every night (von Hofscker 1998, p. 138). In his 1927–1928 film *Inflation* Richter limited his imagery to depicting two objects: paper money (German marks) and the owner of that money. The German mark expands in size as the number of zeroes increase until there are more zeroes than can fit on the screen. It is a simple but biting comment on the out of control inflation that destroyed the economy in Weimer Germany earlier in the decade. It is also a salient example of a social dream (von Hofscker 1998, p. 127). Richter employed a similar montage technique in his use of sound which he believed ought to enjoy a role equal to that of the visual images. One soundtrack featured music from a barrel organ, spoken words, and unintelligible phrases played in short intervals and in rapid succession (von Hofscker 1998, p. 139).

What Richter was hoping to do in film was break away from, even revolt against, traditional narrative forms of theater and the nineteenth century novel. "We expect stories from film, not only because we are so conditioned by experience; we even 'invent' stories if none are offered. The flow of images will always 'make' a story, because our perception and imagination work that way, even if abstract form follows on abstract form" (Richter 1965, p. 114). The process Richter is describing is similar to the way in which we try to make stories (sense) out of our dreams.

Richter realized that the film was a medium uniquely capable of duplicating the form and feeling of a dream, noting that "the use of the magic qualities of the film to create the original state of the dream,—the complete liberation from the conventional story and its chronology…in which the object is taken out of its conventional context and is put into new relationships, creating in that way a new content altogether" (Richter 1965, p. 47).

Dreams That Money Can Buy is the result of an extraordinary collaboration; actually it's composed of several 'dreams' conceived of and realized by some of the twentieth century's most celebrated artists. "Since 1925 I had had many discussions with (Ferdnand) Leger about a film-project," Richter wrote regarding the film's genesis. During a stroll through lower Manhattan Leger suggested a film which would be entitled *Folklore d l'Americaine*. "In Grand street we found what we had in mind: miles of bridal gowns on both sides of the street. A love story between 2 wax mannequins!…and so my film Dreams that Money can buy began." He rounded up old friends from "beloved but bereaved Europe"—Leger, Max Ernst, Alexander Calder, Yves Tanguay, Marc el Duchamp, Jean Cocteau, Man Ray, and Jean Arp. "And so a very un-warlike document grew in the midst of war through the cooperation of 2 Americans, 2 Frenchmen and 2 Germans,—in the then cultural center of the free world." They shot the film on a shoestring budget, using a condemned building in Manhattan's garment center as their studio. They could only work on weekends or at nights since Richter was otherwise occupied in his day job as Professor of City College (Richter 1965, p. 114).

On one level *The Dreams That Money Can Buy* bears a resemblance to a detective story. (Ever since Freud, of course, psychiatrists and therapists have been acting in the role of detectives trying to unravel the meaning of their patients'

fantasies and dreams.) But any attempt on the spectator's part to find a traditional narrative is doomed to failure. That is not the point. The protagonist (to use the word loosely) is memorably named Joe Narcissus, an utterly unmemorable man, who has to figure out how to pay for the rent on a room he's just leased. But when he looks in the mirror (as Narcissus is wont to do) he discovers that he can visualize the images and thoughts running through his mind—voila! He now knows how he'll pay the rent. "If you can look inside yourself," he tells himself, "you can look inside anyone!" He will put his unique talent to use in the service of others by selling them dreams. This is the set-up for the seven dream sequences that follow: *Desire* (directed by Max Ernst); *The Girl with the Prefabricated Heart* (directed and written by Fernand Léger); *Ruth, Roses and Revolvers* (directed and written by Man Ray); *Discs* (written by Marcel Duchamp); *Ballet* (written and directed by Alexander Calder); *Circus* (written by Calder); and *Narcissus* (written and directed by Richter). The sequences make little or no effort to hook the viewer with a traditional narrative. In *Desire*, for example, a couple Mr. and Mrs. A. come into Joe's office. Mr. A. is an accountant—and that's the problem says his wife. His mind is like "a double entry column; no virtues, no vices." And no dreams she could have added. He is desperately in need of a dream, one "with practical values to widen his horizons, heighten ambitions, maybe a raise in salary." Joe finds a dream for Mr. A. using a collection of art images cut out of magazines—a woman reclining in bed; a woman sitting on an old man's lap; a woman being shot by an animal-headed man; a red liquid passing through water, and a melting wax figure of a woman—as the source material for the accountant's dream. These images are transformed into the sort of dream that Mr. A. could only dream about. Leaves fall to the ground beside a red curtain. As a woman in white reclines on a red-curtained four-poster bed a small golden ball rises into her mouth and drops down from it with every breath she takes. Finally she swallows one of the balls and falls asleep. Bars suddenly separate her bed from the viewer. A man watches from behind the bars as if he can visualize her dream in which both nightingales and calves' hooves have an important part to play. But it turns out that the man isn't watching her dream; he is a part of it—but that doesn't mean that he has any idea of what he's doing there and so he 'telephones' her to discover what's going on. In a voiceover she informs him that "they talked about love and pleasure"—and who could ask for a better dream than that? Then her telephone falls to the floor. A misty smoke enshrouds her and Mr. A's dream is over.

In the second dream that Joe sells, two store window mannequins—inspired by Richter and Leger's sighting on Grand Street—conduct a kind of mechanical romance accompanied by a song written by John Latouche and sung by Libby Holman and Josh White, called "The Girl with the Pre-Fabricated Heart." Subsequent dreams become even more abstract with contributions from Man Ray and Duchamp. One dream consists of a 'ballet' of billiard balls on wires conceived of and realized by Calder. The final dream appropriately enough takes the form of a psychoanalytical session as seen through the disturbing—and distorting—lens of the unconscious. *The Dreams that Money Can Buy* is actually a dream within a dream within a dream. The first dream belongs to Joe Narcissus, the purveyor of

dreams. The second dream is the dreams of the customer who buys them from Joe. The third dream is the 'dream' of the audience watching it.

As the distinguished film critic Siegfried Kracauer observed, "Modern art, as it appears in this film, intertwines the region of pure forms with the virgin forest of the human soul. What lies between—the vast middle sphere of conventional life—is tacitly omitted or overtly attacked. Both the Leger and Richter episodes are very explicit in defiance of our mechanical civilization." In this respect this movie, which is predicated on dreams and presents the bewildering, noncausal nature of dreams, is also, at least in part, a social dream insofar as it is a critique of a mechanistic society, in Kracauer's words, "which smothers the expression of love and creative spontaneity." That, he says, explains why modern artists like those recruited for the film are so preoccupied with "unconscious urges" and why dream imagery comported so well with their surrealistic and Dada roots. Kracauer cites the superimposition of the female nudes and Duchamp's "rarified movements" and the juxtaposition of a primitive mask and "a sort of ram's horn" with Calder's mobiles. "And in the Max Ernst sequence the turmoil of sex so radically upsets the nineteenth century interiors that they seem on the point of disintegrating-scattered elements predestined to be reborn with non-objective textures" (Richter 1965, p.118–119). The power of *The Dreams That Money Can Buy* lies principally in its canny use of associations. Even a philosopher with an aversion to the subconscious would understand why Richter's work represents a breakthrough—but also a dead end. Dreams can also be a bore except for the dreamer. Films are most successful at embodying and transmitting social dreams when they tell a compelling story. In other words, they almost go out of their way not to entertain. Trance films were solipsistic "expressions of psychic interiors" which like dreams, required audiences to interpret rather than to enjoy them (Sklar 1994, p. 307).

The Social Dream

Psychological phenomena—self, agency, emotions, sexuality, perception, cognition, memory—do not arise exclusively within the individual. They also need to be considered within the context of the larger culture. We all operate in an environment that consists of various institutions, artifacts, and cultural concepts. Psychological processes are always at work as people conduct their activities or respond to these institutions and concepts. These psychological processes assume particular form and content. In other words, people mold their psychology in congruence with or reaction to certain macro cultural factors. A struggle is constantly taking place among groups to direct (control) macro cultural factors in their interest. Whoever dominates this struggle dominates the form that cultural factors take, and by extension the corresponding form that psychological processes take. Consequently, it would be a mistake to think of psychology only in personal terms when it is also a cultural and political phenomenon. So what we see happening is a kind of feedback loop in which psychological phenomena are then objectified in the culture and transmitted to individuals as they participate in the culture. The

ways in which the sense of self, romantic love and pathologies like schizophrenia, become objectified cultural phenomena help define society. Individuals draw upon these cultural-psychological factors to define and understand themselves—just as they draw upon standards of beauty, dress, and status.

What is less clear is whether a social or collective dream is still capable of embodying or representing a nation or a region, the way that German cinema did, for instance, in the 1920s and 1930s. That films could be distinctively 'French' or 'Italian' or 'British' was probably true to some extent through the 1950 s, as Martha Leites and Nathan Wolfenstein tried to argue in their 1950 book *Movies: A Psychological Study,* but globalization has made such generalizations and stereotypes a more problematic exercise as Sklar explains in his own book about American films: "American movie presented American myths and American dreams, homegrown for native audiences, yet only man-made borders, kept them from conquering the world" (Sklar 1994, p. 212). Those borders have been disappearing ever since.

So how is this interaction between the culture and the individual expressed in a social dream—a social dream that takes the particular form of a film? Like psychoanalysis, film has long been preoccupied with identity and the fragile sense of self. Jean Cocteau's *Orpheus* (1950), for instance, explores the tenuous border between reality and imagination. In Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* (1966) a nurse played by Bibi Andersson becomes one with her patient played by Liv Ullmann. The viewer is drawn into Bergman's dream so that it becomes our dream to an extent as well. In one interview Bergman has called all of his films his 'dreams.' "The reality we experience today is in fact as absurd, as horrible, and as obtrusive as our dreams," he told an interviewer, "We are as defenseless before it as we are in our dreams. And one is strongly aware, I think, that there are no boundaries between dream and reality today" (Peter Cowie, Swweden 2, cited by John Simon, Ingmar Bergman Directs (NY: Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, 1972) 239. In another context, the director declared, "When film is not a document, it is a dream…No form of art goes beyond ordinary consciousness as film does, straight to our emotions, deep in the twilight room of the soul" (Bergman 1960, p. 73).

But while a filmmaker's work might tap into his dreams for inspiration or even be conceived as equivalent to a 'dream,' it doesn't invariably follow that the filmmaker is aware what the dream is, on an individual level and certainly not on a collective level. Artists working in any medium usually do not consciously try to represent a social dream in their work and often don't realize that they have done so except in retrospect. More often other people can recognize that a work has greater resonance than its creator. And that's probably for the best: if the artist were aware that he was trying to convey a social dream he'd probably be paralyzed or else produce a work that was attenuated or polemical.

In some cases the social dream as projected by film (literally and metaphorically) can have a beneficial effect. During the bleak days of the Depression, for instance, films were able to knit society together "by their capacity to create unifying myths and dreams." In spite of clergymen in backwater towns who railed against "sin on the silver screen," the academic, media and literary elites of

their day regarded filmmakers "with considerably more respect, awe and envy" since they were in "the possession of the power to create the nation's myths and dreams" (Sklar 1994, p. 159).

The question of identity has always made for a powerful social dream, especially during periods characterized by upheaval, social, economic, and cultural. A case in point is Sybil, the purportedly true life story of a woman with multiple personality, which appeared first in book form in 1973 and then as a TV movie of the week in 1975 with Sally Field as the title character and Joanne Woodward as her psychiatrist. The authors Flora Schrieber and Cornelia Wilbur, Sybil's psychiatrist, maintained that Sybil's condition was a result of early childhood trauma although the evidence was shaky at best and fabricated at worst. (Sybil's real name was Shirley Mason.) A psychological oddity, so bizarre and rare that it was barely mentioned in most textbooks before 1973, multiple personality disorder suddenly acquired respectability and acceptance in the aftermath of Sybil in her various incarnations, eventually making its debut in the 1980 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health which classified it as an important disorder. The number of cases and therapists specializing in the treatment of MPD escalated quickly and so did the number of personalities that victims claimed. (One therapist identified over 1,000 personalities in one patient, not all of them human). With its emphasis on childhood sexual abuse it also spawned two other related obsessive phenomena: one was the belief that people were being adversely affected by buried memories and the other was that only by reawakening those memories through hypnosis was recovery possible. Together, the three phenomena constitute what I term "a trinity of affinity." It is hardly surprising that these phenomena arose in the wake of the 1960 s (a time of intense tumult) and the early 1970s, when in the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate all authority and institutions were being challenged. America's own sense of identity was being shaken like never before. In the decades that followed the Sybil myth lost much (but not all) of its appeal, supplanted by other social dreams. It's true that several memoirs have appeared whose authors claim to have suffered from MPD, but they haven't sparked the kind of media publicity or spawned a similarly ersatz therapeutic movement as the original Sybil did.[2] A remake of the TV movie in 2007 barely caused a blip on the media's radar screen. However, with the economic downturn that the US began to suffer in 2008, we can reasonably expect to see more films that are centered about problems of identity. So many Americans, after all, especially men, have identified their lives so closely with their work that when they lose their jobs they often find themselves at a loss, unable any longer to figure out their place or purpose as husband, father or as a productive member of society.

Sybil was not a horror film per se but it had a lot in common with the genre in suggesting the possibility of monsters lurking within us. Horror films work even when we know that what we are seeing on the screen isn't 'real.' Gregory Bateson, for instance, observed that there are two types of messages or signals—those that

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[2] For a more detailed discussion of the Sybil case please see my book *The Bifurcation of the Self* published by Springer in 2006.

are untrue or not meant and those that denote signals that do not exist. In his essay "Steps to the Ecology of the Mind," he cites the example of a viewer struck by terror as he cringes from a spear thrown in his direction in a 3-D film or feels

that he's plunging from a cliff to his death in a nightmare. Neither spear nor cliff exist, Bateson points out, and the viewer and the dreamer (at least on waking) understands as much, recognizing that the images don't denote what they signify, but nonetheless the fear is real (Bateson 1972, p. 118). Otherwise horror films wouldn't have the impact they do. And if a horror film didn't produce thrills and terror (much like a roller-coaster ride) what would be the point of making it?

Certainly horror and thriller films have had a field day excavating the recesses of the mind for things we'd rather not acknowledge. The monster elicits a "visceral response of revulsion and disgust," observes Donald Campbell in his essay on the Italian horror filmmaker Dario Argento. Campbell contends that this revulsion can be traced to adolescence, observing that adolescence is characterized by a pull–push relationship in which hormonal and psychological changes are pushing the adolescent toward adulthood while he or she is being pulled in a regressive direction towards childhood in which infantile fears and anxieties about survival and omnipotent fantasies of triumph over loss, death and castration predominate (Campbell 2003).

Campbell focuses on what he calls 'body horror'—those horror films in which monsters emerge out of normal human beings. Think of all the 'normal' people in movies who, having been bit by vampires and savored the taste of blood, turn into vampires themselves. Or consider Brian DePalma's *Carrie* (1976) which depicts in an exaggerated manner the fear and disgust that menstruation arouses. Rouben Mamoulian's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931) is another example of body horror where the protagonist by means of a drug turns into a monster. At the same time these body horror films also evoke social dreams that touch on issues related to the stability of identity. It isn't the monster outside of us that we are so afraid of but the monster that we fear we could become.

Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) and Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) succeeded in terrifying their audiences and are no doubt responsible for countless troubling dreams. Each in its own way expresses a social dream, albeit a terrifying one. The *Stepford Wives* (1975) and its tepid sequel *Return of the Stepford Wives* (2004) are horror films of a different kind, exemplifying not so much the inequalities between the sexes as the actual struggle and conflict. The social dream in these films warns of disintegration of the family as well as of the blurring of male and female roles (Rieber 1997, p. 128).

The Western is a genre where the social dream is often explicit, tapping into myths that still resonate in the U.S.—the myth of self-reliance, the myth of an undiscovered natural paradise and the myth of boundless freedom. "Since Birth of a Nation American films have returned again and again to the basic problem of human conduct and the establishment of law and order in a new and widely scattered society," Manvell writes in his consideration of the Western classic *The Oxbow Incident* (1943), "These have often proved wonderful subjects for films— the westering of the pioneers, the dawn of the concept of justice in remote regions,

and the outbreak of gang or mob violence in the rural and urban areas" (Manvell 1955, p. 146). The Western exerted such an influence over the popular imagination that some directors who'd grown up far from America tried their hand at it, most notably the Italians who invented a subgenre all of their own—the spaghetti Western. Its most famous exponent Sergio Leone was attracted to the Western because, he said, "the west was made by violent, uncomplicated men, and it is this strength and simplicity that I try to recapture in my pictures." In *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968) Leone cast Henry Fonda against type as the villainous enforcer for a railroad tycoon. The story is a scathing take on capitalist exploitation which takes the form of a struggle over water, in this case a piece of land near Flagstone, Arizona called—appropriately—Sweetwater. It is the only source of water in a region where a railroad will be constructed. Water suddenly becomes valuable because it will be needed for the steam engines that empower locomotives. Leone's film was only one of a slew of Westerns about the epic struggle over resources (often pitting ranchers against cattlemen). The director also earned worldwide box office success for his Dollar trilogy: *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964), *For a Few Dollars More* a year later and most famously, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly,* which followed in 1966. The plot of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, set during the Civil War, focused on three gunslingers who are after a cache of hidden Confederate gold and featured a young Clint Eastwood as a mysterious lone gunman with a lightning fast draw. It embodied two dreams at once, both of them integral to Americans' mythical—and mystical—association with the land and its resources. The first is the belief that if one looks hard enough there are always riches waiting to be found (in whatever form or currency) and the second is the conviction of being rescued by the savior who comes from out of nowhere, a hero who has integrity, a gun and a good aim. Probably no film illustrated the obsessive and illusory—and finally tragic—quest for hidden wealth than *The Treasure of Sierra Madre* (1948) which starred Humphrey Bogart. In that film a savior never appears.

If Westerns hearken back to the social dreams that have shaped America science fiction often plays on the fears and anxieties of the present (usually dressed up as the future.) Superman emerged as a comic book hero in 1938 on the verge of World War II (before being incarnated in a TV series and in movies beginning in 1978). However, the quest for an Ubermensch—the superior individual of Nietzsche who has the rational and emotional capacity and volitional need to transcend the problems of society—has been a social dream of any number of societies (Rieber 1997). It can be argued that Superman reveals a major flaw in the American national character because it relies on magical thinking, a hope for the superman magic and the belief that we have license to do something without taking full responsibility for our actions. Americans seem to be looking for the hero who will save them, and they are ready to pay any amount of money for the gimmick, the product or the shortcut to get it without a full-hearted effort. The social dreams of our times seem to be screaming out, proclaiming this problem to us, but whether anyone is listening is another question (Rieber 1997, p. 130–131). If anything, that old superman magic is more prevalent than ever given the increasing

number of super heroes that recent films have appropriated from graphic novels: Spiderman, Batman, and Ironman to name just three of the cinematic saviors to have made their appearance on the big screen. If they haven't achieved superman magic exactly there is no disputing that they are responsible for creating box office magic, which says something about how deeply entrenched this particular social dream remains.

The recent resurgence of the vampire on TV, film, and in books (along with zombies) suggests that another form of social dream is emerging. The meaning of this particular dream, however, isn't quite as easily interpreted as one might assume. Vampires have never gone away, of course; they have surfaced in any number of cultures since Vlad the Impaler and vampires have been making regular appearances on American and international screens. The film adaptation of *Interview with a Vampire*, based on Anne Rice's novel, was a big hit in 1994. But why are they experiencing such a huge comeback now? 2008 was a banner year for vampires. That year saw the publication of *Breaking Dawn,* the final installment of Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series; it sold 1.3 million copies in the first 24 h. That was followed by the launch of HBO's wildly successful new series *True Blood*, the Swedish film *Let the Right One In* (whose plot revolved around preadolescent vampires) and finally the release of the film adaptation of *Twilight.* Both the HBO the Twilight series have attracted huge numbers of ardent young fans, especially prepubescent and teenage girls. These vampires are sanitized; the vampire who falls in love with the human girl is too nice to bite. Desire is suppressed in favor of a dreamy romanticism, which undoubtedly explains its exceptional popularity for its target demographic. A year later the sequel *New Moon* broke box office records—and still no sex. The conventional explanation for the hold that vampires have on the imagination can be found in *Soul of a Popular Culture* by Mary Kittleson. "Symbolically, we can imagine vampires as unconscious energy that sucks us dry of the will essential to desire life…At the same time, predatory impulses are an integral part of our human biological history" (Kittleson 1998). Unlike humans, vampires cast no shadows, she points out. Formulating her argument in Jungian terms, she argues that the culture has to do its 'collective shadow work' in order to evolve. "Culturally, the vampire's presence may be beckoning our society to kill off the adolescent conception of ourselves as innocent heroes and heroines who desire only the best for the world" (Kittleson 1998). But is this really the social dream that the vampire resurrection embodies? Most of the vampires who are enjoying popularity these days depart from the traditional conception of the vampire; far from being monstrous or evil, they are increasingly depicted as young, strong and sensual beings. Even the vampires in *True Blood* are a different breed. To be sure, in contrast to the vampires in Twilight and *New Moon* who show such extraordinary, these Bayou vampires have no compunction about indulging in either sex with humans or slaking their thirst on human blood (although they often rely on a synthetic substitute). Nonetheless, they are presented as a kind of ethnic minority, stigmatized, and subject to prejudice, but nonetheless are tolerated to some degree by the humans they live among. These examples suggest that it might be possible to give a more optimistic reading of

the vampire's new incarnations. Maybe the social dream that vampires represent indicate a greater tolerance for diversity, especially among the young, where ethnic, cultural, and religious differences or sexual orientation are no longer seen as threatening in sharp contrast to the attitudes of older generations.

The question as to whether horror films (or programs on TV) can cause nightmares (infiltrating our actual dreams in other words) hasn't been well studied. But, as Margaret Talbot points out in an article on nightmares for The New Yorker, movies do have an influence on "our sense of what nightmares generally look and feel like…from the surreal dreamscape that Salvador Dali designed for Alfred Hitchcock's 'Spellbound' to the twisted fantasies of David Lynch." She goes on to say, "Such cinematic sequences succeed better than most nightmare studies do in recreating what it feels like to be transfixed by frightening images that are screened in the projection room of one's mind." The relationship can work in reverse, too: "if filmmakers draw on nightmares, their films, in turn, sometimes give us bad dreams." In a study published in 2000, children who had nightmares frequently cited a program they'd seen on TV. Some studies have tracked the types of nightmares people have experienced over the last century "and found that dreams of the bogeyman were common in the twenties; dreams of ghosts, devils, and witches reigned in the fifties and sixties, and those of movie villains predominated in the nineties." Both Freddy Krueger of the *Friday the 13th* series of movies and the evil Voldemort from the Harry Potter novels and movies have made regular appearances in the nightmares of children interviewed for a study conducted by the Dream and Nightmare Laboratory at Sacre-Coeur Hospital in Montreal, but whether they have any lasting or negative influence is unknown (Talbot 2009).

Nightmares are by no means confined to horror films. Apocalyptic scenarios are also commonly found in science fiction films. Although 2008 may have been a banner year for vampire flicks, it was also the year that saw the remake of *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, which was originally released in 1951. But the remake was a dud whereas the earlier version was powerfully evocative. The social dream that the 1951 film expressed has been superseded by other more resonant dreams in the intervening years. The original version was simultaneously reassuring and terrifying—reassuring because it seemed to offer a possible resolution to the conflict between the US and the USSR that had the potential of blowing humanity to smithereens and terrifying because it suggested that we needed extraterrestrial intervention to keep us from doing so. Godzilla represented a similar social dream. The Japanese monster made its initial appearance in 1954 in the first of dozens of films and remakes. A fearsome prehistoric creature, Godzilla is the result of a mutation caused by radiation from the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He can even deliver a powerful thermonuclear death ray from his mouth.

In dreams we often envision and 'try out' future scenarios. They are a way of exploring best and worst case possibilities. Science fiction films have a similar role to play when they offer visions or versions of future societies, more often than not dystopian ones. *Rollerball* (1975), for instance, is a film reminiscent both in theme and content of *1984* and *Brave New World* in that it presents an alternative world order; it is set in 2018 where the world is controlled by six corporations.

The authorities promote a game called Rollerball which is intended to allow the population to let out its aggressions. The fear of technology run amok, a variation of the Frankenstein myth, is also a recurrent social dream, one that has probably never been more dramatically illustrated than by the malevolent computer Hal in Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). (Rieber 1997, p. 127).

Logan's Run (1976) plays upon America's obsession with youth and beauty; the inhabitants of a high-tech Edenic cocoon (established in the aftermath of some worldwide catastrophe, possibly nuclear war) enjoy a hedonistic existence until they reach the age of thirty at which point they are exterminated in an elaborate ritual. Old age is not only stigmatized, it is abolished. The *Handmaid's Tale* (1990), based on Margaret Atwood's novel, offers another dystopian vision set in the near future, but in this case the world has been devastated by pollution as well as war with the result that 99 % of the female population has been rendered sterile and the surviving population has fallen under the rule of barren misogynistic couples who use ritualized violence to impose their will. The handmaids of the title are concubines who are recruited to serve them. A similar social dream—inspired by the fear that humans will be reduced to eking out a living in a despoiled environment—manifests itself in *Children of Men* (2006) in which all women have apparently become sterile and the human race is poised on the brink of disappearing forever until one African immigrant turns up pregnant. The gnawing fear that humans will drive themselves to the brink by their own negligence and greed finds grim expression in the 1973 *Soylent Green* in which overpopulation is to blame for depleting the planet's resources, resulting in widespread impoverishment and such a scarcity of food that fruit and vegetables become rare and highly prized. The storyline hinges on the mysterious green wafers that the majority of people rely on for sustenance. The wafers turn out to be made out of humans: here the tools of mass production are marshaled in service of cannibalism. The persistence of the dystopian social dream can also be seen in the 2009 film *The Road* (based on a novel by Cormic McCarthy) which recounts the odyssey of a father and his son to survive in a world that has been laid waste by some catastrophe. What kind of catastrophe—whether a nuclear war or environmental disaster—is never specified. It probably doesn't matter: the message is that as much as you may fear impending catastrophe maybe you'd do better to worry about what comes afterwards. An ancient calendar—in this case the Mayan—also provided the inspiration for another 2009 disaster film 2012, which left audiences a mere three years to prepare for the world's end.

Impending catastrophe has often served as a catalyst for filmmakers to produce some of the most powerful social dreams on celluloid. Take, for example, the German films that appeared after the cataclysm of the First World War. The national trauma "led to the haunted film, preoccupied with masochism, sadism and death," writes Manvell. These films also reduced the role of the individual, no doubt reflecting the sense of powerlessness that people felt after defeat. "The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari was of this kind; the medieval, the Gothic, the corpse-laden, dream-laden world of legend and fantasy gave the designer rather than the actor his chance" (Manvell 1955, p. 44). In his groundbreaking study of German expressionist films *From Caligari to Hitler,* Siegfried Kracauser declared, "It is my

contention that through an analysis of the German films deep psychological dispositions predominant in Germany from 1918 to 1933 can be exposed—dispositions which influenced the course of events during that time and which will have to be redeemed with in the post-Hitler era" (Kracauer 1947, p. 154).

The Cabinet of Caligari (1919) is a horror story which plays on the delusions of its narrator Francis who relates his investigation of the seemingly unhinged Dr. Caligari. The story is told through a series of flashbacks. In Francis' account Caligari is the orchestrator of a traveling act featuring his somnambulist slave Cesare. He promises that Cesare will answer any question. When Francis' friend Alan asks him how long he will have to live the slave tells him he will die by dawn—as he does. It turns out that Caligari and Cesare have been implicated in several murders in the German countryside. Eventually Cesare is killed and Caligari—revealed as the director of an insane asylum—is unmasked as a pathological murderer. But we learn that what we've been shown is not what happened; Francis is an unreliable narrator; indeed, he is a patient and Dr. Caligari is no madman but the physician who is trying to cure him. Here we see an exemplary example of a social dream—and a precognitive one at that, as Kracauer has pointed out, since it wouldn't be long before Germany itself became a virtual insane asylum whose insane director, far from treating delusions, propagated them.

(*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* was one of a string of pioneering expressionist films released by the UFA Film AG under the Weimer government. The company began in 1917. It boasted such seminal directors as Fritz Lang and F.W. Murnau. Aside from *Caligari*, its fame rests on such films as *Dr. Mabuse* (1922), *Metropolis* (1927), and *The Blue Angel* (1930) starring the incomparable Marlene Dietrich in her first talkie. By the end of the 1920s, however, the studio had come under the control of an industrialist sympathetic to the Nazis. (UFA became a propaganda machine, churning out anti-Semitic films that helped pave the way for Hitler's rise to power in 1932)

Film Versions of Psychologists

Dr. Caligrai is only one of a long line of cinematic shrinks. Psychiatrists have been appearing as characters in film for almost as long as film has been around as a popular medium. How they've been portrayed over the years says a great deal about how the society of the day regarded (or disregarded) them. (The first film about psychoanalysis—G.W. Pabst's 1926 *Secrets of a Soul*—was written by Karl Abraham, an associate of Freud's and used a variety of superimpositions and distortions of images to hint at the confusion in the protagonist's mind.) A Maryland psychiatrist named Irving Schneider has come up with a classification system of celluloid psychiatrists based on three types: Dr. Dippy, Dr. Evil, and Dr. Wonderful. Schneider begins his study with the 1906 film *Dr. Dippy's Sanitarium* in which four patients chase an attendant out of a sanitarium. The harried patients eventually return to the hospital where they are soothed by the eponymous Dr. Dippy who eschews drugs in favor of pies. Dr. Dippy obviously is the buffoon, an

innocuously comic character and an easy mark. A psychiatrist of a distinctly different sort emerges in D. W. Griffith's 1908 *The Criminal Hypnotist* in which an evil doctor puts a woman under a trance so that he can steal her father's money, a plot thwarted a 'mind specialist'—the heroic kind of psychiatrist Schneider categorizes as Dr. Wonderful. Caligari is, of course, Dr. Evil. His successors include the homicidal psychiatrist in Alfred Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945), the staff of the asylum (especially Nurse Ratched) in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962), and the transvestite psychiatrist played by Michael Caine in *Dressed to Kill* (1980). *Spellbound* represents a shift toward a more sophisticated (if still sensationalized) portrayal of the profession. Its famous dream sequences were designed by Salvador Dalí, the dean of surrealists. The titles serve as a kind of tutorial for viewers. "Our story deals with psychoanalysis," the prefatory titles declare, which is described as "the method by which modern science treats the emotional problems of the sane. The analyst seeks only to induce the patient to talk about his hidden problems, to open the locked doors of his mind. Once the complexes that have been disturbing the patient are uncovered and interpreted, the illness and confusion disappear… and the devils of unreason are driven from the human soul" (Bower 1987, p. 188).

Dr. Wonderful shows up as the compassionate Dr. Berger in *Ordinary People* (1980). Of the 200 or so films Schneider surveyed he found a greater number of Dr. Dippy's (35 %) followed by Dr. Wonderful's (22 %) with Dr. Evil trailing behind (15%). Schneider admitted, though, that had he included exploitation and horror films Dr. Evil would have racked up a greater tally (Bower 1987, p. 189). Here we can see the power of the 'emotion pictures' that Munsterberg wrote about. The capacity to project emotions is, of course, not limited to film (or any other medium). As a phenomenon it is often (too often) seen in politics and represents what Psychology Professor Paul Bloom calls 'emotional contagion' where people feed off of and influence the emotions of others. This happens frequently in darkened theaters. It also happened at Nazi rallies at Nuremberg.

Schneider isn't alone in his attempt to categorize psychiatrists on screen. Krin Gabbard (a literature professor) and Glen O. Gabbard (a psychoanalyst) have also investigated the subject in their book *Psychiatry and the Cinema* (University of Chicago Press, 1999). Elaborating on Schneider's scheme, they divide psychiatric films into three historical periods. The first period extends from the Dr. Dippy's of the one-reelers of the early 1900 s to the escaped lunatics of the mid-1960s. For the most part, the authors contend, the profession was seldom treated seriously. Dr. Wonderful's of this period, they write, "were little more than glorified guidance counselors" who helped achieve "a consoling resolution" to the plot (Bower 1987, p. 189). This period was followed by what they call the 'Golden Age of psychiatry in the cinema," beginning with *The Three Faces of Eve* (1957) and culminating in 1962 with several films, most significantly *David and Lisa*, which is considered one of the most realistic depictions of psychiatry. The third period, beginning in 1963, is a much darker one in which negative portrayals of shrinks predominate. They are "often associated with society's false values and shown to be inept or malevolent"—a sharp break from the 1950s "fantasy of social harmony and better

living through psychiatry" (an idealized conception to which psychiatry itself contributed). Undoubtedly, the anti-institutional, anti-authority fervor of the 1960s fueled the trend which, the Gabbards say, began to ebb only with the release of *Ordinary People*. The Gabbards reserve a special place in their universe of celluloid psychiatrists for the works of Woody Allen and Paul Mzursky, both of whom, while treating the profession with humor, nonetheless depict psychiatrists as generally humane and occasionally the source of valuable advice.

They argue that the depiction of the stereotype can be "double-edged in which 'good' and 'bad' psychiatrists are paired together. They also introduce another type—the 'faceless' psychiatrist who has "few, if any, identifying traits," citing as examples the neutral psychiatrist of *Fear Strikes Out* (1957) about the baseball player Jim Piersall and the off-screen psychiatrist in *Diary of a Mad Housewife* (1970). If the portrayal of many male psychiatrists in film is less than flattering, female psychiatrists generally come off even worse. Beginning in the 1940 s, the Gabbards maintain, female psychiatrists are either seen as corrupt or as "inadequate as women" and susceptible to seduction by their male patients (in a reversal of the classic transference).

The ambivalence of filmmakers toward psychiatrists is hardly surprising. Their audiences felt similarly conflicted. "Awe at their perceived ability to unscramble the mysterious workings of the mind is mixed with contempt for their limitations and disappointment with their failure to solve complex problems," notes Bruce Bower in his 1987 Science article. Psychotherapists are perceived as superior on the one hand but also envied and feared on the other, which prompts people (and filmmakers) to ridicule them and try to "put them in their place" (Bower 1987, p. 189).

Psychiatrists offer only one example of the kinds of stereotypes that filmmakers have exploited, promoted, and foisted on their audiences. The same interchange of cultural-psychological factors that gave us Dr. Dippy, Dr. Evil, and Dr. Wonderful also found expression in a system of social archetypes, stereotypes, and role models who epitomized those standards of beauty, dress and status. And there was no more powerful medium to dramatize these archetypes and stereotypes than the film. An elaborate production base was established in California to generate films that functioned as a means to show people social norms and customs, how they were to behave and what things were desirable to buy and own—in general films showed forms of life to which audiences, sitting in dark, palatial theaters must aspire. Each film becomes a lesson in how people were to define and understand themselves. Here the cultural dream machine is providing the dreams (in advertising as well as in the biological sense) for the audiences.

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Chapter 2
The Aliens in Us and the Aliens Out There: Science Fiction in the Movies

Aliens fill us with dread and yet they exert an inescapable attraction on us. We shun them, we deny that they exist, but we can't get away from them—and no wonder: we don't necessarily recognize them when they're standing right in front of us. Aliens can assume familiar forms; they can look like members of our own family or our friends. They are familiar strangers. Or they can usurp humans like parasites, turning them into zombies. No one is immune. The distinction between what is out there—sometimes, as in the case of extraterrestrials, way out there—and what is within us begins to disappear.

Aliens are a kind of social dream. Societies dream just like individuals do. This collective dreamlike experience, which arises as result of an evolving dynamic between the individuals and their culture, is constantly being transformed, sometimes incrementally, sometimes in quantum leaps. The social dream emerges from aggregate social experience just as our own dreams are based to one degree or another on our life experience. That experience—societal and individual—is the raw material of the dream. And although the meaning and purpose of dreams are a perpetual subject of dispute and speculation, there is no doubt that dreams are frequently characterized by tension. A good case can be made that dreams are an attempt to work out conflict. What holds for individual dreams is true of the social dream. And there is probably no better vehicle for expressing our social dreams and for revealing the conflicts that society is grappling with, than the movies. By bringing these conflicts to light, moviemakers, whether they are conscious of it or not, are trying to explain the sources of tension and showing us a possible way out of our dilemma. Unlike books, films are a collective medium that calls on creative collaboration involving the director, the screenwriters the actors and ultimately the audience. A very interesting dynamic arises from this collaboration; what the screenwriter imagines when he is putting words down on paper is not the same as what the director imagines while she's shooting the film or what the actors imagine while they're performing. However, without the viewer's imagination, the film would be dead on arrival. This dynamic isn't limited to any particular place or time; if the film is successful and has something to say then the audiences of generations to come will be invited to become collaborators, too. Given this dynamic, films have a unique ability to capture the zeitgeist (the cultural ethos and values of a society) and represent a social dream. The individual collaborators may not be aware they are doing this (often they are not) and the results may surprise all the participants. That is why the cinematic portrayals of aliens can tell us so much about what's going on in human minds. But it works the other way around as well just as movies can reflect social distress (thanks to this often

unconscious collaboration between filmmakers, writers, actors and audiences). They also have the capacity—and the power—to exacerbate social distress. Movies have been equated with dreams, since they employ the language of dreams to powerful effect. But movies can also provoke nightmares, too, and those nightmares don't necessarily end upon waking. Alternatively, they may just help to hypnotize us and keep us in the dark.

So if movies reveal a social dream, what can we say about social dreams in which aliens play a dominant role? What kinds of conflicts can potentially be resolved by a movie about aliens both benign (as in the 1982 "ET" film) or malevolent (as in the "Alien" series) The answer is…it depends. During the Cold War, social dreams were haunted by the specter of nuclear annihilation. If humans were perceived as incapable of settling disputes on their own we would require intervention by another life form with higher intelligence, capable of cleaning up the mess we've made. There is no better example than "The Day the Earth Stood Still" (1951) in which the alien Klatu (Michael Ronnie) shuts down all power for half an hour to demonstrate the consequences if humans don't reform their ways. Klatu is an obvious messiah figure; he is killed and then resuscitated by his robot Gort. (The robot is programmed to destroy the world if it doesn't hear the magic words uttered by the character played by Patricia Neal—"Klatu barrada nikto.") "Join us and live in peace," As he prepares to return home Klatu warns humankind to change "or pursue your present course and face obliteration."

There are as many types of aliens as there are social dreams. Aliens can be clones (like those in "Blade Runner") or other outsiders like Frankenstein, Dracula, the werewolf, and the zombie. These beings meet the definition insofar as they occupy a state that isn't human but that isn't entirely not human, either (like another species); they aren't alive exactly but they aren't dead (or at least they aren't content to stay safely in the grave and decompose.) And while the majority of movies about aliens fall into a category we could loosely term "science fiction" they tend to be hybrids—a mixture of genres. Some movies, such as the Alien series, are essentially horror movies set in outer space. Others like "E. T." are really fantasies, fairy tales in which the 'monster' may be misunderstood due to physical appearance and suspect origins. Still others like "Men in Black" (1997), notwithstanding its comic tone, are really mysteries. The Men in Black are purportedly CIA or FBI agents policing undercover aliens. According to conspiracy theorists, such creatures may produce official-looking IDs which ultimately turn out to be fake or belong to people who are deceased.

Films in which aliens are the dominant figures (even if they lurk in the shadows or disguise themselves as ordinary human beings) almost invariably have an element of the mystery of detective genre. That is because alien life forms, assuming they exist somewhere in the cosmos, remain as much of a subject of speculation as ever in spite of all our efforts to detect their presence. Aliens hold the answer to the gnawing question that has preyed upon our minds since homo sapiens first emerged in the African savannah: are we alone in the universe? That is the ultimate mystery story.

Aliens have a long and storied history, a history that runs parallel to and is rooted in our own. Aliens, after all, need a species to alienate or be alienated from. Aliens frequently enjoy a condition that humans can only aspire to—namely immortality. In these two first great civilizations of the ancient world, Egypt and China, the people believed in immortality and went to extraordinary lengths to try to achieve it. We have only to think of the pyramids or the necropolis of Qin in Xian, built by the first emperor of China. The direction that these two civilizations took to reach their goals was quite different—both literally and symbolically. Egypt took to the skies, or heavens, while China, went in the opposite direction—underground—in order to create their future home of immortality. (Qin's palace, guarded by a terracotta army and booby-trapped with arrows that could be triggered by intruders, still hasn't been completely excavated.) Both of these civilizations believed, and acted upon, their prime beliefs that you *can* take it with you! For the ancient Egyptians and Chinese these monuments, even if they were only intended for princes, potentates, and the highborn represented the ultimate means of coping with the perennial fear of death as well as serving a related purpose: namely, helping those peoples define the meaning of life. These are opposite sides of the same coin, as it were. Death is alien to life and life is alien to death. To the ancient Egyptians, the objective was to join or commune with the star gods or to travel, as it were, back to where it all began, to their origins. In their view, immortality amounted to a state of transcendence to an alien form of life but one that was both familiar and safe. In other words, the aliens out there turn out to be the aliens in us, too, that is, they reside inside our own human consciousness. Although these immortality-obsessed civilizations reached their pinnacle around 2000 BC, they are only one example of an age-old human coping mechanism in the face of mortality. It may be argued that in the current age we do this through movies.

From time immemorial we have been preoccupied with where we came from as a species, and where and when we die. That leaves us with the interval between the two extremes. Sir Francis Crick, who with James Watson won the Nobel Prize for his groundbreaking work on DNA, was partial to the idea that life might have first evolved from organisms that came from outer space. We are all composed of so-called genetic junk, whose purpose is still unknown. Is this evidence of our extraterrestrial beginnings? Regardless of the answer, we must side with Shakespeare when he wrote, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves." Shall we look back to our future, or look ahead to our past? Metaphorically speaking, the past is in some measure the present and is part of the past; but tomorrow is forever. All of this is what the contemporary myths in films about the aliens tell us. Or put another way: Are the gods of the human race within us or outside of us, or is it necessary to have a concept of god at all? The great medieval philosopher Meister Eckhart said, "The more God is in all things, the more he is outside them" although he was careful to add: "God is within more than without." The equation of gods and aliens isn't simply a bit of rhetorical sleight of hand. Sometimes in movies, aliens behave more like the capricious gods of ancient Greece. In "The 27th Day" (1957), for example, aliens plan to wipe out humanity but decide to let their victims do their work for them by giving five

people capsules capable of destroying a continent, then withdraw from the scene to watch the ensuing disaster from afar. This state of affairs recalls Pogo's famous saying that we have met the enemy and he is us.

Our fascination with aliens may, to a large degree, derive from our own alienation. As the distinguished psychologist George Miller observed in his inaugural address to the American Psychological Association in the 1960's "People are growing increasingly alienated from a society in which a few wise men behind closed doors decide what is good for everyone…. Even those most blessed by economic rewards are asking for something more satisfying to fill their lives… Anyone who reads the newspapers must realize that vast social changes are in the making, that they must occur if civilized society is to survive." What filmmakers are doing—although they are seldom conscious of it—is playing upon the awe and fear that these "few wise men behind closed doors" evoke, transforming them by the magic of cinema into the alien beings who exercise powers that are denied ordinary human beings. "Vested interests will oppose these changes, of course," Miller goes on, "but as someone once said, vested interests, however, powerful, cannot withstand the gradual encroachment of new ideas." Almost invariably, the intervention of aliens in our world upends the established order (how could it not?) Even when we defeat the aliens and send them packing (if we haven't obliterated them first) things have changed irrevocably. Just think of what will happen when scientists announce that they have discovered life on another planet, as they probably will someday; even if that life form is microbial, it will inevitably compel us to readjust our conception of the cosmos and our place within it. In that sense, films in which aliens play a role allow us to stage dress rehearsals in our minds for the possibility that one day aliens will walk among us, if they aren't already.

Some readers will recall the popular books of Erich von Daniken who postulated that gods did in fact arrive on our planet eons ago in spaceships. His theories may be far fetched, but he managed to tap into a general feeling that superior beings like Klatu may have visited Earth more than once in the past and set things in motion (an idea that Kubrick also exploits in his 1968 classic "2001"). The "Stargate" franchise (launched by MGM in 1994) was based on the premise that aliens infiltrated the Earth many years ago through a wormhole created by a ring-shaped alien device (the Stargate of the title) and have been walking among us for years. And we all know what happened when aliens attacked us in H. G. Welles' "War of the Worlds" (made into a film in 1953 and again in 2004) where the alien invasion culminates in a takeover of our planet, proving that if they could push the start button aliens also have the capacity to press the stop button as well.

The first cinematic alien appeared, improbably, in "The Man in the Moon in Santa Claus' Busy Day" (1906) followed 2 years later by a sequel "The Man in the Moon Seeks a Wife." Although aliens don't make much of an appearance in the famous expressionist films produced in Germany between the wars their presence can still be felt. The machine city in "Metropolis" (1926), for example, could as well have been operated by aliens as by subjugated proles; indeed, that is the point: for the ruling class the slave laborers are aliens. Significantly, "Metropolis" features a female robot, carrying on a tradition that began with Joseph Melies

who pioneered the use of robots in film "The Clown and the Automaton, 1987." Robots and androids are simply aliens in another guise, the main difference being that humans are responsible for their creation. However, in almost every film in which these artificial creations occur they tend to become autonomous, blurring the boundary between human and machine. HAL, the malevolent supercomputer in "2001," still epitomizes the threat of technology run amok. Worse: doubt is cast as to whether it hasn't become a sentient being in its own right when, upon being dismantled, it complains that it can "feel" the destruction it is undergoing. At this point HAL sings the song, 'Daisy, Daisy, Give Me Your Answer True,' which in an inside reference turns out to be the song used in a test for the Voice-Coder, a pioneering voice replication device created at Bell Labs. The song was also used in a nightmarish fashion in the 1954 trilogy directed by Orson Welles called "Three Faces of Murder." It should also be noted that when the villain is finally revealed at the conclusion of "The President's Analyst" (1967) it turns out to be an android at Bell Labs, which for many years was the premier technological research lab in the country. That the President of the United States would require an analyst wasn't some farfetched notion, either. Kenneth Clarke, in an inaugural address to the American Psychological Association proposed that an elite group of enlightened psychiatrists, mental health specialists, and neuropharmacologists should assume the administration of a program of "direct psychotechnological intervention" for political leaders to "assure their positive use of power and reduce or block the possibility of their using it destructively." It is unlikely that even if such a utopian project were implemented the proposed beneficiaries would be inclined to undertake a "type of internally imposed disarmament."

Understandably, we begin to think of our minds as if they are computers (when, in fact, they are infinitely more complicated than even the most sophisticated computers). But from that perspective, we feel that it's only a matter of time before the computers we build today will eventually create other computers with the power to take us over. (Computers are already capable of innovation that allows them to create smarter computers without human intervention.) As we surrender more and more of our lives to technology we become ever more unsettled about the forces we are unleashing. We feel that we are relinquishing control. In other words, we feel alienated from our own inventions—worse, we feel that we are becoming machines. "Closely related to this emphasis on control," George Miller writes in his *American Psychologist* essay, "is the frequently repeated claim that living organisms are nothing but machines. A scientist recognizes, of course, that this claim says far more about our rapidly evolving conception of machines than it says about living organisms, but this interpretation is usually lost when the message reaches public ears. If the assumption that behavior control is feasible becomes and accepted concept, it could have unfortunate consequences, particularly if it is coupled with an assumption that control should be exercised by an industrial or bureaucratic elite" Miller (1969). Sometimes this 'elite' can be a single individual. That is the case in another famous film from Weimer Germany featuring the "masterful hypnotizer"—"Dr. Caligari." As the noted critic Siegfried Kracauer puts it in his introduction to the script: "*Caligari* is a very specific

premonition in the sense that he uses hypnotic power to force his will upon his tool—a technique foreshadowing, in content and purpose, that manipulation of the soul which Hitler was the first to practice on a gigantic scale. Although, at the time of *Caligari* (1920), the motif of the masterful hypnotizer was not unknown on the screen….nothing in their environment invited the two authors (Janowitz and Mayer who wrote the screenplay) to feature it. They must have been driven by one of those dark impulses, which, stemming from the slowly moving foundations of a people's life, sometimes engender true visions." (Janowitz and Mayer 1972) Caligari, like the aliens, reflects the unconscious fears and longings of society, but he also foreshadows events that these fears and longings may bring into play. "Whether intentionally or not, *Caligari* exposes the soul wavering between tyranny and chaos, and facing a desperate situation: any escape from tyranny seems to throw it into a state of utter confusion. Quite logically, the film spreads an all-pervading atmosphere of horror. Like the Nazi world, that of *Caligari* overflows with sinister portents, acts of terror and outbursts of panic. The equation of horror and hopelessness comes to a climax in the final episode, which pretends to re-establish normal life" (Janowitz and Mayer 1972).

We find a similar phenomenon in films in which aliens function as surrogates for those elites who, for one reason or another, stand outside of society, who are both reviled and feared, who are regarded as both inferior and superior and whose powers threaten our own independence and dignity. We are afraid of what these hypnotizers or wielders of excessive influence (whether robots, aliens or fuhrers) can do because we fear that we are all too ready to give them the power that relieves us of the responsibility for our own fates. As Krakauer observes about Caligari "The normal as a madhouse: frustration could not be pictured more finally. And in this film…is unleashed a strong sadism and an appetite for destruction. The reappearance of these traits on the screen once more testifies to their prominence in the German collective soul (Mayer 1972)." In movies aliens testify to the appearance of such traits in the collective soul of every one of us.

The heyday of the alien occurred in the 1950s. In the 1951 film "The Man from Planet X" audiences were introduced to what critic Donald Gifford calls "the first of many misunderstood monsters" that don't fare well on the planet they invade. It wasn't until 1953 that aliens made their screen debut in color—unsurprisingly it was green. These green creatures were controlled by "the ultimate brain of all," a tentacle head in a globe (prefiguring Dennis Potter's TV movie "Cold Lazarus" in which a man's head is kept functioning so it can deliver oracular pronouncements). In "Invaders from Mars," the 1953 film version of H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds,* Martians descend on Los Angeles, but their technology is no match for ours: they use heat rays while the US Army uses atomic bombs. (No doubt because of its proximity to so many movie studios, LA remains a favorite spot for aliens to launch their invasions; at least two movies in 2011 feature an alien invasion of LA.) When atomic weapons won't do there's always a fallback position: brain power. In the 1955 film "This Island Earth," human brains are appropriated to protect against aliens, producing the Mutant, "a clawed creature with an enlarged and exposed brain, apoplectic eyes and five interlocking mouths."

(Gifford 1972). The Mutant, though, had nothing on the villainous creature in "It Conquered the World" (1957), which depicted "one of the most alienating aliens, a kind of creeping cone which flung forth flying bats." (Gifford 1972) In "Village of the Damned" (1960) twelve women are impregnated during a mysterious blackout. On reaching the age of nine, the offspring combine their brains in a plot to dominate the world.

In many films humans are culpable in setting aliens loose on the world, reminding us that just as curiosity killed the cat it could kill us, too. In "The Thing" (1951), a spacecraft is discovered buried under the ice in the Arctic. By thawing out the dead pilot, scientists inadvertently unleash a blood-sucking alien on the world. A similar theme is echoed in "The Quatermass Experiment" (1955). The protagonist (Richard Wordsworth) is the sole survivor of a rocket contaminated by a space organism; once he becomes infected he turns into a grotesque version of King Midas, only instead of gold, he absorbs life from whatever he touches— animal, vegetable, or human, so that he finally turns into a hideous monster who meets its unlikely demise by electrocution in Westminster Abby. These cautionary tales seem to be inspired, however, indirectly, by the myth of Pandora's Box. The filmmakers were surely aware that by splitting the atom scientists had popped open the ultimate Pandora's Box and that the radiation from the atomic explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki had produced more than a few human monsters, not all of them were the victims on the ground.

Aliens are not always treated as malevolent beings that have come to usurp our bodies or seize control of the planet or pilfer its resources. In the 1988 "Alien Nation," the aliens known as 'Newcomers' are gradually integrated into society once the shock of their initial contact wears off. However, they begin to suffer from increasing discrimination, providing a convenient metaphor for racial tensions. The 2009 "District 9" also depicts aliens in a sympathetic light; forced to take refuge on Earth after a mechanical failure strands their spaceship, they are herded into internment camps where they are exploited by their supposedly more enlightened human captors. It is significant to note that the film—a worldwide box office success—was shot in South Africa.

Knowing the animosity and suspicion that they can arouse, aliens, however, benign their motives, often take pains to camouflage their true nature. In some cases a disguise is essential if the alien is to accomplish its purpose on Earth. That is certainly the case of Superman. Like many messiahs in religion and mythology, Superman has his weakness (kryptonite); concealing his alien origins, he conceals himself in the guise of a human, Clarke Kent. Superman, who began life in the 1930s in comic books before taking a star turn in any number of films and a TV series, exemplifies the alien as savior. Superman is an alien archetype that may be referred to as a perennial or a recurrent social dream. That is to say, he represents a kind of timeless myth that resonates in whatever period or place he alights. (His sinister counterparts in "War of the Worlds" are also perennials.) Perennials are to be distinguished from the aliens whose portrayals differ from one period to another because of changing political, cultural, or economic conditions. These aliens are products of the zeitgeist. The zeitgeist reflects generational

paradigm drift rather than a shift; trends generally overlap and change incrementally. Arguably, Superman is the most powerful representative of a social dream in this context insofar as he reflects a particularly American need and longing for a savior, whether it's religious or political or comes from outer space. The enduring appeal of Superman can also be seen in the way he's portrayed from one generation to another and from one medium to another spanning comic books, movies, and television. In one of his latest incarnations the man of steel was depicted in his formative years in the TV series "Smallville," a successful effort to make a perennial figure appealing to a younger generation.

In James Cameron's 1984 "The Terminator" (which spawned a profitable film and TV franchise) the 'aliens' are cyborg assassins (Arnold Schwarzenegger) confronting a human resistance fighter (Michael Biehn) who is hunting them down. The catch is that both assassins and his pursuers come from the future. What is at stake is nothing less than the world's fate. The object of their time travel is Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton) whose future son (if she survives long enough to give birth) is destined to lead the struggle against a cyborg takeover several years hence. It's as if a Roman soldier and a priest from the first century had returned to the past in an attempt to either slay or save Mary before she gave birth to Jesus. Interestingly, the cyborg is a product of human ingenuity, not an extraterrestrial marauder; so in that sense we have met the enemy (read alien) and once again he turns out to be us all along.

Many people firmly believe that aliens are out there watching us—aliens who are looking out for us and aliens who may not have our best interests at heart. For some the idea of benevolent aliens is akin to a religious belief system wherein an omnipotent god is taking care of things. Films have reflected this viewpoint. Stephen Spielberg's 1976 "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" is illustrative. As the Bible reminds us, "many are called but few are chosen." In this instance the 'chosen' one is an electric lineman named Roy who after being lured to the landing site of dozens of UFOs is welcomed on board the mothership and invited to accompany the aliens back into space. Musical sounds emitted by the spacecraft can even be seen as "The Bells of Saint Mary's" calling you to church except that an alien five-toned signal takes the place of the bells. Although the nature and motivation of aliens can change with the zeitgeist the religious element persists from one generation to the next. We can even think of angels as a species of aliens. Not so many years ago angels enjoyed a kind of resurgence; rather than counting the number of them on the head of a pin it was possible to count the number of books about them in your local bookstore. (The totals might not have been too different.) Of course, angels have their counterpart in demons; the former come from above (the ancient Egyptian model) while the former emerge from below (the Chinese). That a religious association frequently attaches itself to aliens is perfectly understandable; it's human nature that's driving it. The history of human beings is characterized by a need to believe in something and for many people aliens are as good as gods or alternatively, identical to them as von Daniken postulated. As Kenneth Clarke observes in an essay entitled *The Pathos of Power: A Psychological Perspective*, man created God for "purpose and substance," and

it is for this reason that man cannot allow God to die. "If God were to die, human beings would have to die psychologically, even though alive as organisms." God, Clarke declares, also serves as "a protection against the fragility of the human ego, which led to such compensatory protective agents as "demigods, the directly observable gods" as well as "magicians, medicine men, priests, bishops, kings, generals, father figures, movie stars," which he maintains, all "serve similar if not identical divine functions." These "personifications of power" are given virtues and powers beyond those found in ordinary men." By identifying with them and their projected power, "the average man can obscure his weaknesses and affirm his ego" (Clarke, X). But in our secular age we have imbued extraterrestrials with many of these same superhuman attributes. Aliens then can, at least on screen, assume the same privileges and shamanistic role as those medicine men, bishops, kings, and gods. The power they can project is limited only by our imaginations.

If the prospect of imminent destruction is a chronic source of anxiety for humankind, the causes differ from generation to generation. So the prospect of nuclear catastrophe has ebbed while that of environmental calamity has grown. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, focused attention on this problem, specifically regarding the negative effect of pesticides. Although the nature of the threat to the environment has changed—from the perils of DDT and to the perils of climate change—the gnawing sense that the world is deteriorating has only grown. Not surprisingly, aliens have a part to play in the degradation of the environment. It turns out that aliens do not always have to come from outer space. In the 1960 low-budget "Little Shop of Horrors" (which enjoyed a second life in a cinematic musical version released in 1986) the alien takes the form of a malevolent plant. The film begins with an ominous prologue delivered by Shirley Jones: "On the twenty-third day of the month of September, in an early year of a decade not too long before our own, the human race suddenly encountered a deadly threat to its very existence. And this terrifying enemy surfaced, as such enemies often do, in the seemingly most innocent and unlikely of places…" The improbable hero Seymour Krelborn works as an assistant in a florist shop. Among his plants is one that resembles a Venus flytrap, which he names Audrey II in honor of a girl he has a crush on. But instead of being content with water and plant food, Audrey II has a voracious appetite for human blood, which it satisfies with increasing frequency throughout the course of the movie. "Little Shop" was by no means the first film to emphasize the alien nature of plants. In "The Day of the Triffids" (1963), a meteor storm blinds the human population and endows plants with humanlike intelligence, allowing them to infest London.

In some films like the "Alien" series, the first of which was directed by James Cameron and released in 1986, the aliens act like parasites, infiltrating and ultimately destroying their human hosts. Similarly, in "The Invasion of the Body Snatchers" (its first iteration appeared in 1956) humans are taken over by plant forms (pods) with the knack of simulating the individuals they destroy and assuming their identities. The film, directed by Don Siegel, was based on Jack Finney's novel which featured space plants "that blossom into 'blanks' which take on the shape of humans, then take their places…." (Gifford 1972) To some degree, these

films suggest that the fear of the unknown has shifted from the external (predatory extraterrestrials threatening us from the skies) to the internal (the microbial). By the late 1970 s, an era of increasing eradication of infectious diseases came to an end. With such "new" diseases as Legionnaire's Disease, SARS, West Nile Virus and especially HIV/AIDS, the routes and vectors of infection had multiplied enormously. The dread that AIDS inspired was amplified by its unclear etiology and lack of effective treatment. That its first victims were predominantly gays, minorities, and drug users—e.g., often treated as if they were aliens—made it all the more terrifying and delayed the search for a cure.

Sometimes, though, aliens are regarded as equals—as just one of the guys. Nowhere do we see this democratic spirit exemplified more than in "Star Trek" and especially in "Star Trek: The Next Generation," where aliens and humans make up the crews of the Starship Enterprise. In "Next Generation" one crew member, Lieutenant Commander Data is an android and another, the tactical officer Worf is a Klingon. Regardless of their origin, they are all united in fealty to their prime directive—an injunction not to interfere with the evolution of any society or civilization on any planet. Here is a case where the television and cinematic depictions of aliens reflect not dread or terror of society but rather its highest aspirations. The Starship Enterprise's crew is a microcosm of a United Nations; earthlings and aliens are up against the same galactic threats and must confront the challenge together if they are to survive. The prime directive conveys a not-so-subtle anti-colonial and anti-imperialist message to be sure, but it can also be interpreted as a warning to countries to think twice before using force on recalcitrant adversaries. "Star Trek," in both iterations, represents a social dream, but a dream that can change depending on the circumstances. If the original series reflected the social distress of the Cold War, "The Next Generation" taps into the fears stirred by terrorism.

The staggeringly successful 2009 film "Avatar" directed by James Cameron seems to equate aliens with indigenous peoples who even in a post-colonial world remain liable to exploitation. The Na'vi, natives of the lush moon Pandora, while technologically unsophisticated, are leaps and bounds ahead of their would be exploiters when it comes to spiritual matters. They represent a paradise that we've lost on Earth and seem to be hell-bent on destroying wherever else we might find one in the rest of the universe in the name of profit. As George Miller observes in his essay for *The American Psychologist*: "When the evolution of species was a new and exciting idea in biology, various social theorists took it up and interpreted it to mean that capitalistic competition, like the competition to successfully adapt to the environment, was the source of all progress, thus justifying the great wealth of the new industrialists" (Miller 1969). Although social Darwinism is now discredited, it retains its influence, suggesting in the context of "Avatar" that it isn't the Na'vis who are the aliens. It is us.

It would be a mistake to consider the subject of aliens without taking into account a trinity of affinities that are not usually classified as such. For example Frankenstein, the Wolf Man (or Werewolf) and Dracula and the distinguished line of vampires that have followed in his blood-drenched wake are perennial

creatures, e.g., they have a powerful hold over the imagination irrespective of the epoch in which they appear although there are understandable differences in the way they are depicted form one period to the next. The three beings are weird hybrids, occupying an ambiguous position between the living and the dead, the human and the animal, the mortal and the immortal. They inspire both dread and fascination. (Certainly the recent appeal of vampire novels and movies like "The Twilight" series attests to the enduring obsession with vampires.) The Wolf Man or werewolf embodies all that is untamable and uncontrollable, the beast within us all. The original Wolf Man, played by Lon Chaney, Jr. in the 1941 film of the same name, is infected with a terrible disease because of a gypsy curse. A sympathetic priest shelters the young man in his church but warns him that the only way he can avoid the effects of the curse is to remain inside the church. As soon as he steps outside he is at risk of being turned into a beast, and of course, he does. His attraction to a beautiful peasant girl proves too much of a temptation to resist. It is notable that the Wolf Man suffered from being raised by a distant father who never appreciated him. The priest effectively became a father surrogate, but cannot prevent the curse from coming to fruition.

Of the three, though, Frankenstein may have the most relevance for contemporary society since he represents an attempt by science to create new life forms, which, after all, is one of the principal objectives of current scientific research (Chimeras are the name given to genetic hybrids). One might say that to one extent or another three of these creatures embody the concept of the living dead. While the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association classifies psychiatric afflictions using an elaborate system of categories, this trinity of affinities does much the same thing on a metaphorical level; Frankenstein, Dracula, and the werewolf represent forms of mental illness and in that sense pose a perpetual challenge to our ability to maintain a sound mind and body in a humanistic society.

While Frankenstein's creature, like the vampire and the werewolf, has been featured in enough movies to fill a lifetime of Saturday matinees, we would be remiss if we ignore another variation of the myth—indeed, an extension and elaboration of the myth—namely Dr. Donovan's brain. If "2001" reflects the zeitgeist of the Seventies, and "Alien Nation" reflects currents in the Nineties, "Dr. Donovan's Brain," based on a novel by Curt Siodmak, taps into the fears and uncertainties of the postwar era. Dr. Donovan was a real person—significantly, a phrenologist, who published a book about his research in the late Nineteenth century.[1] Several years later Slodmak's novel appeared under the title "Dr. Donovan's Brain," followed shortly by a film version of the same name written and directed by Felix Feist (It is hard not to believe that the real Dr. Donovan wasn't an inspiration). Once again the story revolves around an experiment that has every potential of going horribly wrong. Dr. Patrick Cory, the protagonist, has obtained a rhesus monkey for his research. At the outset he cautions his wife not to get too attached to the animal since he intends to destroy it for science. Dr. Cory doesn't need to worry about government approval for his research; he's independently wealthy and

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[1] Dr. Donovan (1942).

operates his own lab in an isolated community where there's little risk of prying neighbors. He and his assistant remove the monkey's brain and put it in a fish tank. To their delight, the brain still shows sign of electrical activity. At that point there is a call from the police. A small plane has crashed nearby and there is only one survivor who is badly injured. Dr. Cory tries to treat this man who dies in spite of his efforts. Inspired by his success preserving the monkey's brain, Dr. Cory decides to see if he cannot keep the pilot's brain going as well. How to communicate with the brain remains a problem until Dr. Cory has an inspiration: he will try telepathy. But the brain he's determined to keep alive turns out to belong to the notorious W.H. Donovan, a ruthless millionaire. Dr. Cory proves no match for the brain, which takes control and uses him to murder the not-so-late Donovan's enemies.

That interest in aliens and what havoc they can wreak (or what lessons they can teach us) continues to run high is indisputable. Viewers have the opportunity to watch recently released films such as "Cowboys and Aliens," "Battle Los Angeles," (aliens invade the streets of LA), "Skyline: (aliens invade LA yet again), "Battleship: (based on a board game in which various life forms come to our planet for some mysterious purpose), "Alien 5" (the latest in the franchise), "Area 51: (teens sneak into the secret facility at Roswell), "The Darkest Hour" (tourists trapped in Moscow after an alien invasion), and three sequels–"Avatar 2," "Cloverfield 2," and "District 10." TV screens will be filling up with aliens too. *V*, about an "Independence Day" scenario with nice aliens for a change, is a hit and the forthcoming *Fallen Ski*es, will follow a group of human resistance fighters as they carry out a guerrilla campaign against alien invaders.

In real life, a muted but still vigorous debate is ongoing as to how or whether we should communicate with aliens in the event that they decide to get in touch. In a recent television documentary the eminent physicist Stephen Hawking weighed in with an opinion that stunned many scientists as well as lay people when he said that we should remain silent if extraterrestrials do make an attempt to contact us, adding that we should not be trying to find them, either. He has no doubt that something is out there. Given the billions of galaxies, Hawking contends that life must exist somewhere else. "To my mathematical brain, the numbers alone make thinking about aliens perfectly rational," he said. "The real challenge is to work out what aliens might actually be like." Although the extraterrestrial life forms will probably be microbe-like or simple animals, he noted, there is always the possibility that they will be intelligent—more intelligent than us. And that could pose a problem. "We only have to look at ourselves to see how intelligent life might develop into something we would not want to meet," Hawking said, "I imagine they might exist in massive ships, having used up all the resources from their home planet. Such advanced aliens would perhaps become nomads, looking to conquer and colonize whatever planets they can reach." So making contact with aliens would be "a little too risky," adding, "If aliens ever visit us, I think the outcome would be much as when Christopher Columbus first landed in America, which did not turn out very well for the Native Americans" (Leake 2010).

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (an actual agency based in Vienna) has kept a low profile when it comes to this issue. The Office, which is mainly concerned with monitoring space debris of human origin, was recently in the news when it sponsored a conference in Britain in which panelists debated such topics as "Calling ET, or Not Even Answering the Phone?" and "Extraterrestrial Life and Arising Political Issues for the U.N. Agenda." Like Hawking, Martin Dominik, a physicist at the University of St. Andrews and the organizer of the conference, believes that if it's discovered, alien life is likely to be microbial or announce itself in an electronic signal. "There could be interaction between life on our planet and life elsewhere so how do we deal with that," he said. "The question is should we send messages into outer space or not? Is this dangerous? Should we make ourselves visible to extraterrestrial life or not as a means of identifying ourselves? If they know we are here, do they want to destroy us? Will they help us? Do we gain something from that? These are all open questions." (MacFarquhar 2010) Given the limited success humans have had so far in getting our own house in order—from ending wars to addressing climate change—these questions are likely to remain open for a good long time, barring the return of Klatu who might decide to solve our problems once and for all.

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Chapter 3
The Role of Movies and Mental Health

Psychiatry and Movies

How have psychiatry and its related activities been presented in movies? Psychoanalysis (in Austria) and motion pictures (in France) each began in the 1890s and have continued to adapt to the changing world, with the United States becoming very hospitable to both fields.

One reason for the interest of Hollywood in psychiatry and psychoanalysis could be the unique ability of the camera to capture and represent fantasy, dreams, the unconscious, thought processes, ambiguity, juxtapositions of images, and of past, present, and future, and similar content germane to mental illness. Film provides an unusual opportunity to communicate the "primary process" or world of the nonrational (Winick 1977). The social context of moviegoing, in which a decision is made to see a film, a trip is made to a theater where other people are also sharing an experience in a large darkened room, and there is a return trip home, provides a "set" with special expectancies and readiness to discuss the experience. Films have always had the potential to transport us to an interesting communal experience.

Another reason for Hollywood's interest in movies about mental illness and its treatment would be the role of psychoanalysis in the private lives of Hollywood film people. Los Angeles received a substantial number of eminent disciples of Sigmund Freud from Germany and Austria as the Nazi government implemented its program of eliminating Jews and democratic ideas during the 1930s and 1940s. Dr. Ernst Simmel, who became the first leader of the psychoanalytic society of Los Angeles in 1934, was a protégé of Freud who had been president of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society (Farber and Green 1993).

Freud himself is known to have rejected very substantial offers to participate with Hollywood studios. Although the Freud family refused to cooperate with any film about its patriarch before or after his death, several films with Freud as a character

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This chapter was written by Charles Winick and is based on previous work.

were made. Directed by John Huston, who had previously made "Let There Be Light" (1946), a documentary dealing with a group of soldiers receiving treatment for mental illness during World War II and with a script from Jean Paul Sartre, "Freud" was released in 1962. Several of Freud's case histories were combined in one young female patient. The film's approach to its subject, which is played by Montgomery Clift, is deferential and sensitive. He is shown in discussions with Dr. Breuer (Larry Parks) and an unfriendly physician (Eric Portman). Freud is presented as a symbolic hero who has helped the world. "The Seven Per Cent Solution" (Herbert Ross 1976) involves Sherlock Holmes visiting Freud (Alan Arkin) to treat his addiction, a relatively mellow Freud cooperates with Holmes in solving a criminal conspiracy. The disintegrating relationship between Freud (Viggo Mortenson) and Carl Jung (Michael Fassbender) over Jung's treatment of real-life patient Sabina Spielrein is set forth in "A Dangerous Method" (David Cronenberg 2012).

Psychoanalysis became a salient interest of some Hollywood people. Actress Marilyn Monroe left one fourth of her estate to her New York psychoanalyst, Dr. Marianne Kris. Upon the death of Dr. Kris, the income from the estate was bequeathed to Anna Freud's Hampstead Clinic in London. For many years, the estate income represented a large part of the budget needed to support the Clinic. (Young-Bruehl 1988). Other actors are known to have had near-symbiotic relationships with their analysts (Farber and Green 1993).

Hollywood has been making psychiatry-related films, many of which are of high artistic quality, for a long time. It may not be a coincidence, that the only two films since "It Happened One Night (1934) to win the top five Academy Awards (film, director, script, male and female leads) are "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (1975) and "Silence of the Lambs" (1991), each centrally concerned with psychiatric themes. Films about therapists could be made for many reasons besides economic gain. They might represent an informed piety, a way for a patient who is a movie functionary tried to please his analyst. This could also be an indirect way of learning more about personal symptoms, as well as an approach to undermining the treatment process, or toward acting out feelings about the therapist. For example, the author of "Lover Come Back" (1961) and "That Touch of Mink" (1962) has said that although he had been for 6 years as an analysand, his treatment would continue until the psychoanalyst completed building a swimming pool (Crowther 1962). This attitude toward the psychoanalyst may be at least partially responsible for the negative representation of the profession in these two films. Some individuals may decide to become patients, influenced by the manner in which the helping professions are presented in movies, which have so long provided food for popular fantasy needs. How psychiatry has been shown in cinema may have other implications for the profession itself, in terms of young physicians' interest in it. Many people may form their impressions of various kinds of mental illness from movies, which carry special emotional freight because they feature famous stars. Patients in real life may use movie material on mental illness as reinforcement for resistances. It is also possible that such content could have some positive effects on the doctor-patient relationship by providing a question, a topic of conversation, or some other content that may be turned to therapeutic advantage.

Movie executives and performers are traditionally more likely to be patients than are most other kinds of occupations. They can afford to pay for treatment and, by the nature of their work, are likely to be continually aware of their sensibilities. Psychoanalysts were so accepted in Hollywood at one point that one of their number, Dr. Aaron Stern, was director of the industry's Rating Administration (1971–1973) and then became a movie studio producer. The movie Rating Administration, like the original Motion Picture Production Code of 1930, does not prescribe any protective handling of mental illness. Indeed, many movies have presented psychiatrists or related practitioners in a way that is not positive.

Until the 1950s, movies often ridiculed some psychiatric conditions. Thus, in Frank Capra's "Arsenic and Old Lace" (1944), Cary Grant's brother thinks that he is President Theodore Roosevelt, dresses like Roosevelt, and keeps charging up the stairs to imitate the attack at San Juan Hill. This behavior is humored by Grant and the other characters. But the idea of mental illness as a source of comedy seems less likely today. Some comedy situations have been barely credible. In "Harvey" (Henry Koster 1950), James Stewart is a friendly drunk who visits psychiatrist Cecil Kellaway to discuss the imaginary six-foot rabbit friend whom he can see. The movie, as well as the Pulitzer Prize winning play from which it was adapted, was very successful. In general, odd behavior which merely adds texture to a film, like the character actors of early films who represented "humors" or types, is not counted as mental illness (Winick 1965). Even major stars may play eccentric or odd people who are not technically mentally ill. W. C. Fields' misogyny and dubious habits as Egbert Souse in "The Bank Dick" (1940), the softcore transvestism of Jack Benny in "Charley's Aunt" (1941), the raffish gamblers in "Guys and Dolls" (1955), the extravagant characters in "You Can't Take It With You" (1938) provide examples of the bizarre which are not classified as mental illness.

Black humor may distinguish some films with characters whose behavior is clearly abnormal and shudderingly funny. In Stanley Kubrick's salute to the atomic age, "Dr. Strangelove" (1963), Sterling Hayden plays military post commander General Jack D. Ripper, who is committed to appropriate "purity of essence" of "bodily fluids." Although the general's madness is known at a high command level, there is little effort to deal with his condition right up until he single-handedly orders atomic bomb carrying airplanes to bomb Moscow. Many media dealing with mental illness have contributed for raising public awareness and could encourage interest in psychiatry (Winick 1982). More than a century ago, Clifford Beers's (1907) autobiography *A Mind That Found Itself* helped to create the mental hygiene movement. A book by a prominent newspaperwoman about her psychoanalysis sold over one million copies (Freeman 1951). Novels about psychiatry, many of which have been the basis for movies, have long been a literary staple (Winick 1963). Some celebrities freely discuss their psychiatric treatment (Freeman 1967). A number of actors have been analytic patients and written frankly about the experience. Thus, Orson Bean plays a psychiatrist in Otto Preminger's "Anatomy Of A Murder" (1959), working with the defense to prove that the accused murderer was not sane. Bean (2000) wrote a book on his own failure as a patient in traditional psychoanalysis and subsequent success in orgone therapy.

   Many psychiatric and psychoanalytic concepts (e.g., projection, repression,
acting out) have entered the larger language and are widely used in ordinary con-
versation. Some psychiatric tools have become so familiar that ordinary persons
use them, in daily life and movies. In "Marnie" (Alfred Hitchcock 1960), Sean
Connery is curious about the reasons for the frigidity, lying, and thievery of his
new wife (Tippi Hedren). He interprets her dreams, helps her to interpret word
associations ("you Freud, me Jane"), explains Marnie's reactions to color, and
arranges a confrontation with her mother. Connery relates Marnie's frigidity to a
long forgotten episode involving Marnie's mother's behavior with a male visitor
during a storm. By the film's end, as if it were the conclusion of a successful treat-
ment situation, the couple seems to be able to live together constructively.

Study Design

This report is based on an examination of 330 psychiatry-related films released
in the United States from the end of World War I to the present. Special attention
is paid to the professional identification of the therapist, the problems of patients,
careers of therapists, actors, experience as therapists and patients, and adaptations
of psychiatric movies to television and other media. For each film, its director
and the year of release in the United States are given. The films were viewed and
coded in terms of content categories, which had been established on the basis of
preliminary scrutiny of representative films. Psychiatrists and other therapists are
generally clearly identifiable in terms of their function and role. They represent a
considerable range of occupations and professions and the patients or clients also
reflect heterogeneity. The films discussed represent great variations in approach,
quality of performers and direction, style, technology, and similar factors. In addi-
tion, the psychiatry world has been changing, along with developments in the
other healing professions, since World War I.
   Less than one fifth of the films were made outside of the United States. There
is no way of knowing the representativeness of foreign films shown in America,
because of some legal and practical considerations. The American film industry
regulates the number of films imported here, based on currency exchange rates,
other countries' willingness to admit our films, the presence or absence of dub-
bing or subtitles, and similar factors. It is also possible that other countries may
not wish to expose any significant degrees of their mental illness problems to
American audiences. It is noteworthy that several important film-making coun-
tries are poorly represented, notably Italy, India, Sweden, and France. Italy's film
industry is famous for the sophistication of writers and directors like De Sica,
Rossellini, Antonioni, and Fellini. The comparative lack of psychiatry in the
country's films is perhaps partly a function of the central place of the confession
as an institution. It may also be a result of the large number of characters play-
ing onlookers, who interpret others' actions. A director in Italian films also exer-
cises many of the traditional functions of a novelist, making the psychiatrist less

necessary. Scriptwriters may feel that it would be reductionist to introduce psychiatric concepts into the dramatic colors of Italian life. The country's relative paucity of psychiatrists is at least probably responsible for the relative lack of psychiatric films from India, the world's most active movie-making country. Sweden has also made few psychiatric films in spite of its artistic leadership. The Swedes' relative lack of interest in such films may reflect their feeling that psychological matters are adequately handled in the religious and mystical themes that characterize much Scandinavian screen output.

France, with what is probably Europe's leading psychoanalytic profession, has produced few films involving mental illness or its treatment. One of the few French films about mental illness is Sacha Guitry's "Lovers and Thieves" (1962). A psychiatrist who is the director of a mental hospital speaks at a machine-gun rate, in a burbling manic manner. An example of the tone is a remark he makes about why he likes to save women from drowning: "It is the only way that I can ask a woman to put her arms around my neck and spread her legs."

Some clues to Hollywood's sense of what attracts audiences to themes of mental illness emerge from noting films which have been remade. "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1919 and 1962) deals with a psychopathic psychiatrist. "M" (1932 and 1951) is about a murderer who is pedophilic. "Blind Alley" (1939 and 1949) concerns a murderer who is neutralized by a psychiatrist. "Psycho" (1960 and 1998) involves a female office worker who flees with stolen money. These films feature violence, mental illness, and an effective psychiatrist and were artistically and commercially successful in their original versions.

Approaches to Treatment

In recent years, the boundaries among the various professions involved in treating mental illness have become somewhat blurred, reflecting the proliferation of a range of such professionals in real life. Relevant helping professions in addition to the traditional psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, psychologist, and social worker, include life coaches, sex therapists, motivation guides, holistic counselors, hypnotherapists, family therapists, nondirective therapists, biofeedback, network therapists, psychodramatists, and many others.

The career ladder concept emerging from anti-poverty programs of the 1960s and expansion of the human potential movement in the 1970s provided access to credentials as a therapist for persons with non-traditional backgrounds. Physicians, psychologists, and social workers are licensed by the states and professional societies have their own criteria for membership and specialized recognition. People with a range of backgrounds may call themselves psychoanalysts and analytic training institutes establish criteria for accreditation.

Some form of psychotherapy (the "talking cure") was the major treatment approach from the 1920s through the 1950s when new psychotropic medications began emerging. These medications were especially useful for patients who had

been receiving residential treatment at state hospitals or private facilities and could now be treated on an outpatient basis.

In the last half century, the use of medications by psychiatrists has soared. The continuing ascendancy of medications over the talking care can be seen in a National Medical Expenditure Panel Survey: Some 44.1 % of outpatients in 1998 received only psychotropic medication but 57.4 % did so by 2007. In 1998, the average patient receiving psychotherapy had 9.7 sessions but only 7.9 sessions in 2007 (Olfson and Marcus (2010)). A 2005 government survey reported that only 11 % of psychiatrists provided talk therapy to all patients, a share that has most likely fallen more since then (Harris 2011). In spite of this trend, some form of talk therapy still is dominant in movies, in which medication is less likely to be the focus. The various physical therapies also do not easily lend themselves to valid movie representation. Table 3.1, Types of Therapy in Movies In Percent, summarizes the proportion of therapy types in the films studied. "Psychodynamic" includes psychoanalytically related treatment; "Counseling" includes eclectic talk therapy, "Medical, Physical" involve medication and work with and on the body.

The high incidence of psychodynamic therapists in movies has been relatively consistent since World War I. The psychoanalytic approach has offered a view of the development and motivations of human behavior that has worked very well for the drama that films evoke. However, it should be noted that in the actual world of treatment in the United States, there have always been more psychiatrists than psychoanalysts. In 2000, there were 45,615 psychiatrists and 3,458 members of the leading psychoanalytic society (Scully and Wilk 2003; American Psychoanalytic Association 2012).

Experience in World War II and the need to provide mental health services for large numbers of veterans led to fresh approaches and the training of many new therapists. In the early 1960s, federal government support for the creation of community mental health centers for outpatient treatment further facilitated access to professional help. U.S. Supreme Court decisions in the 1960s recognized alcohol and drug problems as diseases that could be treated; the treatment was largely developed by psychiatrists.

The human potential movement in the 1960s gave rise to new approaches to group therapy, like the encounter group figuring in "Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice" (Paul Mazursky 1969). Since the 1970s, mental health problems have been increasingly accepted for treatment via employee assistance programs, many of which were established at little or no cost to employees. Group approaches

Table 3.1 Type of therapy in movies in percent

Psychodynamic	38
Counseling	36
Medical, Physical	12
Group	5
Other	9
	100

attracted more support because they cost less and provided an additional dimension. These kinds of larger developments found their way into movies concerned with mental illness and its treatment.

Kinds of Therapists

Detailed trends in the kinds of film psychiatrists who have characterized various epochs have been identified and explicated. (Gabbard and Gabbard 1999). The authors relate movements in psychiatry and psychoanalysis to larger shifts in the society and in motion pictures. They identify a Golden Age of psychiatry in films from 1957 through 1963, during which psychiatrists were valid voices of reason, adjustment, and well being. An Australian survey of psychiatric-related films that were released between 1985 and 2000 reported greater diversity of views on psychiatry than in any earlier period. Some other trends include more films set in the past and increases in the number of critically and commercially acclaimed productions (Larme 2000).

The films discussed in this study were coded into one of seven categories, which had been established on the basis of each film's predominant approach, the setting, and the person or persons providing the treatment and its nature. Table 3.2, Movie Therapist Classification In Percent, sets forth the central characteristics of the treatment provider and the proportion of films in each category. Some representative films in each category are briefly discussed.

Serious

The serious therapist deals thoughtfully with patients and works on the basis of appropriate treatment.

One such psychiatrist is Dr. Andrew Collins (Lee J. Cobb) who appears in "The Dark Past" (Rudolph Mate 1948), a remake of "Blind Alley" (Charles Vidor 1939). Collins stresses that his job is curing people, uses psychoanalytic concepts

Table 3.2 Movie therapist classification in percent

Serious	56
Exceptional	13
Comic	8
Troubled	7
Eccentric	5
Evil	6
Foolish	3
Other	2
	100

comfortably and has an opportunity to do so when he and his weekend guests are invaded by escaped murderer Al Walker (William Holden). Collins, a thoughtful pipe smoker, gets the murderer to recount a recurrent dream, and to free associate to each aspect of it. Walker realizes that the thought of his father's blood being on his hands has led him to kill every man who stood in his way, as an acting out of the Oedipus complex. Once he understands the dream, Dr. Collins assures Walker, he will not be able to kill anymore. When police surround the house and Walker raises his weapon to squeeze the trigger, he cannot do so, even to protect himself.

Probably, the first film to present a lay psychoanalyst and one which was also praised as the first "adult" British film after World War II, "Mine Own Executioner" (Anthony Kimmins 1947), deals with Felix Milne (Burgess Meredith) as a young London psychoanalyst. He is treating Adam Lucian (Kieron Moore) a former World War II prisoner of war with schizoid and homicidal tendencies who questions the therapist's lack of an M.D. degree and is a reluctant therapy participant. Milne, who is having substantial problems of his own, is committed to help the patient. The treatment situation's ups and downs and dynamics are conveyed realistically. The film gives a multidimensional and honest picture of a complicated and very challenging psychotherapeutic relationship, affected by Milne's lay status. There is an unfolding of his difficult relationship with his wife and growing awareness of the reasons for which he became a psychoanalyst. The script was adapted from a novel of the same name by Balchin (1947).

In Anatole Litvak's "The Snake Pit" (1949), adapted from Mary Jane Ward's (1946) novel, Dr. Mark Kik (Leo Genn) is on the staff of a state mental hospital and uses shock, hydrotherapy, and psychotherapy with patient Virginia Cunningham (Olivia de Havilland). He has a picture of Freud in his office, as well as a leather couch. Dr. Kik interprets Cunningham's problem as being at least partly a result of her fantasy of having killed her father. Dr. Kik is a healer whose commitment can be related to his European background. "The Snake Pit" was the fourth most successful film at the box office for 1949 and its title has entered the language, for a horrific place from which there may be no return.

In "The Three Face of Eve" (Nunnally Johnson 1957). Joanne Woodward consults psychiatrist Lee J. Cobb because she hears voices. She behaves in a provocative manner, telling the doctor "certainly not!" when asked if she is Eve White. Cobb sends her to a hospital when she identifies herself as Eve Black. He uses hypnosis and sensitive interviewing to deal with her problem. He suggests that the two Eves be introduced to each other and a third personality, able to recall her former elementary school teachers and addresses, emerges. A childhood molestation episode which she is able to remember facilitates Eve's successful dealing with the problem. A 2 years later, she writes Cobb and is pleased that "we're all together now." The movie is based on a best selling book (Thigpen and Cleckley 1957).

A warm, informal, and very accessible psychiatrist (Judd Hirsch) helps a suicidal young man (Timothy Hutton) who believes himself to be responsible for the death of his brother in a boating accident in "Ordinary People" (Robert Redford 1980). The doctor helps the patient to understand what happened during the accident and how it has affected his subsequent difficulties.

Former delinquent Matt Damon (Will Hunting) avoids jail time by agreeing to have therapy with psychologist Robin Williams (Dr. Sean Maguire) in "Good Will Hunting" (Gus Van Sant 1997). Will expects to remain a blue collar worker and is a janitor at M.I.T. Dr. Maguire and Will have both been victims of child abuse. The doctor uses physicality and other non-mainstream methods, discussing his own emotional problems, acting out baseball games. As a result of the treatment, Will develops more productive relationships with his best friend and gradually realizes that he is a latent mathematician with skills that can lead to his making significant contributions to science. Dr. Maguire, on the basis of his interaction with Will, realizes that he himself is ready for a life change and decides to travel on a sabbatical. Will decides to drive to California to be with his girlfriend. Williams won an Academy Award for his performance.

"Antwone Fisher" (2002) is a Navy sailor who was born in prison and whose father was murdered. He receives very careful and sensitive treatment from a Navy psychiatrist, played by Denzel Washington, who also directed the film. Washington invites the young sailor to his home and facilitates the patient's reestablishment of contacts with important figures from earlier years. The real Antwone Fisher wrote the screenplay, reinforcing the credibility of the situation that is described.

Exceptional Workers

There are some healers who can interpret behavior so impressively and others who are given such difficult professional tasks that they can be called exceptional.

The first movie to present a psychoanalyst was G. W. Pabst's "Secrets of a Soul" (1926), in Germany, supervised by famous analysts Nicholas Kaufmann, Hanns Sachs, and Karl Abraham. A still photograph of Freud is shown at its beginning. A chemist loses his house keys in a coffee house, and is followed home by psychoanalyst Dr. Charles Orth, who tells the chemist that he has special reasons for not wishing to enter his home. The chemist free associates on a couch as Dr. Orth smokes. The analyst helps the patient, via a dream and repressed memories, to deal with fantasies of killing his young wife with a knife. The dream sequences are loaded with symbols: e.g., "That water is your dream of impending birth." After a few sessions, the patient's treatment is complete.

For over a half century, psychoanalysts have been attempting to enter into patient's dreams, daydreams, and fantasies, via what has been called the consention approach (Holt and Winick 1960). Some movies present a therapist who is able to enter the unconscious of patients or subjects.

In "The Cell" (Tarem Singh 2000), researcher Jennifer Lopez develops a virtual reality psychotherapy technology that enables her to penetrate the thoughts of patients. At the request of the FBI, she uses her approach to enter the mind of a comatose serial killer in order to avoid the death of an abduction victim. Similar skill is required of psychiatrist Michael Douglas in "Don't Say A Word" (Gary

Fleder 2001), when thieves kidnap his young daughter in order to force the doctor to retrieve a six digit number from a psychotic patient's brain. The number will enable the kidnapers to recover a valuable gem.

In "The Sixth Sense" (M. Night Shyamalan 1999), Dr. Malcome Crowe (Bruce Willis 1999), in a disintegrating marriage, has experienced an unpleasant confrontation with a former patient. Child psychologist Crowe wants to help troubled 8-year-old Cole Sear (Haley Joel Osment) who has a problem similar to his former patient's. Cole has paranormal supernatural powers and can interact with the dead. Crowe's nurturing approach to the child enables him to reach the frightened little boy and uncover the truth behind what appears to be a mysterious mystical situation. The film's seamless mixture of drama, horror, action, and mysticism led to the film's becoming a huge box office success.

Even more influential than "The Sixth Sense" is "The Exorcist" (William Friedkin 1974). It deals with Regan MacNeil (Linda Blair), a 12-year-old girl who is possessed by the devil. Father Damian Karras (Jason Miller), a priest who is also a psychiatrist, is asked to assess her psychologically and requests exorcism for the child. Karras, who is having a crisis of faith, conducts the exorcism with Father Merrin (Max von Sydow). Karras challenges the Devil to leave Regan and enter him. Regan's vocal and physical behavior strains the faith and strength of the two priests; they subsequently die. The strange events in the film repelled and fascinated audiences and there were episodes of mass hysteria in some theaters. With its potent conflict of religion and psychiatry, "The Exorcist" was a singular success spawning many imitators.

A prison Death Row is the setting for "Dead Man Out" (Richard Pearce 1989). Ben (Ruben Blades) is a career criminal who has murdered four innocent people and is awaiting execution. After 8 years of trials and appeals, he has snapped and is now psychotic. Psychiatrist Dr. Alex Marsh (Danny Glover) is called into calm Ben down and "fix" him so that he can be certified to be sane and thus able to be executed. Ben and the doctor are pitting their wits against each other. Dr. Marsh handles his ambiguous role and its ethical dilemma and his own underlying feelings about Ben and the death penalty with care and sensitivity.

Robin Williams gives a subtle performance as a neurologist who begins working with a group of patients in "Awakenings" (Penny Marshall 1990), based on experience with chronic Parkinson's Disease patients reported by Dr. Oliver Sacks (1973). Williams is troubled by these hospitalized "human vegetables" and starts with one patient (Robert De Niro). He experiments with giving the patients L-DOPA, which dramatically revives them, if only for a finite unpredictable period. The film ends with the doctor movingly telling a hospital group that although the awakening did not last, it led to a different kind of appreciation for life and reconnection with humanity.

Marlon Brando, in the twilight of his career, appears as a psychiatrist in "Don Juan De Marco" (Jeremy Leven 1995). About 10 days before his retirement as a state hospital staff member, Dr. Jack Mickler (Marlon Brando) takes a cherry picker bucket to the top of a billboard, where a young man in a cape and mask, Don Juan De Marco (Johnny Depp) is about to commit suicide. Mickler returns

Don Juan to earth. Via flashback, Don Juan relates his career as a lover throughout history to his therapist Dr. Mickler, who decides to enter De Marco's world as Don Ottavio de Flores. Each man learns about the other's world. Don Juan enlightens Dr. Mickler about love, to the latter's benefit and the rebirth of his relationship with his wife Marilyn (Faye Dunaway).

Don Juan appears to recover without the benefit of medication, as the result of his very brief treatment by Dr. Mickler. At the sanity hearing conducted by a judge, Don Juan comes across as an insightful, intelligent, articulate man; the judge finds him to be sane and competent and orders that he be released from the hospital. Mickler is a sensitive and imaginative therapist, defending his patient against bureaucracy and uncovering reality within the romantic imagination.

Comic

Comedy may characterize the therapist, the situation, or aspects of the treatment. The ludicrous comic doctor is often presented in caricature. One memorable psychiatrist is the police alienist played by Gustav Von Seyffertitz in Lewis Milestone's "The Front Page" (1931). A hobo who has shot and killed a policeman is taken for diagnosis to a cadaverous doctor who speaks with a heavy accent and tells the prisoner to reenact the crime. The prisoner says, "I got frightened and shot him.' The doctor says, "We need more realism here—Sheriff, lend him your gun." When the prisoner reluctantly takes the gun, the doctor says, "Well…?" The prisoner points it at the doctor and pulls the trigger. The blood spurts out of the doctor, who falls to the floor crying, "Dementia Praecox!"

Two generations later, a similar scene occurs in Blake Edwards' "Return of the Pink Panther" (1975). The chief inspector who supervises bumbling Inspector Clouseau (Peter Sellers) has dreams of killing Clouseau. When the chief inspector's analyst tries to get him to illustrate the dreams, he strangles the analyst.

Howard Hawk's "Bringing Up Baby" (1938) has a monocled European psychiatrist as a foil for the "screwball comedy" antics of Cary Grant and Katherine Hepburn. The doctor is vain, naïve, and enchanted with his jargon and cliché interpretations. In the final scene of the film, the doctor ("you have probably heard me lecture on love") is fooled by Katherine Hepburn's rather transparent attempt to claim that she is a gun moll.

The ease with which even juvenile delinquents can poke fun at psychiatrists and their methods is shown in Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins' "West Side Story" (1961). Several delinquents are singing about the difficulties of their lives. One lies on the step of a slum building and another puts on glasses, to represent an analyst. When the "patient" reports his difficult family situation, the "analyst" says that he cannot help the "patient" because he has a "social disease." The "analyst" refers him to a social worker. The scene shows the delinquents laughing at the adult society's efforts to understand and control young people.

In "What A Way To Go!" (J. Lee Thompson 1964), Louisa Benson (Shirley MacLaine) is referred to psychiatrist Victor Stephenson (Robert Cummings) by the

Internal Revenue Service because she has given the Service a $200,000,000 gift, although she owes no taxes. In flashbacks at the doctor's office, she explains that each of her four husbands worked hard, died young, and left her a fortune. Each husband's story is presented in a different movie style. Dr. Stephenson begs her to marry him, but a janitor who has come to repair the doctor's hydraulic chair inadvertently knocks him unconscious. The doctor recovers but passes out again when he sees Louisa kissing the janitor, possibly someone she has known previously. The film's title conveys the farcical tone of this black comedy.

Janet Leigh is Dr. Elizabeth Acord in "Three On A Couch" (Jerry Lewis 1966). She is especially dedicated to three young women patients who dislike men, so that she fears to leave them in order to go to Paris with her fiance, artist Chris Pride (Jerry Lewis). Wearing disguises, Pride romances each of the three women so that the doctor will be free to go to Paris. Dr. Acord accepts Pride's comically bizarre impersonations, and decides to leave her practice and travel with him to France.

A comic doctor figures in Mel Brook's "High Anxiety" (1977), in which a Nobel prizewinning psychiatrist directs Los Angles' Psycho-Neurotic Institute for the Very, Very Nervous. The doctor is involved in a murder investigation which debunks psychiatry and spoofs Alfred Hitchcock films. "High Anxiety" could only be released because it is intended as a spoof, which relies on the audience's knowledge of Hitchcock films for much of its humorous appeal.

Radio's serious advice givers of the 1930s have been adapted for television by comic actors who use movies to laugh at the qualifications of radio advisers. Dan Aykroyd, in "The Couch Trip" (Michael Ritchie 1987) is a career criminal feigning insanity who transforms his identity to that of his psychiatrist's supervisor and steals his contract to provide counseling over the radio in California. He uses highly profane language to interpret dreams on radio. One woman wants him to interpret her dream of driving her car to a Pakistan parking lot which has a large number of lizards wearing dark glasses. He is dodging a disheveled Russian priest (Walter Matthau), who knows Aykroyd to be an imposter and is blackmailing him. The psychiatrist who is impersonating is seen in a straightjacket, behind bars.

In "Straight Talk" (Barnett Kelman 1992), singer-comedienne Dolly Parton is a country bumpkin who accidentally gives radio advice which is so well received that she gets her own program, for which she has no background. She modifies folk wisdom ("Get off the cross, they need the wood") and rejects a suitor with a quip ("I know the saying 'take your work to bed' but I didn't know it was quite so literal"). Her wit carries "Dr. Shirley" to success in Chicago, a long way from the small town cabaret from where she came.

A psychiatrist whose treatment of the same patient extends over two movies is Dr. Ben Sobel (Billy Crystal), with patient Robert De Niro in "Analyze This" (Harold Ramis 1999). De Niro plays Paul Vitti, the head of a gangster family who experiences panic attacks and anxiety. The doctor's wedding is canceled by an assassin being thrown from a hotel roof. In sequel "Analyze That" (2002), the FBI assigns Vitti to the doctor for further treatment and the gangster produces a television series based on his own career. The doctor, who had previously been

uncomfortable in the company of gangsters, takes Vitti's place at a meeting of the Mafia leaders and is accepted by them. De Niro mocks his familiar gangster characteristics while seeming to take them seriously. The doctor is farcical even when confronted with grave events.

Troubled

Interpersonal difficulties at the workplace or within their families often characterize movie psychiatrists.

A psychiatric staff that is almost as troubled as the patients is the subject of Gregory La Cava's "Private Worlds" (1934). Dr. Charles Monet is played by Charles Boyer, who has become the hospital's director. Another staff member is Dr. Jane Everest (Claudette Colbert), who has problems with him. Personal relations are complicated because Monet is resented by Dr. Alex MacGregor (Joel McCrae), a staff psychiatrist. The romantic and power intramural relationships and conflicts in this film prefigure dynamics in a number of later films.

"The Flame Within" (1934) is waiting to be fanned to life in Dr. Mary White (Ann Harding), a calm and clear-eyed psychiatrist in Edmund Goulding's film. She falls in love with an alcoholic patient who is 15 years her junior and married to a dipsomaniac heiress. Dr. White entertains the idea of marrying the patient but decides against it because his wife, who is also her patient, will commit suicide if her husband leaves.

A fashionable psychoanalyst (David Niven) in Nunnally Johnson's "Oh Men, Oh Women" (1957), is treating a patient who used to be in love with the analyst's fiancée. The analyst is so bedeviled that he returns to his own analyst, who reminds him how difficult it is to translate knowledge into behavior.

The psychiatrist as parent is often a failure. A woman psychiatrist married to a Harley Street physician is the focus of John P. Carstairs' "Tony Draws a Horse" (1951). Their son likes to draw lewd pictures on walls, but the doctor believes that her son should be encouraged to express himself freely: "I will not have my son put into a psychological straightjacket." The psychiatrist is pompous and unable to use her professional knowledge in her role as a mother.

Victor Hansbury's "Sleeping Tiger" (1954) is seething within the wife of psychiatrist Clive Esmond (Alexander Knox). Dr. Esmond permits a young criminal to live with him as a houseguest as a method of treatment. Esmond neglects his beautiful wife (Alexis Smith). She stubs out cigarettes after a few puffs, drives cars at high speed, and bites her lips so sharply that blood comes. The criminal spends his nights seducing Mrs. Esmond, whom he describes as a "tight wire" who is "empty inside." When the criminal decides to leave, Mrs. Esmond follows him. The doctor's treatment method and marriage both collapse at the same time.

Richard Gere, who played the title role in his breakout movie "American Gigolo" (Paul Schrader 1979), is again involved in an unconventional love situation, as a San Francisco psychiatrist who falls in love with the sister

(Kim Basinger) of a patient in "Final Analysis" (Phil Joanou 1992). The doctor believes that there is no ethical barrier to his affair with the sister and helps her legal defense when she is charged with murdering her husband, citing a questionable legal doctrine.

Dudley Moore, as a middle-aged married New York psychoanalyst, is experiencing a condition that is summarized in the title of the film: "Lovesick" (Marshall Brickman 1983). He falls in love with a beautiful young patient and turns aside the advice of his professional colleagues, a supervisor, and the ghost of Sigmund Freud, played by Alec Guinness.

Prison psychiatrist Halle Berry has an accident while driving and wakes up after several days to find herself a patient in the prison's hospital, a prime suspect in the murder of her husband, in "Gothika" (Mathieu Kassovitz 2003). Her multiple problems include a ghost.

Dr. Henry Carter (Kevin Spacey) is a prominent Los Angeles psychiatrist whose patients all work in some aspect of the movie industry, in "Shrink" (Jonas Pate 2009). Recovering from his wife's suicide, he uses marijuana continually. A best selling author of self-help books, he is often bleary eyed and regards his profession as useless and himself as unable to "fix" people. Many of his patients are not satisfied with him and medicate themselves. Carter's disintegration disturbs his therapist father, who organizes an intervention to confront Henry, who walks out in disgust. Henry is further annoyed when his marijuana turns out to be laced with embalming fluid. During a television interview with Gore Vidal, the doctor has a meltdown and storms out. He conveys a feeling of bitterness and of becoming unhinged. Carter's situation is communicated indirectly when a teenage student whom he has tried to help, visits the famous hillside sign of "Hollywood," photographed from the rear, perhaps intimating the dark side of the doctor's life and the city's subculture.

Eccentric

Some therapists appear to deal with clients or patients in a bizarre or eccentric manner.

In "Carefree" (Mark Sandrich 1938), attorney Stephen Arden (Ralph Bellamy) asks his friend Dr. Tony Flagg (Fred Astaire) to treat Amanda Cooper (Ginger Rogers) and convince her to become Mrs. Arden. Flagg is a dancing psychoanalyst who prescribes dream inducing foods for Amanda. In one dream, she falls in love with the doctor, who tells her that patients always fall in love with their analysts. He hypnotizes Amada, convincing her that she loves Stephen and that Tony should be shot for misleading her. She does try to shoot Tony, unsuccessfully. Tony talks to his unconscious, looking at himself in a mirror, and realizes that he loves her. In spite of Astaire's bizarre moves as a singing and dancing therapist in "Carefree," one critic has noted that "…he's strangely convincing as a psychoanalyst…the whole improbable idea becomes lyrical" (Croce 1972). Although Tony's behavior

is unethical and eccentric, it alludes, however glancingly, to some psychoanalytic canons.

A 6 years after Rogers was an unconventional patient of Astaire in "Carefree," she was again in an atypical music and dancing setting for analysis, as a patient of Barry Sullivan, in "Lady in the Dark" (Mitchell Leisen 1944). This film was made from the 1941 musical comedy of the same name with lyrics by Ira Gershwin and Kurt Weill's score. The analyst is more conventional than Astaire was in "Carefree" but the musical pieces add a more eccentric bounce to the treatment. The dreams, with their musical background and the analyst's help in interpretation, enable Rogers to understand her desire for a wedding.

Dr. Ludwig Brubaker (Oscar Homolka) has an eccentric demeanor in "The Seven Year Itch" (Billy Wilder 1955). He advises middle-aged married patient Tom Ewell about how to handle his "itch," with symptoms that include a twitching thumb and sexual fantasies about his neighbor Marilyn Monroe: "If you itch, the tendency is to scratch." When asked how interesting his patients are, he replies that "…at $50 an hour, all my cases interest me."

In "Penelope" (Arthur Hiller 1966), Natalie Wood (Penelope) is the wife of a banker who pays little attention to her. She decides to get attention by robbing his bank, disguised as an old lady. When she tells her psychiatrist Dick Shawn (Dr. Gregory Mannix) that she has robbed $60,000, he volunteers to return the cash to the bank's night depository. He tries to do so but is frightened by the sound of an approaching police car and leaves the money on the sidewalk. Even after she tells Dr. Mannix of her previous record of thievery, he says that he loves her and wants her to run away with him. She refuses and is reunited with her husband.

In "End of the Road" (Aram Avakian 1970) based on John Barth's first novel, Stacy Keach (Jacob Horner), is catatonically watching the trains go by from a railroad platform. His rescuer is psychiatrist James Earl Jones (Doctor D), who takes Jacob to his Remobilization Farm, a mixture of mental hospital and commune, for treatment. An introductory collage of contemporary events—the 1968 assassinations, Vietnam, riots—presumably suggests that Jacob's university education has not helped him to cope with life and made him catatonic. Dr. D can be described as a very eccentric existential psychiatrist who is especially concerned with alienation and despair. His treatment includes sensory overload, sex involving poultry, rolling in mud with pigs, mythotherapy, acting out exotic fantasies. Jacob's treatment advances and he gets a job teaching grammar at a small college, where he becomes friendly with a faculty couple. When the wife becomes pregnant with Jacob's child, she decides to have an abortion, which is conducted by Doctor D and ends badly.

Robin Williams (Dr. Cozy Carlisle) is a supermarket meat-cutter employee who lost his credentials as a psychiatrist for having had sex with patients, in "Dead Again" (Kenneth Branagh 1991). Cozy's unhappiness at his situation is expressed in cryptic advice and comments, e.g., "That's the karma credit plan, buy now, pay forever." He wears eccentric clothes and believes that life has been unfair to him.

Eccentricity characterizes the treatment approach in "Anger Management" (Peter Segal 2003). Jack Nicholson (Dr. Buddy Rydell) is an anger management

therapist helping soft spoken Adam Sandler (Dave Buznik) who is forced into treatment after a misunderstanding about headphones on an airplane. Dr. Rydell believes that Dave is too gentle and places him into increasingly pseudo-challenging events at Yankee Stadium. While in a car together, Rydell has Buznik pull over and sing "I Feel Pretty." He has Buznik in the backseat of another car, for a date with a transvestite prostitute. The doctor, nude, invites himself into the bed in which Buznik is asleep. Buznik is encouraged to steal a blind man's cane.

Evil

Evil and crime may be found among psychiatrists as an avocational or salient activity. It is sometimes presented as an extreme behavior.

A number of practitioners do great harm and destruction. In Robert Wiene's famous German film, "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1919), the doctor uses witchcraft to exercise power over a somnambulist, whom he commands to commit murders. Caligari, who is the personification of evil, is the head of a mental hospital. Caligari is myopic, even with spectacles. His face is pasty white with ghoulishly framed eyes and white hair askew. The sets convey a visual sensation of disorientation and unbalance. Caligari's appearance is that of a madman, and few films have captured the world of madness so effectively. The film's use of expressionist photography techniques made it a landmark, and helped to give wide currency to its picture of psychiatry. A film historian notes that "no other film has been shown so often every single year since its production" (Card 1994).

Anatole Litvak's "The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse" (1938) deals with a psychiatrist who becomes the leader of a criminal gang in order to obtain material for a book. Played by Edward G. Robinson, Dr. Clitterhouse kills a gangster blackmailer and goes on trial for the crime. In a bizarre final courtroom scene, Clitterhouse insists he is sane. The jury finds him not guilty of murder on the ground that he must be insane to claim that he is sane.

A ruthless and depraved psychiatrist appears in Fritz Lang's "The Testament of Dr. Mabuse" (1941). This German film deals with the criminal gang that Dr. Mabuse is directing from the hospital for the criminally insane to which he has been sent and where he has hypnotized another doctor who becomes his medium. The doctor parrots Nazi slogans; Lang himself subsequently indicated that he deliberately put such slogans into the mouth of a psychotic. Another Lang film, "The Ministry of Fear" (1945), features Dr. Forester, who runs a clinic with a robotized staff, and who kills patients.

Tyrone Power is the only film romantic leading man who actively sought a role as a psychological healer, in "Nightmare Alley" (Edmund Goulding 1947). He is Stanton Carlisle, an unscrupulous psychologist or "mentalist" who learns how to read minds from a roustabout whom he inadvertently kills. He becomes a patient of successful psychologist Dr. Lilith Ritter (Helen Walker), who uses the knowledge she gets from Carlisle to blackmail people. She convinces the mentalist that

he is mentally ill after stealing $150,000 from him. Ritter returns to her luxury practice as a psychologist while Carlisle becomes an itinerant drunk. Although Power and many critics regarded this as his finest performance, it is the only one of his many films that was not profitable (Basinger 2009). He had wanted the part to prove that the public would enjoy him in a non-costume drama dueling role.

Another evil doctor was presented by director Brian De Palma in "Dressed to Kill" (1980). The title refers to psychoanalyst Michael Caine, who puts on women's clothing when he leaves his elegant office to kill a patient. When psychiatrist Maximilian Schell murders his wealthy patients in "St. Ives" (J. Lee Thompson 1975) he offers a psychoanalytic explanation of his deed to the patient before killing him.

In David Mamet's "House of Games" (1987), Lindsay Crouse is a psychiatrist who enters the world of confidence men and crime in order to track down and revenge one of her patients who was cheated. She becomes a very successful deadly participant in the criminal culture.

Anthony Hopkins in 2003 was named by the American Film Institute as the Number One Movie Villain for his role of Dr. Hannibal Lecter in "Silence of the Lambs" (Jonathan Demme 1991). The doctor is a brilliant psychiatrist who kills and eats his victims ("Hannibal the Cannibal"). Trainee FBI agent Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) is assigned to interview him in prison to get urgent help on a kidnaping case. He mocks and ridicules her background. Of a census taker who tried to test him, Lecter says that "I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice Chianti," reliving the taste with a sucking sound through his teeth. He is kept behind cannibal-proof glass and a special mask has been made for his face so that he can talk but not bite. He is resourceful enough to escape and telephone Starling at her FBI graduation party.

Fools

Psychiatrists may lack common sense, fail to see connections, or make absurd choices or recommendations.

Marlene Dietrich hoodwinks a gullible psychiatrist (Alan Mowbray) in Frank Borzage's "Desire" (1936). She asks a jeweler to deliver a brooch to her "husband," Dr. Edouard Pauquet, the famous psychiatrist. She explains that he doesn't like to pay bills. She then visits the doctor as a patient, telling him that her "husband," the jeweler, has a delusion that everybody owes him money. Leaving the consulting room, she meets the jeweler, takes the delivery of the brooch and drives rapidly away. The jeweler is ushered into Dr. Pauquet's office. When he asks the doctor for money for the brooch, the doctor says, "Of course, of course." Both he and the jeweler are fooled by Dietrich.

Sometimes a psychiatrist is foolish but confident in his rationality. The British film, "Dead of Night" (1946), directed by Alberto Cavalcanti, Charles Crichton, Basil Dearden, and Robert Hamer involving strange experiences which blend psychiatry with mysticism. At the beginning of the film, a man is shown walking to a

house. He tells a group in the house that he has a recurring dream that he will murder someone who wishes him no ill. He strangles a psychiatrist who speaks with an accent and continually ridicules the discussion of ghosts and the supernatural. The psychiatrist is obviously the man of good will. The implication is that the stereotyped psychiatrist was so sure of the power of reason that he lost his life as the result of underestimating the power of the nonrational.

A Navy psychiatrist who has written a book about the strains of the executive life does not seem to apply his knowledge and is the butt of cross-examination by defense counsel in the court-martial scene of Edward Dymtryk's "The Caine Mutiny" (1954). The doctor denies that Captain Queeg is paranoid, but admits that Queeg's symptoms are those of paranoia.

Psychoanalyst Dr. Gruber provides the plot continuity as well as its climax in Delbert Mann's "That Touch of Mink" (1962). Dr. Gruber (Alan Hewitt), treating an economic advisor (Gig Young) to a millionaire businessman (Cary Grant), invests his money on the basis of the economic adviser's tips. The doctor displays an uncanny ability to misinterpret what his patient says and to be unable to help him in coping with his problems.

In "Sex and the Single Girl" (Richard Quine 1964), Natalie Wood is a Ph.D. psychologist (Dr. Helen Brown). Tony Curtis (Bob Weston) is an unmarried adventurer seeking to humiliate her and seeks Brown's professional help for problems with his "wife." When he phones after the first meeting, she rushes to a pier to block his suicide; they both fall in the water. Returning to Brown's home, he serves her a glassful of liquor, seemingly convincing her that the large glass "bypasses metabolism." Confused by her unexpected love for Curtis, she telephones her mother for guidance. Later, she races to the airport with a handsome psychiatrist colleague. All of Dr. Brown's activities seem to lack judgment or fitness.

The therapy situation can lend itself to foolish behavior, as in Chantal Akerman's (1995) "A Couch in New York" in which a Parisian dancer temporarily rents the New York office-apartment of therapist William Hurt. Because his patients believe that she has taken over his practice, she dispenses guidance to them. He returns to New York unexpectedly and she believes him to be a new patient, with strained consequences.

Foolishness characterizes a pact that psychotherapist Sarah Jessica Parker has made, 10 years ago, with an old friend and former roommate that if they had not each found a mate by age 30, they would jump into the East River, from the Brooklyn Bridge, in "If Lucy Fell" (Eric Schaefer 1995). Such behavior would hardly be suggested by any reasonable therapist.

Burke Ryan (Aaron Eckhart) is a prominent psychologist specializing in how to handle grief, in "Love Happens" (Brandon Camp 2009). A glad handing guru, he greets the members of his seminars with "I'm feeling OK, how are you?" They reply "A-OK!" He is noted for a book on handling grief *(A-OK!)*. He has minimal insight about himself and his personal problems include closet drinking and elevator phobia. He bullies the seminar members into walking barefoot over hot coals. Burke attempts to date florist Eloise (Jennifer Aniston), who pretends to be mute and rejects him via sign language. His ultimate foolhardiness is a secret he is keeping that could topple him and destroy his future.

The Patients Take Over

A recurrent subgenre of psychiatric films suggests that some simple or mentally ill or disturbed people may be superior to "normal" folks. An emphasis on patients' rights and "revolt of the patients" is anticipated in Mark Robson's "Bedlam" (1946), in which an actress is sent to an 18-century hospital, suggested by the Hogarth painting which is the film's opening shot, on trumped-up charges of lunacy. By the film's end, the residents have captured the hospital head and put him on trial for insanity.

"The King of Hearts" (Philippe de Broca 1966) is a French film dealing with World War I. German soldiers setting explosives to blow up an asylum before they leave a town. The occupying British troops send a Scottish soldier (Alan Bates) to disarm the explosives; he is elected king. The Germans return to the town and resume their slaughter. The asylum becomes a symbol of sanity in the middle of war.

A film that earned very wide attention for its theme of patients being wiser than the staff of a psychiatric institution is Milos Forman's "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (1975), which not only won an Academy Award as best picture, but enjoyed the biggest box office success of any film with a mental illness theme. It grossed more than twice as much as the year's next most popular film. Its success is probably attributable to a combination of the message, brilliant direction, powerful supporting roles, and Jack Nicholson's bravura performance.

Randle Patrick McMurphy (Jack Nicholson) is serving time for statutory rape but feigns insanity in order to transfer to a mental hospital. The movie, made from Ken Kesey's (1962) nightmare novel which was one of the key books of the 1960s, centers around the conflict between iconoclastic, magnetic McMurphy and Nurse Ratched (Louise Fletcher), a shrewd official who controls the ward. We see the group therapy, with the psychotic participants very real. Shock treatments are used as punishment and the nurse is able to authorize lobotomy. Psychiatry appears to be a vehicle of cruelty. McMurphy encourages the other patients to revolt but their doing so has tragic consequences.

Along with Ken Kesey, author Peter Shaffer, in Sidney Lumet's (1977) movie version of the successful play "Equus," thinks that madness could be a greater virtue than sanity in a sterile modern world. Madness, conceived as the true root of vitality, is represented by a handsome blond youth whose sexual interest in horses leads him to blind them. The youth consults a psychiatrist (Richard Burton) who is sterile, bland and repressed. Envious of the boy and feeling fraudulent, the doctor says that "passion can be destroyed by an analyst."

A spate of earlier movies, such as "Marat/Sade" (1967), and "Going Places" (1974), argues that it is more reasonable to be mad than sane in today's world. Such films, reflecting popular philosophers of the 1960s like R.D. Laing, hold that authority is repressive and hostile to the spirit of self-expression.

Richard Benner's "Outrageous" (1977) also presents the sanity versus insanity argument, but is unusual in permitting its "crazies" to cope successfully with their problems. A male homosexual hairdresser shares an apartment with a

schizophrenic young woman who has escaped from a mental hospital. The hairdresser, who asks, "Who's insane anyhow?" becomes a successful female impersonator and the woman resumes treatment with a psychiatrist, but on an outpatient basis. Toward the film's end, the hairdresser tells the woman, "You'll never be normal…you have a healthy case of craziness, just make it work for you."

Although this approach blossomed in the 1960s, as part of the antiwar, "greening of America" revolutionary movement, it found its fullest expression in the 1970s. It is probably relevant that the movie audience, then as now, primarily consists of teenagers and young adults. The Occupy Wall Street movement of 2012 could be related to the anti-institutional movement of earlier decades.

In "Crazy People" (Tony Bill 1990), Dudley Moore is an advertising copywriter who is fired and sent to a mental hospital because his copy is bizarre, presenting products too truthfully. By an inadvertent error, his advertisements appear on television and in magazines and prove very effective ("Visit New York, it's not as filthy as you think"). ("If you look like this, you're a fat slob.") At the hospital, psychiatrist Dr. Elizabeth Baylor (Mercedes Ruehl) encourages Moore to train the other patients in his techniques and facilitates their leaving the hospital in order to start a new advertising agency that incorporates his approach. Cheering, they depart in a helicopter, with the doctor's blessing.

"The Butcher's Wife" (Terry Hughes 1991) is concerned with the disagreement between a psychiatrist and a layperson with paranormal insight. The psychiatrist, with a neighborhood practice in New York City, is Dr. Alex Tremor (Jeff Daniels). The layperson, Marina (Demi Moore), lives on a North Carolina island. Marina understands her destiny to be that a vacationing New York butcher Leo Lemke (George Dzundza), will be her husband.

They marry immediately and Leo and Marina settle in New York's Greenwich Village, where she works in his butcher shop, near Dr. Tremor's office. Marina specializes in short term futurology and gives accurate clairvoyant counseling to her neighbors, including some of the doctor's patients. She and he also share neighborhood friends. She is a psychic elf while the doctor quotes Plato and uses psychiatric jargon. The doctor is puzzled by the validity of her guidance and predictions and by his increasing attraction to her. He tells her that her work is "hoodoo voodoo, dangerous, a nightmare." However, husband Leo becomes interested in another woman and we realize that destiny will lead to a romantic resolution of the psychic-psychiatrist relationship.

Actors and Their Roles

Movie actors obtain their parts in many different ways. Through the 1940s, most actors were under long term contract to one or another of the major studios, which would assign roles to their actors. With the end of the studio system in the 1950s, and the competition for audiences from television, it became more necessary for actors to find their own roles.

   Actors could enjoy their increased ability to influence casting, following the lead of stars like James Stewart and Cary Grant who pioneered in choosing their roles. More recently, actors' careers could be more precarious, without the predictability provided by the contracts with the studios. Earlier audiences were more involved with actors, who typically appeared in more films and led more airbrushed lives than is the case today. The arc of an actor's career is shorter than it used to be.

   An actor's experience with mental illness and/or treatment may add texture and dimensions to a part. It is possible, for example, that Robert Walker's brilliant performance as a murderer in Alfred Hitchcock's "Strangers On A Train (1951) and his last role as an undercover Communist agent in "My Son John" (Leo McCarey 1952) were related to his extended psychoanalytic treatment. Vivian Leigh was probably cast in some roles requiring the expression of depression because of her real life experience with it, which had become a matter of public knowledge. Dissonances may occur, however, between the actor's real life condition and a film role. Some distinguished actors who have played the role of a psychiatrist have turned in extraordinarily bad performances, perhaps because they were too involved in real life roles as patients. The same considerations may apply to directors or producers whose decision to make a film may be affected by latent factors of which they are not conscious. Psychiatrists and the mentally ill may, of course, be presented in films by artists who are quite aware of the effects they are creating. Fritz Lang, who directed the Dr. Mabuse films, said that "My profession makes me like a psychoanalyst." Lang's "Ministry of Fear" (1944) and "Fury" (1936) are impressive examples of his claim.

   Many factors contribute to the choice of the gender of therapists in psychiatry-related films. The decision may be made because of contractual commitments, script requirements, a star's preference, and similar considerations. Jane Fonda, for example, is said to have insisted that the therapist in "Klute" (1971) be female.

   In this study, 23 % of the film therapists are women; the proportion of women therapists has increased over the years in the subject films. Movies tend to reflect larger trends in society. In the United States, women psychiatrists increased from 19 % in 1998–1999 to more than 30 % in 2002 (Scully and Wilk 2003). Women psychologists increased from 39 % in 1990 to 49 % in 2000 to 56.6 % in 2010 (American Psychological Association 2012). These gender changes could have impact on kinds of therapy available (Carey 2011).

   Black actors playing psychiatrists and psychotherapists have had a range of roles in the last half century; some examples follow. Sidney Poitier is the dedicated chief psychiatrist at a state hospital, treating a young neo-fascist in "Pressure Point" (1962). Joe Adams is a government psychiatrist in "The Manchurian Candidate" (1962). James Earl Jones is the director of a bizarre treatment center in "End of the Road" (1970). S. Epatha Merkerson is a psychotherapist in Spike Lee's debut movie "She's Gotta Have It" (1986). Morgan Freeman is an effective counselor at a rehabilitation center in "Clean and Sober" (1988). Psychiatrist Danny Glover deals with a Death Row convict in "Dead Man Out" (1989). Psychiatrist C.C.H. Pounder deals with the possible hazards of the romance of Mary Stuart Masterson and Johnny Depp, each highly disturbed, in "Benny and Joon" (Jeremiah Chechik 1993).

Angela Hall treats severely disturbed young adults in "Mad Love" (1995). Cuba Gooding, Jr., a psychiatrist, assesses Anthony Hopkins, a specialist in gorillas who has killed poachers who attacked his primate friends, in "Instinct" (1999).

Phylicia Rashad is a prison psychiatrist in "The Visit" (2000). At a psychiatric hospital, counselor Don Cheadle works with delinquent youths in "Manic" (2001). Navy psychiatrist Denzel Washington treats eponymous "Antwone Fisher" (2002). Halle Berry, following her Best Actress Academy Award in "The Monster's Ball" (2001), faces problems in "Gothika" (2003) as a psychiatrist at a hospital for the criminally insane.

Actors Who Appeared Twice as Therapists

Some actors have had a role as a therapist in more than one relevant film. A second appearance in a related role may suggest that the first appearance was noteworthy or successful and/or that the treatment setting was particularly valid for the actor. In the films studied, there are eight men and two women who played the role twice. The number of years between each assignment ranged from one to 21, with an average of 8 years. Each film is cited briefly.

Alan Arkin is Sigmund Freud in "The Seven Per Cent Solution" (Herbert Ross 1976). Freud withdraws Sherlock Holmes from his cocaine habit and helps the great detective to understand a traumatic memory. In "Grosse Point Blank" (George Armitage 1997), Arkin is Dr. Oatman, treating a hit man called Blank, whom he advises "not to kill anyone, to see how it feels."

Lauren Bacall, a therapist at the Castle House Clinic for Nervous Disorders, is grappling with recent widowhood and a relationship with another staff member, in "The Cobweb" (Vincente Minelli 1955). In "Shock Treatmnt" (Denis Sanders 1964), she is a psychiatrist at a state hospital who is engaging in criminal activity.

Charles Boyer, a former French film star, plays a mental hospital director in "Private Worlds" (Gregory La Cava 1935). He is a staff member at another hospital in "The Cobweb" (Vincente Minelli 1955).

In "Suddenly, Last Summer" (Joseph L. Mankiewicz 1959), Montgomery Clift as Dr. Cukrowiz, saves patient Elizabeth Taylor from lobotomy and deals with her emotional problems. In "Freud" (John Huston 1962), Clift, as the founder of psychoanalysis, is shown developing his craft and some key ideas.

In "The Dark Past" (Rudolf Maté 1948), psychiatrist Lee J. Cobb helps escapee William Holden to reject violence. In "The Three Face of Eve" (Nunnally Johnson 1957), as psychiatrist Dr. Luther, he helps a housewife experiencing blackouts and headaches to understand that she has three coexisting personalities.

Billy Crystal is Dr. Ben Sobel, a psychoanalyst who treats mob boss Robert De Niro for anxiety-related problems in "Analyze This" (Harold Ramis 1999). De Niro consults the doctor again in "Analyze That" (Harold Ramis 2002), for more intensive treatment for work-related difficulties.

Janet Leigh is an Army psychologist in "The Perfect Furlough" (Blake Edwards 1959), charged with monitoring the conduct of soldier Tony Curtis in Paris. In "Three On A Couch" (Jerry Lewis 1966), she is a psychologist coping with an elaborate scheme concocted by her fiancé Jerry Lewis.

Alan Mowbray is Dr. Pauquet, a Paris psychiatrist duped by Marlene Dietrich, who is stealing some jewelry in "Desire" (Frank Borzage 1936). In "That Uncertain Feeling" (Ernst Lubitsch 1941), as a psychiatrist, he is consulted by patient Merle Oberon for treatment of hiccups, which he relates to her relationship with her husband.

Claude Rains is a thoughtful chief psychiatrist treating Bette Davis at a hospital in "Now, Voyager" (Irving Rapper 1942). In "Kings Row" (Sam Wood 1941), Rains is a sensitive psychiatrist with few patients who is pedantic in conversation.

Robin Williams is a neurologist in "Awakenings" (Penny Marshall 1990). He helps patients who are temporarily released from being catatonic. In "Good Will Hunting" (Gus Van Sant 1997) he is a Cambridge, Massachusetts psychologist who treats a young janitor. He plays a former psychiatrist in "Dead Again" (Kenneth Branagh 1991).

Actors Who Appear as Therapist and Patient

Another way of understanding actors who have played psychotherapists is to note those who also had a role as a patient, in another film. There may be a connection between the two roles and appearing as a provider could enhance a role as a receiver of service. Of the 13 actors, eight are male and five are female. Each film is identified briefly. If an actor has appeared more than once in either of the two film categories, the second and third titles are included. The number of years between the two assignments range from one to 14, with an average of eight.

There is no way of knowing whether an actor playing one of these parts is related to his or her having been previously seen as the other half of the therapist dyad. An actor who had played a patient first might have been more confident about later appearing as a therapist, or vice versa. Of the 13 such pairs, eight had first had a role as a patient.

Michael Caine won an Academy Award for his role as a patient in Woody Allen's "Hannah and Her Sisters" (1986); he is a homicidal cross-dressing psychiatrist in Brian De Palma's "Dressed to Kill" (1980).

Maximum upward mobility is seen in James Coburn's going from parole patient in Bernard Girard's "Dead Heat on a Merry-Go-Round" (1966) to an eponymous role as "The President's Analyst" (Theodore Flicker 1967), whose patient is President of the United States.

Richard Dreyfuss is a patient fighting for the right to control his own life in John Badham's (1981) "Whose Life Is It, Anyway?" He is fighting, as a therapist, for his right to vacation privacy in Frank Oz's (1991) "What About Bob?" from

a patient. In "Silent Fall" (Bruce Beresford 1994), he is treating autism and is a rehabilitation counselor in "Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols 1990).

A call girl patient in Alan J. Pakula's "Klute" (1971), Jane Fonda is a forensic therapist dealing with a complex theological situation in Norman Jewison's "Agnes of God" (1985).

In "Final Analysis" (Phil Joanou 1992), psychiatrist Richard Gere has an intimate relationship with the sister of his patient. Gere plays a manic depressive patient, whose psychiatrist (Lena Olin) confesses to her supervisor that she loves Gere, in "Mr. Jones (Mike Figgis 1983).

Patient Dudley Moore is a 40-year-old songwriter patient who has met his dream woman in Blake Edward's "10" (1980) and a psychoanalyst desperately in love with a beautiful young patient in "Lovesick" (1983), directed by Marshall Brickman.

Debonair David Niven plays a famous movie star seeking psychoanalytic help for his "power fixation" in Charles Crichton's "The Love Lottery" (1954). Niven becomes a suburban psychiatrist, barely able to cope with life, in Michael Gordon's "The Impossible Years" (1968).

Gregory Peck is a psychiatrist who becomes an amnesia patient of Ingrid Bergman in Alfred Hitchcock's (1945) "Spellbound." In David Miller's Captain Newman, M.D. (1963) he is a devoted military psychiatrist but again has amnesia as a patient in Edward Dmytryk's "Mirage" (1965).

Meryl Streep receives family guidance in "Marvin's Room" (Jerry Zaks 1996) and is a rehabilitation patient in "Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols 1990), an unhappy group therapy member in "Heartburn" (Nora Ephron 1986), a suburban divorcee patient in "It's Complicated" (Nancy Meyer 2009), a participant in couple therapy in "Hope Springs" (David Frankel 2012), and a New York City psychoanalyst in "Prime" (Ben Younger 2005).

Martin Ritt's "Nuts" (1987) finds Barbra Streisand as a patient staving off therapist and parents who want to institutionalize her. In "On A Clear Day You Can See Forever" (Vincente Minnelli 1970), she is a patient in two different centuries. She is a sex therapist in "Meet the Fockers" (Jay Roach 2004) and "Little Fockers" (2010). In "Prince of Tides" which she also directed (1991), she is a psychiatrist in love with a relative of her patient.

Previously known for his performance as an action hero, Bruce Willis is a time traveling patient who is sent back to the wrong year, in "12 Monkeys" (Terry Gilliam 1995). In "Color of Night" (Richard Rush 1994), he is a therapist taking over a friend's therapy group. In "The Sixth Sense" (M. Night Shyamalan 1999, his patient is a child.

Natalie Wood is a teenage patient in "Splendor in the Grass" (Elia Kazan 1961), and a young woman patient in "Bob and Carole and Ted and Alice" (Paul Mazursky 1969), "Penelope" (Arthur Hiller 1966), and "Inside Daisy Clover (Robert Mulligan 1966). She is a psychologist in "Sex and the Single Girl" (Richard Quine 1964) and "Brainstorm" (Douglas Trumbull 1983).

Joanne Woodward is the patient in "The Three Faces of Eve" (Nunnally Johnson 1957) and a therapist in "They Might Be Giants" (Anthony Harvey 1971).

Actors Appearing Most Frequently in Therapy Situation

Which actor or actress appeared in the most psychiatry-related movies as either a therapist and/or a patient? Our analysis suggests that four such roles represent a reasonable upper limit category of the distribution of film psychiatry appearances. We tabulated the number of such roles played up to the present by each actor. Five performers met or exceeded the minimum upper limit of four roles. Natalie Wood and Meryl Streep were in the first place with six roles each. Barbra Streisand had five roles. Two other performers each had been in four relevant pictures: Ginger Rogers and Richard Dreyfuss. We can call these five performers the "frequent psychiatry actors."

Natalie Wood is the rare child star who did well as a teen and ingénue performer and matured into an important leading lady. A patient four times, she is a psychologist in two roles. A teenager seeking help for problems of sexual awakening in "Splendor in the Grass" (Elia Kazan 1961), she is a patient of an eccentric therapist in "Penelope" (Arthur Hiller 1966), an actress treated badly by the psychiatrist provided by her studio in "Inside Daisy Clover" (Robert Mulligan 1966), and a participant in an alternate therapy group experience in "Bob and Carole and Ted and Alice" (Paul Mazursky 1969). In addition, she is a psychologist treating Tony Curtis in "Sex and the Single Girl" (Richard Quine 1964) and a psychologist co-inventor of a machine that records unconscious material that can be played back to a subject or patient in "Brainstorm" (Douglas Trumbull 1983).

Meryl Streep, with three Academy Awards and 17 Academy nominations, is the most honored American actress. She appears as a patient five times and once as an analyst. She is an unhappily married member of a therapy group in "Heartburn" (Mike Nichols 1986), a rehabilitation patient struggling with career, family, and drug problems in "Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols 1990), a mother receiving guidance from a psychologist on her relationship with a son, sick sister, and dying father in "Marvin's Room" (Jerry Zaks 1996), a suburban divorcée dating her former husband in "It's Complicated" (Nancy Meyer 2009), and a participant in couple therapy in "Hope Springs" (David Frankel 2012). In "Prime" (Ben Younger 2005), she is an urban psychotherapist deciding how to handle the discovery that her patient is her son's girlfriend.

Barbra Streisand is the magnetic star of a variety of settings and roles. She has been a patient twice and a therapist three times. She first appears undergoing hypnosis in order to stop smoking in "On A Clear Day You Can See Forever" (Vincente Minnelli 1970). Treated by psychiatrist Yves Montand, flashbacks alternate her contemporary Brooklyn self as Daisy Gamble with her eighteenth century self as Melinda Wainwhistle. Her second psychiatry-related appearance is in "Nuts" (Martin Ritt 1987), as a patient under siege. She directed "Prince of Tides" (1991), in which she is a psychiatrist emotionally involved with her patient's family. As a sex therapist, she learns to "Meet the Fockers" (Jay Roach 2004) and deal with the "Little Fockers" (2010).

Richard Dreyfuss is a versatile actor who has been a patient once and a therapist three times. He is a paralyzed sculptor patient in "Whose Life Is It Anyway?"

(John Badham 1991). A dedicated staff member at a clinic in "Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols 1990), he is a psychiatrist attempting to cope with a stalker in "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz 1991). A retired child psychiatrist in "Silent Fall" (Bruce Beresford 1994), he patiently works with a 9-year-old autistic child whom he helps and helps to solve a murder.

Long time versatile star Ginger Rogers is a patient in four movies. She plays an actress with agoraphobia in "In Person" (William Seiter 1935) a radio personality receiving diagnosis from dancing psychiatrist Fred Astaire in "Carefree" (Mark Sandrich 1938) and an executive seeking psychiatric guidance in "Lady in the Dark" (Mitchell Leisen 1944). In "Oh, Men! Oh, Women!" (Nunnally Johnson 1957), she is a neglected wife being treated by analyst David Niven.

Rogers' record differs from the other four actors in several ways. Perhaps reflecting the lesser clout of female stars in the 1930s and 1940s, she never played a therapist. Her first three relevant roles listed involve significant musical content, and she made a total of 73 films. The other four "frequent psychiatry actors" average a total of 34 films each.

We can make some generalizations about the careers of the five frequent psychiatry actors, who are defined by their appearing in four or more psychiatry-related films. Their films were released during the period 1935 through 2012 and represent at least three generations of actors.

The five actors are all very successful over a substantial period of time and have also spaced their psychiatric roles over a range of years. Table 3.3, Years of Acting in Movies and Psychiatry Movies In Years, indicates an average of 36.4 years for total years of acting and 22.6 years for psychiatry-related roles. It is surprising that the two time measures of professional acting are fairly similar for these five performers, who are so different in other ways. We can speculate that there may be something about psychiatric film roles that contributes to these actors' career arcs in a cognate way.

There are other dimensions of similarity. Each actor's first relevant role was as a patient. All are versatile, have also appeared in non-psychiatric films involving music, and have received major recognition by their colleagues and the public.

It is noteworthy that Richard Dreyfuss is the only male in this group of five frequent psychiatry actors. Dreyfuss is a character star, as distinct from the early leading men, like Clark Gable, James Stewart, and Gary Cooper, who did not appear in psychiatry-related roles. In contrast, early leading ladies like Joan Crawford ("Possessed," 1931 and 1947), Bette Davis ("Now, Voyager," (1942) and Olivia de Havilland ("The Snake Pit," 1948) earned recognition for such parts.

Although not a member of our frequent actor group, Gregory Peck is the only leading man who has played three relevant roles: a therapist experiencing amnesia

Table 3.3 Years of acting in movies and psychiatry movies in years

	Wood	Streep	Rogers	Streisand	Dreyfuss	Mean
Movie acting	35	34	34	40	39	36.4
Psychiatry movies	20	23	19	38	13	22.6

("Spellbound," 1945), a military psychiatrist ("Captain Newman, M.D.," 1963), and an executive who loses his memory and whose psychiatrist does not believe him ("Mirage," 1965). Peck's reputation for integrity and his aura of decency and heroism from other roles could contribute positively to the perception of psychiatry in film.

Directors

The directors of movies dealing with the psychiatric milieu are, of course, key figures in any attempt to explore the genre. The current study is concerned with other dimensions of therapy-related films, with special reference to actors. However, a few comments on directors may be relevant.

Some directors of supernatural, melodrama, and horror movies have used a psychiatric or mental illness theme because it lends itself to mystery and dramatic climates. Many noted directors have made a psychiatrist or mental illness film, because the theme permits much latitude. One additional reason for the subject's attractions is that it is one of the few medical themes in which the integrity and effectiveness of doctors may be criticized.

Some directors tend to make films that present characters who are disturbed or atypical or quirky but are not involved in psychiatric settings or treatment. Andy Warhol began his international artistic and commercial success in 1970, when a major distributor took over his film "Trash," which deals with an impotent heroin addict being romanced by Holly Woodlawn, a female impersonator. In his films, the characters tend to be ambulatory schizophrenics or psychopaths who are open to all behavior, and for whom dimensions like "normal" or "right" are meaningless.

Other successful directors, like Roman Polanski, have specialized in oddity verging on psychopathy (e.g., "Cul de Sac," 1966). Other films of Polanski present extreme behavior or highly disturbed people: the beautiful manicurist in "Repulsion" (1965) lives in a private world of reverie, with a progressive condition which involves hallucinations, delusions, and catatonia. This withdrawn woman commits two murders.

In Martin Scorsese's "Taxi Driver" (1976), Robert De Niro is a Vietnam veteran who cannot relate to others and hates everybody. This "commando for God" is a kind of charming lunatic who kills a pimp and decides to achieve recognition by assassinating a presidential candidate. In Scorsese's "The King of Comedy" (1983), De Niro plays a comedian who seeks recognition by kidnaping a prominent television comedian.

Some of the other directors with interest in the bizarre include David Cronenberg ("Videodrome," 1983; "The Fly," 1986; "Dead Ringers," 1988); David Lynch ("Eraserhead," 1977; "Blue Velvet," 1986); and Brian De Palma ("The Fury," 1981).

Psychoanalysis as a profession, an approach to life, and a concept has been notably important to directors Woody Allan and Paul Mazursky (Gabbard and

Gabbard 1999). Allen often introduces analytic concepts, sometimes humorous but often serious or ambivalent. Psychoanalysis is one part of the urban life that is often his theme, as in the multiple Academy Award winning "Annie Hall" (1977).

Psychoanalysis can also be a central theme of the stories of Paul Mazursky's characters (e.g., "Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice," 1969; "An Unmarried Woman," 1978). Mazursky himself plays a psychotherapist in his film "Faithful" (1996). In his other films, the therapist is often played by an actual therapist.

Psychiatry-Related Films in Learning

The use of Hollywood movies for educational and therapeutic purposes has emerged on a number of levels and under many different auspices in recent decades. Such use follows years in which movies were denounced for their effects in contributing to immorality, crime, diversion from healthier activities, violence, lower academic standards, and a wide ranger of other personal and social problems.

Even before the introduction of sound to motion pictures, a number of groups became interested in how audiences were affected and influenced by exposure to the new medium. Educators were especially concerned about many aspects of film effects on young people, as in the Payne Fund Studies (Jowett et al. 1996). The Rockefeller Foundation supported a 1935–1954 program to explore the use of motion pictures for educational and public purposes. One such study involved a group of Hollywood films, each of which included a significant human relations problem, which was shown in order to explore how audiences perceive and use such material in their daily lives (Singer 1951).

Hollywood movies have long been used by some audience members for self-therapeutic purposes. More recently such possible therapeutic dimensions have been generating considerable attention. The use of movies for therapeutic purposes has been parallel to a similar expansion of other art forms. (Winick and Holt 1960; Kadis and Winick 1973). Undoubtedly, some persons who have gone to a theater to enjoy a movie that had a psychiatric dimension were significantly and perhaps unexpectedly affected by it. Such a person is writer Dominick Dunne. Asked if there were any movie that had changed his life, he replied that "I must have been twelve, thirteen when I saw Bette Davis in 'Now, Voyager'… I was so unhappy because of the abuse I took from my father. That film showed me that it was possible to totally change your life, as Bette Davis did in that movie." (Hofler 2009). Dunne was referring to the Davis character's ability to stand up to her dominant mother and transform herself as a result of treatment by psychiatrist Claude Rains in the 1942 film.

This kind of anecdotal material could be strengthened by systematic studies of audiences in realistic movie going situations. Such studies, that include the social context of seeing movies, might help us to better understand the effects of psychiatry-related movies. (Winick 1963).

A fresh approach to the use of entertainment movies to build character strengths and emotional learning has been provided by the positive psychology

movement, which is seen merging scientific research with self-help in order to build virtues and character strength. Martin E. P. Seligman, who was president of the American Psychological Association for 1998, has been the leading proponent of positive psychology (Peterson and Seligman 2004). Positive psychologists believe that films may have a greater influence than any other art form. They explain how such influencing can occur. Films can convey a wide range of knowledge about mental illness and such material can also be organized into various instruction modalities, for college and other settings. (Wedding et al. 2005; Niemiec and Wedding 2008).

Some medical educators use Hollywood films to teach residents and psychiatrists about disorders of the mind, especially subjects like paranoia, psychopathy, and obsessive compulsive problems, where actual patients may be unavailable for educational purposes. The New York University School of Medicine has a popular course called "Teaching Psychiatry? Let Hollywood Help!" (Great plot 2007).

Psychiatric Content on Television

Television represents another modality for the presentation of movies related to psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and related therapies. Television can show an American or foreign movie after it has appeared in theaters. Hollywood studios may decide to bypass theaters and release movies directly to television stations and/or in DVD format to consumers or retail chains. Stations or networks may make their own movies to appear in theaters, television, or home use. In recent years, many new outlets (e.g., tablets, computers) have been emerging, so that movies can be viewed outside theaters relatively easily. The newer digital devices enable their users to obtain a movie and replay specific scenes, whenever they wish to do so.

The increase in psychiatrists in movies during the 1956–1965 decade reflected and reinforced their visibility in network television during the same period. "Road to Reality" was a daily soap opera dealing with a psychotherapy group. "The Eleventh Hour" and "The Breaking Point" were weekly hour-long dramas, with psychiatrists played by Ralph Bellamy and Wendell Corey, two seasoned Hollywood actors. The psychiatric drama has remained a staple.

The widespread growth of cable television over the last several decades has increased the audiences for new kinds of adult content in more flexible formats. One reason for the enormous artistic and commercial success of cable series "The Sopranos" (1999–2007) was that its dominant character, mob chief Tony Soprano (James Gandolfini) was being treated by psychiatrist Jennifer Melfi (Lorraine Bracco). Their many sessions together were shown, as were her sessions with supervisor Dr. Elliot Kupferberg (Peter Bogdanovich, who played a group therapist in the film "Mr. Jealousy" 1998).

Dr. Melfi, who was a continuing and central character, used a psychodynamic approach, that often characterizes other cable therapists. Considerable attention is paid to sexual behavior in the cable series "Tell Me You Love Me," (2007), with

psychotherapist Dr. May Foster (Jane Alexander) treating three couples, who are in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, respectively. The doctor and her husband, in their 60s, have a solid relationship and appear to be able to deal easily with their own family issues.

The 106 cable episodes of "In Treatment" (2008–2010) feature Gabriel Byrne as psychologist Dr. Paul Weston, who had previously worked at the Washington-Baltimore Psychoanalytic Institute. The series, based on an Israeli program, mimics actual scheduling practice, with each patient regularly seen on the same day of every week so that viewers could know in advance when each of their favorite patients would have his or her sessions. Dr. Weston had a number of counter-transference problems, which he was shown discussing with a supervisor. He had to relocate his practice because of one such problem.

In recent years, many entertainment luminaries have had problems of mental illness, sometimes involving alcohol and drugs, for which they publicly sought treatment, at hospitals or specialized centers like the Betty Ford Clinic, started by the former First Lady. During the last several years a number of cable channels have presented series that present actual celebrities who are patients in residential treatment settings, on a "reality television" basis, e.g., "Celebrity Rehab." These series do not present treatment realistically and may influence audience impressions on what is involved in genuine treatment activities. Because the celebrities are paid for their appearance, and the rigid time requirements for scheduling programs must be observed, theatrical rather than therapeutic considerations tend to prevail in these series.

Television has also been used to promote the use of traditional entertainment movies for personal emotional education, via the Cinematherapy series, beginning in 2001 on cable stations and geared to women. The two hosts introduce and show a Hollywood movie, followed by a discussion of it that is led by the hosts and deals with relevant relationships and coping with problems. A series of related books lists other movies that can similarly be used for personal growth (Penske and West 2004).

Some psychotherapists may recommend a specific film to a client, so that it can be a basis for follow-up discussion. One counselor published a "prescription" book, summarizing 200 movies "to help you heal life's problems," with a listing of relevant titles for each problem (Solomon 1995).

Some Trends

Applications of psychiatry to the creation, study and understanding of theatrical films are very likely to continue in the future. More specifically, the psychoanalytic approach has proven to be productive in offering significant insights and findings (Gabbard and Gabbard 1999). Television and the newer digital modalities have aggressively made and presented psychiatry-related films. There is every reason to believe that these media vehicles will continue to meet the needs and gratifications of audiences in the future.

In addition, the expansion of interest in self-improvement and newer educational functions of psychiatrically relevant films can draw on the hundreds of titles that have been made over more than a century. The content and themes of this body of material have continually been related to trends and developments in psychiatry and its cognate fields. As the number of persons working in the healing professions expands, they can be expected to provide continuing inspiration for moviemakers, some of whom have already made films that are not generally associated with psychiatry-related treatment. Among their subjects are space aliens (Dan Curtis, "Intruders," 1992), vampires (Francis Ford Coppola, "Bram Stoker's Dracula," 1992), new super-heroes (Joel Schumacher, "Batman Forever," 1995), cults (Jane Campion, "Holy Smoke," 1999), and ghosts (William Malone, "The House on Haunted Hill," 1999).

Emerging research areas like neuroscience, and computer applications are creating new film subjects. Dream research, for example, has provided subjects and plots for a few decades. Motion picture technology has kept up with the requirements of such newer subjects. "Inception" (Christopher Nolan 2010) is not psychiatry related but is a science fiction film which can be described as a dream within a dream, or people sharing a dream space. It won Academy Awards for visual effects, cinematography, sound mixing and sound editing. The public's enthusiasm for the dream material in "Inception" is reflected in the film's ranking thirtieth in worldwide gross income (Worldwide grosses 2012).

Whether we are considering films that are more or less traditional in subject or technology, there surely will be actors eager to act in them. Actors today are far more willing to accept the challenges of therapy on the screen and in their private lives than their predecessors. A half-century ago, attitudes were less positive. At that time, leading man Cary Grant told interviewers how greatly he had profited from 18 months of LSD-enhanced psychotherapy. He later denied having had the therapy, presumably because of concern about revealing his private life (Eliot 2004; Wansell 1984). Although he played a physician in three different films, he never appeared as a psychiatrist.

Another consideration that would encourage actors to appear in these films is society's steadily growing recognition of psychiatry and the increasing quality of its film applications. Such trends can be expected to attract a wide range of future performers to this significant subject matter. Whoever the future actors in psychiatry-related films will be, the impact of their work will be perceived in the context of the changing American problem of mental illness. Fortunately, the twenty-first century has seen significant government, professional, and community initiatives toward dealing with this problem.

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Chapter 4
Bedlam in Spyland: Is Bourne Bond?

James Bond in the film series is a highly sexualized hero—a hero with few inhibitions or constraints: he sleeps freely and openly with friends and enemies alike. Other action heroes, Superman, Batman, Rocky, Spiderman exhibit a more conventional sexuality; indeed, by comparison with Bond, they seem embarrassed when a woman shows erotic interest in them.

Though the Bond and Bourne films do not offer new fresh esthetic possibilities they are energetic, if not sometimes visually anarchic pieces when compared with the earlier more mechanically awkward action movies in which plot and dialog mattered more and moved at a snails pace. Clearly, neither Bond nor Bourne films are masterpieces of cinematic invention like Eisenstein's works, or those of D. W. Griffith, Lang, Hitchcock, or Orson Wells (Wood 2004). Above all, we are being entertained more than informed or edified about the synergetic qualities of crime, politics, and terrorists. The heroes in these films have a mission of sorts to let us see the world from a particular institutional rather than distinctive ideological slant. While there is no special politics or theory to espouse, each hero in his way defends the status quo.

Presumably, every inch of the world will be on film—the planet will be captured on an enormous reel of tape or captured in the charming pixels of a digital system. Life then will no longer possess a simultaneous quality, but seem more sequential with one "story" after another, as if the DNA of living things were extended; one strand, one byte at a time, to infinity.

A Pre-history of Treachery and Espionage

During World War II and through the onset of the Cold War in the 1950s, the American wartime spy agency, the Office of Special Services (OSS), the precursor of the Central Intelligence (CIA), and MI6 (the secret intelligence services of the United Kingdom) were involved in years of buildup and organization for the struggles against the Nazis and Japanese and then after the war, against new adversaries, the Soviet Union's KGB and the Chinese secret service agencies.

It was in the war years against the Nazis that a young diplomat, John Cornwell (aka John Le Carre), introduced the public to a shadowy world of secret agents, double agents, and sundry espionage moles that shaped the contours of the Cold War. In the 1950s, international political tensions were heightened by spy scares involving the nuclear weapon projects of the superpowers. The execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in the United States for treason, along with the demagogic career of Senator Joseph McCarthy and his nemesis, Alger Hiss in the US State Department, only deepened suspicions and increased the collective political paranoia enveloping the country. Though the political atmosphere in Britain was less fervid, cases of espionage were even more alarming. There was a series of trials of "atomic spies" and the melodramatic disappearances of British double agents into the Soviet Union (Pincher 2009). In the United States the subject of spies and CIA intrigues has aroused rapt interest, but in different ways. Many Americans are still haunted by McCarthyism, "red baiting," and witch hunts hounding imaginary spies. However, the fictional writings of Fleming (James Bond), and Robert Ludlum (Jason Bourne) operate explicitly on the premise that there really existed secret undergrounds—communist, or otherwise. With the British experience, where Burgess and Maclean vanish in the dead of night and resurface in Moscow, it was difficult to claim, as they initially had, that they were innocent victims of a frame-up. And so again when Phil by, followed by Anthony Blunt(the Queen's consultant on art work) were exposed, there could be no retreat into denial or a plausible refusal to believe that anyone, anywhere, had ever been a communist, let alone a spy.

The public reactions to the threat of spies in the fragile atomic weapon arms race in America and Great Britain were indeed different and are reflected in the actions and behaviors of Bond and Bourne. The moody American spy, Jason Bourne, an operator in a super secret agency, is troubled by internal betrayals, by the pernicious outcomes of agency hidden agendas, by the subterfuges of agency administrators and by the climate of frame-ups. James Bond, on the other hand, reflects a different reality. In the bowels of British Cold War policy, many British intellectuals were enthralled by Communism which affected the emotional temperature of its intelligence environment. British political drama was not as inflamed by the fanaticism apparent in the American spy apparatus. Bond operates with few illusions—secure in his trust of his superiors; his seeming recklessness, and semi-comical and satirical antics where Bond saves helpless good guys; Bond is something of a "Lone Ranger"—an American Western hero.

Film Language

The idea of "film language" extends impressions into a discourse. One receives what one sees, you don't have to think it out. One sees an illuminated and dressed scene, here are the music, the facial expressions, bodily movement, and the attitudes of the costumed and dressed actors—and one understands. Movie-going is an act of inference. In a sense, films are illiterate events. (This may be why some of the most

fanciful prose written today is by film critics, who assiduously address themselves to films that are hardly worth the attention.) Why? It may be among the dreariest, most stupid of movies, and one must wonder, does it matter? The critic, like the late Pauline Kael, writes a cogent reaction to what she sees. However unconsciously, the critic is defending verbal culture, subjecting the pre-literate (or post-literate) film-going experience to the extensions of syntactical, analytical thought.

From the Page to the Stage and Studio

Film is time-driven, it shows the exterior of life, it depicts behavior. It tends to be the simplest of moral reasoning, which is why films such as *The Caine Mutiny* are more attractive to large audiences than a film that is more literate, that may be more of a philosophically profound moral tale such as Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. And this may help to explain why the narrative simplification of a Bond or Bourne film concerning otherwise complex political, legal, and moral issues is appealing. Novels and plays can do anything in the dark horrors of consciousness; films, do close-ups, exciting chases, and frightening explosions, as well as intimate scenes of love and compassion that engage the senses totally.

When movies began they were shown in storefronts, dumps, and open lots. Movie-goers paid a nickel and sat down on a bench. The films were silent one-reelers; everyone made them; they were cheap to make and people made them about their own lives. They told their stories of working, living, and dying, about labor strikes, riots, parades, scenes of bar rooms, women dancing and factory work, scenes of life lived in cities, on farms, in slums, and palatial estates. Sometimes a pianist played along with the theme or scene and audiences talked back to flickering screens, stood up to challenge, or applaud the images; audiences cried over tender sorrowful moments captured by the film or laughed hilariously at clownish sketches by Chaplin or Keaton.

Eventually, this anarchic activity gave rise to a classificatory order and this came about naturally as the competition among movies created a demand for longer, more complex movies. Consequently, filmmakers could no longer personally afford the cost of their films so they resorted to banks and insurance companies for financing. Money was duly tendered making banks and insurance companies the often sole judges of just what films were to be made. As a result of these developments, business class of film financiers and professional film-makers arose.

Inventing Society

The commercial entrepreneurs who financed films and appreciated their potential for manipulating images of social reality initially encouraged motion pictures that depicted falsely tranquil social scenes; peace between unequal racial groups,

happy workers and smiling factory foremen, well-dressed and well-fed children, monogamous husbands and wives, hyper functionally happy families going to church and picnics. Apart from the manipulation of social reality in political contexts, the movie era set the tone for the development of powerful tools in marketing products. People were seen driving autos, living in swank apartments, traveling by boat, plane, and car to exotic vacation locales and resorts. Eventually, the movies also embedded a realistic darker side of life of rough-looking sociopaths and gangsters standing apart from normal people and occasionally fairly accurately represented forms of social distress associated with political-economic situations. Gradually, a system of social archetypes and stereotypes evolved into which were fitted physically appropriate types of persons. In general, an orderly production base was established in California to generate films that functioned as a means to show people social norms and customs concerning behavior, what things were desirable to buy and own—in general, films showed forms of life in which audiences sitting in dark theaters could aspire to and desire.

Selling Thrills and Good Guys

Movies are always selling something; that is how they began and flourished in a materialistic, entrepreneurial business milieu. Here and there in Bond films are anti-American tropes. For instance, Tiger Tonaka (*You Only Live Twice*) bellows about baseball, amusement arcades, hot dogs, hideously large bosoms, and neon lighting. The Hollywood revulsions and Vegas shallowness are ironies in Bond. The films are set in locales where bosoms matter and so does food. But what is remarkable about the Fleming and Broccoli creations is how well they perceived the post-Cold War social scene. The transition probably begins after *From Russia with Love;* a paranoid tale about the Bulgarians shooting the Pope in 1982. The stories behind the films are a kind of a bridge from the period of ideological warfare to our own, where the fear of a frigid totalitarian colossus or a nuclear exchange has been trumped by worries about uncorked psychopaths and dirty bombs in the hands of the true believers.

Fleming conjured up imagery that transcended the CIA, and KGB when he gave us *Specter* (an anagram for "Respect"), which was the world of the drug cartels, and political mafias as well as other "non-state actors" like al-Qaeda.

In Fleming's and Broccoli's hands James Bond has become one of pop culture's most recognizable icons. He is a cultural symbol with fastidious tastes: driving only luxury automobiles; drinking only vodka martinis, and wearing exquisitely tailored suits. Bond vacations and engages in thrilling espionage adventures in the most glamorous locales, and gambles—high stakes—in only the swankiest hotels and casinos. He speaks all the most widely known languages, skis, scuba dives, plays golf and tennis at the best clubs, and is a gourmet who dabbles in haute cuisine.

In another vein, every movie fan must be impressed anew by the clear grasp of the tactical situations Bond, Bourne, and Ethan Hawke face in each film. Moreover, their undiminished aggressiveness when confronting heavy odds, their evident pride, and the devotion and loyalty of their bosses and superiors who are often exasperated by their field agent's antics explains the camaraderie between field agents and headquarters and the enthusiastic responses of audiences worldwide. Film fans relish these moments which are enhanced visually by modern technological devices and modalities. In terms of influences, the films seem to owe more of their style and content to *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *Zorro*, even *Batman* and *Superman*, and not one of the greatest of them all—*The Spy who Came in From the Cold* (1955). We come to that brilliant but depressing drama revived in its stark realism in a recent film that traces the history of the CIA: *Good Shepherd*. Bond film is always fresh and portent the future. In the twenty-first century there are signs of aggressive behavior by states touting their nuclear arsenals. And if we are regressing into isolationist's pacts, the twentieth century paranoia of Cold War ideology may return with a vengeance. In the early twenty-first century, threats of war, jihad, and religiously inspired civil conflicts are growing. The world's population is larger; resource consumption of oil is staggering; and has already triggered many conflicts. There are more major powers, more nuclear-armed countries than ever, several of which are inhabited by aggressive and technologically savvy terrorists. To this depressing list may be added the teetering international financial system whose stability is fragile and potentially capable of destabilizing the integrated world economies.

Can Bond rescue us in this precarious environment? To say the least, loyalty to the anachronistic English monarchy is embarrassing; defending the crown, Queen, and England is slightly jingoist and must sound like a hollow roar in Bond's head when he confronts his adversaries; but this is confounded by Bond's love with the sentimental nostalgia of king and queen and country.

The Ethos and Style of Hollywood: Entertainments, Markets, and Brand Management

It has been authoritatively claimed that Hollywood—a state of mind and idea as much as a physical locale—and its various reincarnations such as "Bollywood," are sophisticated networks of learning possessing a logic of money and power, driven by a cinematic, show-biz categorical imperative that could teach Madison avenue a thing or two (Epstein 2005). The grand inquisitors that cobbled the movie business together created the studios and supported the technologies that made film-making a new cultural entity. More than this, the hidden business side of movie making was (and is) vital to its existence. Faced with reports on how relevant audiences in different markets reacted to their films (products), Hollywood studios (corporations) analyzed the various elements (variables)—marketing,

stars, music, action, color, technicians—and other parameters, and adjusted their subsequent production decisions in a cold-blooded, business-like manner. It is unlikely that Standard Oil, Kellogg, and Ford could perform better as commercial enterprises.

The Bond, Bourne, and *Mission Impossible* films are not specifically grounded in the studio enclaves of Hollywood any longer, but they reflect the tell-tale structural characteristics of the studio "system." These extravaganzas of action require the ancillary services that Hollywood still supplies in terms of huge sound stages and the purely business components of film-making that includes agents, publicists, lawyers, numerous film technicians, accountants, and so on. Indeed, like sorcerers of old, filmmakers need to read the public's entrails, if they are to satisfy its entertainment needs and tastes.

The Nature of the Enemy

What makes the most money in Hollywood are morally uncomplicated comic-book depictions of heroes and villains—simple stories in effect, that do not demand much curiosity. Their appeal across a broad scope of audience markets suggests that audiences do enjoy escapist entertainment.

How then is it that action films with political orientations that are admittedly superficial treatments of serious political issues nonetheless acquire and sustain audiences of movie-goers? Do films portray accurately who the enemies of the state might be? Are action films really thinly disguised propaganda pieces instructing us by way of entertainment? Who it is that we should worry about and fear? Some claim we are the enemy—the people (Reiber 2004). Others wonder if the films themselves inadvertently reveal the "real" enemy: high technology that fascinates, mesmerizes, that may mislead and misrepresent reality (Wood 2004).

High technologies hold a central place in all modern spy films. In some (*Golden Eye*, *Mission Impossible II*), the intricate machines of mass destruction constitute the main themes of the films. Yet it was only in film—*State of Siege,* for example—where the fateful consequences of clandestine surveillance were explored and where the role of high-tech penetrations of individual lives were featured but not fully examined in the context of the movie. What this film presented well was the potential threatening power of high technology to watch over us and to intimidate us in a Big Brother style.

The Enemy and the Hero

Bond, Bourne, Hawke, and even Rocky seem to be heroes who share in common psychological traits and political/cultural orientations. The conjuring of hero-images is consistent with the marketing needs of films as business commodities.

What seems clear is that the logic of audience ratings prompts producers to search for omnibus products that can be consumed by audiences of all backgrounds. Furthermore, competition regresses continually with the concentration of the apparatuses of production, and, as importantly, with the means of distribution. As is evident in broadcast schedules, multiple communication networks are on the air at the same time with similar products seeking maximum profits. Likewise, in TV media the frequent mergers between production and distribution groups culminates in a concentration of communication corporations that are vertically integrated with the consequences that distribution largely governs production which translates into the conclusion that distributors exercise a veritable censorship of money over artistic and creative production.

The issue is perhaps even more ominous if one accepts Ernst Gombrich's perspectives on the importance of the "ecological conditions of art." Gombrich argues that art dies when the complex support structure sustaining it collapses. The richness of the cinematic culture would appear to be threatened when the economic and social conditions in which it can develop are profoundly affected by the inexorable logic of profit in the advanced countries where there is already substantial accumulated capital (Gombrich 1994).

Bond, Bourne, etc. are reflections of a social microcosm that does not seem to recognize and value high art. Instead, we see an irruption of commercial cinema dominated by the big distributors with whom producers must reckon. The modern conflicts of film makers over the "final cut" and against the pretensions of producers to ultimate rights over a work may be somewhat similar to the struggles of the painters of the Renaissance with their patrons.

Actors and Stars: An Excursus

In theaters we are in the physical presence of actors; in a movie house, we are not. This fact of physical absence of the screen actor would seem to be very crucial concerning the differences between our responses to a play or a film. Panofsky offers some interesting observations:

> Othello or Nora are definite, substantial figures created by the playwright. They can be played well or badly, and they can be "interpreted" in one way or another; but they most definitely exist, no matter who plays them or even whether they are played at all. The character in a film, however, lives and dies with the actor. It is not the entity "Othello" interpreted by Paul Robeson, or the entity "Nora" interpreted by the Duse, it is the entity "Greta Garbo" incarnate in a figure called Anna Christie or the entity "Robert Montgomery" incarnate in a murderer who, for all we know, or care to know, may forever remain anonymous but will never cease to haunt our memories (1959, p. 31).

If characters live and die with actors then should actors live and die with characters? To clarify further, for the stage, an actor works himself into a role; for the screen, the performer takes the role onto himself. Or, the stage actor explores his potentialities and the possibilities of his role simultaneously; in performance these

meet at a point in nonmaterial space, or psychological space—where in short, the better the performance, the deeper, more lucid the point. In this respect, a role in a stage play is like a position in a game—middle line backer in a football game; various people can play it, but the great middle line backer is a person who has accepted and trained his skills and instincts most perfectly and matches them most intimately with his discoveries of the possibilities and necessities of the defensive middle line play position in football. The screen performers like Sean Connery as James Bond or Daniel Craig, or Matt Damon as Jason Bourne—explore their roles like an excursion in an attic and take stock of their physical and temperamental endowment; they lend their being to the role and accept only what fits. In an important sense, the screen actor is essentially not an actor at all: he or she is the subject of study and a study not his or her own (Cavell 1979).

An exemplary screen performance is one in which a star is born. After *The Godfather* a star arose, only distantly a person. "Marlon Brando" meant the figure created in a given set of films (*On the Waterfront*, *A Street Car Named Desire*, *The Wild One*, *Sayonara*). His presence in those films is who he is, not merely in the sense in which a photo of an event is that event; but in the sense that if those films did not exist, Brando would not exist, the name "Brando" would not mean what it does. The figure it names is not only in our presence, we are in his, in the only sense we could ever be. That is all the "presence" he has.

But it is complicated. A full development of all this is beyond the scope of this essay and would require us to place such facts as these: Marlon Brando was a man, and he appeared in movies both before and after the ones that created, "Brando." Some of these films were not signature performances in that they did not create Brando's stardom as a premier film artist; some may be actually incompatible with "Brando." A case in point: (*Candy 1968*; *The Island of Dr, Moreau* 1996), where Val Kilmer, Brando's Co-star, observed sardonically in an interview that Brando played the island!

To complicate matters further, exemplary stage performances occur all the time where actors create, and become identified with the character. Paul Scofield's performance in *King Lear* is one in which we know who King Lear is, we have seen him in the flesh. The same may be said about Lawrence Olivier's *Richard III*. In film, Orson Welles is *Citizen Kane*; Humphrey Bogart is Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon;* and Rick in *Casablanca*; Sylvester Stallone is *Rocky*; Bette Davis is Eve in *All About Eve;* as Greer Garson is *Mrs. Minniver*. All were or are accomplished actors and vivid subjects for a camera.

Hollywood as America's State Theater: Pathways of the Stars

Part of the difficulty for actors in action thrillers is aging. In *Ride the High Country* the pathos of the aging cowboy (Randolph Scott and Joel McCrea) depends upon their being enacted by aging men whom we can remember as young

cowboys. With the "new" James Bond actors, there is a tacit recognition that Connery is, or has, "aged out" of the role. Plots no doubt change or are calibrated toward the athleticism of the new star. Still several re-incarnations of Bond after Connery have not succeeded in supplanting the original 007.

Satirical treatments of age (*Dirty Old Men*) featuring Jack Lemon, Sophia Loren, and Walter Matthew as old geezers attempting to revive some semblance of romance in their lives was not very successful. Rather than making movies with a Bond threatened by age why not turn to younger men? Connery himself realized his physical limitations and exploited this in films where he valorizes his age and equates it with his substantial experiences allowing him to work with younger co-stars. Humphrey Bogart did something similar where instead of facing the loss of his image as a tough guy, he made *Beat the Devil* where he moved past *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*. The nostalgia his performance released in *The African Queen worked* artistically. In both works, the pretense is that nothing of value has passed since his bravura performances in *Casablanca*, and *The Maltese Falcon*. Bogart's parody of earlier roles, and his irony saved the day and his reputation as an actor.

Can one imagine a James Bond or Jason Bourne not in color? Could they succeed? One cannot imagine The *Spy Who Came in From the Cold*—a black and white cold war spy drama succeeding in Technicolor, but *Our Man in Havana,* a comedy spy film could because of the plot, actors, script, and setting. Neither Bond, Bourne, nor Ethan Hawke films are simply drama/comedy or even mystery films; they are action films—a category of moviemaking that managed to succeed in black and white.

Apocalyptic Change and Cinema

Why do superheroes like Bond, Bourne, and Ethan Hawke arise in the creative psyche and infuse themselves into the popular culture's artistic productions? Are Bond and company, characters peculiar to the West? Or, are they more generally, symptomatic of the imagery that suffuses a sophisticated technological culture struggling through stages of change?

Apocalyptic movements have been the motors and driving forces of religious, political, and economic change throughout history (Mannheim 1938; Kelly 1972). Perhaps the great cinematic epics of the past with oblique political overtones such as *The Seven Samurai* (1959), *Captain Blood* (1939), *Robin Hood* (1938), *Potemkin* are indicative of such trends. Before cinematic technology acquired the technological refinements it now possesses, comic books (action books that featured Batman, Superman, Capt. Marvel, Plastic Man, etc.) which were adventures against criminals and evil doers in a context of astounding action fraught with danger at virtually every turn. Across a broader historical canvas, the record suggests that Christian origins are inseparable from the spirit or apocalyptic that consumed the Judeo-Hellenistic world in late antiquity. Muhammad's early mission

cannot be explained without reference to the apocalyptic admonitions, the foreseen calamities, and the terror of the Day of Judgment apparent in the early suras (chapters) of the Koran (Amanat 2008). Movies found these texts and transformed them into brilliant scripts. For example, a variation on this theme of the "deliverer," the Mahdi or Twelfth Imam, revered by Shiite Muslims, was evident in the Iranian Revolution when the Ayatollah Khomeini who mobilized disparate Iranians and demonized perceived enemies in a world where the people of God—the saved remnant of humanity—see themselves as the sole bearers of divine wisdom and knowledge. The utopian project of realizing paradise may be as devastating as the earthquakes, plagues, and wars of apocalyptic imaginings.

Khomeini appropriated the role of the Mahdi to himself—though shrewdly not claiming openly divine inspiration and infallibility. He shook the traditions of shi' ism to its foundations by taking power so spectacularly (Takeyh 2009).

In Bond films 007 confronts a lunatic mastermind prepared to destroy or subdue the world through catastrophic violence and fierce intimidation. These themes of violent ends, apocalypse, lay at the heart of some of the most important European literature in the pre-World War II period—a time incidentally when Ian Fleming (the author of James Bond Stories) and John Le Carre (the author of *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*) were beginning careers in government agencies involved in intelligence and espionage.

In Robert Musil's *A Man Without Qualities* (1942), a literary masterpiece about the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire in the World War I era, Ulrich, the hero of the novel becomes disillusioned and ambivalent as the Austro-Hungarian system begins to unravel. Ulrich, like Bond and Bourne depends on the external, ephemeral world to form his character. He exhibits keen analytical capacities but is also given to passive aggressiveness. His protagonists are the feckless bureaucrats, army officers, nobles, groveling, bourgeois entrepreneurs, and Moss burger (aka "Jaws" in the Fleming/Broccoli reincarnations on the screen.) Curiously, it seems only in the latest film, where Bond, pitted against a phantom organization, barely uncovers some of its operations. In contrast with the realism of *Tinker, Tailor*…. and *The Spy Who Came in*…, the Bond/Bourne thrillers require apocalyptic scenarios that set the scenes for the relentless actions. And the modern media is lavishly equipped to meet this need. Yet even those who enjoy films with breathtaking endings cannot discern the realities of the international political/ criminal nexus because these are masked by extraordinary deviant personalities who blur the message. No doubt some countries, because of their inner disorder, the rigidity and failure of their political institutions and leaders, are on the verge of destructive apocalyptic change. The Bond films with their plots of government hypocrisy that lead to crises imply that the intellectual highways for social and economic growth, peace, and prosperity, are perilously clogged with psychopathological hustlers engaged in realpolitik. The films do not examine the societal conditions that contribute to crisis making as a chronic social-political-economic state of affairs. One wonders if that sort of political examination could hold an audience's attention.

The Enemy Defines the Hero

The new Bond film, *Quantum of Solace* has all the usual entertainment items of a spy thriller: a sinister criminal organization, power hungry psychopaths, beautiful, distraught woman, high-tech gadgets, and a dauntless, unflappable hero, 007, who rarely loses his nerve—although he uncharacteristically exhibits fury over threats against M—his nanny/boss played by the English actress Judi Dench with persuasive maternal sang-froid.

The enemies in the Bond films are usually some eccentric Euro trash (with occasional Asian or South American variants). Typically, they seek world domination through a vast conspiracy of some fantastic criminal organization whose power challenges nations and ethnic groups. The enemies are deeply delusional but often intellectually apt which makes them even more dangerous. In both the Bond and Bourne films there are images that reinforce the sociological packaging and cultural identity of the star. For instance, as for automobiles, *Quantum* opens with a thrilling auto chase using two top-end cars: a fast, smart Alfa Romeo, and the elegant English automobile the Aston Martin. Bond's fabulous scenes of action are chic and glamorous. On the other hand, Bourne resembles Bond only in terms of his indefatigable hardness; his wardrobe, however, is comparatively shabby, and his hangouts are tawdry, low rent, and lacking in taste.

Bourne's conscience troubles him. In a dark night of the soul moment, he is deeply troubled by the fact that he did not know most of those whom he killed. However, in the Bourne saga, the villains are often colleagues in his secret security apparatus. The government is the enemy; for Bond, on the other hand, the baddies are not the Queen or M. who are often tactless and nuisances; Bond confronts rather ruthless crime wizards, like Le Chiffre in *Casino Royale* who weeps blood in moments of stress. These characters are clear and present danger. Bourne asks plaintively, "Who am I?" Bond on the other hand introduces himself with his famous insouciant assertion, "Bond, James Bond."

Who are the Enemies? Sexual Innuendo and Misogyny

The typical enemies of Bond and Bourne are criminal elites with sophisticated resources and numerous sinister connections with corrupt government officials and business groups. All are strong men who pose a range of threats including economic catastrophes, destabilized political conditions, and massive violence or death, if their demands are not met. The action heroes seek to protect their nation states and their interests. That is the essence of the culture of modern heroism—a commitment to Rome, as it were. Enemy—making for the cinema is a very tricky business, as dangerous, one might suppose, as the olive oil business for early twentieth century Italian immigrants. Today, the situation is expressed in the brittle politics of the Middle East, which exemplify a vengeful emnification.

In connection with our theme, the hotbed of conflict has been touched periph-erally with Bond running around the pyramids accompanied by a beautiful KGB agent and the huge bad guy, "Jaws" trundling along in grim pursuit. This film had a slightly comical turn in which the Egyptians and their Arab associates look utterly foolish while the Israelis, whose presence is low-keyed and shadowy, seem more rational, more competent.

A reviewer might surmise that the battle spaces of the future would appear to be third world cities, and as the urbanization of the world proceeds at a brisk pace, so will the urbanization of insurgencies. One further speculation: the Pentagon, the "Circus" (Piccadilly—the home of MI5 and MI6), and Moscow Center may emerge as the headquarters of global warlords. And despite all the sexual innu-endo: Pussy Galore; Dr. Goodhead, Dr. No, Blofeld and Drax, Bond and Bourne are more like devices than persons: they are the wheels, gears, muscle, machine, and weapons with limits and weaknesses, strengths and skills in the exciting strug-gle against crime and evil.

In many scenes Bond's new female boss M, scolds him for his self-destructive, bravado which she rightly claims endangers missions. Bond is expected to utilize the abundant resources of the British secret services. M demands that Bond put a stop at once to his suicidal behavior and get on with his job. He always appears cool, rarely angry, always in his English way, only slightly beguiled by over-wrought, seething villains. Of course the audience grins and titters, how can it not? Western heroes could afford to be romantic iconoclasts from time to time because they are unfettered by the problems of the non-western worlds. Bond and his col-leagues re-affirm the values of the West. They are like the characters that inhabited the Counter-Reformation: like the Jesuit missionaries in so far as they are individ-ualistic, educated, literate, disciplined, and committed to the political ideological ideals of their employers. Their heroics mixed with technology, violence, and non-stop action explains their huge global appeal. The non-West, the Third World has become the new western frontier for the heroes and gunfighters whose weapons are cell phones, planes, and high tech.

What do audiences see and feel in their heroes and in the film plots that make them so appealing? Are Bond, Bourne, and Ethan interchangeable? Perhaps their adversaries and enemies are alike, hence they too must adapt to the requirements of their struggles with opponents. To the extent that villains are alike, so are the hero protagonists struggling against them.

Has there been a radical transformation of the spy and espionage images in the action-filled Bond/Bourne/Ethan Hawke triumvirate? The modern spy film pre-tends to be apolitical but it reflects establishment political values. The logic stems from the cinematic technology that subsumes and subordinates politics and even love that is, parodied in Bond films and treated enigmatically in Bourne films.

All films share a dominant theme: the world is a place filled with all sorts of social upheavals and economic dislocations where evil people do terrible things and ridicule and denigrate the sober, serious truths that imbue western culture with its humanism, and other cherished values. Bond, patriot, and subject of the Queen, echoes this antique sense of duty to the crown without much reflection about what

his duty serves. And though his boss M thinks he is a bad boy, she still supports his ludicrous deportments. Bourne faces another problem: he has had his memory erased and desperately searches to discover his true identity. Unlike Bond, Jason Bourne does not make random friendships because such actions tend to put his own life or that of his friends at risk in the world he inhabits of double crosses and treachery.

Matt Damon who plays the role of Jason Bourne, stated that he sees the character of James Bond as that of an establishment guy, or imperialist, to put it more strongly, and a misogynist; above all. Bond is the fading empire's vigilante man—Dirty Harry with style and panache.

Apparently, the producers of the James Bond series of films brilliantly realized decades ago that the films would be popular if they are related to current Cold War events. Bond was cast as an upper-crust Brit working in MI5 against the Soviets and other enemies of the British Empire. He also became a key opponent of certain huge and powerful political-criminal syndicates such as SPECTRE (Special Executive for Counterintelligence Terrorism, Revenge, and Extortion) that appears as his principal adversary.

SPECTRE played upon the rivalries festering among Russia, China, the USA, and their multiple sate little states. It had no allegiances to any state or political ideology that, incidentally, is also true of organized crime in general. SPECTRE was the great crime machine against which Bond pitted his skills; the criminal organization dabbled in everything from stealing thermo-nuclear weapons to explicit extortion directed against large nation-states.

Naturally, some of the characterizations of the enemy are fantastical and brazenly play to historical stereotypes. Blofeld, the head of Specter is a wildly eccentric German who makes threats with a cat in his lap. Women appear in Bond films as sexual props; "Pussy Galore" is a luscious operative of Gold finger another dangerous German-type businessman who plots the robbery of Fort. Knox—America's depository for its gold bullion resources. In *Thunderball*, Bond deftly positions his dance partner to take a bullet meant for him and wryly comments when he sets her down that she's just dead on her feet—too tired to dance. Not surprisingly, its self-parody produced spoofs such as *Austin Powers*—a goofy take-off on Bond genre films.

It was in the post-Watergate, post-Vietnam War era, that the hero Jason Bourne appeared in the adventure fiction of Robert Ludlum. Ludlum who died in 2001, envisioned his fiction encompassing themes involving global corporations, crime syndicates, and rogue politicians conspiring to conserve a status quo of world economic, political, and military domination.

Interestingly, *The Bourne Identity* (2002) produced a year after 9/11 when the USA was in the psychological grip of heightened patriotism, where intelligence agencies were given broad authority to do what was necessary to combat terrorism. The film was not a pure propaganda piece for the "war on terror" but was premised on the idea that the CIA could inadvertently become an enemy of its own country. In the bloody arithmetic of the terror war, this theme was somewhat unusual, except that production may have been underway before 9/11.

Quantum of Solace: Bond Gets Bourne-Like

In a recent film, *Quantum of Solace*, Bond is played by the actor Daniel Craig—who starred in the 2006 hit *Casino Royale* as an ice-cold assassin, determined to settle scores. From a cinematographic perspective, the film has some similarity with the Bourne films. Gone are all the schmaltz gadgets and sleek machines; in its place are Bourne type, hand-to-hand combat and foot races, and other forms of violent physical activity.

The screenplay of *Quantum of Solace* includes topical concerns about global warming, the battle over oil, and the decline of dollars. The plot involves another secretive organization, Quantum, linked to a character, Dominic Greene, who leads a clandestine philanthropic enterprise known as Green planet that is a cover for more nefarious agendas. Though he pretends to be concerned with the devastation of rain forests, and rapidly melting glaciers, Greene seeks power and money, which means destabilizing the government of Bolivia, a nation that is pivotal in sustaining ecological equilibrium. Greene must install his General Medrano, a petty greedy thug, as the country's new dictator, in order to control the uncertain fate of Bolivia and, alas, mankind.

As the plot unfolds Bond and M barely survive a surprise attack by Quantum agents in Spain. Bond gets to Haiti where he meets Greene's lover whose on a mission of vengeance and seeks to use Greene to gain access to Medranoin order to kill him. The subsequent action scenes are non-stop.

War Mart: Action Heroes for Grown-Ups

Well-crafted action hero stories can give a lift to a film franchise and turn it into a billion dollar industry. As with Bourne and Ethan Hawke, Bond is a silhouette against a flow of vast historical forces that shape the dramas and give substance and plausibility to the characters. It may be a struggle against the criminal tides of drug traffickers, or military warlords and political kingpins, against brilliant lunatic rich eccentrics bent on conquering the entire world. And carefully wrought action films create box office success.

Bonding and Bondage: The Captive Audience and Long Distance Spying

The progenitor of the enormous Bond Success was not the classic, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* (1965) rendered beautifully into film by Martin Ritt, Richard Burton, and Oscar Werner. However, enthralling, *The Spy* was not a Bond-type thriller; rather it was a grim study of espionage in the realism style of 1960s British cinema. In it we see the duplicities, hypocrisy, and traitorous relations of spies and secret police across, under, and around the Iron Curtain. The film was hailed not only because of its superb script and distinguished actors but also because of its fine monologues and dialogues and sophisticated political

introspections about the futility of the Cold War. There were none of the hair-raising action scenes one finds in Bond/Bourne movies and kindred films. The hero dies of despair through a suicidal act of loyalty to an incidental love interest caught up in the swirl of events. This is a minor dramatic sequence; the real energy emerges in the western spy's trial. In a riveting court room scene a clever double-cross occurs amid the fascinating debates about the ethical issues of the East/West political struggle. In Le Carre's films (*Tinker, Tailor…, The Spy…*; *The Drummer Girl*), we also find characters caught up in morally and ethically ambiguous circumstances; whereas in the Fleming and Ludlum plots, the bad guys are standard psychotics and/or wonderfully wicked cads and scoundrels.

The spies represent an old but newly invigorated type of adversarial conflict fought in street clothes by a few individuals. And with the infusion of some hilarity, lone rangers such as Bond and Bourne, equipped with high-tech military gadgetry may frustrate and decisively check the willful and outrageous behavior of enemies decisively.

Aggressiveness of this sort can be immensely entertaining—and in a sense, edifying by setting up a "good guys-bad guys" political/military scenario that leads audiences to ignore the corruption, crackpot authoritarianism, and the unpopularity of warfare. It presents another kind of "shock and awe" struggle that is visually startling, very violent, and easily psychologically gratifying.

When Bourne is compared to Bond he seems like a rumpled, sometimes glowering figure because he lacks Bond's gift for the easy, unrehearsed wisecracks or trenchant remark. On the other hand, those very qualities some deem as weaknesses—a lack of glitz and sparkle—these qualities seem like strengths in Jason Bourne. Another aspect of each is that Bond seems blessed with improbable luck, while Bourne appears doomed to a life of struggle and bad luck.

Bond was his typical heroic self in *Casino Royale* making clear that the 007 franchises have a will to live, with Bond reinventing himself as part Superman and part Batman. With Bourne, there is an apparent lack of aspiration for heroic grandeur. He elicits comparison through his American innocence combined with a fierce, cunning composite of personal traits that suggests with a nineteenth century frontier U.S. marshal.

Bond always needs a technician—usually an amusing fussy scientist type supplying 007 up with incredible gadgets. Bourne, meanwhile, is low-tech but self sufficient, fast thinking, and able to hobble together weapons and tactics that he needs for survival and the success of his mission. In effect, he is an ingrained American pragmatist able to improvise at a moment's notice.

The Flat World of Globalization

With new character actors and new films the question is, does the Bond approach to the world still work? What are the operative paradigms shaping the Bond and Bourne cinematic stories and adventures?

In *Casino Royale* or *Tomorrow Never Dies* there are not explicit, Cold War foes. In the integrated world of globalization, the distinctive identities and borders

of governments, criminal organizations, and nations are blurred and appear to be disintegrating. Adversaries are not clearly identified and the enemy becomes problematic; friends and allies often seem interchangeable. Indeed, the cast of enemies and friends is often in doubt until the bitter end.

At one level, the anxieties about jobs and economic survival now infect the affluent west. At another, the threats to our life-styles are challenged by ominous nuclear and terrorist threats. Our own communities offer haphazard sometimes unreliable facts about the daily scheme of things. All of this amounts to a potpourri of alienation and inner fear that affects many of us. Bourne plays out some of this psychological turmoil in interesting ways. He is bedeviled by lies and betrayals from those he most trusted and to whom he has sworn loyalty. These scenarios are departures from the conventional exotic bad guys whom Bond chases around the world. In general, Bourne's adversaries are more familiar; they are also less cartoonish and perhaps less entertaining.

The sly smile on the face of the pert, beautiful secret security agent on hearing that Jason Bourne's body had not been recovered from his ten story dive into the murky waters of New York's East River suggests the *Bourne Ultimatum* was not to be a rousing finale of the action spy thrillers. A Bourne "resurrection" is as likely as are more James Bond films. Audiences want more of the silent, taciturn Matt Damon character as much as the sleek, James Bond/Daniel Craig whose lifestyle is a mix of danger and glamor. The two heroes could not be more different or increasingly more alike.

Spy Land and Gang Land: Film Authenticity and Censorship

To make the *Godfather* into a successful film, it had to be real, so realistic that the audience would smell the spaghetti. Italian-Americans were recruited to produce, direct, and star in the epic film. Ian Fleming's and Robert Ludlum's fictional inventions were successful in print—as was Mario Puzo's novel. In order to provide some modicum of realism, Fleming (himself a former British MI5/6 officer) needed others to insure that his films possessed the subtle ruthlessness characteristic of the British secret services and at the same time some of the exciting ingredients of fancy cars, fancy and charming women, and compelling settings to attract audiences.

Thus began the contradictions in the search for authenticity. The head of Paramount movie studios hired as Albert "Al" Ruddy, a tall, tough, gravel voice, non-Italian to keep the project on track in New York.[1] Albert Broccoli put together the

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[1] The "ethnic purity" striven for as part of the production process that the top producer wanted dearly was compromised from the start: Al Ruddy is Jewish; James Caan who played Sonny Coreleone is Jewish; Robert Duvall who played the Coreleone Crime Family Consigliere,Tom Hagen, is Irish/German; Marlon Brando who played the Godfather, Vito Coreleone, was Irish/French; and Abe Vigoda, distinguished Yiddish Theatre actor, who played the role of Tessio, a capo regime close to the Godfather mischievously claimed that he was Lakota Sioux.

myriad components to make the Bond films. Broccoli was not a cinematic auteur, but a hardworking Hollywood moviemaker who saw great potential in the Bond stories.

In the case of *The Godfather* it had to be set in the 1940s consistent with the novel's narrative while in the Bond stories, adjusting story lines in the films to current events seemed quite plausible in view of the political crises occurring almost daily.

In contrast to the American tradition of gangster films, *The Godfather* was a "talky" crime opera interspersed with short violent episodes of sheer depravity. Likewise, the Bond films broke with the successful traditions of spy thrillers that were largely talk-filled slow-moving stories, by injecting a good deal of high-velocity violence, car chases, and thrilling scenes of daring and high-risks.

Concerning the veracity of the scripts and reliability of the story lines, Puzo claimed that he did very little research and that he knew no Mafiosi personally. Fleming was himself a spy. But what movie fan could tell who of the two had more genuine, reliable information upon which to mold plots and characters?

The Mafia Makes an Offer…

When word spread that *The Godfather* was being developed into a blockbuster picture, one mafia boss rose up in defiance. While most mobsters shunned the spotlight, Joseph Colombo, the media-savvy head of one of the New York crime families, brazenly stepped up ready for prime time TV. Colombo was angry (or so it seemed) at the FBI's interest in his activities—which included loan-sharking, jewel heists, income-tax invasion, and control of a $10 million a year interstate gambling operation that was a formidable sum of money in the 1970s. He turned the tables on the bureau, charging it with harassment not only of him and his family but also of all Italian-Americans. In an outrageously bold move, he helped create the Italian-American Civil Rights League, claiming that the FBI's pursuit of the mob was in fact persecution and a violation of civil rights. Therefore, a major goal, a top priority of the League, was to eradicate the word "mafia" from the English language. Colombo contended that it had been turned into a one-word smear campaign. "Mafia? What is mafia?" he asked a reporter in 1970. "There is not a mafia. Am I the head of a family? Yes. My wife, and four sons and a daughter. That's my family."

What began with the picketing of FBI offices in March, 1970 soon grew into a crusade with a membership of 45,000 and $1 million war chest. An estimated quarter of a million people showed up at the inaugural rally of the league in New York City in order to put the feds and everyone else on notice. "Those who go against the league will feel [God's] sting," said a defiant Colombo.

The film *The Godfather* quickly became the league's no.1 enemy. "A book like *The Godfather* leaves one with a sickening feeling," reads a form letter the League addressed to Paramount and many elected government officials. A rally in Madison Square Garden in Manhattan raised $500,000 to stop production. It seemed that the mafia did not want the film made. In California, the Los Angeles Police Department warned Al Ruddy one of the major producers that he was being tailed by unknown persons.

Along with Joe Colombo and the mob, the producers of *The Godfather* had to contend with none other than Frank Sinatra. Sinatra despised *The Godfather* as a book and as a movie, and for good reason: Johnny Fontane, the drunken, whoring, mob-owned singer turned movie star enters Puzo's novel drunk and fantasizing about murdering his "trampy wife when she got home." This caricature was widely believed to have been based on Sinatra. In his desire to rise from singer to actor, Fontane also seemed to resemble Al Martino who had actually performed in mob night clubs and in Las Vegas. Phyllis McGuire, of the famous singing trio, the McGuire Sisters, who was the girlfriend of Sam Giancana, top Chicago gangster, thought that the Puzo character, Johnny Fontane, was modeled after Al Martino.

While Mario Puzo's acquaintance with his subject matter was indirect, Ian Fleming himself may have been the model for James Bond. During World War II, he reached the rank of Commander in the Royal Navy (the uniform of which 007 disports himself from time to time.) It is very likely that Fleming's activities in various clandestine operations helped to shape the plots and story lines of several of his novels and screenplays. Fleming most likely appropriated the details of events not well known by the public and fictionalized them in order to create entertaining, dramatic stories for novels and screen plays. However, the stories may have also served other more recondite purposes to facilitate and enhance political propaganda purposes. They may be utilized to describe the threats that enemies pose as well as depict the technological resources they are alleged to posses that makes their threats, real or potential, credible. Many Bond films in a uncanny way allude to real national threats from hostile state and non-state adversaries-real or imagined.

In the case of Robert Ludlum's popular character spy, Jason Bourne, he reflects a paranoid view of the world in which global corporations, military cabals, and governmental organizations threaten to undermine the status quo. Jason Bourne is a hero enmeshed in a web of intrigues, where friends and enemies are often indistinguishable. The plots in Bourne films show the hero caught up in struggles initiated by right wing groups or surrounded by enemies outside his agency but also within it. This is a situation that Bond rarely confronts. What is note worthy about Jason Bourne is that he suffers from an agency induced amnesia where the memory of his former life has been erased.

Matt Damon, the star of the Bourne series of films, also had the principal role in the film *The Good Shepherd* which is loosely based on real events concerning the origins and early years of the CIA. Robert DeNiro who directed the film said in an interview that he disliked the flashy violence of the Bond type films. In his film, the violence and high powered action were muted as in the tradition of the Le Carre projects. Spying is a gentlemen's game, apparently.

The Godfather Provenance

Mario Puzo said that he found a model for his godfather protagonist in the transcripts and videotapes of the nationally televised Kefauver Hearings in the early 1950s which paraded on live TV more than 600 gangsters, pimps, bookies,

politicians, and shady lawyers before an incredulous, stunned American public. A major star of the televised Hearings that Senator Kefauver and his political cronies confronted on national television in the early 1950s, was the New York gangster Frank Costello, known as the "Prime Minister of the Underworld." Costello (Francesco Castiglia) was a Mafioso and head of the Mangano Crime Family. His career involved gambling and political corruption. During the 1940s, Costello pulled the political strings in Tammany Hall, the democratic party headquarters of New York City. On wiretaps, court judges and political officials could be heard obsequiously thanking Costello for the assistance he furnished in making their careers advance. With his rough and raspy voice, his silky public persona, and personal elegance, Costello was the clay from which Puzo began to create his main character Don Vito Coreleone.

Puzo, Coppola, Brando, and others associated with the production of the film claimed that they saw *The Godfather* not so much as a crime drama—perhaps the greatest in American cinema—but as a "family movie," a film that reveals the social and psychological journey of struggling immigrants facing prejudice because of their ethnic background, but who manage nonetheless, to deal with societal rejection and discrimination and manage by extraordinary means to achieve the American Dream.

But, the Coreleone family is scarcely believable as a typical American family struggling heroically in the way that families in *I Remember Mama*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, and *How Green was my Valley* managed to cohere and love each other in terms of "family values" despite all the inequities they experienced. All these Hollywood productions were set in the elegiac past and focused on the stability of the family as a source of unwavering strength. *The Godfather*, on the other hand, focused on another, more ugly dimension of the struggle for social acceptance and social mobility. Its reception was indicative of its verisimilitude with reality.

The Godfather's director and crew did their sociological homework insofar as their film depicted a criminal enterprise interspersed with scenes of everyday life—hardly bucolic though they were. The production offices were dominated by bulletin boards with 8×10 photos of gangsters, gangland slayings, and mobster funerals in the 1940s and 1950s along with endearing scenes of baptisms, marriages, graduations, marriages, and other scenes of ordinary life that might stimulate and encourage staff creativity.

The Mean Streets: Shock and Awe

In the meantime, Joe Colombo's Italian–American Civil Rights League was strong-arming merchants and residents of Little Italy to buy League decals and put them in their shop windows in order to show their support of the League, as well as their condemnation of *The Godfather*. The League threatened to shut down the Teamsters union locals which included truck drivers and film crew members who were involved in making the film. On two occasions the Gulf and Western Corporation

building in Manhattan was evacuated because of mob bomb threats. It is alleged that the Colombo family personally threatened the producers to stop production.

At a meeting between the film producers and Joe Colombo, the mafia don wanted the word "Mafia" deleted from the script. Not a problem it turns out, since the word appeared only once in the shooting script, but Colombo had other fish to fry. He wanted the proceeds from the world premier of the film to be donated to his Italian American Civil Rights League as a goodwill gesture. The producers agreed. It turned out that the payoff never happened—or, no one will admit that a shakedown occurred.

Greg Scarpa, Sr., a mafia solider, was a potent and charismatic fixture at League events. A natural at politics, he would incite and inflame the meetings: climbing onto a flatbed truck; or grabbing a microphone and delivering an rousing speech attacking the federal government and the FBI, alleging that it harassed Italian-Americans as mafia thugs. It turns out that Scarpa was a major informant for the FBI on mafia activities.

The cinematic treatment of the Cold War glorifies politics and warfare. Moviegoers can abandon their petty concerns of daily life and fantasize—seeing themselves as players in momentous dramas. As with organized crime, wartime in the Cold War sense becomes theater. The world, as seen through the adventures of action heroes, becomes high drama.

The Cultural Nostalgia of Nationhood

The action hero films that occupy such a prominent place in the national cultural ethos promote and glorify the nation. Typically enemies in Bond/Bourne films are depraved and demonic. As depicted in action hero films, the social world is starkly divided into the forces of light and darkness. An interesting aspect of this kind of political genre is that both the good guys and the bad guy look at themselves as victims. This psychology of victimhood is common across a wide range of conflicts. It is studiously crafted in these types of films that are often considered as a sort of "entertainment." The message is that the superheroes are good and just, and though their actions may seem extreme, they can be justified in terms of the stakes at risk.

In both Bond and Bourne films, victimhood or victimization is disguised but prevalent as an underlying theme in the portrayal of the enemies and antagonists. The bad guys are typically seeking to loot and plunder not only their own homeland but also those represented by Bond and Bourne—the good guys.

Peddling the Myths of Heroism

Even in the twenty-first century, it seems that we persist in clinging to the outdated notion of the single hero able to carry out daring feats of courage in the face of an overwhelming enemy. Such heroism, which audiences worldwide obviously enjoy,

is about as relevant as mounting a bayonet charge against tanks and machine guns. But the myth of heroism is essentially political and legitimated by mass entertainment productions. As such they seem to be a powerful psychological affirmation of the culture of political power.

While it seems unlikely, whether or not the Bond/Bourne films and others like them are deliberately produced to promote specific political t values and perspectives, the fact is that the Bond/Bourne films are part of a larger package of entertainment industry vehicles like Rambo that distract audience attention from the realities of actual combat and warfare that culminates in appalling consequences and costs. Yet the syndrome of violence they depict is seductive. It can easily become addictive and at the least offers fascination and thrills. The same analyses may have relevance to the scenarios of action/heroes operating in visually luxurious settings where heroes like *Batman*, *Shaft,* and others are caught up in the violence of huge cities and squalid ghettos. In the Monte Carlo casinos or in the streets of Harlem similar moral dramas are acted out: good cops versus bad criminals and good secret agents versus international criminal political actors.

In The Service of Eros: Dangerous Sexual Liaisons

Bond and Bourne—especially Bond—are pre-occupied with sexual relationships. In each film, there is a kind of breathless sexual abandon and the suggestion of wanton carnal relationships. In Bourne's case, he has lovers but they do not pre-occupy him. But like Bond he uses women to advance his other objectives. Is it about love? Indeed, love itself is dangerous politico-military environments is hard to sustain or establish. The erotic in war is like the rush of battle. It simply overwhelms. While these relationships may appear intense, however, they are also hollow. Bond and Bourne films are captivating in many ways because they convey an existential sense that nothing really matters except the elimination of the immediate threat. Their audiences are not beleaguered by larger issues concerning the justification of conflicts, yet the heroes are presented as "good guys".

Nihilistic Relativism

The Bourne movies have yet to treat the Bosnian conflicts in the Kosovo/Serbia, but the Bond series of films approached them obliquely in connection with the great power struggle over access to oil resources (Ferguson 1998; Hedges 2009).

A disturbing consequence of these events are the relations of duplicity on the part of the "good guys"—if that dubious appellation can still be applied

without embarrassment—that under the duress of war lying, prevarication, and the distortion of honest inquiry suffers irreparable harm (Gray 1998). The Serbs, to use another example, who eventually admitted that atrocities were carried out explained them away by claiming that everyone did such things in that war. The defense attorneys at Nuremberg for criminals like Goering, and Keitel as well as others claimed that the allied bombing campaigns over German cities were mass atrocities so that Nazi actions against Jews, Russians, etc., constituted a form of retaliation that sought to discourage the continuation of the allied assaults on innocent German civilians in the urban areas. Hannah Arendt pointed to this wide-spread attitude in Germany at the end of World War II. She labeled it "nihilistic relativism." She believed that it stemmed from Nazi ideological propaganda which asserted the view that all facts could and would be altered and all Nazi lies should be made to appear true. Reality in this epistemological fantasy became a conglomerate of changing circumstances and slogans that could be true one day and false the next (Arendt 1966).

The point these considerations is that illusions punctuate our lives, just as movies do. Even the great anti-war film, *All Quiet on the Western Front,* based on the novel by Maria Remarque (1958) was interpreted as a frank admission of what really happened, could happen, and has repeatedly happened but was written and the film made according to some critics, as a propaganda weapon to absolve German brutality and nationalist chauvinism. However, as the film made clear, German suffering was starkly painful and challenged the idea that only allies suffered grievously. It implied that one rationale or cause for fighting was as rotten or depraved as the others.

Conclusions

Typically, action spy films involve a hero facing multiple threats. Some act synergistically on the principal character, driving the victim down into an extinction vortex from which he (or she) miraculously emerges intact. However, the trend in such films is toward a uniformity of plot and character qualities which may spell an end to the distinctive structures and features of action hero genre, despite the brilliant technological accomplishments of film makers. The spy films genre is sometimes uplifting jingoistic or depressingly realistic but always entertaining. Bond and Bourne films, as with other successful spy and action movies, must possess a "plausibility factor" built into their plots and stylized presentations. Bond symbolizes the aristocrat as defender of the realm, and Bourne's puritanical cast of mind and behavior—his countenance—is attuned to the vaunted individualism of American mythical history. Why such films are deeply appealing to broad mass audiences even though they are so predictable and violent illustrates the power of the culture to affect creative energy and its intrinsic appeals.

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Chapter 5
The Cult of Celebrity: How Hollywood Conquered Reality

Introduction

The essay examines the role of Hollywood that quintessential creator of social dreams, in producing cinematic images of social reality. The world Hollywood depicts is shaped by the glamorous slipstreams of stars and adventures, making up the drama, joy, pain, and capricious rhythms of everyday life.

Is Hollywood, which has been the entertainment site of major technological breakthroughs in twentieth century filmmaking, an instrument by means of which shadowy political/economic elites manipulate our vision of the real world we live in? And given the huge business inputs in the entertainment business, can Hollywood exercise artistic freedom without a moral/political squint?

There's no Business Like Show Business

Filmmakers have emerged as some of our most influential populist historians. The film, *JFK*, for example, presented a conspiracy theory of the assassination of John F Kennedy in which the director Oliver Stone admittedly took dramatic license with known facts for the sake of the coherence of his plot. The presidential murder, according to Stone, was much like coup de'tat. Driven by deeply felt beliefs, Stone appears to have deftly manipulated unwieldy facts into a seamless conspiracy theory that resulted in an admittedly exciting, but unreliable film.

We need to remind ourselves that the techniques of the theater and cinema have seeped into politics, religion, education, warfare, crime, and commerce (Adorno 2002). Real life "stars" not only enable us to identify with images on the screen or TV, but we may see ourselves as the main characters and imagine how an audience would react to each event in the movie of our life (Gabler 1998). Such fantasy-building, according to Gabler, is the power and inventiveness of celebrity culture that also happens to be integral to the very popular action/hero Bond and Bourne

films. With Bond and Bourne we too can generate, unconsciously perhaps, interior personal screen plays molded on the production values of Hollywood, television, and commercial agencies whose technologies are as sophisticated as any film and TV entertainment corporations.

In American society and other developed nations, the film industry and rock music fields have been the cradles that give birth to celebrities. The high technologies in the culture have not so much nullified or displaced institutions like religion, but have transformed and modified them. The adulation of John Wayne, Marilyn Monroe, Michael Jackson, Judy Garland, Elvis, the Beatles, Madonna, and so on, seems like a return to Roman/Greek polytheistic cultures with many divine figures and household gods. Billy Graham, Rev. Joel Osteen, Pope John Paul II, and a host of lesser personality types fill TV screens; their popularity serves as testimony to the influence of film/TV technologies.

Film and its related technologies, TV, radio, and musical recordings, tend to define what it means, and how we identify our place in society. The camera, the microphone, the TV set, and cell phone have had profound impact on our culture. At its core, one could say that the cult of celebrity—of which the Bond/Bourne films are good examples—represent the denial of death and offers an illusion of immortality (Hedges 2009). And they do more.

In Hollywood, the Lourdes of celebrity mania, there is a cemetery in Los Angeles—the Hollywood Forever Cemetery—, which is advertised as the final resting place for the stars. During World War II the English novelist, Evelyn Waugh, worked in the film studios and learned about the extravagant burial rituals and sites of film luminaries. His novel, *The Loved One*, is a biting, satire about the eccentricities of the stars and their need for immortality (Waugh 1947).

An essay by anthropologist Horace Miner about a mysterious group of people initially puzzled his students until they were told, or discovered, that the "Nacirema" were actually "Americans ["America" spelled backwards]. The fascinating aspect of this essay has to do with its accurate descriptions of American customs, cultural values and folkways, in essence, everyday life seen through the scientific lens of social ethnography. Miner described, for instance, even the practices of dentistry and the behavior of medical personnel in hospitals (Miner 1956). Similarly, in celebrity culture we have our talisman, our gods, divinities, and sacred sites: Graceland (Elvis), Never Land (Michael Jackson), the Isle of Serenity (Princess Diana), and The Eternal Flame (JFK). Auctions in prominent art houses voluntarily offer wealthy clients an opportunity to own relics of a celebrity in the hope, perhaps, of a magical transference of celebrity power. For example, Andy Warhol's $40 swatch watches sell for thousands; even while living destitute, stars sell off their talismans: Elmelda Marcos sold her high heel shoes; Cher her 200 LasVegas Stage outfits; Liberace his fur coats and rugs. These items are cherished like relics among ancestor cults in Asia and Africa. In the modern Catholic Church, pilgrims travel to Fatima, Lourdes, and now Graceland which receives nearly one million visitors a year; and when celebrity items are not made available, they are stolen: Jim Morrison (The Doors rock group), James Dean (actor), and Buddy Holly (rock musician) have had their gravestones uprooted and carted

away by worshipful, distraught fans. Is it farfetched to suppose that the type of celebrity bred in the Hollywood dream factories is not much different from other forms of adoration that are emotionally akin to some politically incandescent ideologies such as Nazism and Communism whose doctrines and charismatic representatives have attracted elements of the intelligentsia?

In 1953, Milosz published *The Captive Mind* which addressed kindred questions. He studied his contemporaries and their self-delusions concerning the autocracy that held Czechoslovakia in its grip. Milosz's insights into the thrall of Stalinism covered the melancholy political journey Czech intellectuals made from autonomy to servitude. Milosz' study concluded that the transformation of the intelligenstia stemmed from a need for a "feeling of belonging." He brilliantly dissected the state of mind of the fellow traveler, the deluded idealist, and the cynical time-server. His work was in the debunking tradition of Milovan Djilas's study and confession of communist oppression (Djilas 1973), Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* with its sad account of painful duplicities among party leaders and government officials, and Raymond Aron's powerful indictment of the hypocritical intellectual classes in his *Opium of the Intellectuals* (1955).

The issues central to these informative works concern the true believer's state of mind (and body)—that is to say, the person who has identified with History and who enthusiastically align themselves with political systems that deny them their freedom of expression. To think about cultist delusions as a form of psychointellectual captivity opens up a wide range of behaviors and social actions to analysis. Many forms of sclerotic political expression that are found in Fascism, Communism, and other totalizing ideologies are familiar territory to students of cultist sects affiliated with various types of fundamentalist Christianity or Islam. Indeed, there are myriad forms of psychic captivity. Economists committed to the master paradigmatic concept of the "market" when analyzing consumer behavior, and buyer/seller dynamics in commercial activities tend to be tied to beliefs in unelectable social laws that presumably govern these activities. As with physicists loyal to theories of gravity and thermodynamics may fail to appreciate the explanatory powers of alternative interpretative models that are not theoretically dependent on Newtonian and Quantum physics. In fact, the "market"—that sacred, conservative symbol and totem of Capitalism is an abstraction like "dialetical materialism." The market is at one ultrarational trumping every other economic process; it is the acme of unreason—its reality is not open to question.

Celebrity Worship

During WWII in the Pacific campaign, John Wayne visited wounded marines in a hospital ward in Hawaii. Wayne, who never served but made several very popular films such as *They Were Expendable, The Sands of Iwo Jima*, was booed by wounded soldiers. Apparently, the shocks of combat made them realize that Wayne and others were in the business of staging illusions for mass consumption.

Celebrity worship is not limited to film stars or rock musicians; it is pervasive. Billy Graham is adulated worldwide. Today, others such as Pat Robertson and Joel Osteen enjoy stardom, fame, and celebrity power. These Christians celebrities travel in private jets, limousines, and are surrounded by bodyguards. They, like David letterman, Jay Leno, and others cultivate the same sort of intimacy with an audience and like other successful celebrities, they amass personal fortunes. The devotion around these people is similar to the frenzy surrounding political messiahs like President Obama, or the devotion of millions of fans for Oprah Winfrey. We seek to be like them because we yearn to see ourselves in those we worship.

Another celebrity fad TV production is *American Idol*—one of the most popular shows on American TV. The show travels to American cities in a nationwide search for contestants who may eventually get to Hollywood and obtain lucrative studio contacts. This is nothing new in American broadcasting. Decades ago on radio there was the Major Bowe's *Amateur Hour* where people from every conceivable background performed before a national audience hoping to achieve stardom and success. The image-making power of modern media is evident in the brilliant visual spectacles of professional wrestling that was at one time a seedy pastime with a small audience. Today, it is a major media industry with huge national audiences.

The Seditious Joy of Professional Wrestling: Other Types of Stardom and Fame

Professional wrestling as distinct form of Greco-Roman wrestling was an Olympian sport and college athletic activity that operates, for its audiences, as the French semiologist Roland Barthes tells us, as a moral struggle (Barthes 1957).

Wrestling is a political phenomenon. The matches pit the symbolic representations of good versus evil. During the contest, the rules are violated when the cupidity that governs the spectacle demands it. Winning is everything; right and wrong do not actually matter; they are nothing more than expedient norms; (hence the huge hysterical crowds of low-brows, middle-brows and increasingly high brows) who are thrilled by the explicit displays of deceit, fraud, rule infractions, and gratuitous simulated violence. However, crowds that make a huge, growing audience for professional wrestling are not fooled by the antics of the wrestlers. The matches and the spectacle are understood as theater; but the hypertropic energy and power of fan emotion and hysteria that fill arenas where matches are presented seem tainted with cynicism and hilarity suggesting that the audience sees the events as staged. Fan outlets and releases are almost purely animal. If the world is rigged against you, if those in power stifle us (recall the frenzy on the film *Network* which featured a doomed, demented rebel who beseeched his audience in fiery tirades to cry out that they would not "take it anymore!"); if those in power outsource our jobs; foreclose on our homes—then, one must cheat back; do what must be done to survive. Duplicity is a part of life and not surprisingly, most

popular wrestlers openly defy and taunt their employers but rarely upset the staged events; however, distasteful the manipulations and antics of the event may appear to the wrestlers themselves and their audiences.

More than 40 years ago, Daniel Boorstin wrote that in contemporary culture the fabricated and the theatrical have displaced the natural, the genuine, the spontaneous until social reality, society, and its cultural frameworks, appear to be something like elaborate stagecraft. The images are constructed by puppet masters—publicists, marketing and sales departments, TV and movie producers, advertisers, pollsters and a legion of manipulators of one kind or another who fill the TV screens, radio broadcasting, communication networks, and media spaces across the entire country (Boorstin 1961)

The media celebrity worship that emerges from the masters is not limited to the United States. Many examples may be cited: Eva Peron of Argentina, Kim Il Sung of North Korea, Nelson Mandela of South Africa, and Sukarno of Indonesia. The greatest celebrity of the modern era is probably the Emperor of Japan—more than John Paul II, or Hitler at the height of their respective fame or infamy.

Almost all of the most memorable celebrities have come from humble origins and their nondescript backgrounds are held as proof that even we, people from humble origins, can be adored and achieve worldwide fame. Celebrities like Oprah Winfrey, up from nowhere to billionaire TV queen and advisor of Presidents enjoys a kind of sainthood, which proves that nothing is impossible socially, psychologically or financially (Baudrillard 1970).

We understand the cult of celebrity as an expression of narcissism where superficial charm, self-importance, a need for constant stimulation, grandiosity; a penchant for deceitfulness, deception, and manipulation—all classic traits of psychopaths appear to be functional personality affects. Once fame and wealth are achieved, they become their own justifications, their own moral compass. How one gets to the top, or fills one's pockets is largely irrelevant. Once you get there, those questions are no longer asked, as the sleek fox-like schemer Gordon Gecko in the film, *Wall Street* chides his audience during a meeting in which his snide, smug, and self-serving rhetoric topple the nervous executive leadership of a large finance corporation he is seeking to acquire. "Greed is good" he chortles to the delight of his greedy audience of stockbrokers and go-getters. Gordon Gecko is another celebrity-creature that Oliver Stone initially constructs as a player in one of the wildest films about the cutthroat financial circuses that typify a routine day at the Wall Street stock exchange.

The Debut of Celebrity Types

In recent years, the perverted ethics of "get what you can, anyway you can" gave us a parade of Wall Street bankers and investment brokers that damaged the nation's economy and caused suffering for untold millions through egregious misuse of investor wealth and savings. Brokers and financial analysts stole

from people who trusted them to generate the funds for a decent retirement and absconded with monies set aside for a grandchild's education. The consequences have been financially catastrophic. Concerned with the psychological damage persons may experience because of exposure to Hollywood-type dream factories, the great critic, Walter Benjamin observed that "the cult of the movie star, fostered by the money of the film industry, preserves not the unique aura of the person but the "spell of the personality, the spell of a commodity" (Benjamin 2009).

Image making and its effects can emotionally distort individuals. According to C. W. Mills "The professional celebrity, male and female, is the crowning result of the star system that makes a fetish of competition." In America, this sociopsychological process is carried out to the point where a man who can knock a small, white ball into a series of holes in the ground with more efficiency and skill than anyone else; thereby, gains access to the President of the United States. It is carried to:

> The point where a chattering radio and television entertainer becomes the hunting chum of leading industrial executives, cabinet members, and the higher military. It does not seem to matter what the man is very best at; so long as he has won out in competition over all others, he is celebrated. Then a second feature of the star system begins to work: all the stars of any other sphere of endeavor or position are drawn towards the new star and he toward them. The successful, the champion, accordingly, is one who mingles freely with other champions to populate the world of the celebrity (Mills 1956, p. 74).

The Degraded Underside of Glamour and Celebrity

There is a universe of celebrity culture whose benchmarks may become the spectacle of humiliation and debasement that characterize some popular TV productions of which *The Jerry Springer Show* is one of the most widely seen. Watching the scenes of spousal abuse, sexual betrayal, and vile denunciation of each other, we recoil with "thank god that's not me." To watch this spectacle is probably an aspect of the same compulsion that drove ravenous crowds to the Roman Coliseum to witness a cavalcade of death; to the horrendous expectations of burning at the stake of religious heretics; to the excitement of the guillotine mechanically decapitating political villains, to the curious freak shows known as "The Ship of Fools," which sailed the rivers and sea ports along Europe's principal trading routes; and to savage racial lynchings in public squares of otherwise bucolic rural southern towns in decades past (Foucault 1965).

In the mass media David Letterman, Jay Leno, and a gaggle of lesser personalities sell us salvation, redemption, or revenge against our regimented existence. Our triumphs and sensational accomplishments happen on TV or occur in the movies, in reality TV, but rarely in real life. Celebrities now sell mortgages, life insurance, real estate, automobiles, and kitchen utensils; even Ronald Regan during a change in his show business career worked as a very successful salesman for the General Electric Corporation, presenting the familiar and comforting

face of the corporate state. Regan would sweetly claim in a subdued voice that for GE, "progress is our most important product." Regan became the President of the United States and his role in humanizing commercial products surely helped his image and subsequent political campaign.

Celebrities as Commodity Entrepreneurs

"Celebrity" is a status and a process that has transcended the role of actor/huckster. With TV and other media communications, celebrity as a prestigious status has been harnessed by corporate society to sell commodities which the public does not need. Most importantly, the political elites have exploited the machinery of celebrity—making in order to mold political figures into attractive candidates. A film with Robert Redford, *The Candidate*, illustrates this idea. In the film, as the son of a sitting governor, Redford plays the part of a maverick rebellious lawyer who allows himself to be exploited by political hustlers. Surprisingly, he wins election as a senator. The film ends with ominous dialogue that at first seems harmless and even endearing, but its ramifications are chilling. Upon wining, a baffled Redford exclaims to his Machiavellian master, "… what do I do next ?"

Politicians are not the only ones peddled; other false fantasies and intimacies are "personalized" and manipulated with facile skill. Rajek calls celebrity culture "the cult of distraction that valorizes the superficial, the gaudy, the domination of commodity culture." Further,

Capitalism originally sought to police play and pleasure, because any attempt to replace work as the central life interest threatened the economic survival of the system. The family, the state, and religion engendered a variety of patterns of moral regulation to control desire and ensure compliance with the system of production. However, as capitalism developed, consumer culture and leisure time expanded. The principles that operated to repress the individual in the workplace and the home were extended to the shopping mall and recreational activity. The entertainment industry and consumer culture produced what Marcuse called 'repressive desublimation'. Through this process individuals unwittingly subscribed to the degraded version of humanity (Rajek 2001, pp. 33–34).

This cult of distraction, as Rajek points out, masks the real disintegration of culture. It conceals aspects of the meaninglessness and emptiness of our own lives. It seduces us into wasteful consumption, and deflates the salience of moral issues that would otherwise arise as social injustice increases, inequality grows, costly empirical wars expand, the threat of economic collapse becomes chronic, and political corruption remains unchecked. The pursuit of status and wealth continues briskly and slowly destroys our souls and our economy. Families live in sprawling mansions financed by mortgages they can no longer afford; shopping which used to be the compensation for spending 5 days a week laboring in tiny cubicles and was a favorite hobby next to TV, has collapsed. American workers increasingly lose jobs that are shipped overseas and outsourced by corporate companies that have disempowered them, used them, and have now discarded them. The films, *The Matrix and the Matrix Reloaded* presented stark, vivid images of massive destruction of our environment that are too vivid to serve as realistic portrayals of

the veil of massive delusion enveloping society. But everyone gets the point of this sort of poetic license in film. It is over the top but a powerful indictment of how and what government deception might conceal and disguise.

In all of these obscene misrepresentations, celebrities manage to retain fame that seems free of responsibility; and their fame as C. Wright Mills observed, disguises those who possess true power: corporations and the oligarchic elites. Magical thinking about remedies for economic salvation, for sweeping medical care, for effective counter-terrorist policies, for truly effective drug control, for immigration problems, for crime in general, for prison problems, and so on, is the currency not only of celebrity culture but also of totalitarian culture. In Nazi Germany, the shrewd propaganda minister Gobbels, used film stars, opera singers, great athletes, writers, and other artists to speak positively about issues in industry, government, education, and many other topics of concern to the Nazi regime primarily because of their immensely influential affects on public opinion. And as we sink into an economic and political morass, we are still manipulated and distracted by the TV shadows flickering on the dark wall of Plato's cave.

George Orwell feared those who would ban books. However, according to Neil Postman, Orwell misunderstood cultural trends. Things are likely to be even more disturbing:

What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban books, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Aldous Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared that the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumble puppy. As Huxley remarked in *Brave New World Reinvented* the civil liberation and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny failed to take into account men's almost infinite appetite for distractions. In *1984 by* Orwell, Huxley added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World* inflicting pleasure controls them. In short, Orwell feared that what we hate would ruin us. Huxley feared that what we love would ruin us (Postman 1985, p. 80).

The novelist, Philip Roth has noted that we live in an age in which the imagination of the novelist lies helpless before what will appear in the morning newspaper or TV news show: Roth says that, "the actuality is continually outdoing our talents, and the culture tosses up figures daily that are the envy of any novelist." He further observed that the reality of celebrity culture "stupefies, it sickens, it infuriates, and finally it is even a kind of embarrassment to one's own meager imagination" (Roth 2009).

Reality TV shows and their loony contestants exemplify Roth's take on the tenuous grasp of the unreal quality of reality. *Celebrity Wife Swap*, a comparatively popular show, lacks any degree of self-consciousness. Show guests and contestants come naturally to exhibitionism, even if they become objects of audience ridicule. With a beguiling innocence, these characters open up their lives to millions

of viewers, even when it involves messy relationships and the exposure of personal disasters. It appears that nothing is off-limits.

In a society that prizes entertainment above substance as long as something can be packaged and turned into drama, it will do (Rieber 2007). Intellectual or philosophical ideas require effort to absorb. Classical theater, books, and newspapers are pushed to the margins of cultural life, remnants of a bygone literate age. They are dismissed as inaccessible and elitist unless they are capable of providing effortless entertainment. The popularization of culture often ends in its degradation. Arendt claimed that:

> The result of this is not disintegration but decay, and those who promote it are not the Tin Pan Alley composers but a special kind of intellectual, often well read and well informed, whose sole function is to organize, disseminate, and change cultural objects in order to persuade the masses that <u>Hamlet</u> can be as entertaining as *My Fair Lady*, and perhaps as educational as well. There are many great authors of the past who have survived centuries of oblivion and neglect, but it is still an open question whether they will be able to survive an entertaining version of what they have to say (Arendt 1993, p. 2007).

American Idol, Television, and Literacy at Risk

Once upon a time, humorless grade school teachers operated their classrooms like rooming house detectives: syntax and grammar, the skeletal structure of language, were learned or acquired in Maoist-like sessions of drill and chant under their piercing, ferocious gaze. Somehow, despite everything, it worked. Pupils who completed grade school could, for the most part, read and write acceptably (ABC news 2008).

Have we traded the printed word for the gleaming image? The answer is yes for many reasons: technology for one, has created a computer world with its mix of text and image. Public rhetoric is designed to be comprehensible to a 10-year-old child or an adult with a sixth grade reading level which ensures a larger audience of individuals who can grasp what is communicated. Most of us speak, think, and are entertained at this level. For critics, like Allan Bloom, America has been qietly transformed into a replica of Pinocchio's Pleasure Island with its promise of no school and endless fun (Bloom 1987).

Functional illiteracy is epidemic in North America. Nearly, a third of the nation's population is illiterate or barely literate—a figure growing by 2 million a year as the country continues to fill up with illegal aliens. Television which is a medium built around the clever manipulation of images along with computer technologies has become our primary focus of mass communication.

TV speaks in the language of familiar, comforting clichés, and sometimes exciting images. Its format from popular reality shows to sit-coms is fairly predictable. TV offers a mass, virtual experience that shapes the ways many people speak and interact with one another. It also creates a false sense of intimacy with elites, who are our actors, news people, politicians, business tycoons (like Donald

Trump), and sport stars. They are all validated and enhanced by the media. It is now the case that in the popular sense, if a person is not seen on TV then on some level he or she is not important. TV and media in general confer authority, prestige, and power.

Pundits, corporate advertisers, talk-show hosts, and gossip-fueled entertainment networks bombard viewers with cant and spectacle filling the airwaves or computer screens with information that is generated daily if not hourly. It would seem that not since the Nazi and Soviet dictatorships and perhaps the brutal authoritarian control of the Catholic Church in Medieval Europe, has the content of information been as skillfully controlled and manipulated. In this environment, propaganda begins to emerge as a substitute for ideas and ideology. Knowledge may be easily confused with manipulated emotion. Commercial products are brilliantly advertised such that a "selection" of one product–for example, one aftershave lotion, may be construed as an expression of individuality. Needless to say, being denuded of the intellectual and linguistic tools that would enable us to discern and separate truth from illusion, we may become cognitively impoverished. In an atmosphere of declining literacy, a fertile ground has been seeded for a new authoritarian or totalitarianism.

Junk Politics: Attractive Packaging and Political Theater

Celebrity culture has bequeathed to us what Demott calls "junk politics" (Demott 2003, p. 36). This type of political polemic does not engage in conventional demands nor does it pose ideas about right, justice, taxes, or foreign policy. Rather, it personalizes and moralizes issues instead of clarifying them. Its temperament is well suited to the culture of celebrity: it is impatient with articulated conflict and enthusiastic about America's optimism and moral character. Yet, nothing changes. For instance, we have to overhaul the health care system. Sales pitch rhetoric comes from some leading political figures and government officials about a 20,000 page piece of legislation that few have, or can read. Junk politics preempts analytical approaches to ideas by redefining traditional values where political courage is transformed into braggadocio. Junk politics reverses things: external threats are magnified and domestic problems are treated as if the were minor issues.

Within this framework, one's record does not matter and only what the local cable news shows say is reality prevails. Examining official records or comparing verbal claims of officials with written or published facts does not seem to matter. One lives in an eternal present. Do people really understand the predatory loan deals that plague working people, that drives them into foreclosure and bankruptcy? Can they decipher the fine point in credit card agreements that too often plunges them into unmanageable debt? Can they reasonably be expected to cut through the deception and complexities couched in impenetrable legal language in which documents are written? The public at large is hostage to the slogans,

clichés, and advertising jingles that manipulate and exploit them. One might conclude from this mayhem loosed on the public that life is like a state of amnesia where we are constantly seeking new forms of escapism or instant gratification.

Boorstin sees these games as self-defeating, and socially pernicious: "Nearly everything we do to enlarge our world, to make life more interesting… in the long run has the opposite effect… we transform elusive dreams into graspable images within which each of us can fit. By doing so we mark the boundaries of our world with a wall of mirrors" (Boorstin 1961, op.cit: 61).

The Most Essential Skill in Political Theater

If consumer culture is not much more than an artifice, then political leaders no longer need to be competent, sincere, or honest. They need to seem only to have these qualities; mostly, they need a story, a narrative—the reality and validity of which is irrelevant. It can be at odds with facts; what matters is the consistency and emotional approval of the story. Those who have mastered the art of entertainment are more likely to succeed in this exercise than the efforts of genuinely sincere public figures.

An image-based culture communicates values and ideas through narrative pictures and pseudo-drama. Celebrity sex scandals, drug use, and train wrecks; child abductions, hurricanes—these events play well on TV and computer screens. International diplomacy, labor union negotiations, and the discussion of convulsive financial crises by economic and business experts in impenetrable technical language do not yield exciting narratives to compare with images of 9/11 or the Madrid train terror attack. On the contrary, a rich governor of a powerful state patronizing call girls becomes a huge a story, whereas a politician who proposes financial regularity reform or advocates curbing wasteful spending is simply boring. As in the past when monarchies used court conspiracies to divert and mislead their subjects away from urgent questions, today salacious films and vicious political gossip, journalistic and media celebrity circuses such as Princess Diana's death in a paparazzi-inspired fatal auto accident distract us with their personal scandals and mishaps. They create our public mythology; film, stage, sports, and politics are the context similar to coliseum events that engage our attention with their convincing fantasies. The sheer power of this fabricated montage of petty film star jealousies and their ludicrous concerns is heightened when contrasted with the real world of al-Qaeda terrorism, the oil crisis, the collapse of Wall Street and financial markets across a world of teeming billions living side by side in impossible squalor. This contradiction scarcely impinges on a public consciousness warped by the illusion packaging of Academy Award fever. In such a framework, the mendacity affecting belief would seem not to matter when the system itself, including its political and social filters that process information, is psychologically sick. Will it suffice to expose the callousness and cruelty of the powerful corporate state? That in itself is an act of faith.

Postscript: The Moral Geography of a Place

"Hollywood" is a difficult concept to come to grips with. It is elusive and elastic at the same time. There is disagreement about its real estate boundaries, identifications, and location. Movie stars, of course, have never lived in the Hollywood tenement district, and by 1930 most of the big studios had relocated to the suburbs whose buildings are surrounded with gently purring high-voltage security fencing. According to Carey McWilliams, the actual golden age of Hollywood was "lonely, insecure, full of marginal personalities, people just barely able to make ends meet; a place of opportunists and confidence men, petty chiselers and racketeers, bookies and race track touts; of people desperately on the make (McWilliams 1946)".

The Hollywood in the imagination of the world's movie public was kept anchored to its namesake location by the inspired calendar of vital events like the annual Academy Awards authorized by the awesome-sounding Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences, by star-studded premiers of films, by footprint and handprint ceremonies outside famous restaurants and hotels, and by the magical investment of locals such as Grumman's Chinese and Egyptian Theaters, at the corners of Hollywood and Vine. These latter were tourist shrines-a celluloid Fatima or Lourdes part of the bus tour and its chief activities. But over the past generations, the real Hollywood has declined from picturesque dilapidation to hyper violent slum; even the rituals have more or less ceased and the façade has crumbled.

Rehab projects, another bland term for sociological hygiene programs in the region, unfortunately have not succeeded. Hollywood is, or was in harm's way, put there by land developers, builders, and politicians over the decades. Interestingly, while occupying a central role in America's fantasy life-Hollywood, Los Angeles has been destroyed over and over again in movies and films since the beginning of the twentieth century.

As Hollywood's immiseration eroded the historic links between movie-making entertainments for an adoring public of consumers, it gradually became possible to imagine the resurrection of Hollywood in a more affluent, more secure neighborhood. Thus, in Orlando Florida, Disney created a dazzling mirage of MGM's golden age. Later, another mammoth entertainment corporate conglomerate, MCA, produced its own idolized version of Hollywood Boulevard and Rodeo Drive at Universal Studios, Florida (Davis 1999).

The elopement of Disney and Hollywood to the politically hospitable environs of Florida, further depressed real estate values in real-time Hollywood. Plans for its rehabilitation today have been shipwrecked. One sees the "Hollywood" sign in the hills and old film tape of what it once was. It produces the kind of nostalgia that stirs people who see the pictures of the flag-raising on Iwo Jima, or the calamitous crashing to the ground of the Twin Towers on 9/11.

Hollywood/Los Angeles may have a resiliency, however, even if its fantasy. In the film *Independence Day* (1996), designed to serve as a model of movie land's sense of patriotism, aliens devastate the USA. In New York it is a tragedy, and

then in Los Angeles it becomes predictably, a farce. In the film, New York's Fifth Avenue (Manhattan) is a boiling tsunami of fire and brimstone pouring down the famous avenue. The depiction is horrifying. When the aliens turn to Los Angeles, however, who could identify with the caricatured mob of hippies, new age freaks, and gay men dancing in idiotic ecstasy on a skyscraper roof eager to greet the extraterrestrials? There is a comic undertone of "good riddance" when kooks like these are vaporized by the earth's latest ill-mannered quests.

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Chapter 6
Life Imitating Art: Organized Crime on Screen

Introduction

Organized crime or "The Mafia" as we sometimes call it, has in reality been largely dismantled by law enforcement and is most likely in its twilight. In contrast, American popular culture has breathed life into its image, and the real Cosa Nostra that was being bundled away into the psychic attic of American folklore has emerged as an intriguing and viable consumer product in media and other mass culture venues. The enduring popularity of "the mob" is best illustrated by the scope and depth of organized crime films from *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* (1912) to *The Departed* (2006) and *American Gangster* (2007) among others. Vigorous law enforcement based on RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) statutes has effectively purged the American mafia of its dominance in many vice and other lucrative illegal activities (Jacobs et al. 1999).

The movie mobster today is part of an enduring mystique. Most real mafiosi are dead, imprisoned, or awaiting indictment. The lag in mass cultural representations (which, for instance, celebrated the American cowboy long after he was extinct) is evidenced in the resurrection of the underworld of the Cosa Nostra whose violent, ugly past has served as material for thrilling, if not always realistic, film, and television stories. Similarly, although the American mafia is merely a shadow of its former self, the popular culture creates a different, exciting story. In the twentieth century, gangster films metamorphosed into modern mafia movies, deriving much of their substance from the compelling social narratives that make up the history of the southern Italian immigration occurring in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The aftermath of World War I, the drastic economic depression begun in the 1920s, and the imposition of puritanical Prohibition policies precipitated social and economic crises across America.

In the 1920s, the films of James Cagney, Edward G. Robinson, and others reflected these grim realities; their movies were gritty, tough, and possessed a roguish charm. The audience appeal was immediate and powerful; the moviegoing public demanded more—especially films with plots that audiences could

readily identify with, and characters who resembled real-life individuals in terms of their looks and mannerisms. Humphrey Bogart, who was not conventionally handsome, nonetheless emerged as a popular film star. Another ingredient for the popularity of gangster films popular, as arguably popular as *Gone With the Wind* (1939), were scripts containing sentimental family narratives. *The Godfather Trilogy* has many themes interspersed with its larger plots that have to do with personal family matters. Paradoxically, the success of such films—even with their familial themes—is that a psychological/emotional association clings tenaciously to the grim historic links of La Cosa Nostra and Italian-Americans. However, the criminal stereotypes of Italian-Americans promulgated by film is in conflict with the facts that show Italian-Americans as successful and distinguished in business, politics, sports, the arts, and professions. It must be said that films about the Mafia are not necessarily attempts to distort Italian-American cultural identity: films can simply overpower facts and overwhelm audiences. There is another difficulty associated with portrayals of gangsters, primarily Italian-American criminals, having to do with other types of distortions. At the risk of downplaying the Mafia's real-life role in union-busting, extortion rackets in retail businesses, labor racketeering, drug trafficking, and, illegal gambling, one expert says that in some movies:

> …hoodlums are transformed into folk-heroes, loveable patriarchs who want nothing more than a decent life for their families and a steady income for their unspecified business ventures (Parenti 1992, pp. 160–161).

The 1930s defined a genre of mob films that reflected the social pathologies gripping America. The films owed their popularity to the instability of the era, the result of the cataclysmic events of the World War, the subsequent economic depression, and the fearful reaction of Prohibition with its restrictions and punitive public policies of control and constraint (Hark 2007). During the era of Prohibition, the kindred problems that flowed from major events, the institutional failures of honest hard work and corruption in public agencies, became sources of inspiration for film makers. Their products reflected much of the appalling economic disarray and offered sharp social commentary on the nature of crime in a society disillusioned by the collapse of the American Dream (Leitch 2002).

Films such as *Little Caesar* (1930), and *The Public Enemy* (1931) made cinema icons of Edward G. Robinson and James Cagney; and *Scarface* (1932) with Paul Muni presented a dark psychological profile of a barely fictionalized Al Capone. These films chronicled the rise and fall of violent criminals, to be sure, but their popularity was a reaction to the instabilities of the times and the failure of social institutions that catalyzed the gangster scene. Inevitably, the gangsters in these movies faced a violent downfall which, presumably, was designed to remind audiences of the negative consequences of crime. Nevertheless, audiences still could and did identify with, or have sympathy for, the criminals, the anti-heroes—especially the jaunty, tough-talking types (Reith 1996).

Scarface was probably the most violent movie of the 1930s. Released in 1932, *Scarface* can be seen as an example of the American Dream shattered by brutal social realities of systemic corruption in the public and private sectors. This deepened the general gloom which, in turn, spread like a communicable disease

(Baxter 1970). The film had a substantial impact on the public and further, sparked opposition from the regulators of the film industry's Production Code over the incestuous overtones in the relationship between Scarface (Tony Camonte) and his sister. Eventually, film makers shifted their perspective in *G-Men* (1935) and in *Angels With Dirty Faces* (1938) where Cagney as a hard-bitten bad guy finally seeks redemption by pretending to be a coward in the face of his execution. This act of humility is prompted by the criminal's priest friend, (played by Pat O'Brien) who wants to discourage a group of boys from the glorification of the criminal life. Clearly, influential crime films had to accommodate the public's moral sense that insisted that criminals be depicted negatively in comparison with law enforcement and justice officers who were shown upholding law and order. Politics in the form of the Production Code joined with art to influence both scripts and characterizations (Christensen 2006).

Along with radio, film across the United States served to disseminate moral and social messages. This was in effect a political agenda that utilized mass culture to insinuate ideological values. For film and radio to survive, however, they were obliged to defer to the political brokers in these mass culture industries who functioned as agents of the status quo—meaning the values of the Temperance League, and those of the fundamentalist Christian movement that maintained a solid grip on the politics of the "Bible Belt" in the United States. Still, many films dealing with current events implied—and none too discreetly—that criminals were the creation of society. And for audiences in the bleak and dissolute 1930s that point of view seemed quite plausible. Indeed, the best, most realistic gangster films were those that mirrored the reality of crime in society. In short, the gangster film was a fairly reliable populist version of crime in the United States (Cogan 2008).

Prohibition

The Prohibition era began in 1920 with the passage of the Volstead Act enabling the enforcement of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Until that point in time, crime in the United States was mostly disorganized and localized. With the turn of the twentieth century, the local gangs that emerged in urban ethnic enclaves preyed upon immigrant populations. The Mafia formed small cliques operating extortion rings and vice activities in cities with Italian immigrant populations. Similarly, Chinese tongs, Irish gangsters, and others operated in their respective communities (Critchely 2008; Dash 2009). Until then, the only semblance of organized criminality was to be found in the gangs of gunfighters mustered by cattle barons to protect their grazing lands from intrusive settlers and plains Indians. While some gangs of former Civil War raiders and guerillas maintained their groups for a time after the Civil War ended, they disappeared as western territories formed and law enforcement emerged to curb violent, dissolute gunmen in the burgeoning settlements. Organized crime in the form of regional syndicates and enterprises that reached beyond local areas had to wait for the opportunities that Prohibition and new waves of immigration afforded.

In subsequent decades as World War I enveloped the world, Hollywood functioned as a psychological/sociological barometer in the United States, reflecting the phenomenon of rural banditry and local criminals who robbed banks sometimes in the role of small town "Robin Hoods" in regions depressed by drought and mortgage foreclosures on farmsteads. The rootlessness and its bitter aftermath that affected millions of people in the midwest and southwest created conditions of near anarchy with widespread crime in places with limited law enforcement personnel who were also hampered by statutes that constrained their pursuit of criminals (Hall 1980; Meyer 1980). Films were made and re-made of the gangster, Dillinger, who was dubbed "Public Enemy #1 and others such as" Baby Face Nelson," "Pretty Boy Floyd." These were gunmen and bank robbers who were mercilessly hunted down and destroyed in the streets and on the roads of American towns and cities (White 1981).

These persons would become successful as characters in films because of their value as news subjects; their exploits as free-wheeling thugs thrilled a nation weary with inert government, alienated by economic depression, and traumatized by the moral apathy generated by the Temperance Movement and its ally, the Anti-Saloon League. The postures of self-righteousness among such religiously radical groups for a time terrorized political and legal agencies in the United States (Okrent 2010). However, as the fledgling FBI increased its policing powers, along with state-wide law enforcement departments who modernized their equipment and upgraded the quality of personnel, criminal justice activities gained legitimacy in the eyes of the public, and popular opinion began to shift to the "good guys." With the slow swing to law and order, crime films did not disappear: they evolved into what many would see as a more balanced approach to crime.

However, the moral/ethical messages in mob movies became mixed: crime was wrong and unacceptable but also understandable. Al Capone and John Dillinger were condemned but were somewhat sympathetic individuals caught up in the economic/social maelstrom which they did not cause but did exploit. Gangster movies became more realistic, more mature, and comprehensive in their plots and character presentations—not everyone was just an unwitting victim of a massive economic dislocation; some criminals were clearly mentally disturbed and with other criminal psychopaths could find a place in an underworld driven by greed and violence. In the post World War I period, enriched by sophisticated technologies in production and market distribution, popular films dealing with organized crime were interesting character studies of the criminal mind and lifestyle and, occasionally functioned as film versions of socio-psychological essays that offered audiences not only escape into the fantasies conjured by Hollywood but in some instances, insight into a major social problem.

World War II and its Aftermath

By the 1960s, the social equilibrium of government and business was disturbed by revelations of a nationwide conspiracy that became known as La Cosa Nostra—"Our Thing." (President's Commission 1967). Prior to Joe Valachi's sensational

remarks before the McClelland Senate Investigative Committee about the organization of the mafia in the United States, most films could only hint at a nation-wide crime syndicate, and virtually none suggested or implied the existence of a mafia conspiracy that operated across the United States. Movies such as *White Heat* (1949), *Al Capone* (1959), and *On the Waterfront* (1954) made vague allusions to sinister, sophisticated criminal organizations, but none dared go beyond intimations and suspicions of a full-blown national crime syndicate that overshadowed local gangsters. However, it was not long before the stakes were ratcheted up with officials, law enforcement, and media sources interpreting government reports in terms that heightened fear by suggesting that the mafia lurked everywhere, that it intimidated local criminal groups in its unbridled quest for power; that it was an alien conspiracy of Sicilians and Italians formed into a secret, exclusive criminal brotherhood that threatened the integrity of local and national government through threats of credible violence and corruption. Such declarations and assertions re-enforced earlier governmental reports—the Kefauver Commission, in particular—which in 1950–1951, was the first national investigative body to shine light on the Mafia's alleged control of organized crime in the United States (Kefauver 1951). And beyond other claims from multifarious sources which could not meet legal verification processes, no substantive evidence, no courtroom-caliber material was produced to support contentions of a centralized Sicilian/Italian organization that dominated organized crime in the United States (Kelly 1994; Rogovin and Martens 1994).

Before the 1950s, evidence to support the idea that organized crime was predominantly Italian was unreliable. Films of that period which could be taken as a fairly dependable indicator of general opinion, would feature Irish, Jewish, and primarily WASP criminals in key roles. Actors such as Alan Ladd, James Cagney, Edward G. Robinson, and Humphrey Bogart played the major roles in big gangster films.

By the 1970s, thanks to journalists, law enforcement pundits, and fiction writers such as Mario Puzo in his novel, *The Godfather* (1969), the many conspiracies that actually constituted organized crime were conveniently collapsed into one—La Cosa Nostra. It is true that Italian-American gangsters have played prominent roles in organized crime since Prohibition. It is also true that some of these individuals reached positions of stature in various legitimate occupations and businesses including the Teamsters Union, construction industries, waterfront enterprises, and so on; and it is the case that mafiosi played roles in national and local electoral politics as well as involvement in foreign policy initiatives affecting the Cuban government. While all of this is undeniable, many of the incidents have been distorted and exaggerated for other purposes (Schlesinger 1979; Neff 1989; Albini 1971; Smith 1975). A consequence of all of these half-truths, specious claims, and questionable sources of information constantly repeated in the media resulted in an explosion of blockbuster films and TV series. The outcome has been that many people, not just in America, believe that something called the Mafia or La Cosa Nostra has dominated organized crime. Most will continue to do so as a result of the brilliant media depictions of events and personalities allegedly affiliated with the LCN as evidenced by, *The Sopranos* cable series (1999–2007) that mesmerized TV audiences in recent years and will be seen in syndication repeats for years to come.

It's Only a Movie

In a sociological study of a master fence (a person who handles stolen goods) the key informant, "Vincent Swaggi," believed that film characters strongly influenced the style if not the techniques of actual criminals. According to Swaggi, the notorious Joe (Crazy Joe) Gallo modeled himself on the actors George Raft who studied the behavioral styles of real racketeers such as Benjamin (Bugsy) Siegel. As a member of the Profaci crime family, Gallo also embraced the screen images of the actor Richard Widmark—who played a psychopathic killer in a mob movie. The eccentricity of Widmark's portrayal influenced Gallo's mode of dress, behavioral traits, and demeanor.

In testimony before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Robert Delaney, an undercover investigator for the New Jersey State Police, testified that:

> The movies Godfather I and II have had an impact on these crime families. Some of the members and associates would inquire…..if I had seen the movie. I said yes. They would reply that they had seen them three or four times. At dinner….in a restaurant I was with a officer and Joseph Doto, who is the son of Joe Adonis; he gave a waiter a plateful of quarters and told him to play the juke box continuously and to play the same song, the theme from *The Godfather*. Senator Nunn (asking a question): In other words you are saying [that] they sometimes go to the movies to see how they themselves are supposed to behave, is that right? Mr. Delaney: That is true. They had a lot of things taught to them through the movies. They try to live up to it. The movie was telling them how. (Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, 372).

In another instance, when Big John Ormento, a capo regime (a boss) in the Genovese Crime Family was arrested for drug trafficking, federal agents found in his home a copy of Frederic Sondern's book, *The Brotherhood of Evil* (1959). Philip Testa, a capo in the Bruno/Scarfo Philadelphia Crime Family was killed in a bomb blast in his home where investigators discovered videos of the Godfather movies, as well as a copy of Demaris's *The Last Mafioso* (1981) in which Testa had apparently made marginal notes and comments (Abadinsky 1997, p. 503).

Hollywood and Television: The Impact on the Underworld

Whatever the reading habits of gangsters, more of them saw movies featuring organized crime themes and characters. Sammy "The Bull" Gravano, the powerful Underboss of John Gotti's Gambino Crime Family in New York recalled his vivid recollections of *The Godfather* films:

> I left the movie stunned…. I mean, I floated out of the theatre. Maybe it was fiction, but for me, then, that was our life. It was incredible. I remember talking to many guys, 'made guys' [initiated mafiosi] who felt exactly the same way (Maas 1997, p. 93).

The film captured the way of life of the mafia as Gravano envisioned it, where honor, respect, brotherhood, and loyalty prevailed. In jail in 1993, awaiting trial on charges that if convicted would ensure a life behind bars, the dream utterly collapsed as a fraud. Soon thereafter, Gravano became a very effective government witness.

Joseph Pistone (aka Donnie Brasco) an FBI undercover agent who spent nearly 6 perilous years associating with members of the Bonanno Crime Family claimed that:

> "Wiseguys (mob members) love movies about wiseguys. They love being depicted on the big screen…. The Godfather? That movie makes wiseguys look like philosophers and noble warriors. Wiseguys know that movie (The Godfather) better than most film students" (Pistone 2004, p. 147).

Gangster films and the popular TV series *The Sopranos*, appealed to the vanity of pesky mobsters. Even when films depicted them as cruel and coarse, the classy technical aura of *The Godfather* and the heroic romanticism of the script valorized images of mafiosi as some sort of embattled but dignified individuals (Camon 2000). It is not Hollywood alone that explores the criminal world for script materials. According to Saviano, modern cinematic images of organized gangsters are influential among real-world hoodlums in Italy where new generations of Neapolitan Camorra bosses do not follow exclusively criminal pathways: they no longer spend most of their time on the streets with local thugs, nor do they carry guns as their predecessors did; they watch TV, often go to college, and frequently take legitimate jobs (Saviano 2007). Few in either the Sicilian Mafia or Neapolitan Camorra use the term, "Padrino" to describe a Boss. When *The Godfather* (Part II) was released, ethnic Italian crime groups started using the term "Godfather" to describe the Boss (Raab 2005). And many young American hoodlums adopted as part of their criminal costume dark glasses, solemn speech (that was still inarticulate), jump suits and fancy, customized tailored clothes after the brash, loud styles John Gotti displayed. As the boisterous head of the Gambino Crime Family, he struck a pose affecting an Al Capone image as the quintessential gangster. The need to be fashionable affected Italian mafiosi as well: Luciano Leggio, a Sicilian boss, wore dark glasses and jutted his chin when he strudded and posed for photos much like Marlon Brando's Don Vito Coreleone (Capeci and Mustain 1996). Some cammoristi, the Neapolitan equivalent of the Sicilian Mafia and American La Cosa Nostra, claim that they set the fashion and style for Hollywood representations of organized criminals. But this connection has always worked both ways. According to one of his major biographers, Al Capone was conscious of the fact that he had become through his massive notoriety, a fashion template for film gang bosses (Bergreen 1994). Howard Hawkes used Capone's career and public posturing as inspiration for his 1932 film, *Scarface*. Capone was sensitive about a scar that ran down his left cheek—a result of a barroom brawl in Brooklyn, New York when he worked as a bouncer for his relative and mentor Johnny Torrio who would later launch Capone's career in Chicago during the Prohibition Era. In Brian DaPalma's successful remake of *Scarface* in 1983, Al Pacino played the role of Tony Montana, a rising crime star in the refugee Cuban underworld of Miami. The drug kingpin meets a calamitous end in a spectacular shootout with Bolivian cocaine traffickers.

In Italy, cinematic images of gangsters are very influential among real-world hoodlums, as they are in the United States. As noted above, Sammy "The Bull" Gravano acknowledged the psychological impact that *The Godfather* had on him and other members of the Cosa Nostra crime families in New York. For Gravano

and others, the films romanticized the mafia way of life and provided a cultural context for otherwise strange, outlandish folkways and blood oaths. Vito Coreleone was the perfect archetype of a mafia boss: resolute, shrewd, intelligent, and determined to live realistically on his own terms rather than succumb to the misery of menial labor, the constant threat of poverty, and degrading prejudice. Film makers and the movie-going public seem utterly enthralled by the mystery and danger of Mafia criminality and avidly watch films and TV series on the mafia underworld.

The Godfather films influenced the way mafia members talked, handled weapons, dressed, and presented themselves in everyday life. Other films such as *Donnie Brasco* (1997), *Goodfellas* (1990), and *Casino* (1995), also made an impact on the thinking of gangsters and the public. Even the music of *The Godfather*, *Goodfellas*, and *Casino* would be heard at weddings, on cell phones, and in TV commercials to such a degree that mafia imagery has become iconic. However, not all the encomiums could blank out the captious views of some journalists. For Capeci, mafia movies were not valid guides to the mafia psyche; fabulous illicit profits and the artistic merits of film productions not withstanding, observers with unwavering eyes had serious misgivings about the adulation organized crime films evoked:

> "The daily routine involves grit, grime, self-interest, lying, cheating, backstabbing, pettiness, spontaneous violence, betrayal, and many other acts that conjure up the idea of killers without honor who will do almost anything to make a buck…. The Godfather ….has nothing to do with reality" (Capeci 2002, p. 209).

The Godfather Trilogy and the Sopranos Series: Panoramas of the American Mafia

The Godfather, III (1990) was reputedly based on a major financial scandal in the 1980s involving Sicilian and American mafiosi, Italy's largest bank, and the Vatican itself (DeStefano 2006). The last of the Godfather films focused on the globalization of organized crime, and its criminal activities in high-level finance conducted by persons operating in plush business suites rather than in slum ridden streets. Godfather III was not a success with the public even with an updated script. Perhaps, the ideas ran out of steam and a dutiful, interested public attended screenings but could not muster enthusiasm; unquestionably, the three Godfather films represent an addition to American cinematic folklore; Part III, the final film by Puzo and Copolla, ended an era of gangster movies and did so brilliantly in terms of cinematography, scripts, and performances by actors that have energized these movies in general.

The Godfather Trilogy offers a vivid look into a mafia dynasty—the Coreleone family. Following the Godfather films, *Goodfellas* (2005) showed that mafia crime films were not artistically exhausted. Since the 1970s, the mafia mystique had saturated segments of the entertainment media, spawning spin-offs such as the short

TV series *Honor Thy Father* (1990) based on autobiography of Joseph Bonanno (Bonanno and Lali 1983). But none has succeeded as the Sopranos which won Emmy awards in an unprecedented fashion. *The Sopranos* TV cable series represented a more sophisticated approach to narrative continuity and character development which contributed to a sober look into the contemporary realities of everyday life in some criminal milieu. Though the world of the Sopranos was not like the habitat or historical context of the Coreleones, and though it lacks the sweep and grandeur of the Godfather trilogy, *The Sopranos* was cutting edge. The series about relatively low-level New Jersey mobsters living in the shadow of the infamous "five families" of New York focused on Tony Soprano's trials and tribulations as an up and coming crime boss who was also working through a middle-life crisis involving issues concerning his marriage and teenage children who were beginning to ask sensitive questions about their father's occupation and reputation. The series was a dynastic-type contemporary soap opera, that worked. For six seasons, the show had legs with consistently good plots and character development. By the time it ended after 76 episodes, we had seen many Tonys—some calculating, others painfully sentimental, lecherous, paternal, paranoid, anxiety-ridden, psychopathic, and above all, greedy. His psyche was compartmentalized and often wounded in the fray of the hypocrisy that swirled around him. As with Vito and Michael Coreleone, Tony Soprano crosscut mob business with his personal family life and, not surprisingly, the outcomes were scarcely satisfactory.

Was Tony Soprano, as seen in a medley of characterizations, a modern archetype of a Mafia mob boss? Given his social and political outlooks on things, his personality is not especially puzzling or elusive, even though he sees a psychiatrist. Comparisons between *The Godfather* and *The Sopranos* could not be more revealing in terms of movie-making, television-production technologies, and plot structures. This aside, the ways in which the characters are presented goes beyond the need to fit them into the correct sociological roles and statuses appropriate to time, place, and cultural dynamics. For example, Tony Soprano is overweight, a slave to food, sex, and violence; he lacks the gravamen and the self-possession of Vito and Michael Coreleone. The screen images reflect the different natures of the characters. The Coreleones were grandees of the underworld surrounded by serious criminal colleagues such as the lawyer Tom Hagen, Vito Coreleone's consigliere (who is not Italian). In comparison, Tony Soprano's consigliere is farcical: Silvio Dante is a scowling pimp who runs the Bada-bing strip club/go–go bar, and does bad Al Pacino impressions. It goes on: Tony's wife, Carmela, is no Kay Adams(Michael Coreleone's wife), a whiny WASP outsider who is shocked by Michael's dubious business affairs. Carmela, on the other hand, is a nice Italian girl from the neighborhood who knows exactly who her husband Tony is, and what he does. And on occasion, she too is pugnacious and acts tough. Tony's children rarely show him respect—except when they're fearful of their father. His son "AJ" and daughter "Meadow" do not usually defer respectfully to Tony as Vito Coreleone's children did. The Coreleone children saw their father as a patriarch, as the Don who remained emotionally aloof, whereas Tony is the butt of his children's jokes. They call him "Mr. Mob Boss," to his face (Kelly 2007a, b).

The main producer of *The Sopranos* claims that the series is about the decline of the Mafia. By being set in the suburbs, the Sopranos characters are closer in lifestyle to middle-class Americans—as is the cable TV audience. Tony sees a psychiatrist. And the principal concerns of Tony's real family (as distinct from his crime family) are both familiar and ordinary: kids, school, health, illness, income, etc.

The huge success of *The Sopranos* appears to be based on factors unlike those which made *The Godfather* films, Part I and Part II, such smashing hits. The show's format is a serial drama/comedy with each weekly episode running approximately 1 h uninterrupted by commercials which means that viewers have more time with characters and plots than a 2 h film. As a result, viewers get to know more about Tony and the characters that make up his world than was possible with the Coreleones.

Interesting aspect of the series are the psychotherapy sessions with Tony's female psychiatrist. Not many episodes include scenes of Tony in a session with Dr. Melfi, but they are central components of the shows. Given Tony's chaotic character structure, therapy is a plausible activity; whereas it would be unimaginable to see Vito Coreleone or Michael participating in psychiatric consultations.

The sessions themselves are filled with surprises and letdowns and are often quite stormy with Tony grumbling, cursing, and slamming the door as he barges out; or, he is flirting and making passes at the doctor. Sometimes, there is genuine empathy between the doctor and the patient over a familial issue that makes the scene poignant. It is a remarkable achievement to have a mob boss regularly visiting a psychiatrist, a female psychiatrist, and make it plausible while not undermining the historical-sociological descriptions of the intrinsic misogyny that has defined organized crime gangsters. Tony seems less remote and reclusive, emotionally richer than some of the criminal types among the Coreleones. However, in therapy sessions Tony skirts the "omerta" business and deftly manages to avoid disclosures about his life that are explicitly criminal.

No matter how convivial Tony's relationships appear, the show does not let us forget that he and his criminal cronies are out there scheming, and intimidating people to make money. When people are killed, it is emotionally jolting.

Mafia movies, more so than the average crime film, are more likely to examine ordinary family life and the anxieties it generates in the life of the criminal. For example, Michael Coreleone felt the pressure from his wife to become a legitimate businessman with no shadowy, illicit enterprises on the side. And his failure to live up to his promises led to the breakup of his marriage. Tony Soprano is man who inherits his mafia way of life and often pridefully invokes the mafia traditions of his uncle Junior and late father, Johnny Soprano, a mob capo but he realistically sees himself as doomed as the sacred traditions of the Mafia disintegrate. Tony lives in the twilight of the idols; these feelings are repressed but ultimately expressed in sessions with his therapist who helps him surface deeply embedded feelings that are painful, angry, and recurrent. Michael Coreleone at least has the consolations and advice of his father and mother when he is faced with doubts about his life and fate. Also, Michael has his thoughtful consigliere Tom Hagen, his sympathetic wife Kay, and loyal capos and soldiers, who enabled him to cope with his fears and doubts. On the other hand, Tony Soprano has Paulie Walnuts,

a headstrong wiseguy, his drug-addled cousin, Christopher, his yuppie wife, and a therapist whose doubts about the legitimacy of her therapeutic role exacerbate Tony's tense feelings which result in bouts of recurrent depression that produce fainting spells and erratic behavior.

The Sopranos episodes play with violence in seductive ways. Some scenes have no depth: the violence is parodied, like burlesque in slow motion. In the scripts, the dialogs beautifully replicate the prose rhythms of the characters. In the midst of this mayhem and gratuitous violence, there are bright spots of ebullient wit and comedy which is a defining feature of the Sopranos series. At the same time, we are reminded of the moral conflicts that form the basis of these dramas: the incipient horror that accompanies the realization that life is rather easily corrupted and confounded by constraints that each of us is capable of losing, meaning that each of us is vulnerable to the loss of our capacity for moral choice.

Michael Coreleone in *The Godfather, Part II* seems tormented by his murder of his brother Fredo—a hopeless, pathetic fool, caught up in a bizarre quest for personal power which ends ignominiously in the betrayal of his family. It is a dreadful act, with many implications clearly presented in the film. Michael murders his deceiving brother even though Fredo is older and deserving consideration. Similarly, Tony murders a young man connected romantically with his daughter, who deserved severe punishment by ancient mafia norms but whose life may have been spared; yet Tony acted impetuously and resolutely—at least he thinks so—in the name of some obscure mafia customs that now seem even to him anachronistic and irrelevant. Tony and Michael appear at times morose and self-loathing, resenting, it seems, rather than regretting, their criminogenic ways. Such a situation creates some conundrums of power: men with the control over life and death sense that they are trapped and constrained by the very rules and resources that give them overwhelming informal authority to forcibly intimidate others; and in a terrifying act of self-discovery, Tony and Michael come to understand that those who crave power find themselves paralyzed by it.

How do mafiosi and career criminals, in general, understand their acts of depravity against members of society? Mob movies do offer scenes which are actually explanations of some types of bad guy behavior. In the typical dynamics of criminal and noncriminal, many of the interactions involve partnerships which demand mutual trust; Vito Coreleone's relationships with high-level criminal justice officials and politicians is never explicit. In *The Godfather* and *The Sopranos*, both crime bosses have relationships with those in the upper world of straight, legitimate society and do not see themselves as intractable enemies of the social world in which they operate and often mercilessly exploit. After all, there is some truth in the wise guy worldview that legitimate society is a pool of hypocrisy with infinite variations in its levels of honesty and corruption. In the criminal picture of things, it is the mafia, the underworld, that seems more dependable by comparison. As the films show, many legitimate associates of the gangsters are indeed repulsive and contemptible. Another dimension that must ease the anxiety mobsters experience seems to occur when they dehumanize and demonize their victims—especially when their victim is doomed to death. Terms like "prick," "cocksucker," "rat," "scumbag," and so on precede an act of murder. Somehow, by humiliating

their victims, through acts of psychological degradation and emnification, the conscience of the perpetrator may be eased. The psychological trick of making the victim less than human is nothing new.

Tony's cynical bravado makes him seem rather normal; unlike Tony, however, Michael Coreleone does not snarl; his brother Sonny is explosive like Tony from time to time which makes Sonny and Tony seem more human. When "work"(murder) needs to be done, Tony exhibits a tight emotional control: his clipped sentences, his bursts of anger, and blazing eyes reveal the depths of his emotions. Though not physically brash, he does seem like a farouche version of James Cagney in *White Heat*. One might feel some sympathy for the mobsters; the in-depth explorations of mobster psychology could give rise to some pity for the bad guys and their rebarbative world-views. But are they really fuck-ups, with a sick view of society? Their attitudes suggest that gangsters see no great moral difference between us and them, and like the rest of us, there is a great deal of variation in thinking, knowledge, and feelings among the bad guys. Have Copolla and Scorcese in their films presented us with thorny issues that raise daunting questions? For example, however deformed the self-righteous perspective of the mafiosi that, in effect, everyone has a price, no matter what, why should not we do as we please? And do not the most brazen, the most arrogant, those with the requisite resources do as they please? Corrupting the system with little concern for others is a widespread belief. Scorcese's opening monolog with Henry Hill (the gangster who is central to the plot) in *Goodfellas* is a parlous claim: "everything's rotten; why shouldn't we (the mobsters) do as we please; everyone is on the take; only fools work for a living…". Hill refers to average, working persons as the "walking dead." Is straight society a collection of dupes, losers, and victims as gangsters allege?

In *Godfather II*, Michael Coreleone, who is negotiating for casino gambling licenses in the Las Vegas hotels, wistfully remarks to a U.S. senator attempting to shake him down that "…we're all part of the same hyprocisy." Scenes like this remove many of the obstacles to a sympathetic identification with the bad guys. A fundamental problem with gangster films is that they may condition us in subtle ways to accept violence as a sensual pleasure. Filmmakers usually claim that they are showing us the real face of organized crime and how ugly it is in order to sensitize us to its horrors. In *Scarface* (1983), a leading premise is that everyone is on the make and the ordinary people, given the opportunity, are as immoral and dishonest as the villains.

Changing Times and Changing Crimes: The Gangster and the New Underworld

The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond (1960) is an important benchmark in the thematic evolution of crime films. Legs Diamond (1897–1931) was a minor bootlegger and gambler who had a connection with Arnold Rothstein and other major New York mob figures. Legs had the rugged looks, panache, and dash to match

Hollywood cowboys and movie bad guys (Kehr 2011). When Legs confronts some of the new power brokers in the underworld, namely, La Cosa Nostra crime figures, he faces a group with more apparent power than the police and few inhibiting scruples to brake its greed and ambitions. At this point, in the mid-1930s, the LCN is in its fledgling stages of maturation. Legs was informed that he no longer could operate freelance. Confounded by a boardroom embodiment of banality, little gray men sitting in judgment, he was perturbed by the idea of crime without personality. Crime stripped of style had become a business rather than an adventure that Legs failed to understand. The theme of crime films before the 1960s was that crime does not pay when in fact it actually does pay more than we care to acknowledge. When the idea was that criminals always get caught, killed, or imprisoned, a cheerful, bland, official optimism prevailed; the bad guys were destroyed at the end of the movie and moral norms were reinforced.

Since the Vietnam War, the mood of the country darkened and a variation on public attitudes toward criminal behavior became more apparent beginning in the mid-1950s where Terry Malloy, the erstwhile bad boy on the docks, is transformed into a heroic stevedore contending with waterfront racketeers in the film, *On the Waterfront* (1954). But the film does not make it clear that Malloy (Marlon Brando) will succeed in cleaning up the docks. In the Godfather trilogy, the "family business" goes on, despite changes in personnel. Beneath the melodramatic styles of such popular films there is an expression of a tragic realism that consistently defies our fantasies about lawbreaking. In the cowboy movies with notable exceptions, the outlaws are always defeated, and the good guys prevail. The "bad-guys" in contemporary films are depicted more realistically (as became evident in publicly televised government hearings); they are not as independently minded as say, Legs Diamond, or even Vito Coreleone in his younger days. Mobsters tend to be more like everybody else but reveal a willingness to kill, to steal, and to bully. They live by taking orders. They tend to be neither disobedient nor deficient in task performance, and in general they are submissive. And with murder everywhere in real life and film—as was the case in the pre-World War II years, viewers became immune to bloodshed. Indeed, killing was an integral part of criminal enterprises on screen and off—except, of course, when it touched someone personally. Or so it seemed. Organized crime leaders understood that spilling blood, however, justified in their own minds, was bad for business and had to be discouraged. *The Godfather Trilogy* explores that very theme—what is good for business must be the prevailing sentiment. For Don Vito Coreleone, certainly not drugs. The struggle over the issue of huge profits accompanied by high risks from law enforcement, the public, and other criminal organizations present some of the main issues behind the epic film.

The time span of *The Godfather* covers the end of World War II (1945) through the mid-1950s. The Corleone family moves itself and its operations to Reno, Nevada and Las Vegas where the casinos and gambling houses can be used to safely wash its narcotics money. *The Godfather, Part II* (1974) expands its exploration of the characters and focuses on the biographical background of Vito Coreleone and the origins of the mafia crime family that bears his name.

The crime boss is not portrayed as a brazen, loudmouth psychopath chomping on a cigar. The Don is a primitive sacred monster, not a strapping brute; nor is he one of those shrinking, wizened geezers consumed by grudges and vendettas. In Marlon Brando's hands, the Don is self-possessed, full of courtly reserve—a person capable of fury, warm gentility, and charm.

By any estimation, *The Godfather, Part II* was the perfect sequel. In the first film, Michael engaged in murder for the sake of the family. In Part II, Michael tasted power, relished it, and clung to it through predatory and vicious murders that included his weakling brother Fredo, and his sister Connie's treacherous husband. The new Godfather put himself beyond redemption and in the end he loses his wife. In *Godfather, Part III* (1990), Michael becomes remorseful. Twenty years later, he is trying to mend fences, and hopes to leave his family a good name as charitable philanthropic people. To accomplish this, he moved his family and wealth out of gambling in Las Vegas and into banking and financial investments, while still retaining secret roles in huge, legitimate casino operations. Other mafia associates with whom he had formed lucrative arrangements resent his climb toward respectability. Ironically, the higher Michael moves into international banking circles, the more he is victimized by otherwise legitimate business people. The Godfather, in seeking to establish and identify his personal family as morally and ethically irreproachable, enters into negotiations with the Vatican when it is enveloped in a crisis of its own: the Pope is at the edge of death and all business deals are in limbo. Compared to the grandees who routinely deal with the Vatican, Michael is a boy scout. He fails to protect the new Pope, but manages to thwart the higher-level mafiosi from poisoning the Church with open corruption. *Godfather, III* ends with a bloody finish (which we have seen before), but this time naked horror is replaced by grandiosity.

In *Part III*, two characters stand out: Connie Coreleone and Vincent—Sonny Coreleone's illegitimate son. Vincent is a hot-tempered aspiring gangster and is ready to take the reins of power from his exhausted uncle Michael. Connie Coreleone comes across as a woman of animal strength and nerves of steel—a mob version of Lady Macbeth or Lucrezia Borgia. She is the quintessential mob witch who maneuvers Vincent into the leadership of the Coreleone Family which has gone transnational and is globalizing its operations.

The vibrant, compelling characters in the Godfather films also include the somewhat comical, fat Peter Clemenza and the scheming Tessio who are secondary chiefs, capos, and run their own fiefdoms, but whose fidelity to Don Coreleone goes back to the early immigrant days in the squalid slums of the lower eastside tenements of New York City. These relationships remained steadfast over the years. Tom Hagen, the Coreleone attorney who really serves as a Consigliere (counselor) in the operations of the crime family, is an ethnic fluke: abandoned in the streets, orphaned as a youth, and taken in by Sonny Coreleone, Hagen grew up in the Coreleone household where the Godfather insisted that he retain his surname and his Irish-German heritage. On this, the Godfather was adamant; he would not countenance the absurdity of adopted ancestries. After the war years, Michael Coreleone reluctantly settles into mob life following the sensational

murders of a New York City police captain associated with the notorious drug dealer, Sollozo. Michael chooses a waspy, ingénue type wife from New England whose ignorance about the activities and reputation of the family offers comic relief. Later, her ignorance having faded after some frightening, dangerous events, Kay's life becomes a nightmare.

No doubt the films' visual verisimilitude with New York in the late 1940s and 1950s along with plausible plots, and excellent acting contributed to their appeal artistically as well as box office success. More than this, perhaps, the story lines of the films are not just about individuals but persons in specific historical settings. One might describe *The Godfather Trilogy* as an intimate epic. For many viewers, *The Godfather* is about the dramatic American Dream from its dispiriting beginnings through many traumatizing struggles to material success and ultimately some disillusionment. The journey of the Coreleones involves the bonds of family linked to licit and illicit business, to crime and murder. And in Part II, there is a fuller expression of America as a land filling up with immigrants who are seeking safety, and escape from hunger and fear. Finally in Part III, Michael Coreleone goes global and seeks admission to an elite group of prominent philanthropic Catholics who will facilitate his charities around the world and help with aid to relieve poverty in Sicily. Or so he believes in his naiveté about religious faith which is in conflict with the Godfather's dictum of power: worth is determined by wealth. What he vainly attempts is to mix one world of sordid business and violence with another that is presumably legitimate. Michael Coreleone quickly becomes disillusioned.

From Global Crime to the American Suburbs: TV Wiseguys

In many of its scenes, clues are everywhere concerning the subcultural heritage of the mobsters in *The Sopranos* series. In the "Bada-Bing!"(its very name a historical glyph to *Godfather, Part II*), Tony Soprano holds court as he sometimes does in a pork store which is another locale that serves as an office for "sitdowns"(meetings) that are convened for mob business purposes. The Sopranos series, perhaps because of its length—76 episodes in 6 years—is more than a show. It examines with psychological depth the various workings of scams, the fortuitous circumstances of hits and spontaneous murders, political connections and their links with bid-rigging contracts and major construction projects, techniques of intimidation, the intricate internecine maneuverings of competing gangsters, and methods of coping with the ever-present FBI. In this way, the series producer and his production associates have suffused the mafia into the social tissues of middle-class suburbia in northern New Jersey. No longer the semi-reclusive Vito Coreleone, the ultimate outsider reposing in a fortress-like compound surrounded by armed men, Tony Soprano lives next door, across the fence; he sits comfortably at the next table in the restaurant. And while no one believes he is a "waste management consultant," the collective capacities for self-deception go only so far at the local FBI offices. Tony and his

family are thoroughly domesticated and culturally assimilated into the social membranes that envelop his community. He is not in the Hollywood style, an outsider/outlaw that does not fit in. Tony and his associates such as Paulie Walnuts, grew up on *Archie Bunker* and *The Honeymooners*—popular TV sitcoms dating back to the 1950s and 1960s. The one exception to a straight-looking bunch of hoodlums is the presence of a gay wiseguy which is a mortal sin for the mafia; although, Tony is reluctant to kill him because he is a very good earner and "earning" (kicking up profits from any enterprise to the boss) is the bottom line for Tony. As a movie buff, Tony loves history, World War II documentaries, the films of Cagney, Bogart and, of course, *The Godfather* and *Goodfellas*.

The Sopranos* was launched with expectations that its audience at least tolerated the idea of the Mafia as a presence, if scarcely an invisible presence. We discover what Tony and members of his crew watch on TV and what forms their imaginations about crime, politics, war, discrimination against Italians, and so on. There is the romance of La Cosa Nostra fed incessantly by movies from the early classics, with Paul Muni, or the psychotic ravings and projections of Bogart, or the sentimental bravura of Cagney, or the thoughtful tough guy, Edward G. Robinson. *The Godfather Trilogy* and *Goodfellas* are pedagogical texts for them as they often cite passages of dialog or describe scenes that serve as instructive behavioral models. This is not at all unusual. Most of the major, defining events in the American underworld which have been presented in films with more or less fidelity to the actual facts are grist for Tony's crew. The early days of Anastasia's waterfront brutalities, his execution in a midtown Manhattan barbershop; the shooting of Joe Colombo in the middle of a mass meeting of the Italian-American Civil Rights Association in Columbus circle in Manhattan; "Crazy Joe Gallo's murder in a Little Italy clam house in front of members of his family—all these ruthless savage acts feed the little Mafiosi's fantasies and viewers can only guess at the impact of such events on Tony's fragile psyche."

Because *The Sopranos* is not a conventional film, it can offer broader, more discursive plots where, over several weeks of broadcasting, the scripts may digress across a range of topics. This technological capacity doubtlessly attracts and stimulates audiences where the sheer topicality of events lend themselves to mob gossip. Tony, his wife, mother, sister, kids, and close associates are seen from all angles including their inner lives. All of these people, including Dr. Melfi the psychiatrist, are prominently featured in many episodes (Rucker 2003). Tony is being treated for depression and panic attacks, and more than his intense struggles with other gangsters, corrupt politicians and businessmen, the turmoil in his home with his wife, kids, uncle, aging mother, and sister easily matched the emotional pressures he experiences in his role as a mob boss. Ordinarily, gangster movies and shows assign women to trophy roles; they are mere distractions in terms of the plots. In Tony's case, strong-minded women were in varying degrees, aggressive and at times threatened to turn *The Sopranos* into just another soap opera. Instead, these domestic battles became a mischievous, genuinely comedic element in the show. However, the is the dark, evil side of grisly events: the series ends

by stripping the audience of its illusions concerning the moral status of its principal characters. Tony murders his cousin because of mob pressures for revenge. With this, the audience must acknowledge that some lifestyles merely mimic what seems normal.

One of the features of the series is the role that Dr. Melfi, the psychiatrist, plays in terms of recovery possibilities for Tony and his personal family. Tony does not seem to respond in ways that Dr. Melfi would consider healthy; rather, he turns her life-enhancing advice and therapy into a theatrical platform where he can act out with another woman. Dr. Melfi reviews Tony's clinical data, consults with a colleague, and decides to end his treatment. Tony the untreatable patient?! The decisive factor behind Melfi's decision to declare Tony untreatable appears to be the information she obtains that psychopaths merely sharpen their manipulative skills in therapy and gain little, if anything, that is likely to restore emotional well-being. What began as a potentially healing regimen inexorably degenerated into a series of ugly recriminations between an emotionally conflicted therapist incapable of treating her ill, and wily, patient.

The Gangster Genre in Film and Television

The Sopranos exhibits high production values which reach the level of cinematic artistry that *The Godfather Trilogy* displayed. The color schemes in film prints, costume authenticity, open-air photography—all distinguished *The Godfather* and *The Sopranos* as special (Nochimson 2006). In the Sopranos, the content of the episodes contains allusions to American cinematic gangster figures and to *The Godfather Trilogy*. For example, Tony Soprano, the emotionally troubled mob boss, intently watches scenes of the gangster, Tommy Powers (James Cagney) with his mother in the film *The Public Enemy* (1932).

Tony is frustrated by his mother's obstinate refusal to placement in a residence for those who need assistance. The panic attacks this incident precipitates lead to an auto accident and subsequent embarrassing fainting spells. In other scenes reminiscent of Hollywood gangster movies the FBI surveillance of Tony and his crew resemble scenes from White Heat (1949). Oddly, Tony and Cody Jarrett (James Cagney) both suffer debilitating migraines; both men are in problematic relationships with their mothers.

Many of the perspectives in *The Sopranos* including the moral phenomenology of the gangster, and the presentation of female crises among those affiliated with career criminals undergoes interesting permutations in the hands of the series' executive producer, David Chase, and his collaborators. There is nothing oblique in the realism of the gangster underclasses, official corruption, and middle-class pathologies. Characters and subplots are often hardboiled and occasionally savage—none more so than the treatment of women.

Molls, Mamas, and "Goomadas"

In this respect, Tony's emotional afflictions are not unusual: his marriage to his wife Carmela is often tumultuous; she, likewise, is tuned-into women's rights, her church, kids, and friends. And even with a bevy of girlfriends, Tony is beleaguered by fears that he is unloved and unappreciated—although he seems fearless and relaxed with his prozac. *The Sopranos* episodes are bundles of action, crisp, sharp dialog, and images the audience easily identifies with. Orbiting around the boss is the core group of his immediate family, his crew, and the associates who form secondary and tertiary rings of characters with varying screen life spans; some of these characters threaten to seize the reins of power and leadership, such as the suave psychopath Richie Aprile, whom Tony's hippie sister Janice falls for. Then, there is the degenerate gambler owing everyone, including Tony; and tragically, the beautiful manic-depressive Gloria Trillo, a car dealer and patient of Dr. Melfi who commits suicide when Tony fails to fulfill his romantic commitments to her. Others surfaced in the series if only to last as long as it took them to get beaten to death, for some indiscretion, mistake, and betrayal that threatened the crime family or Tony personally.

That was the idea: a portrait of a Mafia boss as a midlife family guy harried by adolescent kids, a status-conscious wife, an impossible mother on the brink of senility, and an obstreperous uncle who is also a lifelong gangster. These components alone would seem to be a solid basis for a good sitcom that would include the darker, surreptitious elements of organized crime sufficiently satirized so that it would resemble a popular dynastic soap opera like Dallas. As it unfolded week by week it became rich in text, and in scenes beautifully unfinished, and as the last episode of the series revealed, unfinishable.

It was *The Godfather* that offered the cinematic moment when mafia-affiliated women asserted themselves. Against the stoical, taciturn posture of Mama Coreleone who endured it all—the endless violence, the police, prison terms of the men; the humiliations of gomadas (girlfriends of their husbands)–stand other women such as Kaye, Michael's wife, Connie, Michael's sister, and Carmela, Tony's wife, who symbolize a rebellious female chorus that challenges the Mafia way of life. Kay and Connie Coreleone protest against their lives and act out in self-destructive ways; but 30 years later, Carmela Soprano her sister-in-law, Janice Soprano, as well as Tony's psychiatrist, Dr. Melfi, struggle for living space where they can assert themselves, and liberate themselves from overwhelming male power lest they become complicit with it.

Because of the material rewards that crime and violence produce, women feel trapped in the provenance of mafia resources. Can they resist the lure of affluence? Some do. Others manage to resist male power directly through complex, wily ways in the intra-psychic and domestic realms. The women in Tony's life all have issues: Carmela must cope somehow with Tony's numerous infidelities; nor is she ignorant of his status as boss and all that it implies—especially as it runs counter to her religious convictions about the sanctity of human life; yet she enjoys, as do her children and relatives the lifestyle that his wealth affords. Her conflicts are

deep, soul-rendering struggles that not even her church or priest can help her with. Carmela wants more than financial security in her life. She is hardly unique being married to a man who regularly betrays and abuses her but provides very well for her family—at least at the material level. These painful truths of everyday married life for Carmela Soprano and the other women in Tony's familial orbit serve as a reminder for so many women in all class and status groups that there is much truth in the feminist claim that far too many women collude consciously in their own oppression which infects their homes, work, and social life.

Other women connected to the underworld are less fortunate in terms of material resources as the wives and daughters of mobsters. Wise guys often brutalize women: in *The Sopranos*, Christopher, Tony's cousin and close associate, batters Adriana, his girlfriend who is murdered after confessing to Christopher about her coercion by the FBI to become and act as an informant; a woman loanshark is shot dead in a public place when she defiantly refuses to supply more money to Tony and his crew; a stripper in the Bada-Bing nightclub is viciously beaten to death in a parking lot when she refuses to engage in sex with one of Tony's lieutenants. Tony's rage with his girlfriend is so humiliating for a woman with severe depression that she commits suicide when he spurns her one time too many. And finally, Connie Coreleone is regularly beaten by her husband Carlo but tries to keep it quiet fearing that her hot-tempered brother Sonny might kill her cheating husband. Sonny himself maintains a relationship with a girlfriend whose illegitimate son Vincent emerges as Michael's heir as Boss in *Godfather III*. In the Sopranos series, many episodes deal in a daring manner with issues of misogyny and homophobia (Donatelli and Alward 2006). However, there are other matters that have been and remain controversial in some segments of the Italian-American community and among media critics. Do the Godfather films and others promote ethnic prejudice? Are Mafia films and TV productions the last word on Italians? Does *The Sopranos* defame the cultural character of Italian Americans. Further, are the reputations and histories of those of Italian descent severely damaged by popular TV shows and films like *The Godfather* and *Goodfellas*? The argument of some Italian-American advocate organizations is in essence that these films, TV series, and other entertainments where Italians play gangster roles demean the image of Italians.

The producers, writers, and actors of *The Sopranos* believe that they are telling particular ethnic stories and are making or rendering a sociological map of complex things that go into making a gangster or criminal subculture (Willis 2001). They do not endorse prejudicial stereotypes. On the contrary, the Soprano episodes seek to clarify the conditions that generate the modern Mafia milieu.

Plot Structures and Dramatic Themes

The high production values of *The Sopranos* was employed so effectively that rarely is there a boring moment. The sound design, as with *The Godfather Trilogy*, in the opening title montage nicely captures Tony Soprano's zeitgeist: his driving

energy, his angst, violent tirades, sentimental memories, and his comical cru-
dity with his companion from the early days, his "Sancho Panza," Mafia associ-
ate Paulie Walnuts. The main pictorial compositions are highlighted by fleeting
images of the industrial New Jersey/New York corridor hugging the Hudson River
estuary. Drab working-class housing stretches like necklaces around the petro-
chemical plants that dominate the landscape. Driving through this, Tony arrives
in his new SUV Cadillac at his spacious home with its well-manicured lawns. The
comparative opulence of his home attests to his social arrival at a level of afflu-
ence that sets him apart from those he exploits. *The Sopranos* utilized TV tech-
nical capabilities very effectively in the stream of narrative plots to make it the
dominant series over the past decade. Serial structure in film and TV is noth-
ing new—even in crime dramas (The Untouchables, *Wiseguy*) that morphed out
of conventional police shows. The narratives in the Sopranos scripts are greatly
enhanced by editing formulae and technical abilities that enrich story lines. The
economic production contexts and demands of production schedules actually
encourage serialization. Single shows or big time films of length (*Gone With
the Wind*, *Dr. Zhivago*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *The Godfather*) cannot generate the
income or dependable financing for a TV station or network that is possible for
regularly scheduled, securely financed productions. The reverse situation—turning
a successful TV series into a film—is rare and usually not practicable. Imagine the
hugely successful TV series, *All in the Family* as a movie.

In terms of audience needs, TV series are similar to serialized movie shorts
that were popular decades ago when the tradition of Saturday night movie
theater-going was popular. The movie theater functioned as a large living room
with an immense TV screen in a public rather than a private setting denuded of
all of the latter's amenities. Many successful TV series differentiate themselves
from successful films in several ways. For example, the TV series, *Golden Girls*
(three women living in a retirement community), and *Everybody Loves Raymond*
(domestic scenes with family members and friends interacting in comical ways
with everyday family issues) and the animated series, *A Family Guy*, a raw look
at family dynamics and life, have scripts that consists of little more than one-line
jokes; yet these are award-winning projects.

Unlike the film narrative, the continuing TV story cannot be totally laid out in
advance. The numerous aleatory elements that form the constitutive contexts of
production play a more prominent role in TV series and seem more susceptible
and vulnerable to the unpredictability of creative processes, and the strains of
production schedules and costs than occur in ordinary movie production. In *The
Sopranos*, time and normal flow of life events (the kids actually age on camera)
contributes to the appealing quality of verisimilitude and timeliness that series
effectively creates.

A recent HBO series by Martin Scorcese, *Boardwalk Empire* focuses on the
career of Enoch "Nucky" Thompson, an Atlantic City political boss and bootleg-
ger during Prohibition. Its charm has to do with Scorcese's finely honed sense of
time and place in which the production is situated—the 1920s and the Prohibition
era. As with the Sopranos, the thread of Nucky's relationships involving women,

political leaders, gangsters at all levels, and the community at large where he exercises subtle, clever influence among, for example, the Women's Temperance movement leaders makes up the background for the drama. Thompson imports and distributes large quantities of smuggled alcohol which is what the series is also about. And like *The Sopranos*, *Boardwalk Empire* features a cast of characters that absorb the narrative flow with their own fascinating stories.

Gangster movies of the past presented slender subplots; with TV series, however, narrative techniques have become more complex much like the plot structures of novels. Thus, we see Tony Soprano from a variety of perspectives which was not always practical in the great classic crime films. Nor are their ethical and moral blockages suspectable to thematic exploration as was the case in Hollywood in the 1950s where a formal production code stipulated that a film must never permit an audience to sympathizes with, or admire, a character with questionable morals or a blemished legal history. It was believed that the power of film to influence otherwise oblivious or complacent audiences precluded all sorts of freedoms and nuances in the development of character on screen. Though the historic gangster masterpieces covertly circumvented and subverted those guidelines, the film industry in the United States was generally impeded in its portrayals of criminals in all their complexity. Al Capone, like his modern day fictional Other, Tony Soprano, was a family man as well as a ruthless crime lord. Unfortunately, *The Godfather Trilogy* did not explore deeply enough into the full range of personality in the enigmatic figure of the Godfather. However, *The Sopranos* producers did delve into the provocative personality of Tony Soprano and other characters. Notwithstanding many differences in life experience, what Michael Coreleone and Tony Soprano do share is introspective activities about the ethical incongruities of family men who also happen to be leading figures in crime organizations. Those expecting unequivocal condemnation of "bad men" will be disappointed, while, conversely, those looking for realistic character types such as those developed for the "film noir" scripts of the 1930s and 1940s should be enthusiastic about current trends. In this connection, not all criminally inspired conflicts arc towards an explosive, decisive climax. Many film makers today do not see their products as merely propagandistic tools in the struggle against organized crime, or as simplistic moral roadmaps about good guys and bad guys. As a result, not all criminal conflicts trend toward explosive climaxes. While most criminal events in the series are finite and conclusive—someone lives, someone dies—many criminal activities fail, and even some murder contracts are rescinded. And also true to life, much time is spent in negotiations, including mob "sit downs" where no progress is made. "Sit downs" are designed to resolve disputes peaceably; this was an outcome of the underworld's "managerial revolution" in 1933. Such reality checks subvert traditional images of the gang lord/gangster as a dark gutter deity whose word is final.

Gangsters, however, are not completely domesticated in the movies or on TV. A film version of the life of Salvatore Bonanno (Joseph Bonanno's son) illustrates some of the changes and transitions in criminal images which reflect changes in the Cosa Nostra crime families. Bonanno's men are typically ordinary bumbling mortals with unclear ideas and not very good problem-solving skills (Talese 1971).

The Godfather and *The Sopranos* series stimulated a change in traditional Hollywood style formulaic films about the underworld. The new styles of movie-making owed much to the innovations that came out of TV production: more realistic images of organized criminality seen through the prisms developed in TV. However, not all of it reached standards of professionalism. A recent example of reality TV is Mob Wives a popular panel of scenes involving women whose husbands, boyfriends, and male relatives are incarcerated as "OC" criminals. Its success has insured another season of telecasts. The show's producer Rene Graziano has a husband and father incarcerated. She claims that the show is popular as a form of Reality TV mainly because it reflects the lives of women who must cope with the pressures of their men being imprisoned. This is another example of the sheer popularity of mob movies and TV productions that also suggests that we sometimes permit ourselves to love monsters. The films and TV images are constructed social dreams with whom audiences identified and invariably clamor for more; the irony is that the characters are hardly exemplary moral persons and are unusually devoid of scruples. These media images suggest the questions as to how and why do vicious and psychopathic characters in mob movies become the objects of adoration in a public too frequently harassed by crime and criminals of this sort? Do the films and TV shows offer release from the worries and anxieties of everyday life that the movies provide? That seems too patas an explanation. Yet, the deviance of the underworld is attractive in that it is in part an expression of defiance against those aspects of our lives that cause alienation and chronic unhappiness. Vito Coreleone and Tony Soprano are cinematic symbols who seem merely prankish when compared with the antics of al-Qaeda or with the larcenous behavior of Wall Street moguls.

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Chapter 7
Media and Film Influences on Popular Culture

Influences on Popular Culture

The image of Italian-American organized crime in particular has been largely shaped by a Mafia mystique which is currently being challenged by new generations of scholars and writers who confront the legacies of ethnocentric bias and cultural prejudices upon which parts of the entertainment industry thrived (Kelly 2010). The scurrilous stereotypes and clichés which were formed over decades about Italian-Americans and Italians and insinuated into pop culture imagery that flatten and distort the realities of complex lives and cultural styles are still with us, unfortunately. And because pop culture is driven by market forces, mass media is molded by its dynamics and are likely to continue depicting mobsters as Mafia hoodlums.

Putting it bluntly, what facilitated theories of Mafia dominance by a self-perpetuating nationwide conspiracy of sinister La Cosa Nostra crime families was in no small measure the media. Its power to form opinion, and manipulate it cannot be overstated. And like most people, even social scientists can be stampeded into views driven not by empirical study and analysis but by hyperbole, rhetoric, and substantial media pressure. In 1951, Senator Estes Kefauver conducted nationwide senatorial hearings on the problem of illegal gambling around the country. In the course of his investigations, he inadvertently uncovered evidence of organized criminal conspiracies throughout the United States. These investigations, which were televised for the first time, were followed by government-sponsored hearings into labor racketeering where the sensational testimony of a small time gangster, Joseph Valachi, put the La Cosa Nostra into the national psyche. Valachi mesmerized the senators with his remarks about "crime families" across the nation, about oaths of secrecy (omerta), about murder as a means of gaining entry into this conspiracy that regarded only those of Italian heritage as eligible for membership (Maas 1968).

The Valachi revelations were sensational: a secret, deadly nationwide conspiracy of foreign criminals. Public reactions aroused law enforcement agencies.

In 1967, a national Task Force was formed to study the problems and in 1985, President Reagan created a Task Force to evaluate how the problems of organized crime were being addressed. Throughout this period the names of prominent underworld figures surfaced such as Frank Costello, Sam "Momo" Giancana, friend of Frank Sinatra, and some women tied to the President of the United States, John Kennedy as well as many others with interests in both legitimate and illegitimate businesses. The testimony of experts and the appearance of gangsters taking the Fifth Amendment as a defense against self-incrimination shocked the nation and led to many books, films, and TV series on the mafia and underworld. But the Mafia was the real thing. Along with sensational arrests and prosecutions, accompanied by disclosures of political corruption which some described as a "political/criminal nexus," it is not surprising that the idea of a dominant Mafia empire would eventually fill public discourse and even seize the social scientific imagination.

What was needed were clear, concise narrative accounts that put events into comprehensible language. In the 1950s, mainstream media tended to embrace conspiracy theories about huge Mafia plots controlling national crime syndicates. With the spread of TV later on, fears were magnified by other paranoid stories engendered by sensational media coverage of a daunting Soviet communist threat spreading across Europe and threatening the United States. An Italian mafia conspiracy was neither unusual nor was it thought implausible in a political climate of McCarthy Hearings uncovering enemies of the State in every branch of government. Public apprehensions of alien conspiracies of Mafia criminals in immigrant ghettoes were fostered in an atmosphere of xenophobia fanned by fear of dedicated Communists enemies. The public had experience with a manufactured psychological climate of vast, secret threats against public interest. Many of the 1930s films instilled fear of the foreigner—especially the Italian who was alien in religion, language, and culture. Also, and no less importantly, mob movies in the 1930s and through the war years and early aftermath were well-made with credible plots about issues that concern everyone: family, sex, romance, education, power, and violence (Kelly 2007a, b).

Most mob movies and TV presentations are not just about cops and robbers, street shoot-outs, and general mayhem, but are thinly disguised moral dramas exploring conflicts and familiar contingencies and exigencies that surround everyday life with its endless struggle to earn a living, and make decisions about right and wrong in terms of the ethical expediencies individuals and communities work out in order to survive. The emotional engineering of *The Godfather* offered compelling scenes where Vito Coreleone's taut, bitter, and angry explanations to his sons about their business and life created a stir of controversy among viewers. So too did the TV series, *The Wire*.

The popular *Sopranos* series prepared the way for *The Wire* series. Though the moods of the Sopranos are tragic-comedic—a family drama laced with amusing scenes, *The Wire* ran from 2002 to 2008, and it was a crime drama that looked under the hood of ghetto life in an African-American community in Baltimore, Maryland. The story lines and themes of the 60 broadcasts derive their plots from

the lives of street-corner drug dealers, big time traffickers, the police, political elites, ambitious businesspeople in the black community, union leaders, housewives, kids of all ages, rehab centers, caring social workers, churches and their ministers, the failing schools with their heroic and also indifferent schoolteachers, and politicians who seek opportunities to move up in the power structure at any cost.

The key weapon of law enforcement agents is "the wire"—electronic eavesdropping devices that monitor telephonic communications throughout the complex street drug networks. Narcotics traffickers and street dealers utilize sophisticated cell phones to frustrate detection by narco-police. Over the course of six seasons, *The Wire* series connected the various groups, gangs, and institutions in their working and living habitats with the skill of field anthropologists (Potter and Marshall 2010). The show's entertainment appeal stems in part from its documentary, cinema-verite style that pits the good guys (the police) against the bad guys (drug dealers) in their efforts to cleverly elude and mislead each other. There is also periodic violent gun play which adds tension to the episodes. The only major film at the time that focused on African-American organized crime in ghetto settings involving drug trafficking was *American Gangster* (2007). The film is based on the life of Frank Lucas, a career criminal and an associate of Mafia traffickers with whom he competes violently and successfully for a while through real ingenuity and guts. Lucas is eventually caught and gives up his organization, his family, associates, and Mafia partners.

The world of drug dealing in a Baltimore public housing project, shows significant differences in lifestyles between African-American gangsters and Mafiosi. What could be more telling than in one of the early episodes of the series, when a drug kingpin, who yearns for legitimacy, and whose determination to succeed is still wrapped up in the Horatio Alger myth is seen attending business classes at the local community college while running his drug rackets. More significantly, however, are the portrayals of women in *The Wire*.

Unlike *The Godfather* and other films in its style and genre, the women in *The Wire* are mainly single mothers, not especially heroic persons, who are not confident in their capacities to protect their children from the evils of the crime-drenched streets. On the other hand Mafia women, in films at least, tend to be portrayed as naïve and indifferent and this behavior may stem from the codes of omerta which circumscribe what they might know and what they are forbidden to know, about their husband's and male relatives' criminal activities. In *The Wire,* a few women whose shocking behavior may be attributable to the horrendous circumstances of their lives—seem on occasion inclined to urge their reluctant children onto the streets to sell dope. No doubt they are deeply wounded by prejudice and indelibly marred, and so psychologically mutilated by crushed hopes and ambitions, that they see drugs as a way out of hopelessness. In such emotionally difficult roles, the female actors are often scintillating and brilliant; they eat up the screen when they flash a hard, bitter look. And they, unlike Mafia women, are more deeply exposed to the nauseating realities of crime as a way of life and it takes a terrible toll.

Women encouraging and urging their children into desperate acts of drug dealing expose them to the ancillary risks of prostitution; they come across as monsters that are too enslaved to addiction to help themselves and clearly cannot protect their children from the temptations of the streets. These unsettling scenes compel viewer interest but do not provide viewer comfort. The centrality of some ghetto women in crime scenes and the faint presence of others committed to the eradication of drugs which perpetuate the poverty is reassuring but hopelessly impotent in the face of such massive squalor that deepens a collective sense of defeat and despair. The episodes relentlessly present scenes of unholy bargains and deals between the presumptive good guys and the bad guys that culminate in widespread corruption which is the undertow of the social injustice infecting these African-American communities.

As a sociocultural excursion into the structure of ghetto life, each season of *The Wire* explored an institution hollowed out by bureaucratic gamesmanship and its attendant corruption dynamics. An entire season of shows was devoted to dockworkers in the Port of Baltimore and their clandestine links with narcotics traffickers who move huge loads of cocaine, marijuana, and heroin. Another season introduced the ineffable, self-absorbed, political hustlers of all colors, career ambitions, sexes, who operate single-mindedly in serving their egocentric needs. Another panel of episodes deals with the hapless schools, their embattled teachers, and the children that they failed to educate. Season five in the series concentrated on the press and its diminished role as guardians of public interests. Compromised journalists were constantly betraying each other and their readers by manufacturing stories of the ghetto, of the homeless, and of those living in other forms of social distress. They saw themselves as recipients of prize-winning awards that would enhance their careers. When exposed, some journalists confessed that the layers of cronyism and favoritism contaminated their professional lives and ruined their motivations to write truthfully about public issues.

More than other organized crime dramas, *The Wire* systematically examined the loss of integrity within a big city that is emblematic of our social system. *The Godfather*, *The Sopranos, Goodfellas*, Scarface, and others treat, quite effectively, specific issues, groups, and historical eras. *The Wire* offers a more comprehensive picture of society from the standpoint of an African-American ghetto experience as witnessed by its inhabitants who are in many cases trapped and forced to live there. Also, the ghetto is depicted through the eyes of public servants who are legally obliged to manage its precarious safety, security, health, education, and economic solvency. The series episodes document with skill the elaborate schemes and conspiracies by public officials and exploitative, opportunistic private entrepreneurs that intrigue and alarm viewers with the accuracy of stories illustrating how all sorts of public statistics are juked; how the heroic notion of speaking truth to power has degenerated into self-serving chatter and lofty discourse that is pleasing to those in power. One message among a multitude of viewpoints sustained dramatically and factually in the series is how attempts to buck the elusive "system" are punished, often severely. Accommodation translates into craven survival at the most basic levels.

The Wire series surges occasionally with emotional high and low points; its lugubrious motifs involve steadily deepening scenes of life and death betrayals and failures; and in the case of slum communities inundated with drugs, the simplicity of the plangent title theme serves to offset, or rein in, the multiple subplots concerned with the particular horrors of murders, dying junkies, dissolute mothers, and deadbeat dads. In each unfolding episode an atmosphere pervades where nothing changes except more death, illness, and violence.

The stark realism of *The Wire* might persuade viewers that little or nothing could have turned out differently: it would be hard to believe that rehabbing street junkies would succeed; or that the ex-con prize fighter attempting some community organizing around boxing would get off the ground; or that the star struck junior high school teacher is not doomed to failure and a loss of commitment. How can they change? The ghetto streets of Baltimore are flooded with narcotics, abject poverty, and political corruption that is sustained by some elements in the police forces that routinely violate their sworn duty. It is not a question of good will prevailing, or the forces of law and order overpowering iniquitous conditions; or intractable racial attitudes inherited from a sordid past being suddenly swept aside. That is a species of wishful thinking that *The Wire* does not subscribe to. What the series obliges its viewers to confront is the disquieting idea that a broken, costive world full of fallibilities may not be capable of redemption, or of being mended and healed through some miraculous interventions by society. The series leaves us where we came in—in a fallen world to be endured rather than overcome or saved.

Mass Media and Law Enforcement

Films and TV productions along with relevant police and prosecutors shape public perceptions of organized criminal behavior, organizations, and some of the principal individuals involved in these activities (Websdale 1998). Within police organizations, there is widespread use of surveillance cameras in buildings, on streets and thoroughfares, and in patrol cars that are a means of observing public behaviors; they also capture to some extent the practices of police officers and citizens alike, and the video footage—at least some of it—finds its way to broadcast news shows and "Reality TV" programs. The policing of a post-modern world emerges as a complex set of practices which– for good or bad–help to shape the nature of mediated social control (Manning 1998, 1999).

Since the 1970s criminologists have devoted attention to motion pictures about organized crime, especially when *The Godfather* broke records in movie theaters across the nation. Until then, an attitude prevailed that film could hardly provide little more than anecdotal evidence in the scientific study of the phenomenon when compared with news reportage (Hayward 2010). However, what emerged was the time frame and the technology for the cinematic construction of organized crime in its manifold dimensions (Yar 2010).

Criminal Representations

Crime films often contain surreptitious political or ideological messages either by inducing political conformity to some institutional system or by promoting alternatives to extant political regimes. In any case, many political leaders recognized early on the immense power of moving images and their capacity to affect viewers through their interpretations of real societal issues. One has only to remember the vivid imagery the Nazis produced about the glories of the Third Reich and the ominous threats that Jews posed for Hitler's visions of a greater Germany. During World Wars I and II the warring states did not hesitate to slander and mislead their peoples through propaganda films. Indeed Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda in Nazi Germany, mobilized brilliant German film makers such as Leni Rifensthal and others to create powerful visual images that heroicized the Third Reich and its charismatic leader Adolph Hitler, and films that dehumanized their enemies (Rieber and Kelly 1991).

Other film analysts take another, perhaps more nuanced approach to the potentials of film as a political tool in ideological warfare. Much of this work is based on Antonio Gramsci's Marxist hermeneutics. In this perspective, the production of political authority (hegemony) is seen as intrinsically contested terrain: alongside images, narratives, and texts that encode dominant interests, there are also counterhegemonic understandings offering critical and alternative understandings of societal activities and structures. In the United States, "underground filmmakers" have produced antiwar movies during the Vietnam struggle. However, film makers in the communist scare years of the 1950s were intimidated by the US government which bullied Hollywood's movie industry into political conformity and which ignominiously ended many professional careers in the film industry (Kellner and Ryan 1988). Now, however, contemporary Hollywood and independent film makers have given voice to competing constituencies within American and European political culture. In the same decades as *The Godfather* and *Goodfellas*, and *Scarface* other films such as *The Untouchables* (1987), and *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) were also produced. These highly stylized movies critiqued organized criminality in terms of its moral and social consequences. In this way, popular films about organized crime, and the Mafia in particular, are contested terrain in which conservative, liberal, and radical voices were free to propose alternative points of view on questions that entail moral issues, problems concerning the administration of justice, the management of social institutions, and issues of social order and security in general.

Many crime movies are structured as quasi-biographical stories about good guys and bad guys—with the latter always generating more audience interest. One of the more popular films of earlier decades was recently remade, *Public Enemies* (2009). It is a story about the ill-fated bank robber and bandit, John Dillinger who in the 1930s during the great Depression, evaded police in many states as he robbed and emptied banks in broad daylight, and escaped helter–skelter (much like Bonnie and Clyde) in a hail of machine gun fire. Dillinger, Bonnie and Clyde, Alvin Karpis, "Pretty Boy" Floyd, "Machine Gun" Kelly, "Baby Face" Nelson,

and other less colorful bandits appear to have shown some degree of deference and courtesy to ordinary citizens whom they rarely violated even with all the shooting and mayhem. It would seem that segments of the public lived vicariously through these "Robin Hood"—type criminals many of whom were from the same backgrounds as many citizens who witnessed their crimes. Dillinger and his like stole from banks and other financial organizations (mortgage companies) that operated dubiously and were seen by many ordinary citizens as if they were the "enemies" of the people.

In crime films of this sort, the audience was made aware of the breakdown of the complex social order and how, in the turmoil of an economic depression, vulnerable people—the young, the uneducated, the poor, and working classes—are cast into a criminal lottery of sorts where some turn to crime, others try to bear the burdens of poverty with stubborn pride and fortitude, and others retreat into lives of quiet desperation.

Prohibition produced some of the toughest crime films in Hollywood's history. Crime and organized crime are expressions of social unrest and conflicts. During Prohibition, the cultural tastes of the American public were drastically restricted regarding the manufacture, dissemination, acquisition, and consumption of alcoholic products. Government agencies clashed with large segments of the American public who, by using alcohol at their dinner tables or in saloons and taverns, were transformed into criminals. The conflict between public demand for alcohol and the government restrictions which made alcohol an illicit product created the grounds for the growth of organized crime and produced something of an outlaw temperament in the public at large.

In *Public Enemies* these realities are examined as subtle changes in the underworld which, as always, functioned as a barometer of the broad currents of public opinion and the condition of the economy at large. Dillinger and other rural-type bandits maintained loose connections with more established syndicates like Capone's organization in Chicago. In the film, Dillinger seeks Capone's help when he is being hunted by federal agents as his bloody career roared across the Midwest. Then, with headlines demanding Dillinger's head, his links with the Capone syndicate which had been mutually respectful seemed to have grown suddenly and unexpectedly frosty; Capone could not jeopardize a cordiale detente with the political establishment, and should exposure of a friendly relationship between the two gangsters become publicly known it might destroy Capone's carefully wrought liaisons. Dillinger needed the sort of help that a man like Capone could furnish: a doctor for a gunshot wound; a safe hideout, or just some cash. In the past, Capone could depend upon men like Dillinger to carry out delicate assignments involving murder or assault; in return, Capone would reciprocate with protection of one kind or another, by providing a safe, criminal cocoon or a hideout across the border. Now Dillinger was simply "too hot to handle" and any hint of an association between the two would no longer be viable. According to Nitti, Capone's chief lieutenant, Dillinger was a "public enemy" and as such he was stigmatized and discredited because his presence would threaten the delicate alliances Capone nurtured with upperworld figures. The label of "public enemy"

was more than a publicity stunt, it was a brilliant device in labeling a criminal bandit in the dawn of modern communications technology. Ironically, Dillinger gets caught, trapped, and assassinated after leaving a movie theater (he loved films) about a doomed convict (Clark Gable) faced with death in the electric chair or life in prison. Gable chooses death. Within half and hour Dillinger lay dead in the street outside the theater shot by government agents who had stalked him.

As with many gangster films of the 1930s and 1940s, criminals were typically portrayed as individuals from impoverished backgrounds and usually from immigrant families. Blinded by greed and prey to a topsy-turvy version of the American Dream and Horatio Alger myth, it was because of social rejection that the legitimate ladder of success was unavailable to them. Thus, with the normal "pathways" closed off because of their lack of education, or race, ethnicity or religion, some sought criminal ways to wealth and status. Although movie viewers expect criminals to fail which means prison or death, the bad guys are seen somewhat sympathetically as victims of circumstances as much as they are perceived as psychopaths or social misfits. The public could not be easily fooled about gangsters and the times in which they flourished. The viewing public could certainly be informed, and indeed cherished new information and insight into issues of national concern. It knew of course that ghettos and slums functioned as criminal nurseries, and that impoverished ethnic neighborhoods and dreadful slums were places where grievances against society at large were born and festered and that prison was scarcely the solution. As movies dramatized the plight of convicts and ex-cons, they left prison confinement harboring a deep, deep hatred of society for what it had done to them. And movies provided a powerful setting that highlighted these painful issues. Apart from actually entertaining audiences, organized crime films offered the public not only information about the probable precursors and causes of crime, they also shed light on how scandalous criminal justice agencies, corrupt police, and prosecutors contributed to rampant crime and chronic violence.

Early Gangster Films and Their Legacies

In 1912, D. W. Griffith produced *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* a movie featuring organized crime activities, and 3 years later Raoul Walsh showcased *The Regeneration* about violent lawlessness on the streets of New York City prompted by the rise of Irish-American slum boys into gangsters. The film offered some sociological insights: it suggested that oppressive social conditions contributed significantly to a criminal orientation.

By 1927, Josef von Sternberg, a renowned German film director, produced a gangland melodrama, *Underworld*, which is now considered the first modern organized crime film. Following Sternberg's success was Lewis Milestone's 1928 classic, *The Racket* which focused on big city corruption and an urban environment virtually controlled by the mob. The movie had the distinction of being banned in Chicago, the headquarters of Al Capone—presumably because of the

movie's depiction of systematic police corruption. After World War I improvements in sound technology made gangster movies truly entertaining with the sounds of tough guy talk, molls, and the shrill thrills of gunfire. Mob movies attracted audiences in the era of Prohibition that was filled with urban violence, and the deleterious effects of the economic depression. Movie theaters were flocked with people who obviously enjoyed seeing in film portrayals what they witnessed in everyday life on the streets.

In the 1920s and 1930s, three movie actors achieved stardom in gangster films: Edward G. Robinson, James Cagney, and Humphrey Bogart. *Little Caesar* (1930) starred Edward G. Robinson as a coarse, ruthless killer named Caesar Enrico Bandello (a caricature of Al Capone) who rose to prominence in gangland and then fell ignominiously in a hail of gunfire and treachery. Following that box office success was William Wellman's *The Public Enemy* (1931) with James Cagney as a cocky, fast-talking brutal bootlegger. In 1932, Howard Hawks brought to the screen, *Scarface: The Shame of the Nation* (1932). Paul Muni played the role of a vicious hood in Prohibition Chicago—another thinly disguised portrayal of Capone—with great success, as his character displays poignant feelings despite his reputation as a psychological monster.

Film Censorship

The early 1930s saw the stunning successes of organized crime films. During this period an effort was launched that would spell the end of what was seen as the glorification of organized crime and the criminal. What emerged was the Hays Production Code and the Legion of Decency sponsored by the Catholic Church which compelled studios to generate scripts that would make moral pronouncements to the affect that crime does not pay (Potter 1998).

The idea was to characterize career criminals as mentally disturbed, even psychopathic. The Hays Office demanded that organized crime and criminals in general should not be treated as tragic heroes. Many studios and citizen groups supported these prescriptions for any number of reasons. Numerous groups feared the glamorization of gangsters whose rise could be attributed to the economic chaos of the War and the deepening Depression whose end could only be dimly perceived.

Widespread criminality and the ambivalent posture of Hollywood movie studios created a puritanical backlash over America's ripening "shame." It became important to shift the emphasis from the criminal to the crime buster, the "good" guys, in order to relax the pressures for even more censorship, and to curb the proliferating opinion that America was a crime-ridden empire out of control (Munby 1999). Thus, in 1935 Hollywood offered the public *G-Men* starring the screen villain of the recent past, James Cagney, whose previous street experiences facilitated his infiltration of criminal gangs. Edward G. Robinson, another tough guy, had the lead role in *Bullets or Ballots* (1936) where he goes undercover and joins

racketeers in order to gather evidence of crime; and in *Angels With Dirty Faces* (1938) two young slum kids pursue different lifestyles—a Cain and Abel contrast—where the bad guy (James Cagney) ultimately relents and disavows his criminal ways to his friend (Pat O'Brien) now a priest, who persuades Cagney, a defiant hero in the streets of the slums, to rectify matters with a dramatic public denunciation of his life of crime which he does convincingly on his way to the electric chair. The movie was a box office sensation.

Post-World War II

As the 1940s and World War II passed from the scene organized crime films became more brutal, cynical, and violent though many gangsters began to camouflage their illicit businesses beneath the protective canopy of legitimate enterprises. Under the cover of legitimacy, gangsters ran vice rackets, extorted legitimate businesses, and infiltrated trade unions. Changes in the underworld were in stark relief in *I Walk Alone* (1948) when Burt Lancaster plays an ex-con named Frankie Madison who had been double-crossed by a partner and spent 14 years in prison. When released he discovers that his former partner whom he protected won't help him despite promises made. The ex-partner bluntly tells him "This is big business now; we deal with banks, lawyers, and have a Dunn and Bradstreet rating. The world passed you by, Frankie."

The 1950s continued to present organized criminals as part of mob organizations including syndicates, gangs, and ethnic gangs with occasional allusions to the mysterious Mafia. The film plots were simplistic depictions of society as immoral and corrupt. The best of the genre was *On The Waterfront* (1954) which was a gritty look at New York's waterfront racketeering among the longshoreman's union. Presented in a raw, black-and-white documentary style, the film starring Marlon Brando won major awards. It served as an expose of work conditions and the consequences of mob influence.

While films about organized criminality, including TV cable series, focus on the social conditions individuals confront in their communities, very few films treat minority participation in organized crime beyond the standard approach of minorities being dependent upon the more powerful white criminal groups. *New Jack City* (1991) examines ghetto conditions and the origins of the crack cocaine trade in a big metropolitan area. Interestingly, many of the scenes and actions resemble crime films about white groups, so the only significant differences are the racial composition of the criminals and the locales of the action. Another film, this time about the Spanish ghetto in New York City *Carlito's Way* with Al Pacino looks at the heroin trade and the failed attempts of a former dealer to rehabilitate himself and go straight. The plot lines are familiar with corrupt police, mafia murderers, deceitful partners, and how together these factors derail Carlito's sincere efforts to be crime free. On the other hand, Tito, the villain in *New Jack City*, is a cunning criminal unrepentant when caught and full of contempt for his

victims when with an inconclusive court proceeding against him erupts in may-hem after a desperate neighborhood resident shoots the haughty druglord as he leaves court.

Big City Crime Fighting

In most large metropolises of the world, slums function as franchised solutions to problems of warehousing this century's surplus humanity. And slums breed not only disease and despair but all sorts of crime even though city dwellers like to think of themselves as enlightened and avant-garde. New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, and other urban mega zones are reputedly glittering cesspools of crime, corruption, and immorality which the rest of the country views with a mixture of salacious envy and pious contempt.

The context for most movies involving organized crime are the city its slums and the impoverished ethnic ghettos. The immigrant ethnic ghettos also tend to be run-down depressing habitats which also are likely to be disconnected from the sociocultural life of the larger, more affluent urban complex. In the modern world, cities furnish the toxic ingredients that may lead to crime. Indeed, most of the five Cosa Nostra crime families in the USA and many of the more prominent Mafias in Europe and Latin America are named after mob bosses and urban locations, which is indicative of the power and influence of territorial identities and loyalties. Such facts pose conundrums for researchers.

In a study of an African-American slum in Philadelphia identified by law enforcement as "crime ridden," its residents although statistically more vulner-able to robberies and assaults than other groups of residents, displayed the least fear of crime (Merry 1981). In Bensonhurst, a working-class ethnic community in Brooklyn, New York which is believed to be at one time the center of La Cosa Nostra's power, police report comparatively low-street crime rates when con-trasted with the rest of the city. It may be supposed that residents in crime-infested areas attempt to manage their apprehensions about crime by making certain that they do not openly show distrust, suspicion, or hostility toward known criminals (Kelly 1996). Apparently, somewhat non-hostile reactions to criminals may reflect a shared anger over injustices mutually felt and experienced by criminals and poor neighbors alike. The injustices that lead some to crime while others endure the consequences of poverty may, at the least, create a meaningful neutrality among criminals and non-criminals. In Bensonhurst, young street criminals—potential inductees into Cosa Nostra—are disinclined to steal from neighbors who acknowl-edge their existence as persons growing up in the neighborhood. In this connec-tion, many mob movies demonstrate fairly well-grounded political sociological instincts when they deal with the conditions that affect organized criminality in these environments. There are a variety of responses to deprivation and structural neglect in the lives of criminals ranging from charismatic churches, prophetic cults, ethnic militias, and more prosaically, organized crime (Davis 2006).

In films like *Carlito's Way* (1993) the resilient residents of Spanish Harlem created an urban subsistence economy operated by street gangs, narco-traffickers, and Cosa Nostra crews connected with criminally compromised and tainted attorneys in the criminal justice system. The film captures a set of adjustments shaped by the interplay of gangsterism, trafficking, and extortion rackets mixed into local cultural norms and folkways. It must be said that the majority of residents remain law-abiding, but it is the crime—notably violent crime—that creates the public sensations that movie-makers crave.

Impression Management and Public Behavior

As noted above, many career Cosa Nostra criminals including most recently, John Gotti, Michael "Gaspipe" Casso, and Sammy Gravano looked to movies for behavioral models. And yet many of these signature productions like *The Godfather*, *Goodfellas*, and the series *The Sopranos* examined anticrime themes and did not constantly heroicize the principal characters. Bogart, Cagney, and Capone in his various cinematic reincarnations served as models but all fell from power; ironically the top organized crime films challenged the norms of the criminal subculture, the betrayal of the criminal code, enshrined in "omerta", and presented very clearly the reasons for many hoodlums to turn their backs on the criminal way of life that so many had feverently embraced since childhood. Casso, a mob boss, and Gravano a powerhouse in the Gambino crime family second to Gotti, explicitly pointed to screen gangsters as examples of what it means to be a "wiseguy."

Another public stage for the depiction of mobsters was made by the United States government in the 1950s when the televised Kefauver Committee held hearings on corruption and illegal gambling in New York City. They proved so popular that their market share of viewers threatened Bishop Fulton Sheen's religious talk show, a popular variety showcase, The Ed Sullivan Show, and the Milton Berle ("Mr. Television") comedy variety hour. The Kefauver "show" featured the gravel-voiced Frank Costello known affectionately in the New York underworld and the city court system as "The Prime Minister." Also, appearing in starring roles were the gambler and political fixer, Joe "Joe Adonis" Doto, and Joe "Crazy Joe" Gallo who appeared in dark glasses, a black shirt with white tie as a costume appropriate to his impersonation of Richard Widmark who played a role in a popular crime drama as a psychopath who throws the crippled, helpless grandmother in a wheelchair is one of his adversaries down a flight of stairs. Among the assortment of lesser known characters was the redoubtable Virginia Hill, not a gun moll, but a money mover who also conducted "romances" with top mob bosses in the country. She proudly announced to a stunned panel of senators and investigators that her rapid rise into the upper echelons of the national syndicate had nothing to do with her ability to keep her mouth shut. On the contrary, she majestically averred: "I'm the best cocksucker in the mob!" Needless to say the coarse obscenity scandalized the viewing audience and left the cherubic senator from New England, Charles Tobey, utterly speechless (Jennings 1967).

The Mafia's Monopoly of Mob Movies: Emotional Engineering

The seductive power of mob movies became unmistakably clear with the success of *The Godfather* and other kindred films. Some mob movies are very popular while others with substantial production qualities (good scripts, actors, etc.) are abysmal failures. Film failure is an intriguing issue: is it the result of an inept script, poor direction, lousy actors, inadequate publicity, or some mixture or permutation of such factors? Similarly, film success is equally mysterious. What makes for success, however, is intangible that haunts producers and backers of films.

When it was released in 1972, *The Godfather* was an instant success, later to become a landmark of American cinema. As a dramatic portrayal of post-World War II America as it emerged from the fog of global war, the film bridged many audiences. While a peripheral concern (though not to the production studio), the movie also financially invigorated Paramount Pictures Corporation. Artistically, the Mafia film earned ten nominations at the 45th Academy Awards ceremony.

The success of *The Godfather* artistically has been attributed to the clever interweaving of several story lines that would become explicitly interconnected in *The Godfather Part II* and *Part III*. In essence, the films chronicle the generational struggles of an immigrant and his family as they confront the intricate, multifaceted American Dream. What is remarkable about these films is that their plots and story lines are authentically situated in a subcultural world of crime and violence as a way of life. It is a trilogy that works on the grand level of epic, with brilliant cinematography, and as a touching, tragic family narrative.

With *The Godfather's* resounding success, television got back into the production of crime dramas. Much earlier TV had shows like *The Untouchables* and *Wiseguy*. *The Untouchables* touched upon Al Capone's Chicago and Melvin Purvis, an FBI agent who hounded Capone's organization. Some other short-lived melodramas of good guys versus bad guys much like the Cowboy and Western thrillers of the 1940 s appeared periodically on TV. Then came *The Sopranos* on cable tv which fed off *The Godfather* in subtle ways. Tony Soprano, the lead character, purrs with admiration for the two Godfather films and laments how he has come into the business of organized criminality when respect is at an end. However, not all of Tony's crew are so sentimental. Chris Moltisanti, a cousin and Mafia wannabe, happens to be partial to more contemporary gangsters like Tony Montana in *Scarface*. "Lewis Brazi sleeps with the fishes," he exclaims. Big Pussy, a Soprano soldier, exasperatedly corrects him: "You mean Luca Brasi, Luca!" Soprano characters revere the movie, at the same time they are also sensitive to the implicit stereotypes it generates. In the vernacular of working-class Italian-American neighborhoods, Moltisanti's remarks are known as "breakin' balls."

Modern mob movies are often edifying and not always disappointing. Knowledgeable viewers find many of these productions entertaining because they do not reinforce a narrow view of the Mafia underworld as little more than a treacherous network of like-minded gangsters rather than a set of disconnected,

fragmented crews deeply suspicious of each other who are linked through ethnicity and a vanishing set of subcultural organizational norms. The notion of a "brotherhood" is not much more than an evanescent piece of a disparate mythic cultural reality. However, movie goers love the idea of a secretive, unified organization as seen in James Bond films where 007 confronts SMERSH—a super-type Mafia of loyal, dangerous criminals bent on world domination. Good mob movies including *Raging Bull*, *Casino, Mean Streets,* and *Donnie Brasco* are films that seem like "integrated spectacles" as Debord describes them (Debord 1993).

From the 1970 s onwards the films about organized crime promoted by Hollywood have dominated the popular imagination. A good example of film power to reinforce or create public opinion is Oliver Stone's *JFK* (1991). Oliver Stone's assassination theory of John Kennedy involves the possible collusion of the Mafia, the CIA, Lyndon Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover, FBI Director, among others. The filmmaker suggested that the 1963 murder of President Kennedy was nothing less than a coup d'etat (as argued passionately in the movie by Kevin Costner playing the role of Jim Garrison, the New Orleans District Attorney who brought to trial for conspiracy to murder the President Clay Shaw and several shady figures immersed in the Netherland of drugs, illicit sex, and tawdry business dealings. Pertinent to the case and trial was the fact that Clay Shaw had been an operative of the CIA in the past. Oswald, the accused murderer, was for Stone (and more than half of the American Public) a patsy, in the conspiracy. Mob bosses in New Orleans (Carlos Marcello), Tampa (Santos Trafficante), and Chicago (Sam Giancana) were presumed to have handled and arranged for the hit, escape routes, and vital intelligence needed to mount such a delicate operation.

In the film, the key characters float through many scenarios along with maverick elements in the CIA, the U.S. Army, veterans of the Bay of Pigs, and an array of malcontents. Stone tried to put together the vital parts of the jigsaw puzzle, but we may never know what really happened, any more than we will ever know the true identity of Jack the Ripper.

Stone's atmospherics mixed with Hollywood studio set pieces including newsreels gives the film an occasional grainy touch of toughened realism and also a malignant tone; in other words the feeling that something quite sinister was taking place before our eyes under the American veneer of prosperity and two car garages, something that ultimately brought disillusionment and cynicism into a world that had seemed shadowless and full of possibilities. And afterwards? Audiences left theaters dazed and angry; *JFK* set the historical sense on fire. In the aftermath of the event in 1963, Deleay Plaza there occurred, among other things, the expansion of the Vietnam War, race riots in major cities, more assassinations (Bobby Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X); it saw the proliferation of the hippies, LSD, Kent State, Woodstock, Altamont, the Panthers, and a decade later Reagan/Bush for another 10 years.

The array of peripheral characters caught up in the confluence of events had to appeal to Stone's feverish imaginative capacities: homosexual businessmen, CIA agents masquerading in a variety of roles and masks as flight-school instructors, erstwhile attorneys, pedestrian gangsters, and slightly deranged nightclub

proprietors. The mob angle offered other fascinating, fateful motives. According to this scenario, Attorney General Robert Kennedy had been out to break up organized crime and imprison its partners like Jimmy Hoffa of the Teamsters Union. Bobby's brother President John Kennedy had done nothing to stop him. Furthermore, the Mafia pined for its lost casino empire in Havana, Cuba which it had hoped to win back when assorted bits of Miami-based flotsam of the Scarface variety washed up in the Bay of Pigs; but Kennedy failed to provide air cover and the effort to destroy Castro failed. Jimmy Hoffa wanted bobby Kennedy dead; Carlos Marcello wanted Kennedy dead so that his snarling pit bull, Bobby, could be removed. The Five families who controlled the tiles that make up that gorgeous mosaic, New York City, wanted Kennedy dead in a big way. *JFK* exposes all these wicked, baneful reasons. The film is a hefty lesson in political science and history and imaginative filmmaking. Another motive may be added that Stone acknowledges but does not explore in-depth—the desire of the Kennedy's to force Hoover's retirement as FBI Director. In the aftermath of the murder of the President, the government changed significantly in terms of policies: it became more imperial, secretive, and punitive. Elements of the government and the Presidency under Lyndon Johnson evolved, or matured, into a vortex of negative glamor. Stone's film, however flawed, deals upfront with a complacent, ignorant platitude that weak-minded people often resort to in a crisis: regarding JFK's murder some are inclined to dismiss the reasons for it as fortuitous—as something that sort of happened. For Stone, nothing bad just happens in America.

Some of the key writers, producers, and directors of mob films who deal with the Mafia, namely Coppola, Scorsese, Pileggi, and others share a quality that is a concern for reworking and representing as accurately as possible Italian-American subcultural experiences. In this sense they constitute an "autobiographical intelligentsia" who are truly unified by common passions and visions. For a time, however, they functioned as a firing squad without mercy or a sense of reprieve against the nonsense that preceded the serious treatment of the Mafia subculture in Italian-American life. They discovered that the social dreams of the struggling Italian-American ghettoes to be no different and no less desirable than the great bourgeois vision of the good life in a tamed, morally upright society. As a consequence of their efforts what emerged, what they introduced in films, was a new esthetic climate that was instrumental in revising elitist historical judgments girdled with xenophobic sensibilities.

While the basic nobility of the Italian-American experience has been to some degree ignored and needs to be justly restored, as with any ethnic group, its ethnographic history is dotted with social blemishes of one type or another. For example, through one great crime syndication after another, LCN (La Cosa Nostra) groups have looted America's "Little Italys." There were part of the initial stages of the massive immigration into the United States and faced no competing hierarchies of power within the immigrant communities with the clout to challenge the mafia, that had to wait on cultural assimilation where alternatives to mafia power could be articulated and implemented. Culturally sensitive film makers, as distinct from exploiters, have done good work in this era of a cinema boom and cultural

monumentality by reviving the grist and dynamism of Little Italys, in terms of their communal tragedies and triumphs. It seems that the modern La Cosa Nostra is no longer the ancient horror it was in the 1930s through the 1950s. Though Mafiosi are volatile and versatile, their cumulative impact has been weakened by RICO antiorganized crime statutes and by the availability of economic alternatives in legitimate society to mafia involvement.

Major film makers and their television counterparts especially, seem to communicate best with their audiences not by instructing them in what to make of what they see, but by inviting them to compare notes. This interactional style seems especially appropriate with crime films. Crime films, mob movies, are dialogical in spirit in the ways that Vigotsky envisioned the structure of communication processes to be. As with reader and text, the dialogical experiences of movies are between viewer and film. In line with the work of several Italian-American film makers and artists, *The Godfather Trilogy* was a form of cultural relief and rehabilitation from an imposed collective guilt and shame, from the obligation to be apologetic, from the apparent obligation to explain away the phenomenon of mafia and its sordid presence.

The movies *New Jack City* and *American Gangster* that focused on drug dealing and the type of organized crime that develops around it in the African-American ghettos reveals some of the underside of a stagnant, crippled American social dream, the myth that is still unfulfilled that has at present led to despair, and suffering for so many. In the eyes of unflinching realists in the Black world, many of whom are stone killers and criminals, the dream is meant for whites only. The rest who think it is a social and psychological recipe meant for all seem utterly and hopelessly deluded.

The War on Organized Crime

When *The Godfather* appeared followed by a rash of other similar films, many commentators felt that the movies glorified criminals. The process of demeaning or celebrating personalities, social, and political movements is nothing new in mass media. In the 1930s and early 1940s. (Potter 1998), Journalists such as Walter Winchell and entertainment impresarios like Ed Sullivan utilizing radio and later TV as an entertainment/information tool popularized many causes and persons including the "G-Men" (FBI, Treasury Agents) (Potter 1998). With the media's help, Hoover became a national celebrity as a crime fighter and later as a hunter of Nazi agents and communist espionage agents. Winchell aided Hoover with the capture of Lepke Buchalter, a notorious New York syndicate kingpin in the clothing rackets and drug trafficking networks. Both men saw mutual advantages in cooperation. Winchell found Hoover to be useful because he was a source of information about underworld personalities and other individuals with sensitive political views which Winchell exploited on his radio broadcasts. Both men understood that mass culture and society were rapidly changing and both appeared to

have an instinctive grasp of the potential power of mass communications technology. Hoover's publicity techniques included the invention of a "Public Enemies" list of wanted criminals, fugitives, who allegedly committed heinous crimes and crimes against the entire nation. And throughout a long career, Hoover permitted many quality films to be made by Hollywood movie studios about his agency, its work, its personnel, about himself as its boss, using top movie stars in the pictures, and productions that could compete with any of Hollywood's finest studios. And over time many of Hoover's communications technologies were duplicated by local law enforcement agencies (Gid Powers 1983). Several of these technologies and techniques were developed by Winchell who seized on new methods for distributing, collecting, and creating news; Winchell utilized the methods to launch with others in broadcasting a new mass culture of celebrity (which has developed cultic dimensions today) that was centered in New York, Hollywood, and Washington, D.C. The style of his broadcasts was fixated on personalities and less on news analyses (Gabler 1994).

The "war on crime" when seen as a cultural phenomenon has been long fought not only with guns but with pens, cameras, actors, films, and TV. The media bring to light details about crime fighting and also what legislatures and government in general do or fail to do. Such methods of gathering, distilling, and disseminating information transform society and the state. Obviously, there is a negative side to this: media can "create" news, destroy, or empower individuals that it favors or opposes, and in general sway public understanding of events and individuals. Put slightly differently, collectively the images and stories purveyed in media make up the packages of social dreams that constitute our culture.

In still other ways through public interest projects on Public Broadcasts systems, the public may learn in detail about national historical and political issues and problems. And with access to broadcasts public interests and government agencies as well as citizen groups, issues of national interests may be presented such as the implications of transnational organized crime for the public. Eventually, effective presentations can bring important problems out of the weeds and precipitate governmental action in the form of new agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Homeland Security to combat terrorism and global drug trafficking.

By Way of a Conclusion

Films about crime cannot prescribe bromides to despair, but sometimes they can help us to learn how to live with the societal madness and its throbbing imperfections that threaten to engulf us and to recognize what is different about it and what has not changed at all.

It seems that every age appears to be dominated by a privileged form of expression, a genre which seems a fit expression of its special truths. In this era we have come to appreciate that culture itself is largely a matter of media: its older forms

of expression—print, sound, and video were and are, in different ways media products (Jameson 2003). Macluhan's thesis: "the medium is the message," rings even more true today than ever. Put another way, the intervention of the complex apparatus, "the Consciousness Industry" is now everywhere. Perhaps as Adorno suggested this was always the case (Adorno 1978). Film, mass media and the Internet show us what the world might look like in our own absence (Cavell 1979).

Appendix: New American Gangsters and Media

The contemporary scene in which the La Cosa Nostra is no longer the dominant force in the American underworld, ethnic and racial street gangs along with motorcycle gangs have been growing rapidly in size and influence in the inner cities and ghettoes of American urban areas and in the volatile border regions in the Southwest of the United States. The emerging gangs are localized metropolitan groups who have affiliates in prison systems and in urban ghettoes that stretch across international borders. Members are recruited to conduct illicit businesses in gun running, drug trafficking, and other criminal activities.

In 2005, on the front page of The Los Angeles Times, a shirtless young man covered in tatoos poses menacingly. The photo was part of an article on MS 13 (La Mara Salvatrucha), a Salvadoran criminal organization with formations in several US states and a predominant presence in major federal prison institutions (Lopez et al. 2005). The work of Lopez and others describes the ways in which the mass media have positioned such groups as part of the criminal nexus that links drug trafficking, illegal immigration, terrorism, and street crime in many American cities. By focusing on the illegal immigration of hardened criminals who play prominent roles in the leadership of international networks of transnational criminal activity, it seems that major media outlets have embraced the paradigms of emergent criminal structures the government has promulgated and adopted the rhetoric of government agencies such as the FBI and the satellite agencies making up the huge Department of Homeland Security. And over time journals such as *Foreign Affairs*, PBS (Public Broadcasting system) and *The New York Times* featured articles about Latino gangs in rhetoric and prose similar to the LA Times article. For Macek, the result has been the appearance in print and TV media a "discourse of savagery" where media vilify minority urban youth by deploying stigmatizing metaphors of "contagion" and "penetration" that tend to accompany discussions and presentations on TV, and Internet outlets of immigration and crime issues (Macek 2006; Santa Ana 2002). Santa Ana warned that "gangs are spreading into Mexico and beyond and that once ensconced, the gangs grow quickly" (Santa Ana 2005, p. 98). The impassioned language in which these issues are typically discussed suggests that the gangs—unlike traditional American youth gangs—are essentially malevolent, parasitic groups that seek to infiltrate the United States and promote a crime wave similar to that which saturates some Latin American societies. A *Newsweek* article, described an attack in which the victim was "repeatedly

stabbed and his head nearly severed." The piece went on to describe other incidents of violence where "gang members were armed with machetes and hacked away at members of other gangs" (Campos-Flores 2005, p. 22).

The texts of such articles stoke fears about criminal conspiracies fueled by illegal immigration. Many news agencies prominently feature photos of heavily tattooed gang members displaying firearms and belligerently "throwing signs" (using complex hand and finger movements to communicate secret gang information) (Gunckel 2007). It seems very likely that images and texts in a context of sensationalistic media coverage contributes to a climate of fear and intimidation that will encourage government suppression with little informed public support for a balanced approach to crime deterrence. The media-driven gang threat facilitates political campaigning based on xenophobia engendered by media with MS 13, for example, referenced frequently in connection with immigrant crime spreading out of the big urban areas into suburban communities (Reisman 2006).

Coverage of Central American gangs in TV journalism, documentaries, and news reports shows a similar range and style of sensationalistic imagery that emphasizes intensified law enforcement in lieu of an in-depth examination of the structural causes that precipitate criminal gang development, growth, and impact on communities. In too many media treatments of the problems the rhetoric in the media accounts and presentations appears to be dehumanizing where gang members are sometimes compared to a "virus" while warning that MS 13, for instance, is becoming an international menace, crossing borders at will, leaving its bloody mark from central America to the American heartland. And personal interviews with gang members dwell almost exclusively on criminal violence. In a documentary film entitled "Mara Salvatrucha 13" produced in Mexico, the Mexican border with the United States is seen as porous, a place lacking in police control, a Mafia territory, a habitat of Mexican/American lifestyles in which drugs and weapons are readily available. This species of media documentary is known as "border cinema" (Iglesias 2003).

Another species of current documentary-making—a sort of "shadow cinema"—is similar to conventional sociological accounts on gangs in that it is ethnographically sensitive to gang street life and to the gang notion of a "family." The gang sense of family does not refer to Mafia-type crime families; family in this sense is not the same as "family" in the criminological literature. For many gang members the gang itself functions as a surrogate family offering emotional support and a sense of belonging for members in the streets of the neighborhood. Filmmakers not only show how tough the street gang/family can be but also just how supportive it is. In short, the gang/family is a notion filled with ambiguities and complexities in the ghetto gang subculture. Clearly, it is not just a superficial factor in adolescent emotional development. Another way of putting this is to say that while the institutional realities of ordinary family life seem threatening, even for middle-class teenagers, the gang-as-family is a powerful motif/metaphor for gang life (Rodriquez 1998; Brown 2002).

Others have observed that Chicano cinema as well as ghetto underground filmmaking focus intensely on street life and penal institutions to the exclusion of

other aspects of gang members' lives (Noriega 2001). Major Hollywood productions about Chicano life in American cities, in particular, Edward James Olmos's *American Me* (1992) deal with the prison setting as a reconfigured site of the male Chicano's other home and family while the barrio itself seems little more than a place where disaffected, fractured families bide their time in exasperating economic circumstances.

Exploitation films might readily be explained by a popularity that thrives on themes of violence and gang solidarity. Such movies illustrate the eagerness of producers to capitalize on audience demands for gratuitous violence and sexually prurient scenarios. The line between a documentary and a salacious entertainment action thriller is blurred to such a degree that almost anything may be packaged as entertainment even though its original intent may be educational (Schaefer 1999; Faris 1992).

The news stories and docudramas about ghetto gangs and their threat has been popularized by interviews, on camera, with scarry violent felons telling harrowing stories of life in the 'hood. The appeal of such films goes beyond their informational and educational value. What is indeed provocative beyond the obvious ingredients of violence and street mayhem is that the sensational style is not merely acknowledged as a legitimate factor in films, but threatens the scientific validity of documentaries whose purposes are, or ought to be, purely informational. On the other hand, might not the unflinching gaze of sensational, exploitative docudramas about the complex narratives of gang life actually humanize their subjects as well as inform their viewers? Or will these communication/entertainment vehicles reinforce reactionary immigration policy and repressive law enforcement policies?

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Chapter 8
Conclusions: The Inventor, the Detective, and the Warrior

Three Film Archetypes

We will now discuss three of the principle archetypes/stereotypes* that have figured prominently in modern film—the Inventor, the Detective, and the Warrior. We have chosen to separate these three motifs mainly because we believe that even thought they are all of a piece, they can be discussed as primarily having one characteristic or the other. They should be considered a dynamism, or gestalt that works together. Some actors are so identified with a certain type that they are used over and over again in similar kinds of movies—recurring dreams that play a comforting role because they are so predictable and have such satisfying resolutions. For instance, as Kracauer notes, from 1930 to 1933, the now forgotten actor Hans Albers "played the heroes of films in which typically bourgeois daydreams found outright fulfillment" although it was among workers that his exploits resonated in particular.

The Inventor

In some respect, the inventor is a surrogate for the filmmaker. On the one hand, he (and it is nearly always a man) is a pioneer, a visionary, and possibly a genius capable of mastering and manipulating technology and nature; on the other hand, he can also be an exploiter, a mad scientist (analogous to the Dr. Evil of psychology), or else because he is too narrow-minded and arrogant, becomes responsible for unleashing destructive forces. The inventor is both the embodiment of the American dream—driven as he is to explore, conquer and transform—and its saboteur. One of the greatest American films ever produced—*Citizen Kane* (1941)—is based on the larger-than-life figure of the newspaper publisher and magnate William Randolph Hearst (and directed by the larger-than-life figure Orson Welles). "Kane is America, Kane is us, Kane is a social institution—but

Kane is also flesh and blood, a man, an individual," writes Manvell, "But what is real about him is constantly on the borderland of what is unreal; such a life as this is a melodrama, a human anomaly, a monstrosity." This dualistic view, he goes on to say, is reflected in the style of the movie, "weaving in and out of actuality like sequences in a nightmare." The 'realistic' sequences are thus very real and the 'unrealistic' very unreal: "the

> Again I want to emphasize that the use of 'archetype' is meant as convenient shorthand for a characteriological classification; it is not meant to suggest a Jungian bias.

Thatcher Memorial Library, haunted by the ungenerous spirit of its founder, Kane's guardian during his minority, is like a giant morgue, echoing, vast, and empty. Kane's Xanadu is a domestic cathedral; his wife, unhappy with her puzzles, sits crouched in space beside a fireplace the size of a cottage..." Kane 'invented' (if that's the word) a form of journalism that put a greater priority on selling papers than on accuracy. (Although the claim is certainly exaggerated, Hearst was credited with starting the Spanish-American War because of the boost it would give to circulation.) His influence can still be felt—in fact, it is stronger than ever—in today's media in which it seems the most rancorous and loudest voices prevail.

Arguably, the most significant inventor ever brought to life on the big screen (in more ways than one) is Frankenstein. The original 1931 film is one of the first to show the unintended consequences of a misguided scientific experiment. Because of his assistant's error, Dr. Frankenstein transplants a criminal brain into his creation. Frankenstein follows in a long tradition with roots in ancient Greek mythology (Galatea, Pygmalion) and in Jewish legend (the dybbuk) in which man tries to create new life (human, clones, chimeras) at his peril. (The anxiety that this subject raises is echoed in debates over the medical use of stem cells or the safety of genetically manipulated food.) Inventors are also feared because they continue to tinker with and create technology which makes life easier for us while troubling our sleep. Instead of a reconstituted corpse like Frankenstein's monster, we view technological devices—and their creators—with ambivalence. Our cell phones track our every movement (even when they're switched off); our family and friends can find out where we are but so can the service providers, governments, and hackers with malicious intent. Are films telling us that the same high technology that fascinates, mesmerizes, and misleads us is the real enemy? Certainly the fear that we are surrendering control over our lives to technology is not new. Kubrick's eerily human-like computer HAL spawned any number of insidious machines which, in the guise of benign labor-saving or protective devices, infiltrate families, and defy the intentions of their inventors. In the 1977 *Demon Seed*, the computer at the heart of a high-tech surveillance system takes a young wife (Julie Christie) hostage and impregnates her. The 1998 *Enemy of the State* is another example of what one critic has called techno-paranoia where the enemy of the title (played by John Voight) is a NSA spook with seemingly enough technology at his disposal to track down every man, woman and child in the United States. Not that man does not fight back. The Star Trek series (both in its TV and

film versions) portrays the perennial tensions between man and machine, personified by Kirk the fallible human and Spock the infallible Vulcan. Their conflict harkens back to earlier social dreams such as *Metropolis* and *Frankenstein*. While the machine is trained to reason, the human relies on intuition which the machine lacks. The starship Enterprise, a futuristic law enforcement agency, embodies both extremes and aims toward finding a balance between emotion and reason. Its ethic is not to interfere but rather to lend help to other worlds. The inability to find that balance between cognitive and emotional behavior represents the main danger for society.

The separation of the mind from the heart was never more vividly illustrated than in the British TV movie *Cold Lazarus* by the late Dennis Potter. *Cold Lazarus* (1994) takes place in Britain in the twenty-fourth century when society is being run (or run to the ground) by American corporations. The world Potter envisioned is a dystopia where the streets of London lie in ruins and people are terrorized by a resistance group called RON ('Reality or Nothing'). But scientific advances proceed apace. It is now possible to realize mankind's age-old dream of defeating death; scientists at a cryogenic research institute are able to revive the mind, though not the body, of a twentieth century writer Daniel Feeld (played by Albert Finney) who in his second life is reduced to a disembodied head. The head of the consortium sponsoring the research is convinced that he can make a fortune by broadcasting the revived writer's memories on TV. But all the decapitated writer really wants to do is return to the oblivion of death. However ingenious the film, Potter was tapping into a collective dream that was already old by the time Icarus took his ill-fated flight too close to the sun. As much as humans long for immortality, those mythical—and fictional—characters who obtain it (or almost do) invariably discover the price is far too high to pay.

The Warrior

Why do superheroes like James Bond, Jason Bourne (the hero created by the late Robert Ludlum), and Ethan Hunt (the hero of the *Mission Impossible* series) arise in the creative psyche and inject themselves so emphatically in popular culture? Are Bond and his fellow superspies characters peculiar to the West? Certainly, Bond films are a recurring social dream that emerged during the Cold War but they have, improbably, survived its end. In later films, the enemy has shifted from the Soviets in a seemingly fantastic direction where 007 is often pitted against an international terrorist syndicate with access to all the fruits of modern technology. What is remarkable about the Fleming and Broccoli creations is how successfully they were able to transcend the confines of the Cold War. (It is well documented that Ian Fleming made use of his own experiences in British intelligence in the Bond novels; what is not so well known is that in giving him his famous codename 007 he was probably inspired by C. K. Chesterton's 1908 novel *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare*, a book

often referred to as "a metaphysical thriller.") The transition probably begins after *From Russia with Love* (1963). The Bond movies did not have to depend on the rivalry between the CIA and KGB for its villains when there were so many waiting in the wings. The tentacles of "SPECTRE" (an anagram for 'Respect') extended far beyond the Soviet intelligence services, reaching into the world of drug cartels, the Russian mafia and later other non-state actors like al–Qaeda. In the process, James Bond became one of pop culture's most recognizable and enduring icons notwithstanding the casting changes that gave us significantly different conceptions of Bond: Sean Connery, Roger Moore, Timothy Dalton, Pierce Brosnan, and lately Daniel Craig. He remains a cultural symbol with fastidious tastes: he drives only luxury automobiles (Aston-Martins); drinks only vodka martinis (shaken, not stirred) and wears exquisitely tailored suits; he vacations and engages in thrilling espionage adventures in the most glamorous locales and gambles for high stakes in the most exclusive casinos and stays in only the toniest hotels. He speaks all the most widely known languages, skis, skin dives, plays golf and tennis at the best clubs, and is a gourmet who indulges in haut cuisine. One can make a case that Bond, at least in his earlier incarnations, was a kind of embodiment of the nuclear bomb himself. Take, for example, the lyrics for the title track of *Thunderball* (1965), a sort of 'dream within a dream.'

> He knows the meaning of success.
>> His needs are more, so he gives less.
>> They call him the winner who takes all,
>> And he strikes like Thunderball.
>> …
>> His days of asking are all gone.
>> His fight goes on and on.

Bond is licensed to kill, he can always escape to fight another day; he does not have to get bogged down in tedious diplomatic negotiations. "He looks at the world and wants it all," the song continues. It is an attitude that is shared by most of Bond's avaricious antagonists who are prepared to use any means possible, even launching nuclear strikes, to maintain or extend their power. Bond certainly is not troubled by any conscience. He is a man of action whose days of asking are all gone (although one doubts that he ever asked for anything to begin with). And for those of us who lived through the Cold War, the fight did give every indication of going on and on with either endless stalemate or nuclear extinction as the only possible outcomes. Beginning with *From Russia with Love* (1953) onward, though, the Soviet Union had already begun to lose some of its cachet as a worthwhile opponent. In that film, Bond and a beautiful Russian agent make common cause to defeat SPECTRE which, we discover, has been manipulating events to bring about a confrontation between the Soviet Union and Great Britain for its own malevolent purposes. Bond films prefigure the fear prevalent in the social dream today of a faceless enemy, possibly sponsored by a rogue state or operating from the safe haven of a failed state, an enemy in other words that transcends boundaries or national loyalties.

But Bond has also proven capable of evolving. As personified by Craig, he is more downbeat and jaded, more emotional (Bond grieves over the death of a girlfriend), and less of a skirt chaser. He has arguably done a better job of adapting to political and cultural changes than Hugh Heffner whose magazine once celebrated Bond as a kind of idealized playboy.

The stories in the Bond form a kind of a bridge from the period of ideological warfare to our own, where the fear of a frigid colossus or a nuclear exchange has been trumped by fears of uncorked psychopaths and dirty bombs in the hands of the true believers.

In the recent *Quantum of Solace* (2008), Bond's antagonist is not a terrorist but rather a mogul who has enriched himself by despoiling the environment. Whatever their motivation, the evildoers in Bond films are invariably deranged masterminds prepared to destroy or subdue the world through catastrophic violence even if it means bringing about Armageddon. That we are now confronting fanatics who threaten to blow up the world might account for why audiences tend to shun movies that feature Islamic radicals. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of Communism left filmmakers (as well as thriller writers) temporarily bereft of a convenient evildoer. After 9/11, radical Islamic terrorists assumed the role of boogieman. People do not want to go to the movies to see fictionalized versions of events they can watch unfolding every night on the TV news (Neither *Syriana i*n 2005 nor *The Kingdom* in 2007 was a box office success).

The heroes in these thrillers all have a mission of sorts: to let us see the world from a particular institutional rather than ideological slant. Bond, Bourne, and Hunt may all be anti-conformists and renegades who routinely disobey orders but they never challenge the status quo. On the contrary, they actually defend it. The warriors who dominate our social dreams are seen as forming the vanguard against the barbarians who are armed with high-tech gizmos. They are the successors of the tight-lipped cowboys who with a six-shooter brought justice to the Wild West. In that social dream, too, the heroes were defenders of existing institutions, perpetually locked in a struggle to keep chaos at bay.

The Detective

With the possible exception of the sheriff in Westerns, no cinematic hero has had more of an influence on audiences than the detective—the rumpled, jaded, romantic, hard-drinking figure who walks the mean streets and puts his life at risk to unravel a mystery. In one form or another, this figure appears in a variety of related genres—the crime film, the gangster film, the thriller, and the film noir. He is distinctly American although his ethnicity may vary—Mr. Moto (Japanese), Charlie Chan (Chinese) and "Easy" Rawlins (African-American)—and he tends to be a loner even though he is frequently ensnared (and betrayed) by a femme fatale. Our image of the detective was to a large extent shaped by the film adaptations of Dashiell Hammett—The Thin Man series and *The Maltese Falcon* (1931, 1936 and

1941) and Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe particularly as he is portrayed in *The Big Sleep* (1946) and *Farewell, My Lovely* (1942, 1944 and 1975). The detective or the private eye flourished during the classic age of the film noir, a period that extended from the late 1940s to the late 1950s. (Orson Welles' 1958 *Touch of Evil* is generally regarded as the last noir of the classic period.) Usually shot in black-and-white, dimly lit, and set in forbidding urban environments, film noir was influenced—visually and thematically—by German expressionism. The protagonist of these films could also be policemen, boxers, grafters, or victims like the ill-fated hero of *D.O.A.* Who has only hours to discover who killed him. Just about every character is cynical, embittered, avaricious, or despairing and that includes the femme fatales, corrupt policemen, jealous husbands, and alcohol-addled writers who also make regular appearances in film noir. The cities where these films take place–Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, and Chicago—are mazelike and labyrinthine, filled with traps and pitfalls for the unwary. More often than not the action occurs at night in bars, nightclubs and anonymous hotel rooms; even the daylight is uncertain and the weather forecast always seems to call for rain. As a social dream, these films reflect the anxiety and apprehensions prevalent in society in the aftermath of World War II. "It is as if the war, and the social eruptions in its aftermath, unleashed demons that had been bottled up in the national psyche," Nicholas Christopher writes in his study of the genre. The Red Scare was at least in part responsible for the sense of paranoia that hangs over many of these films, especially *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955), and no wonder since the films were created by many directors and screenwriters suspected of Communist sympathies who were hauled before the House Un-American Activities Committee, blackballed from the industry and in some cases thrown into prison. One of them was Dashiell Hammett. The Red Scare was another social dream—a dream that was not confined to the screen.

Conclusion

We have seen that film can be a transmitter of a social dream even when—especially when—the filmmaker is unaware that he is creating a dream. At the same time, we have shown how audiences can become a collaborator in this dream, imposing their own fantasies and memories on the film so what they see on the screen is both the filmmaker's vision and their own. Some skeptics have taken issue with the idea that films have the capacity to embody and convey a dream, pointing out that for the most part, Hollywood film studios (and their counterparts elsewhere in the world) are in it for the money. So what else is new? But that misses the point. To be sure, studios and the individuals they hire aim to manipulate us. (Think of the many 'tear jerkers.') But as Kracauer has noted in his landmark study of the German cinema, the manipulator has to have good (or at least compelling) material to manipulate. "Even the official Nazi war films, pure propaganda products as they were, mirrored certain national characteristics which

could not be fabricated. "He goes on to say that if Hollywood ignored the wishes and desires of the public it would pretty soon find that no one was going to see its products. In the long run, he writes, "public desires determine the nature of Hollywood films." But what are these public desires? Sometimes, until the film-maker shows them their desires, the spectators (and the filmmakers) are not aware of them. In other words, the filmmaker is helping us recall a dream we had forgotten on waking. As Kracauer says: "What films reflect are not so much explicit credos as psychological dispositions those deep layers of collective mentality which extend more or less below the dimension of consciousness." What Munsterberg was the first to realize was that the power of films to do this was derived partly from the collaborative vision of the filmmakers and their teams of technicians but also partly from the techniques employed by the new medium—close-ups, flashbacks, and flash-forward, jump-cuts, etc. Thanks to their capability for violating causality, juxtaposing seemingly unrelated images, sequences and sounds, or revealing characters' memories or emotions so vividly films proved capable of duplicating the experience of dreaming better than any other mass medium. As the influential art historian Erwin Panofsky noted, the spectator may remain in a fixed position throughout the duration of a movie, "but only physically… Aesthetically, he is in permanent motion, as his eye identifies itself with the lens of the camera which permanently shifts in distance and direction. And the space presented to the spectator is as movable as the spectator is himself. Not only do solid bodies move in space, but space itself moves, changing, turning, dissolving and recrystallizing… ". Kracauer cautions that while films may reflect the longings and anxieties of a culture or a nation that does not mean that there is a "fixed national character" but rather that the medium can tap into "such collective dispositions or tendencies as prevail within a nation at a certain stage of its development." He contended that by examining the Expressionist films of the 1920s like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Metropolis*, for instance, it would be possible to get a sense of the "fears and hopes" that swept Germany immediately after World War I". He also points out that the dreams of a particular nation are often similar to those of many other nations. If circumstances are similar enough—say, economic deprivation or war—other people will share the same dreams. All the same, even if psychological states (of individuals, cultures or nations) are influenced to a great degree by external factors "psychological tendencies often assume independent life, and, instead of automatically changing with ever-changing circumstances, become themselves essential springs of historical evolution." These "dispositions" can outlast their original causes and undergo their own metamorphosis; sometimes "in cases of extreme political change" in which the political system dissolves or collapses, it can trigger a breakdown of the psychological system of a people as well. As social dreams, as an expression of unconscious fears, hopes, and psychological distress, films can both anticipate and predict these changes. We dream in the darkness of the bedroom and we dream in the darkness of the theater. Perhaps, the principal difference is that we do not pay for the former and we are obliged to pay for the latter—in other words, they are the dreams that money can buy.

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