Media **M**agazine

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Partners in crime
Music and politics
Auteurs and actors – Scorsese, De Niro and DiCaprio
Cooks and the box – TV chefs
Celebrities and products
Tweeting and online comment
Tackling your terminal examination

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English & Media Centre

Welcome to the last issue before your exams. You're on the home stretch now – so we've provided you with a checklist of important survival tips from principal examiners to see you through your Media and Film terminal exams, whichever papers you're doing. And Front Page News includes summaries of, and links to a few of the recent news stories you might want to be familiar with if you're studying media regulation, the press, ownership and institutions, or advertising.

Meanwhile, the rest of this issue is devoted to media collaborations of various sorts – between **artists and auteurs**, such as Brad Pitt and David Fincher, or Martin Scorsese and his muses, de Niro and DiCaprio; between **celebrities and products** (anyone for coffee with George Clooney?); between **audiences and technologies**, such as Twitter and online news forums. Some collaborations are **fictional** – partnerships such as Holmes and Watson, Morse and Lewis, Hannibal Lecter and Clarice Starling, often linked by crime or the prevention thereof. Others are **cross-genre**, such as Steph Hendry's survey of the connections between music and politics, or Jonathan Nunns' overview of celebrity and cuisine in TV cookery shows. We look at collective networks for new film-makers, and consider the ethics of unpaid production experience. And several pieces explore the collaboration between audiences, industry and texts, with a focus on **cross-platform story-telling and convergence**.

Finally we include an exclusive response from the Press Complaints Commission to a feature in our last issue on the press pack's coverage of violent events. The article provides some useful context to the background of the story, and details of the PCC's proactive role in supporting victims and communities and improving standards in the press. We are glad to give the PCC the opportunity to make the Editors' Code of Practice and its policies on acceptable behaviour more transparent.

We hope you'll enjoy this issue and find plenty to support you over the next few weeks – and wish you the very best of luck!

Jenny grahame

Remember, *MediaMag* now has its own Facebook page at **http://www.facebook.com/mediamag.emc**

Coming in September's MediaMag: the Production issue

Make sure your Centre re-subscribes so you can access:

- Articles from examiners about getting the best out of your production work
- 'How to…' pieces to see you through some of those tricky technological issues
- Case studies of particularly interesting production processes in film, TV, online media and print
- Favourite productions, how they work and what they mean to us
- The launch of a new *MediaMagazine* production competition, with prizes and the chance to see your work in print or online
- New MediaMagClips from media professionals and practitioners describing their work.

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Front Page News

Those Phone Hackers

Revelations about the *News of the World's* phone-hacking practices are emerging so fast that by the time you read this, it will already be out of date. This story will run and run, and could end up somewhere quite exciting – will Andy Coulson, under whose watch the *NoW* hacking took place, keep out of jail? Will Rebekah Brooks, his predecessor at *News of the World*, the first female editor of *The Sun*, and now Chief Executive of *News International*, escape unscathed? What about PM David Cameron, who somewhat unwisely hired Coulson as his Head of Communications even though he knew that Coulson had employed a journalist who actually paid the police for stories, thus opening up speculation implicating not only half of *News International*, but also of Westminster and Whitehall? And the Metropolitan Police itself now looks to be in real trouble after allegedly suppressing evidence, misleading the parliamentary select committee investigating

the case, refusing to re-open investigations, and accepting payment from the tabloid press.

Meanwhile, back at *News International*, other Murdoch newspapers have kept remarkably quiet about the whole affair – until the BBC *Panorama* programme broadcast on 13th March, which reported on the activities of a private detective, Jonathan Rees, who allegedly obtained illegal information for the *News of the World* by accessing private bank accounts, and paying the police for information. The response from both *The Times* and *The Sun* was to attack the BBC for its own methods of investigations – a fairly common occurrence in the Murdoch empire – while referring only in passing to the original allegations against the *News of the World*.

You may not need to know the ins and outs of this story, but it does make for a brilliant case study in media ownership, democracy and the media, media regulation, and the current state of play in the UK news industries. And it

certainly fuels many of the concerns of those who object to Murdoch's buy-out of BSkyB, and to News Corporation's £415 million purchase of his daughter Elizabeth's production company **Shine**. Joining up all these inter-related stories is tricky – as ever, *The Guardian's* media section will help: **www.guardian.co.uk/media/phone-hacking**

Keeping an independent eye on the i

The i launched very quietly on 25th October 2010, at a time when its sister paper *The Independent* was watching its circulation dwindle to 183,000 copies and losing more than £12 million a year. Published by **Alexander Lebedev**, who owns not only *The Independent* but also the free *London Evening Standard*, it aimed to be a 56-page 'lite' version of *The Indy* for what **Roy Greenslade**, legendary newspaper guru who now writes for both the *Guardian* and the *Evening Standard*, calls 'time-poor people dashing between home and work' – offering serious news coverage in a popular way though digestible nuggets of information.

Despite a launch campaign featuring Jemima Khan, Dom Joly and other credible celebs, and a mass of coverage and online discussion from the dailies, *the i* was not an instant hit. At a cost of only 20p, and aiming for a readership of 200,000, within the first month it was selling only **70,000 copies a day**. It was of course at a disadvantage from the start, up against the free papers the *Standard* and the *Metro* which it resembled in brevity and appeal, and looked set to perform disappointingly.

Yet six months after its launch, *the i* seems to be starting to build a niche market, with a daily circulation of 175,700+ – nearly at its original target. This may be at the expense of *The Independent's* circulation, which continues

to dwindle, but is quite positive in the context of other newspapers' circulation figures – *The Times* has dropped by 14.1% in the last 6 months, while over the last year sales of *The Telegraph* have fallen by 8.3%, and *The Guardian* by 7.7%. Media analysts suggest that *the i's* coverage has improved, much enhanced by its lack of advertising (although that may not be very good for business). It has been suggested that Lebedev may be generously funding his papers to keep them afloat.

Online comment suggests that there is a new appetite for short, intelligent news digests among commuters, and that *the i* is considered a major step up from 'the churnalism and *Mail-lite* feel of the *Metro*'. Nevertheless, *Metro* currently circulates 1.3 million copies a day, and in March 2010 boasted a readership of 3.5 million through being recycled on public transport; and its advertising revenue is stable despite the recession. *Metro* is owned by **Associated Newspapers**, which also owns the *Daily Mail* (circulation 2,136,568) and *Mail on Sunday*; and also minority shares in the *Standard*. Its position within a major newspaper stable allows for intensive audience research, which claims its readership is predominantly young, urban and middle-class, and thus ideal eyeballs for advertisers; hence *Metro's* ongoing buoyancy.

Meanwhile *the i's* unexpected success may soon attract rivals. **News International** is apparently planning a new 10p title targeting

the same middle-market commuter-reader as *the i*. And in another change in the newspaper landscape, it looks as if **Richard Desmond**, new owner of Channel 5, may be interested in selling off some of his newspaper and magazine titles, including the *Daily Express* and *Daily Star*, whose circulation continues to decline.

If you're revising for an A2 question on changes in the newspaper industry, or on media ownership, a comparison of the fortunes of *the i*, *Metro* or *Standard* might be worth researching.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/greenslade/2011/mar/11/abcs-i?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3487

Product Placement

How advertising and promotion will help to prop up our programmes

It's been debated for years, and now it's here, signalled by that big black **'P' DOG** (Digital Onscreen Graphic) shown for all of three vital seconds at the front of programmes and ad-breaks. Since 28th February, broadcasters can now charge brands to appear in top-rating shows. Of course, **product placement** is not new to UK audiences familiar with US shows and other foreign imports: think of Carrie Bradshaw's use of her iMac, or the regular featuring of Coca Cola in the hands of *American Idol* judges. Indeed, US analysts the Nielsen Company calculate that in the last year alone, viewers of Channels 4, 5 and Sky 1 will have already seen 541 brands and 2,029 'unique product integrations' in US programmes, and for many years UK shows have featured branded props sourced by placement companies.

In America, where the encroachment of TiVo and internet viewing means that as many of 90% of the prime-time audience manage to avoid the ads, product placement currently accounts for about 5% of the TV advertising market. David Charlesworth, head of Sponsorship at Channel 4, hopes the market will be worth about £170m within five years or so. Programmes such as the commercial soaps – *Corrie*, *Emmerdale*, *Hollyoaks* – together with *This Morning*, food shows such as *Come Dine with Me*, and style shows are likely to benefit. However, media regulator Ofcom is more cautious, in view of UK regulation restrictions; product placement is banned from children's shows, news and current affairs, religious and consumer advice programmes. And because programmes are made so far in advance, it may take some time before the new system makes much impact.

Meanwhile, Channel 4 has finalised its first product placement deal with a T4 show part funded by high street chain **New Look** in which fashion-savvy babes compete to put on catwalk shows and win the prize of a job with **New Look**. *This Morning* is already featuring a Nescafe-branded Dolce Gusto coffee machine.

And acclaimed documentary-maker **Morgan Spurlock** (*Super Size Me*, *Where in the World is Osama Bin Laden?*) has had a smash hit at the Sundance festival with a new film *The Greatest Movie Ever Sold*, all about funding a film through brand sponsorship and … yes, product placement (eventually, he persuades 15 mega-brands to fund his film). Unsurprisingly, he argues that the intervention of advertisers in production is a threat to artistic and editorial integrity. Watch this space to see how all this unfolds over here. **http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/product-placement**

The Wikileaks Saga

Here's another Big Story it's hard to get to the bottom of, even if you've followed it from the start. It's a story comprised of many strands, including:

- **the news stories of Bradley Manning, the US soldier implicated in the leaks, and currently held under inhumane conditions in a US military prison**
- **the extradition of Assange to Sweden on allegations of rape, which many have seen as a deliberate attempt to discredit him.**

So how to piece it all together? As usual, The Guardian has been a useful participant and provocateur in revealing the story of the 250,000 US embassy cables leaked worldwide last November and publishing a selection of them, alongside an editorial justification and much debate about the principles of Freedom of Information, as well as extracts from its own publication, WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy.

There are (to date) 1003 stories in the media section of The Guardian website. It's worth scrolling through them to see how it all developed:

http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/wikileaks

Front Page News researched, written and designed by Jenny Grahame.

The silly season is coming up, with the usual abundance of prequels and sequels, including *Scream 4*, *Apollo 18*, *The Hangover II*, *Spy Kids 4*, etc. Slim pickings, but the following are worth looking out for.

6th May: Everywhere and Nowhere
From Menhaj Huda, director of *Kidulthood*, a drama centred on a British DJ torn between honouring his family traditions and his love for DJ-ing.

13th May: The Way
Directed by Emilio Estevez, and starring himself and his father Martin Sheen (but not brother Charlie Sheen!). An American father travels to France to recover the body of his estranged son who died while travelling 'El camino de Santiago' from France to Santiago de Compostella.

27th May: Apocalypse Now (1979 re-release)
An absolute must if you haven't seen this magnificent Coppola movie based on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* transposed to the Vietnam war. Mesmerising and on everyone's Top Ten Best Ever.

2nd June: X-Men: First Class
Prequel, written by Bryan Singer, directed by Matthew Vaughn, with James McAvoy, Michael Fassbender and Jennifer Lawrence. In 1963, Charles Xavier starts up a school and later a team, for humans with superhuman abilities. Among them is Erik Lensherr, his best friend... and future arch-enemy. See trailer at http://www.imdb.com/video/imdb/vi1434032665/

17th June: Green Lantern
Directed by Martin Campbell, with Ryan Reynolds, Blake Lively and Peter Sarsgaard. In yet another much-hyped comic-book adaptation, a test pilot acquires a mystical green ring that bestows on him both otherworldly powers, and membership into an intergalactic squadron tasked with keeping peace within the universe. See trailer at http://www.imdb.com/video/imdb/vi2981926937/

15th July: Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2
Usual genius cast, lots of featurettes on imdb.com. Take tissues. So farewell then Daniel, Emma and Rupert. The end.

19th August: The Inbetweeners
Your favourite 6th-formers go on holiday to Crete. Can they keep it up for a whole feature? Also: **Super 8: Directed by JJ Abrams (Lost)** and produced by **Spielberg**. Set in 1979, so expect nostalgia plus the usual enigmatic otherworldliness. See the trailer at http://www.imdb.com/video/imdb/vi447192345/

26th August 2011: Arrietty
Intriguing sounding Japanese animated adaptation from *The Borrowers*.

Comments please?

Who comments on news sites, why, and in whose interests? And why the anonymity? Are comment sites evidence of democracy in action, widening representation, collaboration between news producers and their audiences, or simply narcissistic rantings? Sara Mills investigates.

Almost every news site has comments enabled. In fact, it is a given of new media that the audience must be able to interact with the content. But does tacking on the ability to comment on news stories really help? Or really make news sites into social media? The recent story on the rescue of the miners in Chile generated comments like these on *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* news sites:

The miners finally gonna get evacuated Wednesday finally! I really can't imagine being stuck down there for a month.

Did anyone see who won I missed the ending.

Do you think they'll do a celebrity version over christmas or will we have to wait until next year?

Something else happened today. The whole rescue operation was scheduled for today by our lizard-men overlords. Wake up, see through the smokescreen.

This comment has been removed by a moderator. Replies may also be deleted.

I don't understand what all the fuss is about? Seems like pointless coverage.

Great scenes from Chile

For once there is happy ending in the world

Everyone from the rescue effort from all nationalities should be very proud.

do you think this high-profile rescue will make them miner celebrities?

The first question has to be: **what is the point?** What is the point for the posters, for the readers and for the news institutions themselves? Who benefits from such comments, and how?

I have moderated the comments I selected above, leaving out the foolish, the racist, the insulting, those trying to sell me something, and those making an unrelated political point, but most comment areas are often much less strictly moderated. As such, they have been described as:

havens for a level of crudity, bigotry, meanness and plain nastiness that shocks the tattered remnants of our propriety.

Leonard Pitts Jr., a Miami Herald columnist

And yet, almost all news organisations have them. The key word is **engagement**. While audiences are commenting on news stories they are staying with your webpage for longer, and they are not getting their news from someone else's site. **Comments create communities**, and **communities create opportunities for advertising**. Increasing the number of people who view a page, and the amount of time they spend on it, and totting up the number of commenters are all powerful persuasive devices when it comes to **proving audience traffic for selling advertising**.

However, it's not all good news. Do advertisers really want their product associated with, or even advertised next to, a series of racist, homophobic, ignorant or otherwise unpleasant comment? Do the news organisations themselves want to be associated with such sentiments?

Whether they like it or not, it seems that most news organisations consider comments to be an essential part of their offering. **It's not the product that matters**, **but the process**. You can say what you like as long as you are saying something.

Anti-social media?

So why are people so keen to comment on news stories? In our Facebook and Twitter generation, it seems that people want to share their thoughts and opinions. Commenting and the discussions that arise seem to be central to our enjoyment of news stories. We are perhaps becoming so used to participating that the thought of passively being told a news story without the capacity to talk back to it now seems old-fashioned and limiting. As an audience we are used to being **active**, being able to **participate**, to **generate content**, to **affect the content** available on the web.

In **media theory terms**, it might be the need to connect with others, to have our voice heard, that is important. **Blumler and Katz** referred to this as **Personal Relationships** – our virtual conversation is a vital way of linking to the wider world. In a similar way, such comments help us to establish our **Personal Identity**, not just by expressing our own opinions, but by seeing who agrees with us, who disagrees, what the wider reaction is. In these ways, news sites move from just delivering **surveillance** and **information**, and shift into the more **social functions** of helping us to develop our personal relationships and identity. New media: it's all about *me* – and now the news is all about *me* too.

However, some news organisations have become so tired of the streams of abuse that commenters unleash that they have dis-enabled comments on some news stories. In America, *The Star Tribune* no longer allows comments on stories involving race, homosexuality, and crime, and other locally sensitive stories. While you can see their logic, it means that people can only comment on stories that are so uncontroversial and uninteresting that no one really cares about them.

This raises questions about the **quality of the comments** posted on news sites. On the whole, they seem to follow the **90-10-1 rule:**

"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."

90% of readers never comment, **10%** of readers comment occasionally, and **1%** of those who do comment, comment frequently. The figures may be even more skewed than this, meaning that the comments represent only a tiny section of the actual audience. But is it an audience group that deserves to be heard? Perhaps we have become so used to fully-moderated content, in traditional newspapers, on the BBC, on official news sites, that to hear the 'voice of the common people' can come as a bit of a shock. Most official news is sourced, written and presented by a small section of society: **the educated**, **middle-class who adhere to democratic and PC values**. In the comments section, we hear the voices of those who *don't* belong to this select group. I don't like a lot of what of they say, but does that mean they have no right to say it? Perhaps the comments sections on news sites are **widening representation**, and allowing under-represented groups access to the media?

Have your say...as long as no one knows it's you

Should comments be **anonymous**? There are two sides to this discussion and it raises interesting issues for new media. We are used to the internet being anonymous in many ways. A *New York Times* article says:

> From the start, internet users have taken for granted that the territory was both a free-for-all and a digital disguise, allowing them to revel in their power to address the world while keeping their identities concealed. A New Yorker cartoon from 1993, during the Web's infancy, with one mutt saying to another, 'On the internet, nobody knows you're a dog,' became an emblem of that freedom. For years, it was the magazine's most reproduced cartoon.

12/04/10

There can be good reasons for maintaining privacy: some people need to comment anonymously – their work or professional life might not allow them to give their real name, or their 'whistle-blowing' might be deterred if they had to give their real name. But for most people, anonymity seems to give them **license to say**

ANONYMOUS

things they wouldn't want to be associated with publicly. And if you don't want people to know it's you saying it, should you really be saying it?

When asked why comments turn sour, one media analyst said:

Racism, hate, dislike of the police, and racism, I'd say. Also, racism.

A recent case in America has thrown the issue of anonymity into the spotlight. A serving judge in Ohio was linked with comments made anonymously on current news stories – some news stories were the death-penalty cases where she was the judge. The newspaper linked comments made under the name 'lawmiss' to the same email address as Judge Saffold – and outed her as the likely author of these comments. Should they have done this? If she was posting anonymously, should this be respected? Or should she have to stand by her comments? This may be a special case. Most people who comment on news stories have no influence over how those news stories turn out: for example whether a defendant is prosecuted or sentenced to death. Saffold was removed from the case, and then took the newspaper to court for violating her privacy, although she has since dropped her $50 million lawsuit in return for an 'undisclosed financial settlement.'

If no one could be anonymous on comments sites, would people self-moderate their comments? People who use Twitter and Facebook are used to sharing themselves and their own

opinions quite openly, sometimes too openly… anyone remember **Stuart MacLennan**, who was dropped as Labour's candidate for Moray less than four weeks before the general election? His crime? Foul-mouthed and offensive comments on Twitter. To see more, and to see what he actually said, check out *The Independent* from 9th April 2010. Likewise **Bishop Pete Broadbent** was suspended from duty after criticising the announcement of Prince William's engagement on Facebook: 'I give the marriage seven years,' he said, and referred to Charles and Diana's marriage as 'the last disaster…between Big Ears and the Porcelain Doll.'

Perhaps people should have to stand by their comments on news sites too. However, insisting on this could be difficult. It would be too expensive for news organisations to verify everyone's identity. A further 'cost' might be the loss of users: if sites demand any type of lengthy or complex registration, users may simply go elsewhere.

Back in the day, expressing your opinion about a news story meant writing a stiffly worded letter, buying a stamp and walking to the post box, on the off-chance it would be printed weeks later on the Letters page. Now it is so easy and instant to comment, there are thousands of posts for news organisations to trawl through. Some news organisations find ways to moderate their comments areas, but the number of comments makes this difficult: the news organisations can't afford to pay people to moderate every

comment. Some have automated filters, set to remove comments that contain sensitive or offensive words, but this usually provokes people to greater creativity in expressing the same ideas in different ways. Others operate a two-tier system where only those who post 'appropriate' or well-liked comments get to appear, unless you opt in to the second, lower tier of 'all comments.' The **potential for bias** here seems enormous: comments that are in line with current opinion and the organisation's views are likely to get into the first tier; unorthodox comments are not likely to. Other methods include **'disemvowelling'** where unpleasant comments have all the vowels removed, allowing people to just guess at the foolishness someone has posted, or **'bozo-filtering'** – here, the user can keep posting, but no one except them can see their comment. Presumably this allows someone to vent their spleen and get everything off their chest, without offending everyone else. However, I suspect it is the outraged reaction from other commenters that is so desired by posters; without any reaction, they might soon give up and go and post elsewhere. News organisations may feel that a minority of commenters may be mindless fools, but they are *their own* mindless fools and they want to keep them!

Comments please?

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HOLMES / WATSON

A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN
Onscreen Representations of Sherlock Holmes

Starksy and Hutch, Morse and Lewis, Cagney and Lacey … partnerships between police or detectives have been a recurrent feature of TV crime drama since its birth. But none can match the original collaboration of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson.

When **Sir Arthur Conan Doyle** churned out his **Sherlock Holmes** adventures for *The Strand Magazine*, he surely couldn't have imagined the impact that his most famous creation would have over the next one hundred years. From **Basil Rathbone** to **Benedict Cumberbatch**, the character of Holmes, and, of course, his sidekick Doctor Watson, has seen many reinventions, reinterpretations and re-imaginings. This most intriguing of partnerships has been portrayed onscreen in a number of intriguing ways, exploring issues such as intelligence and sexuality.

It can be argued that, as horror films are said to reflect the fears and norms of the culture of their time, so there is a **Holmes and Watson for every generation**. An example is **Christopher 'Harry Potter' Columbus'** re-imagining of Conan Doyle's hero in *Young Sherlock Holmes*. Under **Stephen Spielberg's direction**, **Nicholas Rowe** and **Alan Cox** take on the roles of Holmes and Watson as

teenage schoolboys in an *Indiana Jones*-style adventure which mixes Holmesian deduction with high adventure and a dash of romance with the gorgeous **Sophie Ward** as Holmes' ultimately-doomed girlfriend Elizabeth.

Cox's Watson is thoughtful and sensitive, but also a bit of a buffoon, and paired with Rowe's elegantly gangling Holmes, theirs makes for a typical, but also touching, representation of the eponymous partnership. Their adventure consists of bringing down an Egyptian cult that is murdering teenage girls and involves, among other things, a psychedelic trip through a London graveyard (with the scariest cream cakes in film history attacking poor, spaced-out Watson!) a fencing match and a tragic death scene that will have many reaching for their handkerchiefs.

While it may not be canonically faithful, playing fast and loose with the chronology of the Holmes/Watson relationship, and, heaven forbid, introducing a love interest for the great

Credit: image.net

sleuth, it is an inventive and opportune take on **Conan Doyle's** characters. The film made such an impression that twenty-five years later Rowe and Cox reprised their most famous roles in the **2010 London Improvathon**, a 50-hour theatrical fundraising event, which revealed the impact of their portrayal on a whole generation of Holmes fans.

Ritchie's Holmes – Victorian London from a 21st-century perspective

Fast forward to the 21st-century and over the past year there have been two major screen adaptations. The first of these was **Guy Ritchie's** *Sherlock Holmes*. This rollicking take on Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* mythology brings the story up-to-date with several (literal) bangs. From the moment the film starts, we are plunged into the seedy underworld of Victorian London, and introduced to a hero who is both brilliant and rather unbalanced.

Robert Downey Jr's swashbuckling scruffy, neurotic take on the great detective mixes the traits that Conan Doyle created with a dash of directorial license. We see Holmes taking part in a bare knuckle fight, for instance, when there was no real evidence for Holmes' participation in the original stories, but Ritchie pulls examples from Holmesian canon with just as much agility. The violin-playing, sometime drug-taking supersleuth is still very much recognisable in this version.

A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

Plot-wise, there are similarities between this and *Young Sherlock Holmes*. The presence of a mysterious cult whose leader is sacrificing young women, the use of supposedly supernatural devices to create murder and mayhem, all seem rather familiar. This could merely be both directors paying homage to **Conan Doyle's beliefs in spiritualism**, but it is tempting to consider the possibility that Ritchie was a fan of the 80s film.

Ritchie's interpretation of the source material is more *Lock Stock* than Baker Street at times, but this does make an entertaining film. The trademark camera angles and sequences play well in this film. Rather than have Holmes explaining his reasoning straight to camera, the director chooses to illustrate Holmes' lightning-fast thought processes through the lens of the camera. Take, for example, the opening setup, when Holmes, by way of a voiceover, talks through his attack strategy step-by-step while the sequence plays out at walking pace. Immediately after this, the sequence is played through again

at lightning speed, to demonstrate **the marriage of intellect and fighting prowess**.

If the narrative of Ritchie's film takes some liberties with the source material, the one area where Ritchie remains faithful, and affectionate, is the **pairing of Holmes with Watson**. Unlike so many earlier adaptations, **Jude Law's** Watson is no buffoon; he is a loyal, intelligent companion to Holmes, who can certainly hold his own in any situation. This Watson even goes so far as to punch his dear friend on the nose after Holmes causes great upset during a dinner with Watson's fiancée Mary Moreston. While Conan Doyle was sometimes flippant in the way he portrayed the good doctor, he never wrote Watson as a fool, and this is reflected strongly in the way the two interact on screen. These are two men who are equals; who complement one another, complete one another.

The suggestion of **homoeroticism** runs implicitly through this version, as well. Holmes reacts to Mary Moreston like a love rival, exuding calculated bitchiness at the dinner table.

Grabbing Watson's walking cane under the dinner table, he unsheathes the sword within, demonstrating possessiveness over his friend in the face of the competition. He then goes on to demolish Mary by making correct, yet pointed, observations about her life, her career and her former romantic encounters. Watson is not amused, and remonstrates with Holmes, eventually leaving the table to pursue his fiancée.

The Sherlock of Gatiss and Moffat

This is a theme that is once again picked up in the second high-profile interpretation of the Holmes canon, *Sherlock*, that aired on BBC1 in 2010. Written by **Mark Gatiss** and **Stephen Moffat**, who declared that 'everything is canon, so you can raid from any adaptation', this is a contemporary retelling, shifting the action to the current day, but keeping true to the spirit of the original tales.

Benedict Cumberbatch portrays the great detective and **Martin Freeman** (soon to be seen as Frodo Baggins in **Peter Jackson's adaptation of *The Hobbit***) takes on the role of Watson.

True to the original source, this Watson is a veteran army medic, carrying with him both physical and emotional war wounds. Watson's point of view is established early in the first episode with the camera following his narrative; he has been discharged from the army, isn't really dealing with his own issues, and is very much in life-limbo on his return from Afghanistan. Interestingly, **Conan Doyle's Watson** was also a veteran of the first Afghan war.

Watson's flat is colourless; his life is reflected in the beiges and muted greys of the décor. He has been told by his therapist to record his thoughts and feelings in a blog (which actually exists as part of the BBC's *Sherlock* website – **a great opportunity to explore cross-platform media for this text**), but the blog is, tellingly, blank at the opening of the episode. This implies that Watson's life, like the blog, is empty until he meets his future partner. There are recurring, playful references to Watson's blog in the two subsequent episodes, with Sherlock expressing incredulity that anyone could be interested in reading of their exploits online.

The initial meeting between Holmes and Watson is triggered when Watson has a chance encounter with an old colleague, who mentions that an acquaintance of his is looking for a flatmate. Watson tentatively agrees to meet the man, reasoning that he cannot continue to live in London unless he moves to a new address.

Cut to a hospital morgue and we are introduced to Sherlock Holmes, who is beating a corpse with a riding crop to establish how quickly bruising occurs. Holmes is a gaunt, gangling figure, not unlike **Rowe's Holmes** from the earlier adaptation, with alabaster skin and dark clothing. Under Watson's incredulous gaze, Holmes wastes no time in deducing exactly why Watson has appeared, and, after borrowing Watson's phone, tells him so. With that, the partnership is formed.

An intimate relationship?

One of the most intriguing things about this update is that Holmes becomes **'Sherlock'** and

Watson becomes **'John'**. It stands to reason that this would be the case in a contemporary retelling, but for a few moments it does seem at odds with everything we know about the partnership. However, this soon becomes normal and fitting in the context. After all, two 21st-century flatmates would hardly refer to one another by their surnames, would they?

And it's not just the names that are changed. This version of the Holmes and Watson story sees Holmes addressing one of the greatest speculations of the whole canon head on; that of his **sexuality**. Over a cosy table in a favourite restaurant, when the headwaiter makes the assumption that Watson is Holmes' date for the night, Watson broaches the subject of girlfriends and boyfriends ('which is fine, by the way…'). Holmes responds, without missing a beat, 'I know it's fine, but I think you should know that I consider myself married to my work.' However, Gatiss and Moffat don't quite leave it at that, hinting by way of body language and a climactic final scene in the third episode, that Holmes' professed asexuality is not all that it would seem. Hints from the writers about the next series also nod to a rather sexier Holmes. Fans were given three words to play with by the writers: **Hound, Reichenbach and Adler**. Any Holmes fan, or indeed any casual moviegoer, will recognise the last as the name of the only woman ever to get the better of Sherlock Holmes.

It would be wrong to assert that *Sherlock* gets bogged down in sexual politics at the expense of narrative, though. The three episodes of the first series are tightly plotted and intriguingly shot, with plenty of interesting visual effects to keep the audience interested and up to speed.

Moffat and Gatiss create breathtakingly beautiful shots of modern London which, for all their contemporary chic, have echoes of their Victorian past. Episode two, 'The Blind Banker', mixes modern crime with Victorian notions of circus, when the final scenes take place in tunnels under the city.

As with Ritchie's use of camera speed and angles to keep the audience in synch with Holmes' thought processes, so this version uses quirky onscreen floating text, including telephone numbers and odd, seemingly random words and phrases to demonstrate Sherlock's deductive reasoning. This, like the use of first names, seems peculiar at first, but it is an effective tool to keep the audience engaged and on their toes. Though it may also seem self-conscious at times, making things seem modern for the sake of it, as a visual cue, it is effective.

These two new adaptations of the Holmes canon may be the latest in a long line, but there can be no doubt that they have gone down well with audiences. At the time of writing, **Guy Ritchie** is filming a sequel, with **Stephen Fry** playing the great sleuth's more intelligent, but far lazier, older brother Mycroft. While Fry has had to remain rather tight lipped, for reasons of professional confidentiality, his recent Twitter feed has included some small details about filming in misty, snowy locations in London. Similarly, Moffat and Gatiss are currently penning three new episodes of *Sherlock*, to be aired in Autumn 2011. It would seem that there is far more mileage in Conan Doyle's stories yet, and it would be nice to think of the old hack smiling in amusement about just how far his most famous creation has evolved.

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PARTNERS IN CRIME

Collaboration in Television Crime Drama

Credit: image.net

Lucas Johnson considers the significance of the collaborative partnership in TV crime drama in terms of narrative structure, representations of social class and ideologies of law and order.

Collaboration has been a notable feature of **crime drama narratives** throughout the history of the genre. From American cop shows such as *Starsky & Hutch*, and *Miami Vice*, to British crime dramas such as *Inspector Morse*, *Lewis*, *Dalziel and Pascoe*, *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes*, partnerships between investigators, sleuths, detectives or police officers have long been one of the genre's key conventions.

In many cases, there is an important narrative reason for this. For example, it is often suggested that sidekicks such as Dr. Watson, who acts as assistant to Sherlock Holmes, or Sergeant Lewis, who performs a similar role in *Inspector Morse*, effectively function as **audience surrogates**, asking questions that enable **the methods and deductive reasoning** of their investigative partners to be explained and revealed for the benefit of the audience.

However, this is not the only narrative function that the crime drama partnership performs; such partnerships also play an important role in the construction and exploration of **binary oppositions**. It is these oppositions, according to **Claude Lévi-Strauss**, that provide narratives with their meaning and cultural significance.

Exploring social difference

Whilst the binary opposition of **crime/ criminal versus law/investigator** is perhaps the defining convention of crime drama, partnerships between detectives or investigators frequently enable other differences and oppositions to be explored. For example, alongside the crimes that are investigated at the **diegetic level** of the text by the detective-protagonists of *Inspector Morse* and *The Inspector Lynley Mysteries*, these dramas also investigate issues of **social and cultural difference**, using the partnership between the DIs and their sergeants as the vehicle for these investigations. So, whilst Inspector Morse is constructed as an upper-middle-class, Oxford-educated opera-lover, and Inspector Lynley, as the Eighth Earl of Asherton, is a member of the British aristocracy, these characters are set in binary opposition to their working-class sergeants, Robbie Lewis and Barbara Havers.

These partnerships therefore serve to construct and articulate particular **myths about social class**. As Fiske (1987: 131-2) points out:

> For Lévi-Strauss myth is an anxiety-reducing mechanism that deals with irresolvable

have come. **John Yorke**, the **BBC's Controller of Continuing Drama Series** and **Head of Independent Drama**, highlights the significance of the binary oppositions that are played out through the partnerships in these crime dramas, as he discusses *Life on Mars*. According to Yorke:

> The beauty of Life on Mars is that each week it concentrates on catching criminals through two completely opposing styles of policing. We put a modern DI bang in the world of the old school copper and so explore two totally foreign worlds. Sam's both repelled and fascinated by this prehistoric world, and the drama lies in how he tries to accommodate himself to life on a completely different planet.

The simultaneous repulsion and fascination that Sam feels is, in many respects, analogous to the way in which the audience is positioned in relation both to this 'prehistoric world' generally, and, more particularly, to the character who is its very embodiment – Gene Hunt. Whilst Hunt's brutality and political incorrectness do not sit comfortably with today's dominant social values, he is clearly constructed as a highly charismatic and appealing character. Indeed, for all the corruption and inefficiency that is shown to characterise the 1970s world that Sam finds himself in, it is consistently represented as a **more attractive world than that of the present-day**. This is carefully emphasised through the **mise-en-scène**, which sets the bureaucratic and clinical nature of the modern-day police station in clear binary opposition to the 1970s police station – a station which, with its dartboard and trophies, more closely resembles a pub saloon. The cigarette smoke which hangs over the workspace that Hunt and

contradictions in a culture and provides imaginative ways of living with them. These contradictions are usually expressed in terms of binary oppositions.

In this way, the partnerships between characters of different social classes that are at the heart of both *Inspector Morse* and *The Inspector Lynley Mysteries* can be seen as **'anxiety-reducing mechanisms'** which, through the myths that they construct, provide imaginative ways of dealing with the **complex nature of class relations in British society**.

Gene, Sam and Alex – cultural contradictions

This use of the crime drama partnership as a means of negotiating certain **cultural tensions or contradictions** is also apparent in *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes*. Here, the central conflict or opposition is between the cultural attitudes and policing methods of **different eras**. The construction of this binary opposition

is facilitated by the time-travel narrative that the two programmes adopt, as DCI Sam Tyler is transported from the present-day back to the 1970s in *Life on Mars*, whilst DI Alex Drake finds herself back in the 1980s in *Ashes to Ashes*. Each character forges an unlikely partnership with DCI Gene Hunt, who, as a stereotypical old-style 'tough guy' cop, is the antithesis of the politically correct world from which Tyler and Drake

his team of officers occupy effectively establishes a nostalgic haze through which the audience is invited to view this 'other' world. Here the crime drama partnership can again be seen as a way of dealing with **irresolvable cultural contradictions**, negotiating between duty and desire, simultaneously acknowledging the need to follow procedure, as well as the attraction of breaking the rules, and mediating between the

politically correct and the politically incorrect. Sam's journey thus assumes the significance of **cultural myth**, as, whilst recognising the suspect nature of Gene Hunt's ideological values, he is ultimately able to accommodate himself to the 'other' world he finds himself in. In so doing, he provides a useful **point of identification for the audience**, enabling us to play out our own conflicting desires for the two different worlds that these characters represent.

Negotiating past and present

The negotiations between past and present that are played out through *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes* are also a significant feature of the recent BBC series, *Sherlock*, written by **Steven Moffatt** and **Mark Gatiss**. Whereas the protagonists of *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes* are dispatched from the present back into the past, *Sherlock* takes Conan Doyle's Victorian detective on the opposite journey, re-imagining him as a modern-day character. Therefore, whilst Sam Tyler has to accommodate himself to a world without the sophisticated technology that he has been accustomed to as a modern-day detective, Moffatt and Gatiss' Sherlock fully embraces the 21st-century world of text-messaging and Google, whilst retaining the propensity for brilliant deductive reasoning that has traditionally been the character's trademark. The programme

itself also makes use of an array of innovative and unconventional devices to narrate the stories. At one point, when Holmes is studying a crime scene, a series of captions appears on the screen, revealing what he is thinking. Whilst Watson is still used to some degree as a means of revealing to the audience the inner workings of Holmes' mind, his function within the partnership is therefore not limited to this role as it has been in some previous adaptations. This shift in the dynamic of the partnership enables the personal relationship between Holmes and Watson to be more fully developed and explored, sometimes for comic effect, as in the scenes in which Holmes and Watson are mistaken for a couple, first by their landlady and later on by a waiter. However, whilst these scenes are clearly intended to be humorous, the significance of the humour lies in the way in which the meaning of Conan-Doyle's precursor text has been changed or subverted in the process of adaptation. Again, what we are seeing in these scenes is a negotiation between past and present – a negotiation between the cultural norms and values of different eras. The playful and highly reflexive way in which Moffatt and Gatiss update Conan-Doyle's detective fiction would seem to align them with a postmodern aesthetic, in the same way that the parodic intertextual references to seventies and eighties crime dramas in *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to*

Ashes can be seen as a postmodern strategy for dealing with a cliché-riddled genre. Whilst the conventional crime drama has often solicited the active participation of the audience by inviting them to try to solve the crime before the investigator within the text, postmodern crime dramas such as *Life on Mars*, *Ashes to Ashes* and *Sherlock* also invite the audience to collaborate in the meaning of the text on another narrative level. In recognising and taking pleasure in the intertextuality of these texts, and their parodying and subversion of source materials, the audience too becomes a 'partner in crime'. It is this ability to make the audience active participants in the production of textual meaning that gives the contemporary crime drama its continuing cultural power.

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MUSIC AND POLITICS

Steph Hendry explores the long relationship between music and politics, the tension between the industry and street culture, and the role of changing technologies in promoting activism and alternative voices.

There has long been a tension in popular music between its status as a commercial product and as a vehicle for artistic expression. Pop music is often seen as a disposable product which has a limited lifespan, with no more cultural meaning than that created by the audience member. In today's digital media age, pop music's **commodification** has been at the centre of debates around **copyright**, **ownership** and **distribution**. Music industry profits from recorded music had been falling before audiences moved from CDs to MP3s; but the issue of **illegal downloads** and **file sharing** highlights the fact that music is seen as **a product to be sold**. It is argued that this act of commodification results in the **devaluing** of the product itself as its cost creates the product's perceived value. In today's context of cheap (and often free) downloading, the monetary value of pop as product is very small.

Success in the music industry is about selling products that have **mass appeal**. Record companies define success purely in financial terms. Traditionally most of the income generated by an artist would have come from single and/or album sales. Today the sale of the music itself is not necessarily the best way to generate income: **live shows**, **licensing music for public performance**, **cross media tie-ins** and **corporate sponsorship** are all successful revenue streams for record companies and musicians.

The X Factor can be seen to epitomise the more commercial side of the music industry. Contestants are selected and judged on their ability **to replicate the sounds of already successful artists** – those that have already proved popular with the buying audience. Contestants perform cover versions of songs that are familiar to the audiences and the purpose of the show is to provide **fame** for the winners and **profit** for the institutions who invest in the programme. *The X Factor* makes no attempt to hide its commercial focus; but it was brought to the fore in December 2009 when a **Facebook** campaign was organised to stop *The X Factor* topping the charts at Christmas – something that had become the traditional conclusion to the series. The campaign **had limited impact in terms of halting the enormous profits** that are generated by the programme, as the track chosen to galvanise protest and unite the anti-*X Factor* lobby was **Killing in the Name of...** by **Rage Against the Machine** – a band signed to **Sony** records. Sony is the parent company of **SyCo**, Simon Cowell's record label, so the protest did not impact on Sony's profits.

At the heart of the protest though was the idea that, whilst pop music is often **cynically manufactured** to create a popular product with mass appeal, it has also been a voice for the **non-mainstream audience** and being a source of **cultural resistance**. The choice of song, with its refrain of 'Fuck you I won't do what you tell me' identified the generalised grievance that *The X Factor* was constructing a set of musical and cultural norms which were edging out alternative voices and any forms of music which challenged the chart-friendly ballads and R&B that *The X Factor* has become known for.

Adorno, the culture industries, and Cowell

The cultural theorist **Adorno** was pessimistic about the social impact of popular culture and claimed that the **'cultural industries eliminate critical tendencies'**. He saw popular music as being produced, packaged and sold and, through its marketing, doing nothing other than manipulating the public's taste to maximise financial gain. The **different genres of music** can be seen to be nothing more than 'variations on a theme' which offer the **'pretence of individualism'**.

In many ways *The X Factor* and other heavily constructed pop music models can be seen to **create a 'total system'** which Adorno saw as a **'hegemony of markets'** offering audiences nothing more than the same thing to buy over and over again, breeding a **'passivity'** that is **'produced and circulated by the culture industries'**. The Rage Against the Machine campaign, however, rejected this passivity by offering an alternative voice to the buying public – even if it was connected to a major record

MUSIC and POLITICS

label. The culture industries, which include the tabloid newspapers, reacted strongly against the campaign, even going so far as to claim that the success of the campaign would 'ruin Christmas' (*The Sun*). The conflict between the manufactured music of **The X Factor** and the perceived **authenticity** of a **politicised** band like Rage Against the Machine is an example of the division that has been drawn between the creative side of popular music which is seen to have an authenticity in terms of artistic expression and the plastic, **manufactured** pop performances which are created for mainstream appeal. This has been an important differentiation in musical culture in the past.

Repackaging resistance?

Peterson and Berger saw musical culture as being cyclical, with pop music beginning on the street as a genuine artistic creation acting in resistance to dominant culture and the alienation or oppression felt by those outside the mainstream. They observed that, as new music gains an audience, it is **taken by the recording companies, repackaged and sanitised to create music with mass appeal**. The origins of the music are often lost in this **'repackaging'**.

■ **Blues** and **Jazz** were musical forms that were developed by a black culture which was actively excluded from white mainstream culture. **Elvis Presley** was a white man who took black music to a white audience in the 1950s. Elvis **depoliticised** the music that influenced his performances although, compared to the other mainstream white artists of the time, his version of Rock and Roll seems radically **sexualised**.

■ **Punk** started as a musical form that was actively rebelling against the complexities and over-blown nature of the studio/stadium rock of the 1970s which needed music industry investment to meet the heavy costs of production. Punk sold a form of musical expression where artists needed little money or musical skill. It created a **'do it yourself'** culture but this was replicated by record companies who produced and marketed bands to tap into the growing market for a simpler, more direct form of music.

■ **Rap** began as a **social commentary** created by young urban artists who spoke of the hardships of life in a still largely racist environment. The work of **NWA** for example was confrontational dealing with issues such as **racial profiling and police brutality**, unlike the rap designed to have broad appeal, epitomised by the chart-topping success of Vanilla Ice in the late 1980s.

Popular music, politics and power

The history of popular music has many examples of music being used as **a source of cultural resistance**. Folk music originated as a form of communication between working-class cultures and there are many examples of songs being used to act to unify oppressed groups. Popular music's history is not one just of commercialisation and packaging but also of politics. Music on the street level is often created as a direct response to social inequalities and offers a voice to people who traditionally have limited social and/or political power.

■ **The 1960s** saw US culture in political and social turmoil. Counter-culture movements actively protested against dominant cultural values and the anti-war movement and the civil rights marches epitomised the conflicted times. Pop music, influenced by beat culture and the folk music of artists like **Woody**

Guthrie, provided a musical backdrop to this era and protest songs were an important addition to the counter-cultural movements. Artists like **Bob Dylan** and **Joan Baez** used traditional folk music as an inspiration for politicised songs which were successful in the mainstream. **John Lennon** used his musical position for political purposes including creating anthems for the anti-war movement in 'Give Peace a Chance' and 'Happy Christmas (War is Over)'.

■ After several waves of migration into Britain, **the late 70s** was often divided in terms of attitudes towards the growing **multicultural nature of society.** The **Rock Against Racism** movement attracted many fans and punk/new wave music was often used to voice resistance to conservative values and the rise in white-supremacy groups. Bands such as **The Clash**, **The Ruts** and **Aswad** took part in concerts, rallies and recorded songs which promoted racial tolerance.

■ Pop and politics remained linked in the **early 80s** with bands as diverse as **The Jam** and **Crass** recording songs of social commentary and protest. The Conservative government of the time introduced a range of **social and economic changes** which were resisted by a large number of people including musicians. They challenged public sector cuts, privatisation of nationalised industries and the social changes (and mass unemployment)

created by the closure of manufacturing and production industries. There was a spate of **urban riots** in UK cities in 1981 with 'Ghost Town' by **The Specials** voicing the hopelessness of life in deprived urban environments. The riots had a racial element and The Specials were one of many groups who continued to speak out against far-right political activism and attempted to present the values of cultural diversity within their music. Many musicians supported the **miners' strike (1984-5)** and songs were written to raise money for the miners and in support of the Union's attempts to save jobs. **Billy Bragg** was actively involved in this as well as being a member of **Red Wedge** – a collective of musicians who collaborated to support the Labour party and motivate people to become more involved in politics – specifically supporting **The Labour Party** in the 1987 general election.

■ The **Live Aid concert of 1984** is probably the best-known of the collaborations between pop

dizzee
RASCAL

and politics. However, it could be argued that its focus on charitable donations **depoliticised** the famines by foregrounding **aid rather than political change**. Furthermore raising money by providing a concert and a single could also be seen as diluting the 'selfless' nature of charitable giving by providing an incentive for donations.

■ **In the early 1990s The Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill** (now 'Act', as the law was passed in 1994) was another focal point which galvanised a range of pop artists. The act effectively **outlawed Raves and the associated 'free party' culture** as well as an alternative lifestyle culture where young people had dropped out of the mainstream and lived in travelling communities. (The behaviours of both these sub-cultures were made illegal via the criminalisation of activities such as travelling in convoy and the public playing of music containing 'repetitive beats'.) The flash point for this political clampdown was the **Castlemorton Common Festival in May 1992**. Tens of thousands of people who were blocked from attending the Avon Free Festival in Bristol gathered on the common and a spontaneous week-long, unlicensed festival followed. Several bands that had a following within these cultures became a

focus for cultural resistance to the (then) proposed law; and even the usually apolitical *NME* used its pages to encourage **dissent and protest** (another behaviour subject to further criminalisation within the act). Several bands that emerged in that period foregrounded political commentary including **Orbital, The Prodigy, New Model Army, The Levellers** and **Chumbawamba**.

Where are we now?

And today...? With Simon Cowell's grip on the pop charts at the end of each year and pop's hedonistic, fun side seemingly dominant, is there any place for politics and music? Artists such as **Bono**, **Chris Martin** and **Sting** have used their celebrity status over the years to speak on a range of political issues but they are often criticised for **preaching rather than being activists**. Some bands and artists enjoy success and remain unapologetically political with **Serj Tankian** regularly criticising US governmental policies through his recordings; **Dizzee Rascal's** 'Dirty Cash' was a cover version used to make specific criticisms of the attitudes and practices that led to the recent economic crisis, and **The Manic Street Preachers** continue with a politicised stance 19 years after releasing their first album.

Facebook and **YouTube** offer technologies

that allow voices from outside the mainstream access to audiences **bypassing the traditional music industry gatekeepers**. However, these social networks are often diverse and fragmented, and go largely unnoticed by the majority. Recording companies maintain their focus on artists with mass mainstream appeal, so, ironically, the current e-media age may make accessing resistant pop music easier in many ways; but the volume of distribution sources can dilute its impact.

It's difficult to know whether a track such as **Captain Ska's 'Liar Liar'** critiquing the Coalition government and marketed only through word of mouth with its **200,000+ hits on YouTube** constitutes a major success when the video for **Justin Bieber's 'Baby' has attracted 426,000,000 viewings**. However, the political scene seems ripe for more political and social commentary with the economic situation being responded to with cuts and students taking to the street to protest. A generation previously accused of being depoliticised and apathetic is taking to the streets, and it may be that this leads to a resurgence of pop music as a social commentary and motivator.

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Celebrity Endorsement

A collaboration made in heaven?

When it works it's brilliant for all concerned – when it doesn't, everyone loses. When Tiger Woods endorsed Buick cars, sales plummeted; Britney didn't do much for Pepsi, or vice versa. Emma Webb investigates the collaborative world of celebrity endorsement – and suggests a particularly tasty success story.

Celebrities and brands can be a collaboration made in heaven. Paying the right celeb to feature in slick, expensive advertisements, talk up your brand at press conferences and name drop during interviews can cause your profits and brand awareness to skyrocket. However, if that same celeb goes on to shame themselves through scandal or simply drops off the cool list, it can cause a brand's reputation to fall apart overnight.

Love at first sight …

Celebrity endorsement is where **a celebrity agrees**, **for a fee**, **to promote a brand**, **usually through the visual medium of the television advertisement**. The term 'brand ambassador' is also used and this can imply a broader collaborative relationship between celebrity and brand, whereby the celebrity is expected to attend launch parties and sponsored cultural and sporting events (for example, a Formula 1 Grand Prix) in order to publicise the brand. The photographs taken at such glittering occasions inevitably end up gracing the pages of tabloid magazines, anchored with a caption that refers to the brand ('Madonna sparkles in this season's newest couture at the D&G Spring/Summer Collection catwalk show'), resulting in **unpaid-for 'below the line' advertising**.

The collaboration between celeb and brand may be **monogamous**, where the celebrity is contractually forbidden from having relationships with other brands (and certainly not competitors in the same market). Alternatively it might be that certain freedoms are afforded and the celeb can **play the field** a little. **David Beckham**, for example, is happy to have 'less than meaningful' partnerships with multiple brands, ranging from **Disney World to Marks and Spencer's**. Some famous faces are a little more discerning and build up relationships with just a few select brands, whom they may work alongside for many years. Can anyone remember a time when reliable **Gary Lineker** wasn't the face of Walker's Crisps (if you were born after 1995 you certainly won't!) or contemplate a point in the future where he isn't?

What's in it for me?

The collaboration between brand and celeb can be described as **mutually beneficial,** in that

their market; the expensive, über-complex coffee machine (as sold to George Clooney in the 'piano' advert) has swiftly become the desirable **'executive toy' of the 21st century** and no smart office is complete without one. Nespresso also patented the original idea of offering coffee in small shiny capsules, available in no less than sixteen different flavours which can be purchased in a 'coffee boutique', where the selection of 'gourmet' coffee turns into an entire shopping experience.

George Clooney and Nespresso – a match made in Italy

Clooney is Mr Nespresso. The attractive, smooth-talking, talented, intelligent and ever-so-slightly-smug actor projects perfectly the brand message Nespresso are trying to convey to their audience – that a small cup of strong, European-style coffee renders its drinker assured and confident in any given situation. Clooney has a strong appeal to both male and female audiences (confirming the old adage that men want to be him and women just want him) but his allure is strongest with middle-aged audiences, who are financially able to afford luxurious consumer goods and are therefore in the target market for Nespresso.

Clooney has also proved a good investment for the brand in that he lives a largely scandal-free existence. Numerous glamorous girlfriends, celebrity buddies such as Brad'n'Ange and a history of making intelligent, topical films have rendered him a highly-respected global A-lister. His audience is aware of his well-publicised work as a humanitarian campaigner for causes such as Darfur and the Sudan, which resulted in him being appointed as a **UN Messenger of Peace in 2008**. This may seem incidental to his endorsement of Nespresso, until you examine Nestlé's own history, which has been dogged by controversy and criticism since the mid 1970s, when there were boycotts of their products throughout Europe. A significant minority of left-wing consumers still regard the brand with suspicion; and by appointing the righteous Clooney, Nestle may be encouraging their audience to forget this past and regard the brand in a new light.

Different platforms

The television advert is the main method used to build awareness in this campaign, though in virtually every airport in the civilised world Clooney can be found gazing seductively and smugly into the eyes of millions of travellers a day. The tagline **'Nespresso. What Else?'** not only suggests that Clooney does not register the existence of any other coffees but also uses a presumptuous rhetorical question, which suggests that the brand know that they have the market in gourmet coffee virtually monopolised (which of course they have – the Nespresso capsule is patented until 2012). The use of **handwritten fonts** connotes the authenticity of Clooney's preference for the brand and the **chiaroscuro lighting** effect adds to the **cinematic** feel of the campaign.

it is frequently as good for the celebrity's career as it is for the brand's profits. It can help to keep a famous face in the public eye during long pauses between film or TV projects. It can even revive a flagging career. What it certainly does is **boost the bank balance** and endorsing the right product can even make a previously somewhat dubious celebrity seem more legitimate. Bringing **Lily Allen** under the **Chanel** umbrella to promote their handbag range in 2009 probably did far more to add a touch of European sophistication to Allen's slightly dodgy party-girl reputation than it did for Chanel's already rock-solid brand image.

For the brand, the main draw is the **sales boost**. After controversial **punk rocker John**

Lydon fronted a TV campaign for the rather dull **Country Life** butter brand – a distinctly unlikely partnership – Dairy Crest's profits rose by 85%. Conversely, association with a wholesome celebrity can also legitimise a less-than-wholesome brand, as we are about to see.

Nespresso and the unique selling point

Nespresso is owned by **Nestlé**, the massive international multi-billion pound corporation who also manufacture **Nescafe** – the more ordinary granules that mere mortals buy in a jar from the supermarket. Nespresso is positioned as their **high-end**, **luxury coffee product**. In recent years Nespresso have rather cornered

The two most recent television ads ('The Piano' and 'Cab Driver') also feature **John Malkovich**, the legendary cult comedy actor, as St Peter, the figure thought in Christianity to be the guardian of the gates of heaven. In **'The Piano'** Clooney enters a 'coffee boutique' and purchases a Nespresso machine. Flirtatious, lingering glances with sales assistants and female customers serve to remind the audience of Clooney's iconic sex symbol status. We cut to a shot of a single, perfect drop of coffee splashing, slow motion, into a cup and watch Clooney finish his drink. He exits the store and a point of view shot shows a grand piano falling towards our hero. Cue a strategically-placed fade to a fluffy clouded set and Malkovich. A measured sequence of deadpan comedy dialogue ends with Clooney reluctantly handing over his Nespresso machine to Malkovich in exchange for a return to the land of the living. Cut back to the exterior of the coffee boutique and the fatal scene is replayed, with Clooney walking away unscathed and the piano shattering on the ground. As always in advertising we end with the brand logo and message 'Nespresso – What Else?'.

The advert utilises Clooney's skills as a comic actor perfectly. He plays himself, as is frequently the case in adverts involving celebrity endorsements, and the audience uses their **prior knowledge of his public persona**, as acquired through other media texts, in order to understand the narrative. Of course, the narrative only makes sense if you understand **Clooney's status as a successful**, **smug sex symbol**. The message that a Nespresso machine is a desirable consumer good that even Saints covet is successfully, but subtly conveyed.

'Cab Driver' opens once more with coffee boutique flirtation. Clooney exits, looking cautiously above him for the falling piano and hails a cab on what appears to be a European street. Both adverts were actually shot in Milan – Clooney is known to live much of the year in Italy and the sophistication that a European setting connotes reinforces the high-end Nespresso brand values. Malkovich is revealed to be the cab driver and demands the immediate handover of Clooney's bag of Nespresso capsules, as 'we've run out up there.' The line 'Volluto, my favourite' reinforces one of the **USPs** of the product – its **multiple flavours and strengths**. When a thunderstorm is called up by 'St Peter', Clooney is forced to hand over the few capsules he is hoarding up his sleeve. 'Heaven can wait, George, but not for its capsules.' Cut to Clooney, sat outside the coffee boutique, looking somewhat shellshocked and without his gourmet coffee.

A long running affair?

Clooney has been the face of Nespresso since 2006 and if the popularity of this latest series of adverts and the soaring sales of Nespresso are anything to go by it looks as if the smooth-talking actor will be continuing to collaborate with the brand for some time to come. I for one shan't be complaining about seeing more of him in my ad breaks. In the immortal words of one hit wonder band SuperSister: 'I like my men like I like my coffee. Hot, strong and sweet!'

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Food, fame, chefs and celebrity

genre and collaboration

From Rick Stein to Heston Blumenthal, from *Masterchef* to *Nigella's Kitchen*, from *Kitchen Nightmares* to *Jamie's School Dinners,* what is the appeal of this ubiquitous genre? Every waking minute the schedules seem crammed with these shows, with The Food Channel on digital providing a dedicated and themed outlet to ensure a constant foodie fix should you not be able to get enough elsewhere. So what's with this obsession in a country once famed for lousy cuisine? And why should you, as a Media Studies student, be interested? Jonathan Nunns investigates.

Credit: image.net

I got interested in this by channel surfing and being astonished by the number and variety of shows. I realised this was a fully **postmodern** genre; it really could turn into anything and serve any audience.

Technically, these shows are great for **textual analysis** and are a good example of what you could well get given in the **WJEC AS exam**. Remember all those M&S ads? I don't know if the term **'food porn'** was actually coined to describe them, but it might well have been. Lovingly and sensually shot scenes of great looking food, in **slo-mo and close up**, with sexy music and a sexier **voiceover**. No wonder it spawned so many

YouTube spoofs. This could also make a great research project, since it covers so many issues.

Clearly you could think about **genre**, but you could also look at **representation**, from **gender** with Nigella Lawson and Gordon Ramsey, to **audiences**, with *Ready, Steady Cook* and *Come Dine With Me*. Also, massive as this genre is, there seems to be relatively little published about it, and in that sense it is pretty much virgin territory.

But where do you start with so much material?

Early days

Cooking on TV started out with 'how to' shows; some now largely forgotten like those of 50s

guru **Fanny Craddock** and some still going strong like the perennial shows of 'national treasure' **Delia Smith** who has been teaching BBC2 audiences how to cook since the 1970s (and very successfully so; her books still sell by the truckload and even now, like Jamie Oliver, she only has to include an ingredient on her show for it to sell out in the supermarkets).

The genre really kicked off in Delia's capable hands in the 1970s, a time when people in the UK didn't eat out much beyond the occasional scampi and chips and the range of cuisine available to ordinary people at home tended to be along the bog standard lines of pie and

mash and a roast on Sunday. The range of fast food outlets and restaurants we have today simply didn't exist; tinned spaghetti and packet curry were seen as exotic! In Britain at this time drinking wine was rare and what was generally available, mostly lousy. The rich and sophisticated might have had access to better quality stuff, but for the masses Mateus Rose and Blue Nun were the first date choice. Even McDonald's wasn't available here until 1973 and the British Wimpy hamburger bars (if you can remember them!) were an adventurous meal out.

So how did we get to the multi-headed mega genre we have now? For this, I suggest, there is a one-word answer.

Celebrity

The origin of these changes can probably can be traced to the shows of 1980s TV chef **Keith Floyd**. Celebrity chefs (as in 'listen to me' type authority figures) had of course existed long before television, going back to the books of

Mrs Beeton in the mid-19th century. Floyd's shows, however, were different. For a start, they were arguably more about him than the food; and secondly they became **luxury travelogues** with Floyd travelling to great-looking countries (often France and Italy) to knock up posh nosh whilst chatting up the locals. The shows featured the flamboyant, wine-slugging chef as the main event, rather than the food. The cult of celebrity has grown around chefs ever since – and with it has come money.

Gordon Ramsey is better known in the public imagination for his aggression and swearing and more recently his troubled love life and precarious business empire than for his food. Not for nothing did he have a show called *The F Word.* In the same vein, **Nigella Lawson** is known more for the **'Domestic Goddess'** tag and her much-spoofed, on screen sexuality than her food.

It's not only the chefs who have become more flamboyant. Early cookery shows were actual exercises in making the basics well. Much of the food now seen on TV is wildly complex,

'Fanny Cooks'; credit: image.net

expensive and likely to give you a coronary from twenty paces. The point of the programme is the **performance and the character of the chef** (good for studying representation and narrative then!).

It's ironic that at a time when the British public

is more interested in food than ever before, that we should also, according to health experts and media coverage, be facing an American-style *Super Size Me*-type obesity epidemic, partially, I guess, because many of us sit watching shows about great food but rarely make any and subsist

Marketing heaven! There is even the exclusive *Jamie Magazine*, available only at Sainsbury's and packed with must-have Jamie kit.

Postmodernity

Oliver is a good place to begin to explore how cookery and chef shows have become possibly the most **postmodern** of genres. He started with his late 90s show, *The Naked Chef,* a cheeky, young and sexy antidote to all the upper middle class poshness that made foodie-ism a bit off-putting. However, since then his image has graced beautifully-shot 'travel with some food thrown in' shows like *Jamie's Italian* (featuring the gimmick of his bombing round in a groovy 60s VW camper van), *Jamie's America* and his recent touring show where he did most of Europe and North Africa too. The shows have as much in common with **Stephen Fry's** recent American travelogue and with **Michael Palin's** famous travel shows such as *Sahara* and *Pole to Pole* as they do with cookery shows, and are all about Oliver's continued extension and cultivation of his brand. If comics like Fry and Palin can extend their range and front travel shows then why shouldn't chefs? Why not the **chefalogue**?

From the broadcasters and producers' perspective, this is about using a celebrity profile to extend the appeal of shows to audiences who would otherwise have stayed away. These

on burgers and snacks instead. [*Not me! Ed*] The point of chef shows has changed. It's all about money and entertainment, not learning to cook. When that becomes clear, everything else drops into place.

The branding process

Each chef has become a **brand** in his or her own right, with a celebrity persona designed to make him or her distinctive and highly marketable. Each is managed and media-handled to create an exploitable image, a brand which can become the bedrock for a TV career, a chain of restaurants, websites and cookery books. This has led to what has become known as **'brand slap'**, a casual form of **celebrity endorsement** where, if your name is big enough, you can charge a company vast sums of money simply to stick it on their product. Singers and actresses do this for perfume, George Clooney does it for upscale coffee (see page 21), and chefs do this for everything from peppermills to toilet cleaner. In this way, the chef as brand becomes a marketing machine that adds credibility to other brands.

Look at that great brand tie-up of recent years, **Jamie Oliver** and **Sainsbury's**, two mega (or should that be pukka?) brands getting together to make money. Oliver's popularity, and his cheeky mockney persona sexes up the Sainsbury's brand, giving it a younger appeal, establishing the supermarket giant as the home of **good food with attitude**. As for Oliver, he is paid to advertise himself, his TV shows, his restaurants and his own range of products.

postmodern genre hybrids aim to snag the chef's fans, travel buffs and cookery devotees to take them all along for the ride. **Rick Stein's** recent tour of Asia and **Gordon Ramsey's** to India mine the same profitable theme.

How to become a 'National Treasure'

More important for both Oliver and for this genre are some of the other things he has achieved with his fame. **Docusoaps** like *Airport*, needed to create strong characters to **anchor** them, narrativise them, and make them fun. How much more interesting to take an established star and have them take on a major social issue as part of a documentary series, particularly with *Super Size Me* had been a hit at cinemas and the public were gradually becoming aware of the need to eat better.

In 2006, *Jamie's School Dinners* took the genre in a different direction. This Channel Four **docusoap** plonked a committed Oliver in the middle of a crusade where he took on the poor quality of the food served in many UK school canteens. Oliver's campaign created an iconic show in which he fought to change the eating habits of many of the poorest and unhealthiest, replacing fry ups with healthier alternatives and demonising the now infamous Turkey Twizzler as representative of all that was bad with school food. Some great TV scenes emerged, such as parents resisting Oliver's changes by feeding bags of chips through the bars of the school gates to their kids and children chanting that they '…didn't want to be healthy…' making TV that was both bonkers and brilliant.

Oliver's epic mission culminated with a visit to Downing Street to see the Minister for Education, after which government policy changed, and school dinners nationally were made healthier. Oliver cemented his status with follow up shows like *Jamie's Ministry of Food* where he took on the eating habits of one of Britain's unhealthiest towns. A trans-Atlantic version, *Jamie's American Revolution*, was recently aired in the UK, showing Oliver (not for the first time) reduced to tears by people's stubborn resistance to his attempts to stop them eating themselves into an early grave.

Similarly crusading shows about food safety and the treatment of animals have been made by **Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall** and others in attempts to raise public awareness about factory farmed chickens and pigs, for example.

How serious it's all become!

It would be wrong to think this has become a totally serious and worthy genre though; this is still **narrativised** entertainment we are talking about. The cookery show has gone through many changes and has morphed in ways that make it almost unrecognisable from its origins. **Reality Elimination Shows** like the testosterone-fuelled *Hell's Kitchen* and the less aggressive but no less competitive *Master Chef*, have ensured the genre's continued move into the primetime mainstream of reality programming joining dance and talent shows like *Strictly Come Dancing* and *The X Factor*.

Hell's Kitchen and *Master Chef* have both featured **variants** where, like other reality programmes, minor celebs have been put through their culinary paces and been given an *I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here*-style opportunity to raise their profile with audiences, promote their products, and seek further employment on the back of the experience.

Coming full circle, *Ready, Steady Cook's* chef **Anthony Worral-Thompson** endured a similarly profile-raising stint on *I'm A Celebrity* himself, having previously joined the campaigning health promotion strand by promoting food for pre-diabetic conditions.

So what now?

The genre seems set to continue its **postmodern** morphing with soaped-up, elimination show variants screening nightly, and more campaigning foodie documentaries upcoming from some of the genre's leading lights. Already this year, Channel Four's *Great Fish Fight* featured Oliver, Ramsey and Blumenthal, investigating the scandal of the destruction of fish stocks, the oceans and, by extension, the planet. Are these chefs a new breed of super hero? That this should be done in a way which raises their profile, improves their credibility and promotes their empires, when both Ramsey and Blumenthal's have suffered some recent well-publicised setbacks was, I'm sure, entirely coincidental. Clearly this is a genre of ambition and no little ego.

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Tweeting together

We (Media) the People

Nick Lacey explores the new democratic potential of Web 2.0 from the user-generated knowledge of Wikipedia to the activism generated by Twitter in recent anti-cuts protests.

Wikipedia

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

For Wikipedia's non-encyclopedic visitor introduction, see Wikipedia:About.

Wikipedia (/ˌwɪkɪˈpiːdiə/ or /ˌwɪkiˈpiːdiə/ WIK-i-PEE-dee-ə) is a free, web-based, collaborative, multilingual encyclopedia project supported by the non-profit Wikimedia Foundation. Its 17 million articles (over 3.5 million in English) have been written collaboratively by volunteers around the world, and almost all of its articles can be edited by anyone with access to the site. Wikipedia was launched in 2001 by Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger and has become the largest and most popular general reference work on the Internet, ranking around seventh among all websites on Alexa and having 365 million readers.

Your teachers may have told you to not to rely solely on **Wikipedia** for your research projects and they're right. But it is, nevertheless, a brilliant resource. It's also one of the best examples of **'we media'**, where, through the internet, **audiences become producers**:

> **As a collectively authored encyclopaedia Wikipedia is the prototypical model of an open source user-generated knowledge world.**
>
> Lister et. al.: 206

Wikipedia exemplifies **Web 2.0**, **Tim O'Reilly's** conception of the internet (see http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html) where **audiences** (users) readily **produce** (generate) media texts, facilitated by the growth of broadband connections and easy-to-create webpages, such as blogs and Facebook.

Wikipedia is also an example of the **collaborative possibilities of the internet**. Its success relies upon:

> **The idea of the wisdom of crowds [that] takes decentralization as a given and a good, since it implies that if you set a crowd of self-interested, independent people to work in a decentralized way the same problem, instead of trying to direct their efforts from the top down, their collective solution is likely to be better than any other solution you could come up with.**
>
> Surowiecki, 2004: 70

Another extraordinary thing about Wikipedia is that it is a **non-profit making trust**; contributors work voluntarily with no financial reward. It has been argued that in doing this, **participants are behaving like citizens rather than consumers**. The media generally treats most audiences as a **group to be sold to**. Wikipedia is selling nothing, as it is free; and contributors are not selling their time and expertise, as they give it for free.

Citizen journalism is also a feature of Web 2.0 and probably came to prominence during the **2005 7/7 bombings in London**. People caught up in the devastation on an underground train took photographs with their mobile phones and posted them on the internet. These images were obviously authentic eyewitness texts that gave an immediacy to the reporting of the event that was inevitably missing from traditional journalism written second-hand and in retrospect.

As noted above, **Web 2.0** could only be established **once the technology of broadband connections was widespread**, otherwise uploading large files – such as video – would take a prohibitively long amount of time. Similarly, the **rise of citizen journalism** was facilitated by 'new media technologies' which **converged products** (a phone also became a camera, web browser and a music player) and made them **portable**. Thus the victims of the bombing could, as soon as they were above ground at least, post their images onto the internet within minutes of the event happening.

The rise of the blog

Web 2.0 has also been characterised by the rise of **web logging or blogging**. In January 2009 it was estimated there were at least **131 million blogs** http://www.numberof.net/number-of-blogs-2/, accessed January 2011).

Blogging became so popular because sites allowed people with no skills in web design to make a site without needing web-authoring software (such as **Dreamweaver**). They also had no need for a host for their pages, as blogging providers, such as **WordPress**, offered them for free. All that's required is the ability to connect to the internet.

> WordPress is web software you can use to create a beautiful website or blog. We like to say that WordPress is both free and priceless at the same time.
> The core software is built by hundreds of community volunteers...
>
> http://wordpress.org/, accessed January 2011

The webpage software for WordPress has been produced by collaborative means (as has the operating system Linux and Open Office). Blogs have the facility for readers to post their comments, though administrators may moderate these and decide not to publish them. Blogs often link to other websites driving traffic to other users, who may also link back to the original page. The blogosphere has been created where anyone can comment on events and offer opinions. We are no longer in the position where the only way an individual could be heard was via the letters page in a newspaper or occasional access broadcast programmes that could be made by 'ordinary people'.

Of course, when anyone can produce a media text there is no automatic quality control. Traditional media outlets invariably only produced well-made texts (whether viewers

agreed over the value of the content is a different matter). Hence YouTube is full of badly made videos and the blogosphere is infected by trolls who are posters who only want to spoil discussion through inflammatory and off-topic comments.

The rise of tag clouds

Tag clouds are another collaborative tool that is characteristic of Web 2.0. Blogs, bookmarking sites such as **del.icio.us**, and photographic sites like **flickr**, allow entries to be tagged with relevant words. Anyone clicking on the tag will then be taken to other posts, bookmarks or photographs with that tag. Thus the overwhelming nature of the internet with its billions of pages is made manageable by **collaboration**.

Tweeting for change

The most recent high profile Web 2.0 entrant is **Twitter**, which allows messages of only 140 characters or less. Twitter can work like Facebook's 'status' feed, but however is not limited to whoever you allow to access your pages. At its weakest, Twitter can inform us about the **banality of everyday life** by telling us what the person we are following is doing (picking their nose?). However, at its strongest Twitter can **inform us succinctly**, **in real time**, **about ongoing events** (such as @PennyRed's posts from inside a kettle with protesting students, http://twitter.com/#!/PennyRed) and **link us to other web pages**.

At the end of 2010, Twitter had a crucial role in **the protests against government cuts**. It helped publicise the fact that a number of companies, such as **Boots**, were moving their Head Offices to countries with lower corporate tax rates, and so avoiding paying the British Exchequer what they owed. Similarly, **Philip Green**, who runs the **Arcadia Group** which includes stores such as Top Shop, was targeted for protests because he paid a **£1.2 billion** dividend to his wife – thus avoiding paying **£285 million** in tax (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Green, accessed December 2010).

The payment had been made in 2005; however, Green's role in advising the Government on public service cuts in 2010 made him a high profile target. **Vodafone**, who allegedly avoided a £6 billion bill, was also targeted.

The UK Uncut protests originated: in the Nags Head pub in north London [where] about 10 like-minded activists, many of them environmental campaigners and almost all in their 20s, hatched the idea of targeting alleged tax avoiders...
The night before the protest, the group created a Twitter account – @ukuncut – and the accompanying hashtag that would allow others to rally around the issue. The first tweet said: 'This is the official Twitter account for tomorrow's direct action in London. Meet 9:30AM at the Ritz – look for the orange umbrella #UKuncut.'

Lewis et al, 2010

That so few people could create such an effective protest in such a short space of time is a testament to **the collaborative possibilities of the internet**. By including the hashtag **#Ukuncut**, anyone can read, or contribute to, the posts about the protests against tax avoidance.

Access for all

Despite having founders, UK Uncut's success in creating countrywide protests has been based upon its **non-hierarchical nature**. Anyone can join and/or organise a protest using Twitter. As @MissEllieMae tweeted on 3rd January, with reference to protests about the banking system:
In case you missed it the first 50 times: @ UKUNCUT IS AUTONOMOUS DECENTRALISED PROTEST AND THEREFORE HAS NO OFFICIAL LINE ON MUTUALS.

Twitter was also **mashed-up** (i.e. combined) with **Google Maps** to create real time information about the anti-tuition fees student protests in London, in December last year, **to help students to avoid being kettled by the police**; see http://tinyurl.com/34trqsa. Those with web-enabled phones could monitor and/or contribute to the mash-up during the protest.

Writing at the beginning of 2011, it's unclear whether the protests enhanced by Web 2.0 sites and technology will continue, or whether they existed only through novelty value. However, the **collaborative possibilities are clear** and it's highly likely that any anti-government protest in future will use whatever Web 2.0 tools that are available to make their message clear. It also

appears that as a result of the technology, young people, after 30 years in the political doldrums, are once again making their voices heard.

For further investigation:

http://anticuts.org.uk/

http://falseeconomy.org.uk/

Paul Lewis, Adam Gabbatt, Matthew Taylor and Simon Jeffery (2010): 'UK Uncut protesters spied upon by undercover police' *The Guardian*, 3 December (http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/dec/03/uk-uncut-protests-undercover-police, accessed January 2011)

Martin Lister, Jon Dovey, Seth Giddings, Iain Grant and Kieran Kelly (2009, 2nd edition): *New Media: A Critical Introduction*

James Surowiecki (2004): *The Wisdom of Crowds: Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few*

In the next issue of *MediaMagazine* we will be featuring a case study from Clifford Singer on the production process behind activist network sites like **mydavidcameron.com** and **falseeconomy.org.uk**

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Collaboration or exploitation?

the would-be film-makers' right to chose

Shootingpeople.org is a brilliant collaborative network supporting young people entering the film industry; but the question of unpaid labour vs minimum wage presents a massive dilemma for its members and for the union. Owen Davey reports on the issues and ethics of the right to gain production experience for free.

The Factories Act of 1802, the first of its kind, stated that 'Children under 9 years old are not allowed to work', and that work of children above the age of 9 'must begin after 6am, end before 9pm, and not exceed 12 hours a day'. Its laxness seems absurd to us now, as do the claims of many industrialists at the time that the Act's advocates were elitist, interventionist do-gooders, intent on robbing children of their right to work. This argument raises an eyebrow, but, when redirected at consenting adult workers, this seriously old-fashioned principle can find surprisingly strong ground in today's society. If a line must be drawn – which it must – across which individual culpability manifests as adulthood, then who is to say that such adults cannot work themselves half-dead in a role of their choosing?

In developed, post-industrialist countries, at least, conventional industries of labour, manufacturing and the like have for the most part established themselves, through the evolution of unions, legislation and basic necessity, as relatively stable institutions for workforces, regulated by rules regarding pay, holiday, hours and conditions. The **'creative industries'**, however, are more fluid, reliant as they are on constant reinvention – the new film, the new play, the new record – and the often elusive base from which such products are manufactured: **freelance actors** filmed by a **freelance crew** on whichever locations happen to be dictated by the script, for instance. This article will deal particularly with the film industry, due to its ever-greater relevance to me, its potential relevance to many of you, and the timely way it epitomises the **volunteer-reliant 'industry'** and the debate about **'individual choice vs. the greater-good'**.
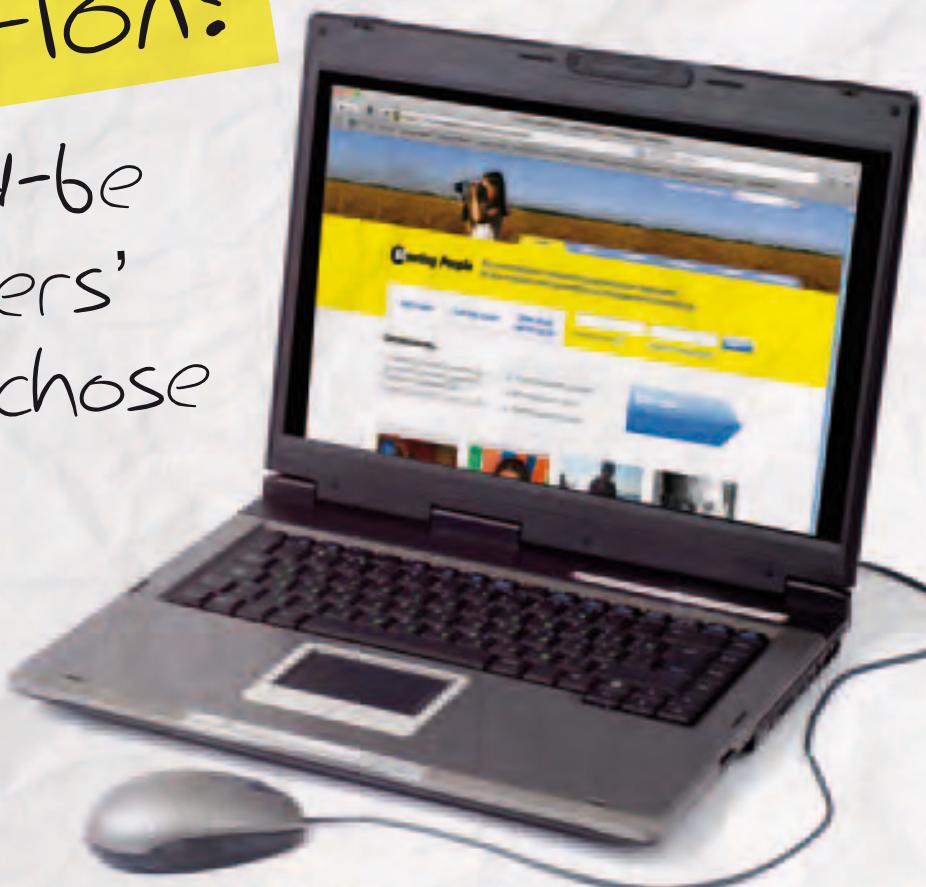
Collaborating via shootingpeople.org

Let's start with the little league, my league. I am a member of **shootingpeople.org**, as are many others; it is t**he world's largest network of independent film-makers**. I have sought and accepted unpaid work opportunities or 'collaborations' via this network, the trade of services being possibly – alongside acting as a more tasteful self-publishing platform than YouTube, etc – the most earnest function of the network; certainly its most appealing.

Shootingpeople.org is essentially a site where anybody with an interest in film, whether it be directing, composing, writing or simply viewing, can create a Facebook-style profile, upload their videos and easily communicate with each other, mostly in the form of daily bulletins which anybody can post or receive, and via which many **collaborations** are formed. Need a camera operator for your film? Post for one on the bulletin. Want to write music for

films? Post a link to your profile on the bulletin. The key difference between **shootingpeople** and something like YouTube, is that, partly due to its yearly subscription fees of around £30, but mostly due to its culture of peer-review, it ensures a genuine atmosphere of **passion and professionalism towards film-making** in particular that a completely open-ended platform such as YouTube does not. In other words, it's like YouTube, without all the crap.

In 2010, however, as a result of the network's growing significance and therefore responsibility within indie film-making, debate slowly but steadily grew over whether or not it should be advocating the **national minimum wage**. This decision could have led to a ban on advertisements for collaboration or 'expenses only' work, and, therefore, closed that avenue into the industry. Put simply: one's choice denied.

The union joins the debate

The debate swelled in part due to the input of **BECTU (the Broadcast**, **Entertainment**, **Cinematograph and Theatre Union)**, which represents staff, contract and freelance film-makers amongst its subscribers or members. All trade-unions depend on the strength of their membership numbers to bargain against potential exploitation by employers. Most act as insurance; the threat of strike action, for instance, is a deterrent against such exploitation.

However, it is also important to remember that a union, much like the companies it protects its members from, is a top-down power base; the individuals at the peak stand on the shoulders of the members below (who pay for the privilege), and even the scattered individuals of indie film-making, if rallied behind a national minimum wage act, could potentially strengthen the union's power base. That aside, BECTU seem genuine in their ethics; they argue that

there are too many producers out there who exploit the fact that there are more young people wanting to work in the industry than there are jobs available

Similar comments reared their heads during an apparently healthily 'bruising' public debate, organised between the union and **shootingpeople** – a release for the pressure caused by months of boiling fury on online forums. **Shootingpeople** was clearly much less hardened by battle than BECTU. Judging by blog posts from both sides after the debate, this personable, free-spirited network seemed truly shaken in the face of the union's hard-line principles and veteran PR. It countered:

Now look, I really get it, there is a law there to protect the most vulnerable people from exploitation, and I…and every film maker I know, fully support and champion that law. I also believe that it is a fundamental human right for people to choose to work for free if they want to. This is a philosophical stand point that I can not see any way around.

Blog entry by shootingpeople representative Chris Jones, post BECTU debate

BECTU compared **shootingpeople's** advocacy of free labour to standing by whilst a victim is mugged. A video of the debate, which was released by BECTU, can by viewed in full here: http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=oJANs3rg_PY

According to **shootingpeople**, both sides finally agreed on a statement:

There is a class of low budget productions, where the primary motive is not profit and where crew are responsibly treated, which BECTU are prepared to ignore in respect to minimum wage enforcement in order to focus on holding bigger productions, where the primary motive is profit, to upholding the minimum wage.

http://shootingpeople.org/blog/2010/03/the-bectu-minimum-wage-debate/

Democratic guidelines

This seemingly reasonable compromise was accurately reflected in a subsequent poll taken by **shootingpeople** of their members' opinions

on the matter. 83% claimed they wanted unpaid jobs posted on the website, while 75% claimed that low-paid staff like runners should be able to work for free on an independent film if they so chose. The final vote revealed that 82% (a motion-passing majority) of **'shooters'** agreed with guidelines ensuring that:

- unpaid jobs could only be posted by **non-independently funded projects below a certain budget** (£50,000 for a feature, £15,000 for a short, £10,000 for a music video) and **companies below an annual turnover of £1 million**
- they could only do this if the project were *not* a television/corporate commission, **insurance** was guaranteed, **expenses paid** and **credits given**
- oh yes, and a copy of the finished film on DVD must be received by all (that's the clincher, obviously).

This settlement, I believe, shows that what was once a fairly naïve and open-ended network (although not too naïve, as shooters have always paid membership fees) can step up to the challenge of meeting both its collaborative, self-governing, individualist founding principles, and its new-found responsibility as a large, organising community.

Shaken but refusing to be bullied into action without debate and consensus, the **shootingpeople** network has found a compromise fit for its current situation. There will, of course, be some who say the community's added 'laws' are already a step too far towards unnecessary governance and reduced choice, and others who will claim that such 'choice' is meaningless when the options are either to volunteer, or to step aside. This latter opinion will inevitably lead to further regulation, and will, at some point, further infringe the community's freedom as it grows; new lawless communities will spring up out of the further dissatisfaction this will cause. But for now, during this happy medium, I would advise joining **shootingpeople**.

My own experience has been mixed. On paper, the difference between **'expenses only'** and **'meets national minimum wage'** is not enough to establish a project's motives, inclusiveness and potential fulfilment. I have spent two weeks working on a labour-of-love with a like-minded team, and still felt a strong sense of achievement – despite the profit-share never paying off. I have spent a week on other, more 'professional' productions, only respectfully to bow-out, ever more mindful as the project wore on that I was being – in the blunt advice of one professional I encountered along the way – screwed.

Would I blame anybody but myself for this mixed bag, or even think of such lesser experiences as anything but learning curves in themselves? No. Would I also, however, prefer at least the compensation of minimum wage to fall back on at such times? Of course. But then would that film we spent two fulfilling weeks shooting for free ever have got off the ground if we'd been paid? Again, no. It is a dilemma as old as that which defines our society as a whole (if that isn't too dramatic): **how to be fair and still be free**? And, in the case of film, **can we still be fair and make good films**?

Collaboration or exploitation?

Collaborative process, but what about the movie?

Of course, the main aspect of this whole equation which cannot be overlooked, particularly in the authoritarian 'sink or swim' world of film-making, is the final product: **the film**. And, consequentially, the customer: **the audience**. Despite its importance to us lowly runners and the like, it's rare to hear much talk of compromise, trade unions, practicalities and fairness from our beloved auteurs when it comes to realising their visions. It is a strange contradiction to know that the films we love have almost always been created by a hierarchy and a single autocratic director; a method that seals our currently exploited fate. We are a collaborative crew, yes, but there can only be one captain.

The debate in action: The Hobbit

This is the impression – again, simplistic when on paper – one gets from the trials and tribulations of forthcoming mega-movie *The Hobbit*. **Peter Jackson** and his backers **New Line** and **MGM** (since bankrupt), refused to supply guarantees of minimum wage and working standards. They were duly boycotted by **EMAA (Australia's Media Entertainments and Arts Alliance)**, along with its counterparts in the US, UK and NZL, crippling the pre-production with the backers' fear of actor strikes. The unions later withdrew on grounds that the talks they demanded were deemed technically illegal in New Zealand courts; nevertheless, such a bruise

in confidence, has placed the film's location, New Zealand (as seen in *The Lord of the Rings*), in extreme jeopardy. This could potentially move the entire production, and basically the country's entire film industry, to the cheaper and safer location of Eastern Europe, as threatened by Jackson himself. More likely, however, is a move to the massive and 'safe as houses' **Leavesden Studios**, here in little England. Conspiracy theorists suggest that Warner Bros (the ultimate backers of both franchises) – intend to open a combined Potter/Hobbit theme park at the site.

The unions, however, claim that Jackson's threat is just that, a threat, and it does seem – as the Scottish Socialist Youth so simplistically pointed out on their blog – hard to side with a man, nay, a *knight* of New Zealand, worth an estimated £300 million, against a thousand or so happy-go-lucky Kiwi extras, no matter how good *Brain Dead* was. But, strewth, I'm afraid these

things just don't get any less complicated in the big leagues. And I've got problems of my own to deal with. Go and watch the row unfold for yourselves…

http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=XoUN2A GxrnA&feature=player_embedded

Owen Davey is a graduate in Digital Screen Arts, now freelance in the creative industries.

The Curious Collaborations of David Fincher and Brad Pitt

In the early 90s, golden-locked Brad Pitt was a young, good-looking, pretty-boy actor who took fluffy roles in films like *Thelma and Louise* and *Legends of the Fall*. Then, in 1995, the dark and disturbed mind of director David Fincher slithered into Pitt's world to forge an unexpected partnership that has so far produced three sinful cinematic apples. Pete Turner examines the fruit.

Brad Pitt gained international recognition as a sex symbol for his supporting role in *Thelma and Louise* in 1991. The cowboy hat, cocky grin and steamy sex-scene ensured audience members took notice of this fresh, new hunk. Pitt went on to secure his reputation as a handsome leading man with larger parts in *A River Runs Through It* and *Legends of the Fall*. However his appetite for edgier roles was clear from his early work as a psychopath in *Kalifornia*, and his cameo as a stoner in *True Romance*.

On the other hand, **David Fincher** began his directing career in commercials and music videos. Selling Coca Cola and Nike sportswear through dazzling but dark adverts, and promoting the music of icons including **Madonna** and **The Rolling Stones** helped develop Fincher's trademark style and distinctive creation of tone and atmosphere. He moved on to feature films with an brave debut, directing the third film in the *Alien* franchise. Unfortunately, the

> **malevolent tone… earned the movie abhorrent reviews. It grossed $53 million, the worst in the franchise**
>
> Bowles, 2008

Not a promising start to a Hollywood career – and certainly not a reason for a pretty-boy actor to show interest in his next film.

However, after watching *Alien 3*, Brad Pitt remembers:

> **walking out of the theater thinking, OK, that was not what I expected… That wasn't a Hollywood ending. It really stuck with me.**
>
> Bowles, 2008

Pitt's recent output had relied on his good looks, and many of the roles he took were in traditional films with a lack of truly interesting or daring characters to play. Fincher continued on his course of dark, challenging films by choosing to direct a disturbing serial killer film next. Pitt remained on the look out for new, darker material; a film that would subvert what audiences were expecting from a Hollywood movie 'starring Brad Pitt'. Despite apparent differences in their personalities, the script for *Se7en* (1995) brought the pair together for the first of their three collaborations to date.

Se7en

Brad Pitt plays a young, cocky and short-fused detective, David Mills. He is transferred to a crime-infested, permanently rain-soaked, unidentified city to be partnered with Morgan Freeman's older, wiser detective, William Somerset.

> **Initially, Fincher didn't see Pitt for the role, which had been conceived as a slicker kind of guy – 'I had always seen somebody who was more sort of a fuck-up,' the director said, '[but] he was incredibly enthusiastic…'**
>
> Swallow, 2003

Pitt demonstrated a real determination to win the role of Detective Mills despite Fincher's reservations and despite the fact he was to play, (in the words of the director) 'a fuck-up'. Pitt presents Mills as a childlike man. He is cocky and impatient, ignorant, sulky and impulsive. He ends the film losing the killer's 'game' because

he cannot control himself. Pitt plays the 'fuck-up' well and invites empathy and sympathy from the audience. The character is not stupid but occasionally ignorant and too eager to show his worth, resulting in a lack of control. His wife does not share with him that she is pregnant; he loses the killer in a chase scene and finally loses his wife and freedom in the final scene. This challenges expectations of a thriller and the typical hero role that a star like Brad Pitt should be playing.

After reading the script and being offered the part, Pitt immediately signed on, with one caveat: The studio could not change the film's final scene… According to Pitt:

> They tried all kinds of things to change our minds. We wouldn't budge. David isn't afraid to use an ending that works, even if it isn't the one you want.

Bowles, 2008

This **created a bond between actor and director**. Fincher had constantly battled with the studio over his vision for *Alien 3* but now he had a big star in his corner – helping to fight the studio and keep his vision intact on *Se7en*. This sealed their relationship and demonstrated their loyalty to each other. The finished film was praised for its bleak style, grim ending, and outstanding performances from **Pitt**, **Freeman** and **Spacey**.

Fight Club (1999)

Following the success of *Se7en*, Pitt mixed it up with roles in dark dramas such as *Sleepers* and *Twelve Monkeys*, but also took parts that cemented his position as a heartthrob such as *Meet Joe Black*. Meanwhile Fincher moved onto directing **Michael Douglas thriller** *The Game* before bringing his next script right to Pitt's door.

> Fincher was instrumental in getting the actor on board, to the extent of flying to Pitt's home in New York City while the actor was working on Meet Joe Black and waiting for hours on his doorstep until he returned in the morning.

Swallow, 2003

Fight Club is the story of an unnamed protagonist **(Edward Norton)** who creates an alter-ego for himself. This imaginary friend is **Tyler Durden** and is played by Brad Pitt with a shaved head and part of his teeth missing. In Tyler's own words, he is:

> All the ways you wish you could be… I look like you wanna look, I fuck like you wanna fuck, I am smart, capable, and most importantly, I am free in all the ways that you are not.

Producer Art Linson said studio executives expected '*Se7en* in another costume' (Swallow, 2003) but got something quite different. Pitt plays Durden as charismatic but psychotic; an

anti-capitalist terrorist who blows up credit card company buildings and spouts a verbal handbook of self-destruction.

On release of the film, critics and audiences were divided. In response to negative criticism, Pitt argued that *Fight Club*:

> attacks a status quo that these men have given 40 years of their lives to… This was one of the first times I did not care what anyone thought – it was just dead on.

Swallow, 2003

Fincher and Pitt were bombarded with criticism when they had a Q&A at the Venice Film Festival. Fincher gave up arguing with the assembled critics and now seems to feel the same sense of pride as Pitt does about the film.

> In his boardroom, he has a blow-up of the review Alexander Walker… gave Fight Club: 'An inadmissible assault on personal decency. This film is anti-capitalist, anti-society, and indeed, anti-God.'

Goodwin, 2008

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (2008)

Fincher went on to direct safer, slightly more conventional films *Panic Room* and *Zodiac*. Similarly, Pitt starred in a string of harmless Hollywood blockbusters such as *Ocean's 11, 12 and 13*, *Troy* and *Mr and Mrs Smith*. He still toyed with interesting characters, most notably his Irish gypsy boxer in *Snatch*, but also in the Coen Brothers' *Burn After Reading*.

If this was not evidence enough of the director/star pair mellowing and maturing, their most recent collaboration surely is. *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* is the life story of the titular character played by Pitt. Born with the appearance of an old man and looking younger and younger as he grows older, it was argued that:

> both director and star would have to wade into unfamiliar waters. Pitt would have to get ugly, Fincher happy.

Bowles, 2008

Pitt's character certainly appears old, grey, spectacled and in various stages of immobility (limping, crutches, wheelchair), but with the use of state-of-the-art digital effects, it is still Brad Pitt's face the audience sees and therefore it is never easy to call it just 'ugly'. However, Fincher definitely has to get 'happy' with moments of the film capturing love and the joys of two people finding each other at the right moments in their lives and sharing many happy experiences together. Actually this is only a very small part of the film; the romance and joy only happens for around half an hour (and mainly in a single montage) of the two hours and forty minute running time. Death, old age and funerals permeate the film but the theme is that **death is not something to be feared and is instead necessary for humans to fully appreciate their lives**.

Therefore the film is not all 'ugly' Pitt and 'happy' Fincher. Two hours into the film we see Pitt looking not only his usual good-looking self but also digitally tinkered with to look younger and fresher faced. The end of the film is also
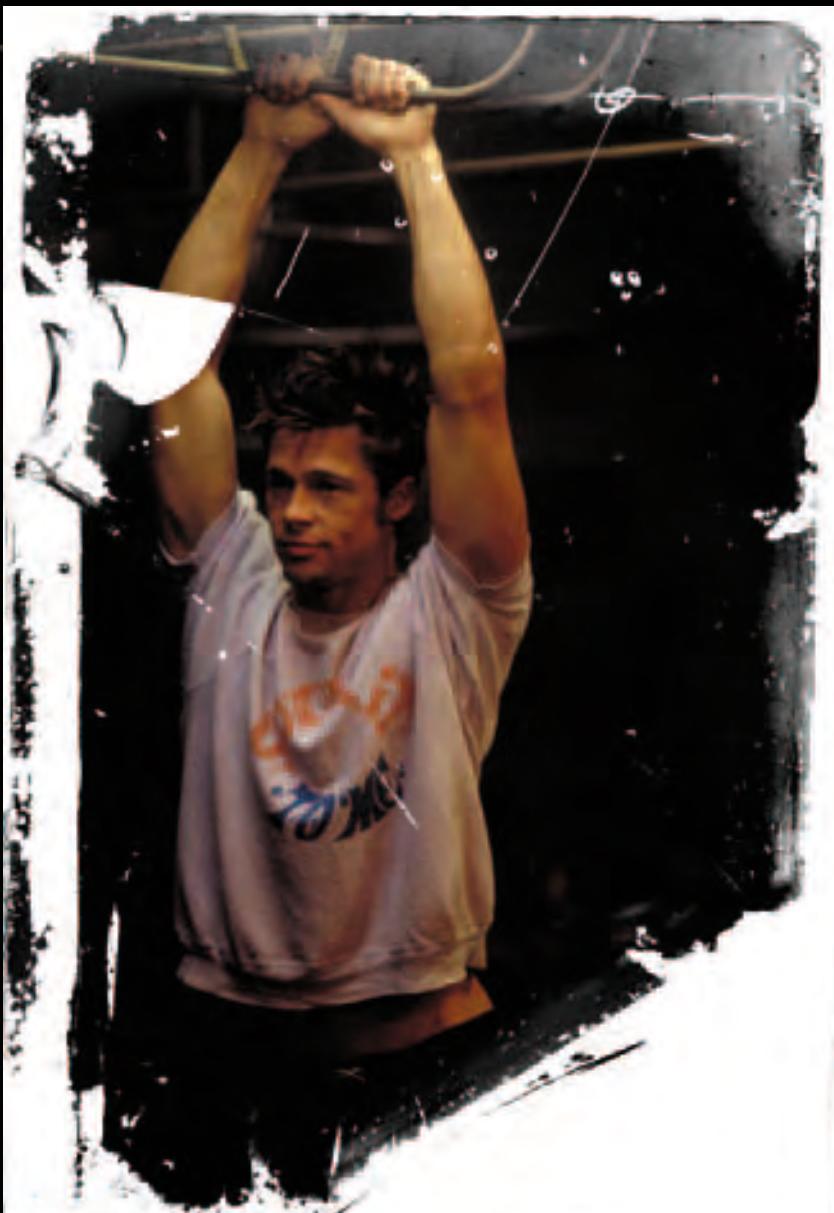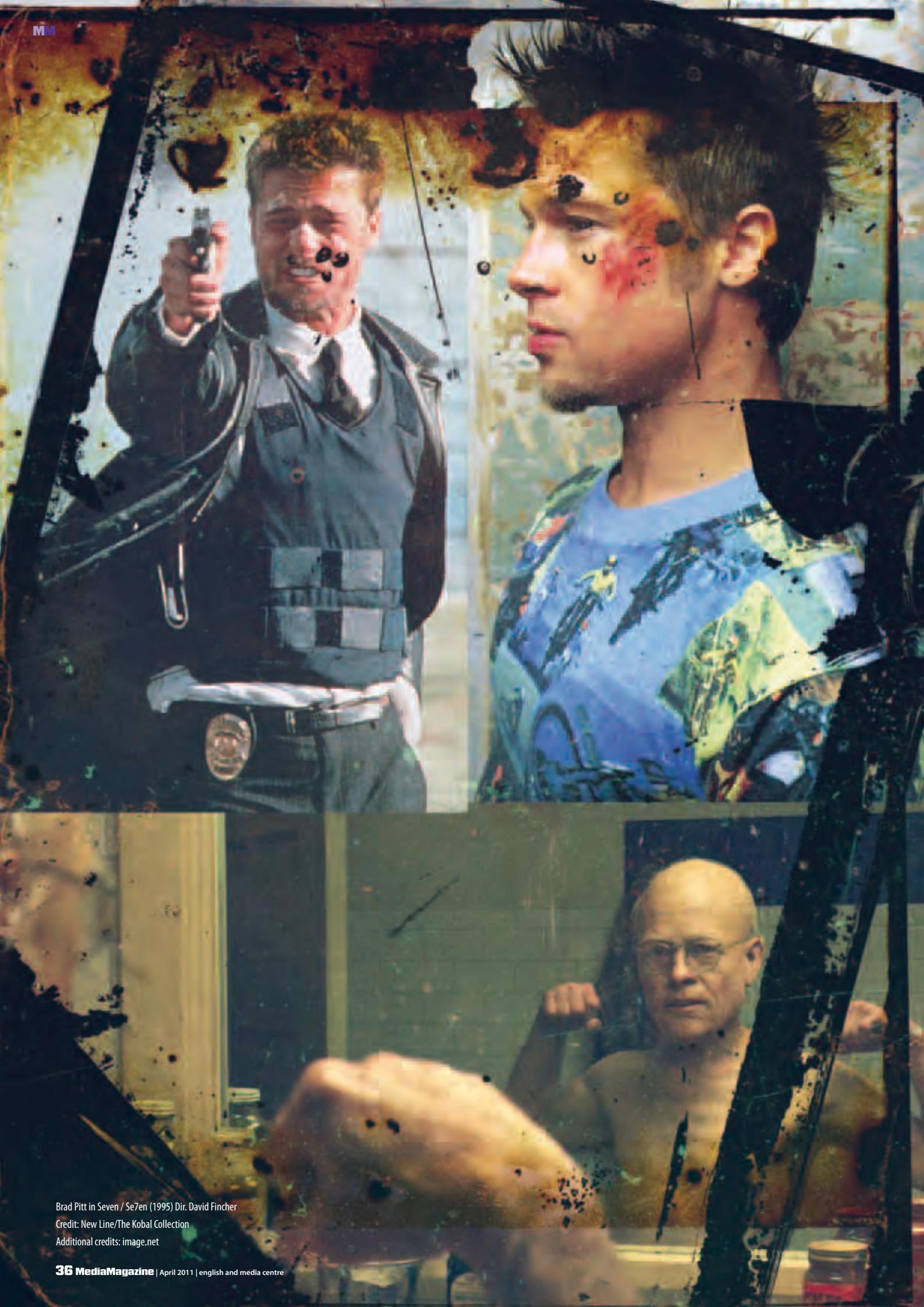
Brad Pitt in Seven / Se7en (1995) Dir. David Fincher

Credit: New Line/The Kobal Collection

Additional credits: image.net
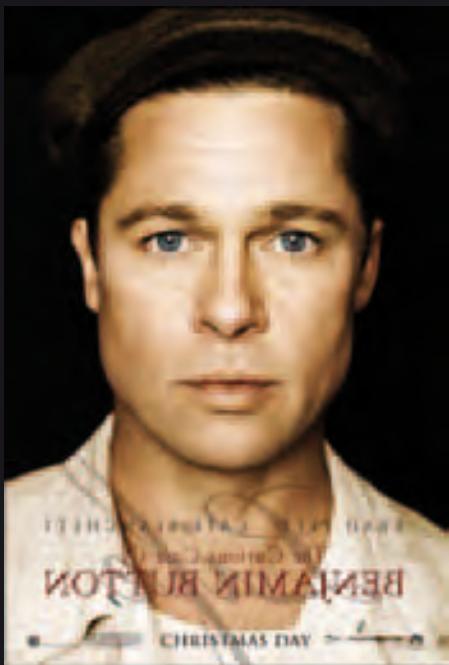
quite dark with Benjamin Button aging into a young boy (showing signs of dementia) and then finally a baby who has no recollection of the love of his life. However this is clearly the most curious of Fincher and Pitt's collaborations and a real departure from the dark and twisted tones, themes and characters of *Se7en* and *Fight Club*.

Future collaborations

With Fincher taking on the Hollywood remakes of the **'Millennium' trilogy** (*The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* etc.), casting **Daniel Craig** in the lead, and Pitt busy with auteurs such as **Tarantino** and **Terence Malick**, does this mean audiences have seen the last of the Fincher/Pitt collaborations? Perhaps not:

> **Paramount Pictures has acquired graphic novel 'The Killer' and will develop it as a directing vehicle for David Fincher... produced by Brad Pitt's Plan B Entertainment and Alexandra Milchan.**
>
> Fleming, 2007

However, this was reported some time ago and has yet to come to fruition. Nevertheless, there is also *Fertig*:

> **based on the biography of middle-aged American civil engineer-turned-World War II guerrilla fighter Wendell Fertig who with a small team of Americans refused under orders to surrender and led thousands of Filipinos in a seemingly hopeless war against the Japanese.**
>
> Holmes, 2008

Fincher believes Pitt would be perfect and will sign up for the project when the script is right.

The curious collaborations of David Fincher and Brad Pitt are all unique and exceptional films. The pair clearly has great affection for each other. Their commentaries on the DVDs of their films are testimony to their warm relationship and shared sense of humour. Fincher is a masterful director, renowned for his perfectionism and has brought out the best performances from Pitt, who, in turn, has fought Fincher's corner and allowed him the freedom to go to dark places the Hollywood studios dread. All those waiting for their next collaboration can take comfort in the words of Brad Pitt:

> **I trust Fincher. If he wants me to do a movie, I say yes first, then find out what it is.**
>
> Bowles, 2008

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Visiting Doctor Lecter

Many genre films, from science fiction to gangster and crime movies, focus on collaborative partnerships between protagonists on a shared mission. But very occasionally they reverse this convention to explore the mutually dependent relationship between characters on opposite sides of the law. James Rose investigates one such elaborate and dangerous collaboration and its role in the chilling narrative of *The Silence of the Lambs.*

Films within the crime or police procedural genre rely heavily upon a number of **collaborative relationships** in order for their narratives to be propelled forward. The majority, such as *The French Connection* (William Friedkin, 1971), *Magnum Force* (Ted Post, 1973), the *Lethal Weapon* series (1987 – various directors), *Dragnet* (Tom Mankiewicz, 1987), *Red Heat* (Walter Hill, 1988), *Tango and Cash* (Andrey Konchalovskiy, 1989), *Se7en* (David Fincher, 1995), the *Bad Boys* films (1995 & 2003, both Michael Bay) and *Starsky and Hutch* (Todd Phillips, 2004) (or even a film such as *K9* [Rod Daniel, 1989]) utilise the **buddy relationship** between two very different types of police officer – one is usually a straight-laced, by-the-book officer while the other is a loose canon, a rogue officer who gets the job done by virtually any means necessary. While this clear sense of **binary opposition** creates tension (and in some of cases, humour), it also provides a positive relationship in which collaboration has the effect of loosening up the straight-laced officer whilst simultaneously forcing the rogue officer to take

more responsibility for their actions.

Out of this construct emerged an interesting aberration: instead of two police officers working together to solve a case, a number of films paired a police officer with a known criminal: perhaps one of the earliest of these was the **Clint Eastwood vehicle** *The Gauntlet* (Clint Eastwood, 1977) (which was later 'remade' as the **Bruce Willis vehicle**, *16 Blocks* [Richard Donner, 2006]) and was followed by films such as *Midnight Run* (Martin Brest, 1988), *The Fugitive* (Andrew Davis, 1993) and *Con Air* (Simon West, 1997). In these films **the antagonism between the law and the lawless** is dissolved as each provides the means by which the crime can be solved. Inevitably, by the end of the narratives, the criminal within the relationship is absolved by proof of their innocence, allowing the two to become friends or, in the case of *The Gauntlet*, potential lovers. While many films have followed this narrative trajectory, one film, *The Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme, 1991) would take the central relationship to an extreme place and, by doing so, potentially subvert it.

On its release *The Silence of the Lambs* was met with critical acclaim and audience adoration. While its acting and directing were highly praised (and would go on to win numerous accolades in the 1992 Academy Awards), it also generated **controversy**: its **representation of homosexuality/transsexuality** was heavily criticised by gay critics. The film was also criticised for being sexist while one journal, *The Nation*, described the film as one which:

> **trumpets sadomasochism, homophobia, misogyny, and more.**

Such criticism came about through the story itself, for the film is, ostensibly at least, about the pursuit of a serial killer nicknamed Buffalo Bill (Ted Levine). As the narrative unfolds, Bill kidnaps the Senator's daughter and, through her capture, Bill's plan is made manifest. Struggling to express his sexuality and, even more so, his desire to become 'woman', Bill kidnaps, starves and murders women, removing their skin in order to create a costume that he can physically wear. By doing this he hopes that both visually and psychologically he can become 'woman'.

At the crux of the investigation lies **the narrative's central collaborative relationship** between trainee **FBI Agent Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster)** and incarcerated cannibalistic psychopath, **Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins)**. Clarice is sent to Hannibal by her superior, **Jack Crawford (Scott Glenn)**, in order to conduct a questionnaire that may help construct a profile of Buffalo Bill. During her investigation, Clarice visits Hannibal four times, all in an effort to probe for clues to the identity of Bill or the means by which she may capture him.

As each of the visits take place, the ensuing conversations between Starling and Lecter become a verbal sparring ground in which their collaborative relationship functions as a means by which each tries to gain what they desire: Clarice wants to capture Buffalo Bill and save the Senator's daughter, while Hannibal desires both to slake his voracious appetite for others' psychology, and to gain his freedom. In order to gain what she desires Clarice submits to **Lecter's request for a *quid pro quo* – a mutual exchange of information**: if Lecter is to help construct a profile of Buffalo Bill, then Clarice must become Lecter's 'patient' and tell him the story of her life.

Visiting Dr Lecter

The first three visits Starling makes to Lecter function as a context in which each tries to manipulate and deceive the other. As these exchanges develop, they each earn the other's respect: the aged psychologist, who at first tries to dismisses the young Starling as nothing but 'a well scrubbed hustling rube', is soon put in his place when he asks her to suggest her own profile of Bill. Starling states that 'most serial killers keep some sort of trophy from their victims' to which Lecter replies 'I didn't'. His sharp and cruel answer is quickly rebuked by Clarice: 'No. No, you ate yours'. Her reply is as sharp and as cruel as Lecter's, effectively undermining him by reminding him that although he may well be an effete and intelligent psychologist, he is, and always will be, a psychopath himself. With such an observation Lecter sanctions their relationship by suggesting the *quid pro quo*.

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When Starling accepts this trade of information, Lecter secretes clues into his responses to Clarice's questions; for example, his first clue – 'Look deep within yourself Clarice Starling. Go seek out Miss Mofet, an old patient of mine' – leads Starling to the Yourself Storage facility in Baltimore. Thus he aids her in constructing the desired profile of Bill while, all the time, gaining information about Clarice's upbringing. As a consequence, **the context of their collaborative relationship shifts** – from police officer questioning a prisoner **to psychologist questioning a patient**.

While at first this shift allows each to gain what they desire, the *quid pro quo* develops to such a extent it becomes apparent that Lecter and Starling may be, in some way, attracted to each other. This is not necessarily sexual but more through a shared interest in the other's psychology: Lecter's interest in Clarice can be read as one in which **he attempts to heal her psychological problems** while Clarice's interest in him allows him the opportunity **to express his intellect and demonstrate his great skill in profiling**. Consequently, their collaboration simultaneously functions not only to construct a profile of Buffalo Bill but also to allow each to explore the other's psychology.

The fourth visit

The outcome of this relationship reaches its conclusion in Starling's fourth and final visit to Lecter. Having accepted the offer of a transfer in return for information leading to the capture of Buffalo Bill, Lecter is moved from Baltimore State Hospital to a courtroom in Tennessee. Starling manages to gain access to him but instead of playing his psychological games, she attempts to rush him into providing answers. Annoyed, Lecter asks if she has been sent to try and glean some final clues before they are 'booted off' the Buffalo Bill case. In response, Clarice states that she came to see him because she 'wanted to'. This reason is an interesting one, for it encapsulates all of the emotive values of the various modes of relationship that exist between them. She 'wanted to' see him as an FBI student because she wants to learn from him; she 'wanted to' see him as an FBI Agent to ascertain clues from him in order to save the Senator's daughter; she 'wanted to' see him as Clarice Starling for she is, in some way, attracted to him. With such a potentially ambiguous reason, Lecter briefly pauses before answering her: 'People will say we are in love'. He says this in a slightly off-hand manner, suggesting it is another cruel criticism and yet possibly functioning as an exposure of his own developing feelings for Clarice (he has already told her 'It would be quite something to know you personally'). Starling appears to sidestep this possible flirtation by appealing to the moralistic part of Lecter, suggesting that he has only told her the truth (as opposed to the lies he's now telling). While this may well be the reality of their relationship, Clarice's intimation possibly compounds Lecter's sexually-charged comment; she is clearly highlighting that he has chosen her, he is singling her out as special because he is not deceiving her as he is the others.

Lecter quickly and effectively shifts their relationship to that of student and mentor. He asks Clarice a series of questions which will enable her to resolve the identity of Buffalo Bill herself. In this relationship Lecter challenges Starling's intellect as a profiler, asking her to use both her logic and her acumen in order to correctly answer his questions. When she answers correctly he asks another question; when she is wrong he scolds her. As the exchange gathers pace and seems to be leading to the revelation of Buffalo Bill's identity, he once again dramatically shifts the relationship, by recalling the *quid pro quo*, and asks Clarice to complete her therapy with him.

Despite her evasion, Lecter insists on hearing the rest of Starling's childhood memories. She reluctantly explains how, after her father was murdered, she was put into the care of her uncle, a farmer. One night she hears the lambs crying before they are slaughtered. She describes her attempts to save 'just one' of the lambs by taking it out of its pen and running away. In punishment she was sent to an orphanage. Before offering his diagnosis, Lecter asks Clarice if she still wakes at night, the sound of the bleating lambs reverberating through her dreams. He states that Clarice desires to save the Senator's daughter not just because it is her duty, but also because if she can save just this one person from death then maybe the lambs will be silenced. Lecter's diagnosis is astute and accurate but not said with malice. He speaks as a professional and as someone who, like Starling, wants to help. Yet this is not to help Starling solve the case but more to heal her psychological wounds – Hannibal will indicate how to do this but no more.

With their psychiatrist/patient relationship at an end, Starling is taken away from Lecter but their mentor/student relationship still remains. As she is escorted away, Lecter calls her back, stating that she has 'forgotten her case file'. Breaking free from her charges, Clarice runs back to Hannibal's cell and takes the case file from him. The dramatic nature of this scene is emphasised by Demme's choice of shot: instead of showing Clarice taking the file in a wide or medium shot, he chooses instead to present the moment in close up. As Starling takes the file, Lecter runs his finger down hers. This moment is simultaneously tender and chilling, for within the singular moment it is made clear that he does indeed have emotional feelings for her; and yet, given he is without doubt a psychopathic cannibal, his touching of Clarice is perverse.

Later, when she looks through the case file, Starling reads Lecter's handwritten annotations and, from his clues, works out the identity of Buffalo Bill. In the end then, **the collaboration resolves itself**: for Starling gave Lecter what he required **– a patient he could heal –** while Hannibal gave Clarice what she needed: the clues to save the Senator's daughter and so enable her to **silence the lambs**.

> **James Rose is a freelance writer and film-maker. His book on del Toro's *The Devil's Backbone* is published by Auteur.**

Worth a visit to the library:

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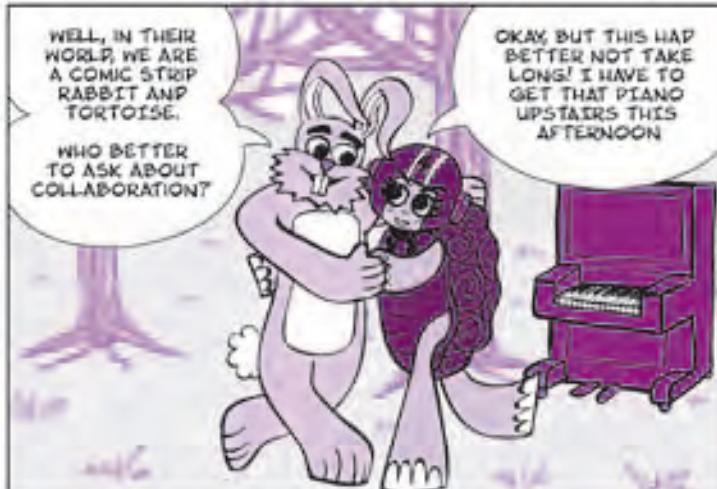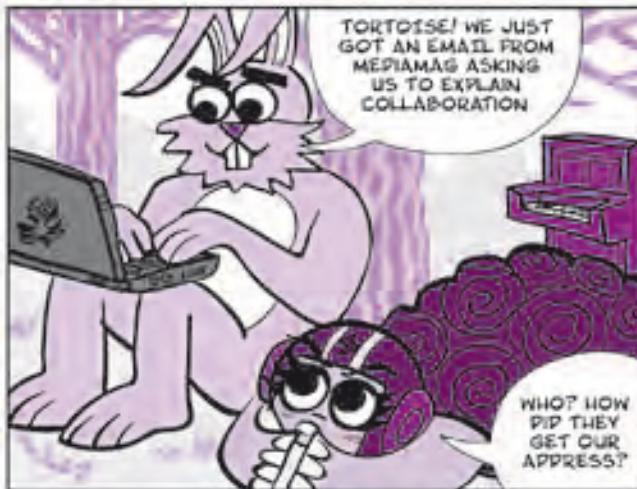
INDY vs INDIE

CONTRASTING COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN AUDIENCE, INDUSTRY AND TEXT

Duncan Yeates offers a comparison of two contrasting movie texts as a way into WJEC's MS4.

The Hollywood and independent film industries are remarkably contrasting organisations: distinct differences can be noted between their films ranging from narrative structure and use of camera angles through to their approach to marketing and distribution. Therefore, they provide an excellent starting point to begin research for **the MS4 section of the WJEC Media Studies specification**.

MS4 requires students to answer three questions on **the relationship between audience, industry and text**. Each answer should focus on a **different media industry** and explain how these concepts intertwine and relate to each other. Candidates should aim to **use three different textual examples** for each industry that they have studied.

For the purposes of this article and due to the constraints of space, I intend to focus on one independent film – **Rian Johnson's *Brick*** and one Hollywood movie, **Steven Spielberg's *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull***. As well as being **diametrically opposite** in terms of their budget and the kind of institutions that produced them, they also contrast significantly in terms of **genre**, **representation**, **narrative and targeted audience**. I would suggest that this is a helpful approach to studying any media industry

for this topic, as strongly contrasting texts offer more to comment on and write about in the examination.

Before I launch into an exploration of the two films in light of the **audience/industry/text** dynamic, it is important to briefly define the characteristics of a '**Hollywood**' and an '**Independent**' movie. Therefore, 'Hollywood' movies are characterised by:

• high budget and production values
• mainstream audience appeal
• use of big name stars and directors
• a narrative which is relatively simple to follow
• an emphasis on action and plot rather than characterisation
• widespread cinema distribution and marketing.

Conversely, an Independent movie typically features:

• low budget and production values
• coverage of topics and issues that may appeal to a cult audience
• unknown actors and directors
• a complicated narrative structure
• little reliance on special effects
• limited cinema distribution and marketing.

Having established the fundamental differences between these two kinds of movie, we can start to analyse and explore them in the light of the dynamic between audience, industry and text.

Brick

Rian Johnson's *Brick* is, in many ways, a stereotypical 'indie' film. Firstly, the film was his directorial debut, and features a largely unknown cast; in addition to this the film was self-financed, as no Hollywood production companies were interested in the script. This is something that is perhaps understandable when one considers the fact that the film's dialogue makes consistent use of an adapted style of '**detective speak**' inspired by **the noir fiction of Dashiell Hammett** (an American author of 'hard-boiled' crime fiction whose adapted novels included the seminal *The Maltese Falcon* and *The Thin Man*).

The film's narrative concerns a high school student's murdered ex-girlfriend and her connection with a brick of heroin that is somehow indirectly responsible for her death. *Brick* is incredibly hard to understand on first viewing and likely to alienate a mainstream viewing audience in search of 'light entertainment' or the use and gratification of 'diversion'.

So what is the **relationship between audience, industry and text here**? Firstly, we can start by considering the film's potential audience demographic. The film is a **detective/film noir movie** – a fairly non-mainstream genre in the 21st century, despite its high status for previous generations. It does feature a teenage cast and is set in a high school, thus offering viewers the use and gratification of '**personal**
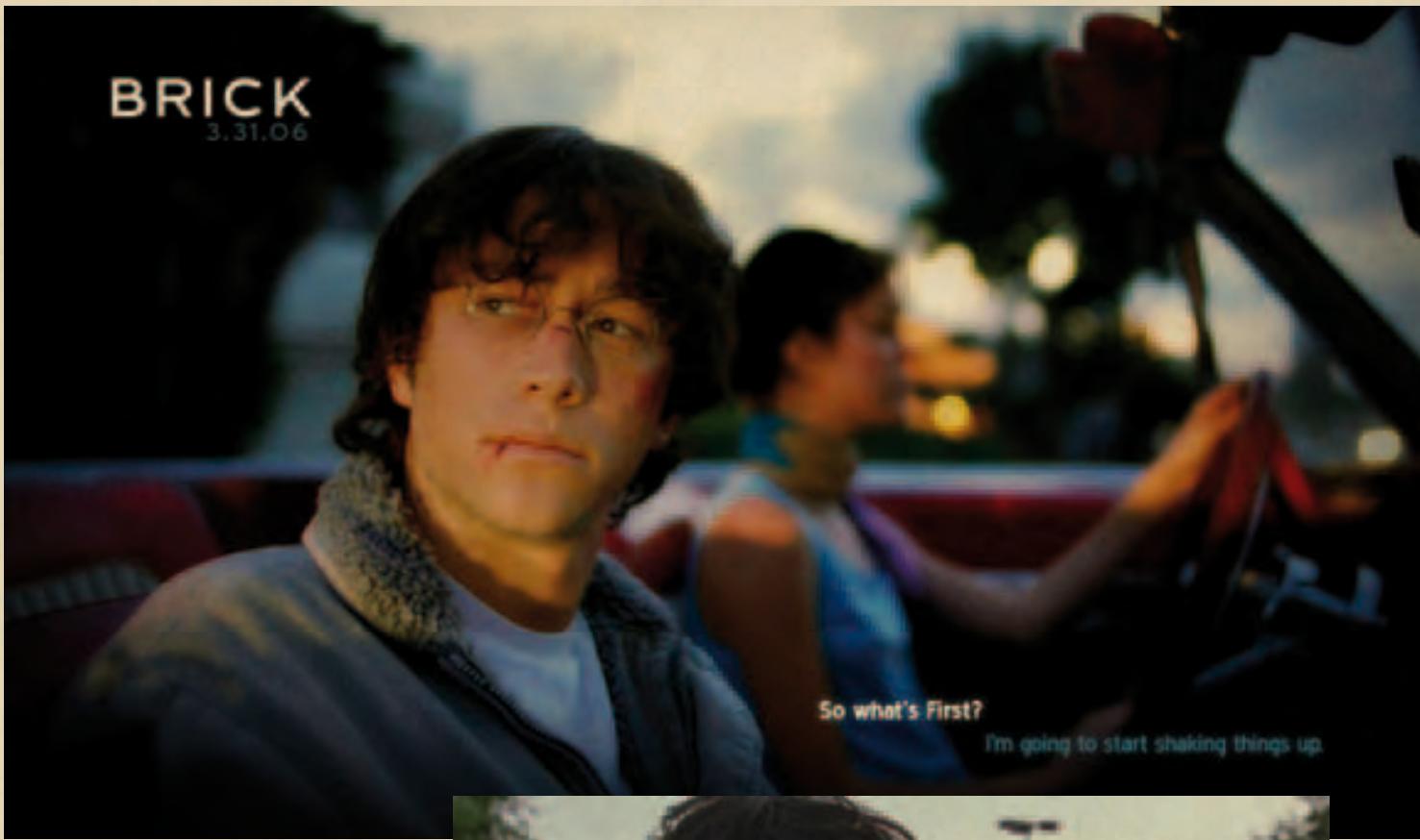
identification'. However, this is then marred by the characters' **allegorical and metaphorical patterns of speech**, which reflect the 'hardboiled' dialogue of classic film noir, but do not mirror any form of current **'teen speak'**. An example of its complexity would be the central character Brendan Frye's response when being threatened by a drug dealer's bodyguard: 'The ape blows or I clam', implying that he will not talk until he is left alone by the 'muscle'. Although deciphering these enigmatic lexical codes might prove enjoyable on the odd occasion for noir aficionados, this kind of speech informs the dialogue of the whole film – thus alienating and potentially bewildering the average teenage audience.

So who's Brick for?

Naturally, all of this begs the question: **who is the film aimed at**? The answer is, unsurprisingly, complicated. The film does have some appeal to a teenage audience as mentioned above, due to its use of the mise-en-scène of a high school and teenage actors. It also, to an extent, offers the use and gratification of 'surveillance' as it offers a perspective on a particular sort of high school that a bright teenager might find intelligent and refreshing. In addition to this, the film may well appeal to fans of detective/noir stories of any age as well as people who enjoy some of the fiction of the writer who inspired the film: Dashiell Hammett. In short, the film's **target audience is unclear**, **limited and certainly not mainstream**.

Having established that the film's target audience demographic is limited; how does this connect with text and institution? The most obvious connection to be drawn here is **the relationship between text and audience**. Johnson has deliberately written an oblique and unusual script, which although it features a

school as its mise-en-scène, deliberately subverts both the teen movie genre and the detective/noir genre in order to make something original and fresh as well as potentially challenging the expectations of mainstream audiences. His intention was to show **how archetypal high school characters easily correlate with the stereotypes used in detective fiction** – a concept that would not necessarily occur to, nor appeal to, the average cinema-goer. Naturally Hollywood companies did not perceive *Brick* to have mainstream appeal nor the resultant profit potential that accompanies this level of popularity. This left Rian Johnson with no option other than financing the film himself.

Given this background we can understand why *Brick* places **little emphasis on special effects**, and includes **an elliptical and confusing plot** as well as **detailed and developed characterisation**. Equally, without the backing of Hollywood institutions, distribution of the film

was limited. The more cynically minded among you may now be wondering the point of making what seems, to all intents and purposes, a self-funded vanity project with little hope of profit. The simple answer to this question is **artistic freedom**: *Brick* won the Sundance Film Festival prize for Originality of Vision in 2005. In short, the director was free to make the film he wanted to make; and although its appeal will have been limited in terms of audience demographics, the people to whom it did appeal considered the film an artistic triumph. This would not have occurred had a Hollywood company produced the film; **artistic statements do not necessarily equate with profit**.

Into the mainstream: the profit motive

Conversely, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* offers a completely different perspective on the dynamics between audience, text and industry.

One of the most interesting things about this film is that it is **a sequel made with a clear profit motive**. A brief summary of the figures for the previous Indiana Jones films below gives a clear insight as to why:

Film	Profit
Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981)	$384,140,454
Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (1984)	$333,107,271
Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (1989)	$474,171,806
Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (2008)	$786,636,033

Here, it is evident that it is in **the interest of the institutions that produced this film** to keep making sequels. Naturally, we need to take inflation into account when looking at the figures of the latest instalment but it does prove that *Indiana Jones* is still a commercially viable franchise.

Here, the relationship between audience, industry and text is shown in a different light. The first film in the series, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, was both a critical and commercial success, thus setting the blueprint for a profitable text. As the audience enjoyed this text, it would have been important that the sequel to the film represented similar character stereotypes, had the same kind of narrative structure and mimicked the genre and conventions of the first film. This would mean the chances of the second film being a success were higher, as a winning formula had already been developed. It is often the case that only small character and plot changes are necessary to maintain audience engagement when making a sequel.

Having said this, the first three films in the franchise garnered a fairly even level of profit whereas this has doubled in this latest instalment. Inflation has already been mentioned as one reason for this huge increase in profit, but another reason may well lie within **audience demographics**.

Indy's non-indie audience

The audience demographic of the first set of *Indiana Jones* films was relatively broad due to its adherence to the conventions of **the Action Adventure movie and its PG rating**. This meant that males and females from 12 years of age and above could watch and potentially be entertained by the films. Their construction was such that there were sufficient action sequences and romantic subplots to also engage older viewers of both genders. Therefore, as would be expected from a 'Hollywood' movie, the films appealed to an incredibly wide audience demographic.

What is really interesting about *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* is that it draws in a demographic of people **young enough to be previously unaware of the franchise**, **mainly due to its use of Shia LaBoeuf** (star of other child-friendly action movies such as the *Transformers* **remake**). It might be argued that this is a potentially lucrative market as it is; however, it also draws in an **older audience demographic** which, although potentially mainstream, would not necessarily be interested in watching the latest action movies in general. How does it do this? Principally by retaining **Harrison Ford** as one of the stars of the film. For this specific audience demographic the use and gratification of **'diversion'** is doubled, with the film potentially invoking **fond memories of its viewers' youth** as well as the more obvious diversions contained in his action-riddled plot. Indeed it is quite plausible that *Indiana Jones and the Crystal Skull* provides **family viewing** for parents who enjoyed the previous films in their youth as well as younger children who are new to the franchise.

It goes without saying that all of the films in the *Indiana Jones* **franchise** conform to the conventions of Hollywood movies, featuring **high production values, stunts and special effects**, **big name actors** (Harrison Ford, Shia LaBoeuf, Cate Blanchett) and familiar directors (Steven Spielberg). There is also the backing of large film institutions such as **Lucasfilm** and **Paramount**. This, combined with the already proven profitability of the franchise, means that the thorough marketing campaigns and effective distribution provided by Hollywood organisations will have guaranteed the profitability of *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*.

It is hard to imagine a *Brick 2*; but a further film in the *Indiana Jones* franchise seems eminently plausible for all the reasons discussed previously. However, when independent movies make such a valuable contribution to a small minority of appreciative viewers, do we really need sequels?

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Brick:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dashiell_Hammett

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0393109/

http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=3cVzHeJ0Z3I – the trailer

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull:

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0367882/

www.indianajones.com – official website

PRINCE
IN PRINT

the collaboration between biographer and musician

Prince has been one of the dominant artists of the popular music world for decades and continues to be a major figure. Andrew Green interviews Matt Thorne, author of the forthcoming book *Prince*, on the issue of collaboration in Prince's life and work.

What led to your interest in writing about Prince?

I became friends with editor Lee Brackstone from Faber in 2002 while attending a conference on the Short Story with him in Newcastle. On the last night I had to go home early because I was going to see the London leg of **Prince's One Nite Alone tour**. I discovered Lee was also a Prince fan and a few years later when I was looking for a new project, he suggested a book on Prince.

What processes do you go through to write about a major living artist like Prince?

It has been a big challenge to find a suitable non-fiction voice. Before this I have only written fiction. I have written the occasional essay and piece of journalism and worked as a book reviewer since 1998, but this is my first full-length piece of non-fiction (and when I say full-length, this is a major undertaking that will be several hundred thousand words long). I have always enjoyed reading music writing, but have read much more since starting on the book. I think

there are some wonderful music books coming out at the moment, such as **Rob Young's** *Electric Eden*, that cover a broad historical and social canvas and demonstrate the important role music has to play. At the same time, because this is a book dedicated to the work of one musician I have been particularly interested in authors who have done a similar job with other musicians, such as **Paul Williams'** wonderful *Performing Artist* books on **Dylan**. Of course, the fact that Prince is a living artist brings its own challenges, as in a sense the project of writing on such an artist never ends and is constantly changing to reflect developments in the artist's life and work.

How would you define Prince as an artist? What have been the major influences on his development?

This is a difficult question to answer in brief. It is one of the major questions I set out to answer in the book as a whole. What I can say though is that he is unique (and likely to remain unique) in the sheer breadth of his output. On top of all the studio albums he has released, there are thousands of unreleased songs, hundreds of videos, the movies, the TV films, the concerts, CD-Roms, websites, comic books, and much more. **Significant themes and concepts** emerge through all of these different media. These connect a large amount of his work in different forms and make it fascinating to research and write about. As for the major influences on his developments, I think you can break this down into three strands. There are his **core influences** – people like Larry Graham, James Brown, Stevie Wonder, George Clinton, Sly Stone, The Jacksons, Tower of Power, Miles Davis, Carlos Santana, Joni Mitchell, Rufus and Chaka Khan. Then we can trace **influences from the musicians he has worked with** at various points in his career; these creative influences are often more local in time, and have fluctuated throughout his career, with some bands playing a larger role in his creative process than others. A final set of influences emerges from **his listening and response to the changing field of popular music** throughout his career.

Prince is an artist who has undergone a number of transformations in the course of his career. How do you interpret these transformations, and what was their impact on his work?

Again, this is hard to summarise in a small space, but is a major part of the book. Perhaps the most important thing, and one of the arguments that I make in the book is that if you take a strictly **diachronic** [changes over time] approach to Prince's work then you can miss a great deal. As a listener, growing up buying Prince albums in the order of their release, I was often confused because some of the songs sounded closer to songs from a previous era than other songs on the record. And what has become apparent to me over time is that Prince does a lot of wood shedding. As with many other major artists (**Neil Young** is a good example) he often commits songs and ideas to tape and then brings them out to work on them many years

later. He also (like **Bob Dylan**) doesn't always put his best songs on his records, so there is a mass of first-rate stuff that goes unreleased, or is played once on an obscure radio station, or is even given to another act. Alongside this, I suppose the biggest transformation was the **famous name change**, but I think that was largely a business decision rather than a purely creative one. Smaller transformations tend to come about (or are accompanied by) changes in the band. An example of this would be the difference between the music Prince recorded with the Revolution and the various line-ups of the New Power Generation.

Given some of the past controversies about music biographies, celebrity autobiographies and ghost-writing, and issues of authorised and non-authorised biographies what contact did you have with Prince in the writing of your book? What kind of collaboration did you engage in when writing the book?

There has been **no collaboration; it is an unauthorised book**. But once it was known I was writing the book, I received invitations to go to Prince's house in L.A. and party with him and watch him play a private concert. I was also lucky

enough to watch him play to a tiny audience in a hotel room in New York. The trip to L.A. was the most exciting. I was flown to L.A., put up in the Mondrian, then driven up to his house to watch a private concert in the company of Bruce Willis, Sharon Stone, David Duchovny and various other stars. The New York show was two shows straight after each other that added up to **nearly five hours of stage time**. I've also interviewed a large number of Prince's collaborators over the years, and seen him play live around seventy times, in locations around the world.

What collaborations has Prince engaged in with other artists, and how have these shaped his career/style as a musician?

There are three chapters devoted to this issue in the book. **Prince's collaborations** can be broken down into three categories. First there are the **Prince-created bands** (like **The Time** or **The Family**). Second there are his **collaborative relationships with protégées** like **Jill Jones** or **Bria Valente**. In both of these there is inevitably some 'give and take' in the creative process. Thirdly there are several other artists to whom he has given songs, like Kenny Rogers or The Bangles. Here the relationship is rather different, as this is more about **interpretation and presentation of Prince's work** – recreative rather than creative, I suppose. It is not so much that they have shaped his career or style, rather than they offer an alternate outlet for all the songs he has written. He is always trying to find ways to get more of his creative material out there, and this is something he has found consistently useful.

What have you discovered are the key ways in which Prince collaborates and engages with his fan-base?

This is a complicated question. Prince no longer has a website and has turned against the internet (or rather, no longer finds it a worthwhile place to be). That said, he remains incredibly generous to his fans. I don't think he particularly collaborates and engages with his fan-base through the internet and social media sites in the way that lots of artists do, but when he did have a website, he did occasionally ask for **feedback on works in progress**, so I suppose in that sense fans did have the chance to influence his creative processes at some level.

How do you see Prince's work developing from here?

It is impossible to tell. Prince's work has developed so much it is hard to second guess where it may go from here. He has recently said that he has material for a few albums ahead of the one he has just released, and he has generally been at that point throughout his career. The big question that (unfortunately, in my opinion) has dominated over the last few years of his output is to do with **distribution**. His last album came out with newspapers and magazines but has yet to appear in the States. The triple-disc set that came before that was sold only in Target stores in the States, and the one before that was given away with papers and at concerts. So he is not going for mainstream distribution methods. I assume he is going to continue with this form (or a variation on this form) of distribution, which means that although Prince continues to make a good profit from his recorded work (and I am not knocking this approach to releasing his music – from a business perspective it's remarkably shrewd), his work is not as widely reviewed and appreciated as it should be. At the same time he is probably (and deservedly) more celebrated as a live artist than ever. I think the big question is how he handles the release of both his new music and (hopefully, at some point) the music in the Vault that is yet to be released. I hope he finds a business model for doing this that satisfies him but that also allows the music to live on. The way the Miles Davis box sets have been handled might be a good model.

You're best known as a novelist. What have been the most interesting parts of the experience for you as a writer in producing a biographical study?

The realisation that even when you're writing what is essentially a critical and historical work, you need to constantly **focus on the narrative** in the same way you do when writing a novel. Fortunately, Prince's career in rich in **extremely compelling stories**.

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MARTY, BOB AND LEO

the changing nature of masculinity
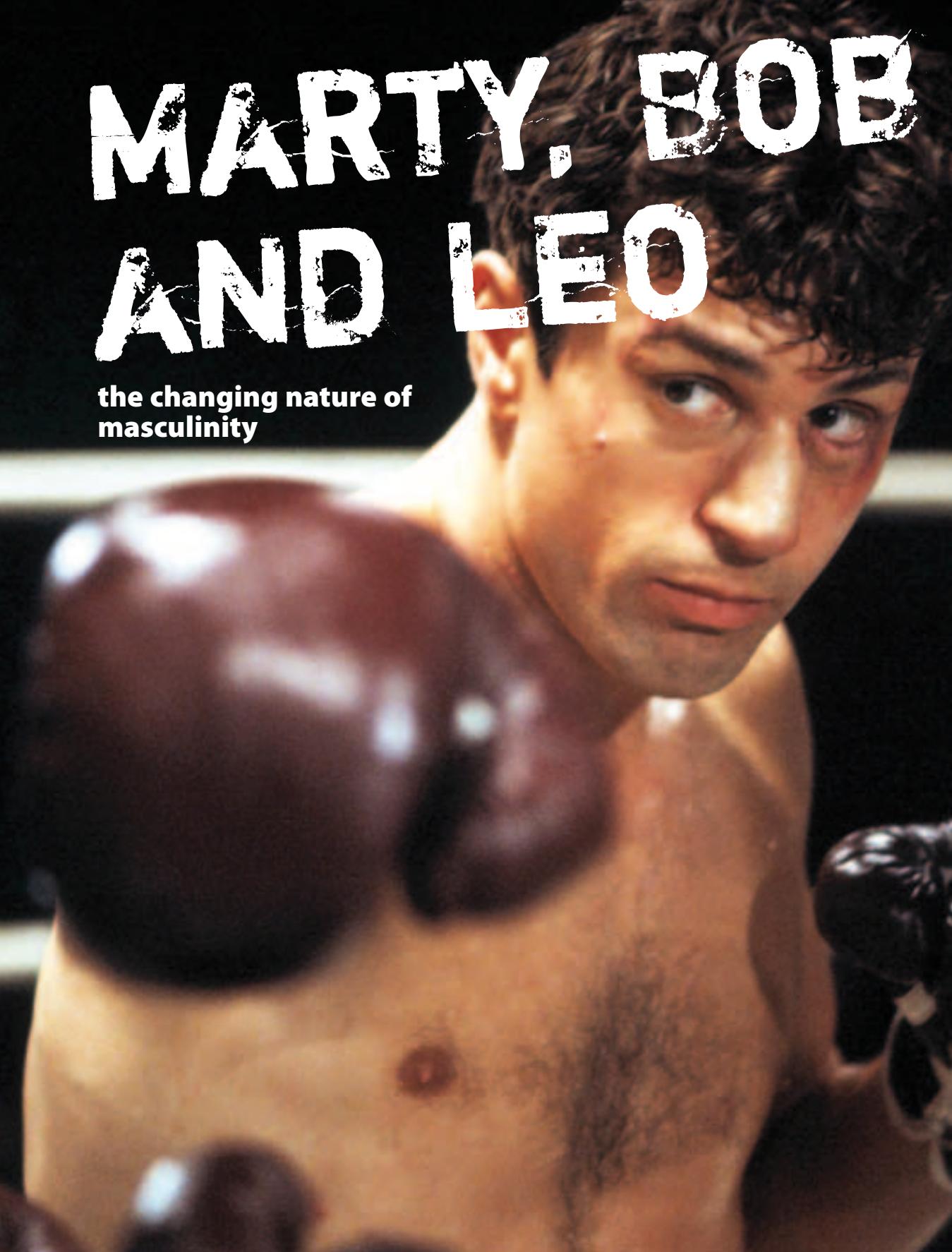
Tina Dixon explores the collaboration between auteur Martin Scorsese and his two male muses, Robert de Niro and Leonardo DiCaprio, and considers what they tell us about changing representations of masculinity.

Martin Scorsese remains one of my favourite directors. Apart from the fact that he is cool and intelligent, I love his **earlier gangster films** *Goodfellas* **(1990)** and *Casino* **(1995)**. I also taught these films whilst teaching the gangster genre, and my students loved them too. In many ways these films showed us sheer unadulterated machismo in the guise mostly of **Robert De Niro** and **Joe Pesci**. Both De Niro and Pesci are contemporaries of Scorsese, as Scorsese was born in 1942, De Niro and Pesci in 1943.

One of the things that I find interesting as a Media teacher is the **ideological nature of representation**, and I believe that Scorsese films have a lot to say about the ideological nature of the representation of **masculinity**.

So here, I am going to look at Martin Scorsese's collaborations with two male actors: **Robert De Niro** who has appeared in eight films so far, and **Leonardo DiCaprio**, who has appeared in four to date. I will argue that the switch in 2002 to working with DiCaprio marks an ideological shift in the representation of masculinity in Scorsese films. Whether this was a conscious decision, or simply brought about by circumstance may not be known, but it does nevertheless highlight and mirror **ideological shifts within society**.

Robert De Niro in Mean Streets (1973) dir. Martin Scorsese
Credit: Taplin-Perry-Scorsese/The Kobal Collection
Additional credits: image.net

This relationship with a different kind of actor was relatively late, given the fact that the representation of masculinity had been changing for a decade or two before; but given the very masculine nature of gangster films, it is not so surprising that it took a while to catch up.

The biographical context

First things first. A brief biography of Scorsese shows us that he was born on 17th November 1942 in Queens, a diverse and densely populated borough of New York, to **Italian immigrant parents**. As a child he suffered with severe asthma attacks, and so had to stay at home and watch the world go by through the window of his third floor bedroom. His window on the outside world was enhanced by cinema; because of his asthma his father took him to the cinema a great deal. After dropping early thoughts of joining the priesthood was dropped he eventually found himself at New York University, studying cinema. He took his studies very seriously, so it comes as no surprise that he embarked on a career as a film-maker; in 1963 he made his first student film, *What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Place Like This*, lasting nine minutes, for which he won a prize of $1,000. He received a BA and went on to obtain a Masters at NYU.

Scorsese has always made films that concentrate on realistic characters; indeed, truthfulness of character has become his hallmark. The first film he made with De Niro was *Mean Streets* **in 1973**, although lead character Charlie was played by **Harvey Keitel**.

Mean Streets and de Niro

Robert De Niro had grown up in Little Italy a few blocks from Scorsese; they are the same age and had met a few times. He was cast as Johnny Boy. The film incorporates lots of features that would become commonplace in popular cinema: the use of slow motion at unexpected moments, music, and dialogue made up of three words shouted back and forth (see Thomas Sotinel's *Masters of Cinema: Martin Scorsese*). Violence became an important and recurrent feature, coupled with the characters' unease and inner turmoil.

Mean Streets provides the audience with many benchmarks for Scorsese's style: New York settings, loners struggling with inner demons, rock-meets-opera soundtracks. Set in Little Italy, New York, it is about a small-time hood Charlie (Keitel) who works for his gangster uncle, making collections and reclaiming bad debts. He is, however, too nice to succeed, in love with a woman who his uncle disapproves of (she has epilepsy), and friends with her cousin Johnny Boy

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acting is always convincing and truthful. This can be said particularly of his characters in Scorsese films, as well as his more comedic roles such as *Meet the Fockers* **(2004).** But what De Niro carries with him is a very traditional masculinity, he is **a man's man**. A man not to be messed with, whether that's as Johnny Boy in *Mean Streets*, Max Cady in *Cape Fear*, Jimmy Conway in *Goodfellas*, or even in the lightweight comedy roles he has played for other directors, such as Jack Byrnes in *Meet the Parents* **(Roach, 2002)** or Paul Vitti in *Analyse This* **(Ramis, 1999).** He exudes a strong masculinity, someone who has a non-existent (or well-hidden) feminine side. It is rare to see De Niro vulnerable in a role; he shows sensitivity, and is capable of warmth, but vulnerability is rarely shown.

In *Casino* he is capable of sanctioning extreme violence as a gangster, but the love he clearly feels for his wife Ginger (Sharon Stone) is quite touching. Even so, he remains the hard man.

In terms of ideologies around masculinity, De Niro is **the personification of traditional masculinity**. He is handsome rather than pretty or beautiful; muscular and stocky rather than slim and toned; strong, both mentally and physically.

(De Niro), a psychotic whose trouble-making and unpredictability threatens all of them. Charlie cannot reconcile all of these opposing values, and a failed attempt to escape to Brooklyn simply moves them a step closer to a bitter doomed future. The audience can sense the futility the figures are doomed by the violence. Charlie is a dangerously soft-hearted hood who tries to protect Johnny Boy with tragic consequences.

It has been argued that this is **Scorsese's most autobiographical film**, and Charlie is partly based on him. **De Niro**, by contrast, plays a psycho and nut job. The contrast between the two men is interesting but it is De Niro who plays the more **overtly masculine character**, and the fact that he is so convincing is testament to his acting ability. But actors carry with them a persona, and a good deal of academic work has been conducted on 'stars'.

According to **Richard Dyer** (1977) stars possess four qualities:
- the star's **identity** as a real person
- his/her **role**, the characters they play
- screen **persona**, the qualities they bring to the role that are transferred from film to film
- the **image** circulating within the culture.

While the real person is only known by a few friends and family, the star's **role** and **screen** persona is available to all. However, the **role** and **real** person can become confused, especially with Method actors like De Niro, who use a range of techniques to immerse themselves in the thoughts and emotions of their characters to develop authentic, realist performances.

De Niro: method and masculinity

Scorsese went on to cast De Niro in a further seven films: *Taxi Driver* (1976), *New York New York* **(1977)**, *Raging Bull* **(1980)**, *The King of Comedy* **(1982)**, *Goodfellas* **(1990)**, *Cape Fear* **(1991)** and *Casino* **(1995)**.

There is no doubt that De Niro is one of the finest film actors of all time. He has the ability to morph into any character, looking physically different in roles in films such as *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull* and *The King of Comedy*, but his

He is the provider not the receiver, capable of love but not made vulnerable because of it. These are the qualities of a masculinity that was prevalent until possibly the late 1970s or early 1980s. Scorsese's casting of De Niro is probably partly because he is a brilliant actor but also because he represents the kind of **hegemonic masculinity** he grew up with.

Despite De Niro's brilliance, and however much Scorsese has enjoyed working with him, the world has changed. There have been cultural and social shifts in terms of ideologies around masculinity. It is hard to imagine De Niro in a Scorsese film where he portrays a more contemporary masculinity, a masculinity that is **more fluid**, **less traditional and less hegemonic**.

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AND
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The wider contexts of representations of masculinity

And so we look to wider contexts in terms of reasons why ideologies around masculinity have changed. This is a subject **Lynne Segal** looks at in her book *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (1990). She argues that if we flashback to the 1950s, **the relationship of men to home and family** has undergone a massive transformation. Back then, questions of men's relationship to housework and childcare were not on any political agenda. But since the end of the 1970s men's roles as **fathers** and their **domestic responsibilities** have been widely observed and discussed. So there have been changes within the home, with domestic work and childcare becoming more equal, and less the sole domain of women. We cannot overlook **the role of feminism in all of this**.

Segal suggests:

To be 'masculine' is not to be 'feminine', not to be 'gay', not to be tainted with any marks of 'inferiority'.

This is clearly the kind of masculinity we can see in De Niro's role in *Mean Streets*, *Taxi Driver*, *Goodfellas*, *Casino* and so on. She adds that it is

in relation to **women's and gay liberations** that we find the possibility for greater sexual equality. And let's not forget the various changes in legislation that came about in relation to this: the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the **Sexual Offences Act (1967)**, **The Equal Pay Act (1970)**, and the **Sex Discrimination Act (1975)**.

Discovering DiCaprio

In 2002 Scorsese cast **Leonardo DiCaprio** in *Gangs of New York*. DiCaprio was born in 1974 of German, Italian and Russian descent, though like Scorsese he was raised in the US. He is a committed environmentalist and through various roles has never been afraid to show vulnerability, certainly shown to good effect in *Titanic*. I would argue that it is unlikely that a young De Niro would ever have been cast as **Romeo**, as DiCaprio was in 1996, in *Baz Luhrmann's Romeo and Juliet*, a role that was beautifully suited to him.

Scorsese could have cast a number of more masculine actors of a similar age in the role of Amsterdam Vallon in *Gangs of New York*, such as Russell Crowe, Bradley Cooper, Colin Farrell, Matt Damon, Josh Brolin, Gerard Butler, or Jason Statham. Yet he chose **DiCaprio**. In fact he had originally cast **De Niro** in the brutal role of Bill the

Butcher, but he pulled out and so Scorsese hired **Daniel Day Lewis** to play the role. This again, is an interesting decision, to replace the very masculine De Niro with the much more delicate Day Lewis.

DiCaprio for me represents a much more **contemporary masculinity**. He is beautiful rather than handsome; though tall he isn't overly stocky or muscular. He is capable of showing sensitivity, vulnerability and fear in his roles. After *Gangs of New York* Scorsese cast him in three further films: *The Aviator* (2004), *The Departed* (2006) and *Shutter Island* (2010).

It is in *The Departed*, a gangster film for which Scorsese won an Oscar, that we see DiCaprio capable of showing real vulnerability, a truly troubled soul who is clearly out of his depth. Set in South Boston and about the police waging war on Irish-American organised crime, undercover cop Billy Costigan (DiCaprio) is assigned to infiltrate the mob run by Frank Costello (Jack Nicholson); a young cop Colin Sullivan (Matt Damon) is working for Costello. The DiCaprio character is flawed however; a damaged childhood has made him vulnerable as an adult. He is sent to see a police psychiatrist Madolyn (Vera Farmiga) who is Sullivan's girlfriend. Costigan allows himself to expose his vulnerability to her; he is clearly troubled, and she is fully aware of this. She falls for him, which complicates the plot, but it allows the audience really to emphathise with Costigan. In one scene he goes to visit Madolyn at her place when she is packing to move in with her boyfriend; as he stands in a doorway she looks at him and says 'your vulnerability is freaking me out right now'. They then make love. This representation of masculinity is shown as flawed, vulnerable, troubled, tender and needy. It is difficult to imagine De Niro playing a character like this.

There is a face-to-face interview with Scorsese and DiCaprio chatting on YouTube (http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=zTznpsNPek), post *Shutter Island*. There is clearly a mutual respect for each other; DiCaprio explains that he was introduced to Scorsese's work and saw *Taxi Driver* when he was 15 and loved the film, blown away by De Niro's performance. Scorsese tells us that it was De Niro who first brought DiCaprio to his attention after he had seen him in *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*, the 1993 film in which DiCaprio plays Johnny Depp's autistic brother. DiCaprio was nominated for an Oscar for this role at 19. He continues, that he respects the fact that as an actor DiCaprio is prepared to take a role wherever it needs to go. I think it is fair to say that he would say the same of De Niro; but I would go further in saying that as male actors he would ask different things of them; he would cast them for different reasons, and mostly those reasons would be related to the kind of masculinity he wanted to represent.

So what does all of this say about the representation of masculinity, this collaboration of Martin Scorsese first with De Niro and then DiCaprio? It tells me that we live in a world much changed since 1973, the year of *Mean Streets*: changed politically, socially and culturally. Masculinity as a concept has changed from a hegemonic traditional binary opposite of the feminine, to something more fluid. The crisis that it went through in the 1980s and 1990s, as a consequence of some of the contextual factors mentioned earlier appears to have transmuted it into a more fluid and fragmented entity. Hollywood actors no longer need to be men's men, such as James Cagney, Humphrey Bogart, John Wayne, Robert Mitchum and Robert De Niro. They can now be pretty, sensitive, vulnerable, slim, as personified by actors such as Johnny Depp, Jude Law, Ryan Philippe, Orlando Bloom and Leonardo DiCaprio. Clearly something has shifted socially and culturally for this to be the case.

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Cross-platform storytelling

Collaboration, convergence and the extension of narrative
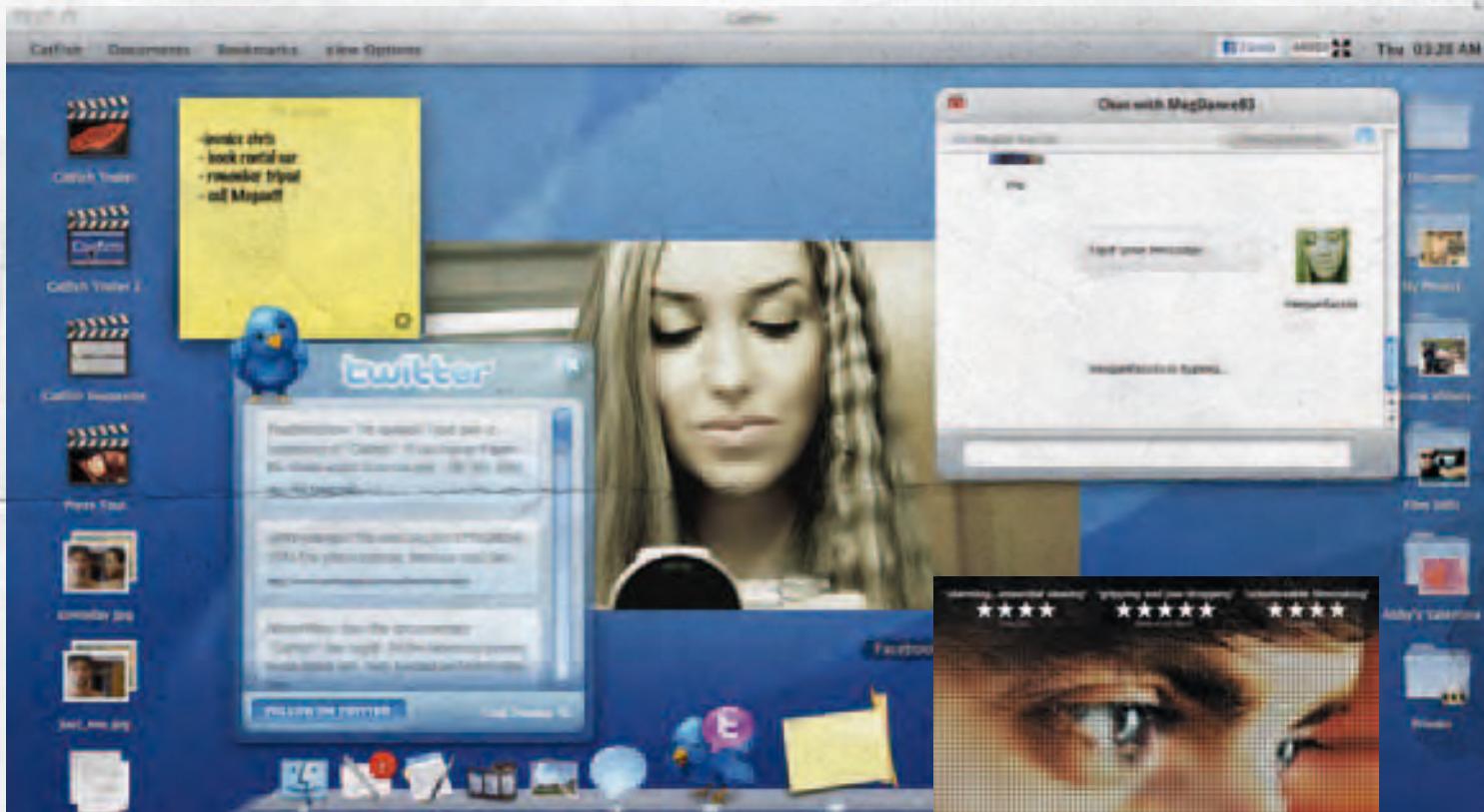
John Branney explores the new forms of storytelling opened up by technological convergence, and their impact on narrative structure and audience interaction.

There have been a great many changes in modern cinema that have affected our interaction with the medium. Digital effects have made the impossible possible and 3D has allowed us completely to immerse ourselves in the narrative world. However, there has been another change within narrative that has had a dramatic impact on audiences but which has almost gone unrecognised. The narrative of modern cinema is no longer one which is explored ultimately within film, but one which **extends into other media** and this extension of the narrative experience is one that could have a more significant impact than we might first realise.

Marketing and the active audience

The increased deployment of non-linear narratives, as seen in *Pulp Fiction* (1994) and *Memento* (2000), has reflected the fact that audiences have become more sophisticated in the way in which they make sense of a film's storyline. This has meant that the audience has accepted a more active role during the viewing of a film. This eventually extended further than the viewing experience itself into a film's marketing campaign. **Viral marketing** in particular is an area that has significantly affected the extension of a film's narrative. For example, the marketing

another level. This level of engagement requires the audience to take on a more active role. First they have to seek out the website; and secondly they must make sense of the information they are presented with and refer to this mentally as they view the film. This is particularly interesting in *Catfish*, given the extraordinarily complex layers of subterfuge, real and imagined identity, and psychodrama raised by the film's documentarised narrative. In turn these have generated extremely interesting debates about both the collaboration, manipulation and ethics of its subjects and production process. (Ed: Spoiler alert: see http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2010/nov/20/*Catfish*-fact-or-fiction-film)

However, for some films the audience's engagement with narrative does not end with their cinema experience.

Comic book convergence

The popularity of the comic book film can be seen as the stimulus for the cross-platform collaborative development of a film's narrative outside of the film itself. In films such as *X-Men* (2000) and *Spider-man* (2002), there are hints at a deeper narrative world through phrases, characters and even props. **Intertextual references** to the comics allow some viewers to enjoy the film on another level, while for audience members unaware of these references there is an opportunity to discover the comics and re-watch the film.

One could be cynical and view this simply as another way in which media conglomerates make sophisticated use of a back catalogue of ancillary products, and in some cases this is undoubtedly true. However, others may see it as another opportunity to **revisit their work and the narrative world they have created**. This is certainly evident in Richard Kelly's *Southland Tale* (2006), initially planned as a 9-part 'interactive experience' that eventually

campaign for *The Dark Knight* (2008) featured a vast array of websites, each of them dedicated to different characters and each featuring content hinting at possible narrative arcs. This certainly allowed audiences to familiarise themselves with the film's narrative but did not really extend their experience of the film.

The more recent *Catfish* (2010) provided audiences with the ability to access the main character, **Nev Schulman's** desktop. The site replicated a Mac desktop, and featured not only promotional material for the film but also allowed access to Nev's emails, chat archives, photos, videos and documents. This gave the audience an opportunity to engage with the characters (Nev, Abby and Megan) before they even sat down to watch the movie.

The presentation of character relationships and indications of narrative development works particularly well as a marketing device here but

it also allows the audience to connect with the characters before the film's release and therefore there is an opportunity to enjoy the film on

saw not only the release of a film but three graphic novels which accompanied them. These graphic novels allowed Kelly to delve deeper

into the machinations of the characters and the world that he had created. The graphic novels were initially released before the film and eventually integrated within the blu ray for the film, therefore not requiring the audience to pay anything extra. The graphic novel made up the first three chapters of the 'experience' and the film featured chapters 4-6. Again, much like the earlier comic book adaptations, audiences could enjoy the films without an engagement with the first three chapters in the graphic novels. However, as the film begins with Chapter 4 there is a clear element of persuasion here that is encouraging its audience to seek out the graphic novels (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southland_Tales).

The advantage of television over film

Recently, there has been a great deal of debate over whether television is producing a better quality of drama than film. It is certainly more detailed in the creation of its narrative world than cinema, simply because television is afforded more time to develop its character and narrative arcs. The increase in production values and the attraction of film stars has meant that the divide between film and television has become smaller, and recent television hits such as *The Walking Dead* are good examples of this. However, Hollywood has been quick to seize this opportunity to engage with a wider audience and to further develop narrative which may have been seen as too difficult for a film adaptation. The announcement of an adaptation of **Stephen King's** *Dark Tower* books signifies a potential key development in the relationship between film and television. The adaptation not only seeks the commissioning of a series of films but also two television series to accompany them which will provide a **narrative bridge** between each of the films. Oscar-winning director **Ron Howard** will helm the first film and also the first television series. King's faithful fans are likely to be pleased by this announcement, as it surely means that more time will be given to exploring the depths of the narrative. However, it also means that audiences are given more time to engage with characters and storylines. The fine line between film and television are successfully married here to provide a more in-depth narrative exploration. This type of **collaborative convergence** may be seen more frequently, and audiences will visit the cinema complete with a backstory of their lead character and an awareness of the narrative journey their protagonist may be taken on.

Computer games and the development of an immersive narrative experience

Whether the *Dark Tower* adaptation is seen as a game-changer for both the film and television industries will remain to be seen; and with a scheduled release date of 2013 audiences will be given plenty of time to engage with the books beforehand. The **role of television** may become as equally as important to the film industry as literature, comics and graphic novels have in the past. The development of more **immersive** forms of technology may also have an impact on our engagement with film. **Computer**

games are certainly evident of this connection. With the release of *The Matrix* sequels in 2003, audiences were given the opportunity to explore the backstory of the film's narrative through the computer game *Enter the Matrix*. Playing as either Niobe or Ghost, both of which featured in the films, audiences were allowed actively to participate in a structured adventure telling them a backstory that is alluded to in *The Matrix Reloaded*. This level of active participation might just be the future of narrative cinema. Audiences may eventually play a character within the narrative and rather than simply watching a linear storyline play out on a 2D cinema screen, they may instead completely immerse themselves within the narrative, exploring the storyline as they see fit, making their own connections

between characters and situations. Whatever the future may hold, it is clear that the way in which audiences explore and interact with narrative cinema is changing and as we become more sophisticated in our exploration so must the ways in which we interact.

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The Fame

LADY | GAGA

MISTRESS OF CONVERGENCE

Synergy: In media economics, **synergy** is the promotion and sale of a product (and all its versions) throughout the various subsidiaries of a media conglomerate e.g. films, soundtracks or video games. Walt Disney pioneered synergistic marketing techniques in the 1930s by granting dozens of firms the right to use his Mickey Mouse character in products and ads, and continued to market Disney media through licensing arrangements. These products can help advertise the film itself and thus help to increase the film's sales. For example, the *Spider-man* films had toys of webshooters and figures of the characters made, as well as posters and games (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synergy)

If you are a 21st-century Media Studies student you need to know everything there is to know about convergence, the hot buzzword that is at the heart of all Media Studies specifications. And who better to use as a case study than Lady Gaga, the poster girl for New Media? Sean Richardson shows you how to master the concept of which she is the mistress.

Convergence

Convergence means essentially **the technology-driven unification of different media channels**.

Unifying a message across broadcast TV, broadcast radio, newspapers, books, video and film, recorded music etc. can be immensely powerful. These **platforms** can come together in new ways to promote a single message or brand, driven by digital communication and technology.

Digital media can carry any type of content. Video can be distributed on a mobile phone network or music over the internet. This not only means that different types of media are converging, but also that media and telecoms are converging. In other words, a single

technology, such as the 4G phone, can become the **distribution platform** for a massive range of different types of digital activity, from conversation to gaming to TV-viewing to film production.

In addition to convergence at the **distribution level** there are areas in which the same content can be **re-packaged** across media: for example, computer games and films use the same content in different ways. This also creates powerful marketing **synergies**. The technological digital explosion has allowed some 'stars' to create enormously successful convergent global presences.

Lady Gaga

Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta, aka 'Lady Gaga', has over 10 million Facebook 'friends' and over 3 million people follow her on Twitter. This mastery of social media has been a feature of her career since she emerged from the New York underground dance scene. She wrote her own newsletter to her loyal followers and saw the potential of communicating directly with the fans in new ways. She calls her fans her **little monsters**, and the bond she has generated between fan and artist is unprecedented. In a recent post on Twitter she wrote how she loved the way her fans post pictures of her on the web:

> **There's something heroic about the way my fans operate their cameras. So precisely, so intricately, and so proudly. Like Kings writing the history of their people. It's their prolific nature that both creates and procures what will later be perceived as the 'kingdom.' So, the real truth about Lady Gaga fans, my little monsters, lies in this sentiment: They are the kings. They are the queens. They write the history of the kingdom, and I am something of a devoted Jester.**
> **Love and art,**
> **gaga**

The media theorist **Marshall McLuhan**, in a hugely influential 1964 text called *Understanding Media*, commented on the link between what is said and how it is communicated. His most famous line was, 'The medium is the message.' In *Understanding Media*, he suggests that a **medium** is 'an extension of ourselves.' So the Twitterverse and the Facebook virtual world can be seen as a new way of extending our self and our persona. The medium of communication for Lady Gaga is the online network of social media. With 10 million Facebook fans, she is using the new medium to put forward a message with massive success.

Political and pop convergence

Gaga repeats a simple and caring message across her sites, marketing copy and brand. The massive power of **brand Gaga** was clear when she played a pivotal role in drawing to public attention the need for a political policy change in the United States. She campaigned very successfully on the issue of homosexuals in the U.S. military having to lie about their sexuality, resulting in the repeal of the Bill. The **'Don't ask, don't tell'** issue was a passion for Gaga, who now has enormous global web power. This was arguably an unprecedented convergence of popular culture and political will. To paraphrase President Obama's comments after signing the repeal bill: 'Now those who put their life on the

collide, where the power of the media producer and the power of the consumer interact in unpredictable ways.

In other words, convergence culture meets somewhere between the media platform and the consumer platform.

The emergence of a **Gagapedia** reflects the collaborative nature of the Gaga brand, using fans creativity to create interest and appeal. The **Gagapedia** is a:

collaborative project, a place for fans to share what they know and love, to work together to collect everything that is known about Lady Gaga.

Haus of Gaga

The **Haus of Gaga** is the name used by Lady Gaga to describe her behind-the-scenes creative team.

The name is inspired by the German **Bauhaus**, a school of art in Germany that combined crafts and the fine arts via an organic creative process. Gaga uses a similar process, of which she says:

I called all my coolest art friends and we sat in a room and I said that I wanted to make my face light up. Or that I wanted to make my cane light up. Or that I wanted to make a pair of dope sunglasses. Or that I want to make video glasses, or whatever it was that I wanted to do. It's a whole amazing creative process that's completely separate from the label.

The **Haus** is a collective which works on various projects for Lady Gaga. These projects include clothing, stage sets, props and sounds for her live performance. In her own words:

It's my creative team and it's really organic…

The Haus concept is also inspired by **Andy Warhol's Factory**, a 1960s New York City studio peopled by an entourage of artists, film-makers and performers who helped Warhol on an assembly line for the production of his famous silk-screen images, film projects, and other collaborative ventures. Gaga's creativity and collaborative process is very similar to Andy Warhol's scene in the 1960s, where bohemian ideas were dominant and one figure was at the centre of the scene. Gaga herself is chief creator, despite what she might say about the collaboration of her 'Little Monsters'.

Mistress of the medium?

Lady Gaga has clearly mastered the new social network phenomenon that drives global consumerism. Her brand is accessible, yet stylish and aspirational, with ten million 'Little Monster' fans. The collaborative nature of her image and branding, involving the fans in producing texts themselves, is a masterstroke of marketing. Her fans feel like they 'own' a part of her and feel part of the process. This is simply not the case for many other artists, who are seeing sales falling and interest declining. Perhaps Lady Gaga is the new 'Madonna' for the Facebook generation, continually rebranded by her 'Little Monsters'?

Sean Richardson is Head of Media at Penistone Grammar School near Sheffield.

line will no longer have to lie about who they are to serve their country.' Gaga had effectively used her **Little Monster** fanbase as a successful lobbying tool in politics.

Lady Gaga made it her mission to highlight the 'Don't ask, don't tell' issue at the MTV Video Music Awards, and turned the front page of her web site over to the Service Members Legal Defense Network. After the show aired, web searches soared on everything from 'lady gaga guests' to 'what does SLDN stand for' (http://prop8trialtracker.com/2010/09/13/lady-gaga-brings-don't-ask-don't-tell-to-mtv-video-music-awards/). Gaga subsequently discussed the issue on the chat show *Ellen*, hosted by lesbian comedian Ellen Degeneres. It hit the Twitterverse – and the issue became a web phenomenon.

In his book: *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (NYU Press, 2006), Henry Jenkins defines convergence culture as:

where grassroots and corporate media

bullets for success

Tackling your terminal examination

We know that by this point in the year you'll be preparing for either AS or A2 terminal exams. Your teachers will no doubt be revising with you and drowning you in timed essays but there's nothing like hearing it straight from the examiners' mouths to help you wake up and smell the coffee.

So *MediaMag* asked the examiners for each exam for each of the different specs to provide you with five bullet points spelling out the most important issues to remember when preparing for that all-important moment when you turn over your paper and begin to write.

Before you read on, make absolutely sure you are looking at the right exam! We've tried to make this as clear as possible – but only you will suffer if you read the wrong bit by mistake…

Many thanks to all the examiners who have generously given their time to collaborate with you.

And…the very best of luck.

Exam Board	AS	A2
OCR **Media Studies**	**G322/3: Key Media Concepts** **Principal Examiner: Pete Fraser and Jason Mazzocchi**	**G325: Critical Perspectives in Media** **Principal Examiner Julian McDougall**

OCR — Media Studies

AS — G322/3: Key Media Concepts

Principal Examiner: Pete Fraser and Jason Mazzocchi

- Plan how you will make your notes for the TV drama extract – **spider diagrams** are sometimes best! Remember to link **analysis of the technical features** of the TV/radio drama extract to the **representation** being analysed.

- **Editing and sound** tend to be the least well done areas – pay close attention to them!

- Have lots of contemporary examples (i.e. from the last five years) of your own for question 2 on the industry.

- Make sure you **answer the question** that is set on the paper! Be able to **explain** and **evaluate** the points you make, to move beyond description – but *don't* overload your responses with irrelevant theory!

- Leave a line between each paragraph – make it easy for the examiner to read!

A2 — G325: Critical Perspectives in Media

Principal Examiner Julian McDougall

- Make sure you divide your time sensibly: 1a and 1b half hour each, section B 1 hour.

- **1a** is all about *you*. **1b** is all about the *work*. But both are about **applying theory** to **practical work and the creative process**.

- You need to prepare to write about **all of the concepts and all of your productions**, so you can respond to what comes up on the paper. **Examples** are crucial. Decide which of your examples you will use in 1b, and apply the required theory to it.

- **Section B** is about a *deep* understanding of a complicated media issue. Make sure **you answer the question** that is actually set!

- You need lots of **reading**, lots of your own **examples** and a **clear, balanced argument**. And you need to make **connections**.

- Most of your answer should be about **media from the last five years**. It's OK to use theory from longer ago as long as the media examples are recent.

Exam Board	AS	A2
WJEC CBAC **Media Studies**	**MS1: Media Representations and Responses** **Principal Examiner: Christine Bell**	**MS4: Media: Text, Industry and Audience** **From Principal Examiner: Barbara Connell**

WJEC CBAC — Media Studies

AS — MS1: Media Representations and Responses

Principal Examiner: Christine Bell

- Make sure that **your notes are well structured and address the questions**. Remember to read question 2a and b as well as question 1 as all of these questions will relate to the stimulus material in some way. If the stimulus material is print you will still need time to consider the resources and to make notes. **Good note-taking** will help you to construct a better, more coherent examination response.

- When analysing technical and audio codes in texts always remember to use the correct media terminology and to discuss the **purpose** of the technique and its **effect** upon the audience. Just naming the shot/angle/editing technique will result in a descriptive response.

- Theory is only relevant if you can apply it **effectively** to a **range of specific examples** to illustrate your points. Beware of downloading outdated and irrelevant theories!

- Question 2c or 3 may use the general phrase 'in the media today' – you must *not* produce a general response. Ensure that your answers for these questions include **two or three detailed specific examples**, ideally from more than one format. Remember that one text can be used for a variety of purposes e.g. the *Slumdog Millionaire* trailer could be used to answer a question on **audience** but could also be used to discuss **representations** of gender, age, ethnicity and national identity. **Make links** between the questions and the examples you have studied in class. Be prepared to be **flexible** in the way that you respond to the question.

- For questions 2c and 3 the expectation is that you produce a **coherent, structured response** reflecting your knowledge and understanding of the question. Try to start your answer with an overview showing your broad understanding of the concept and its relevance. Avoid launching straight in to your examples. At the end of your response sum up briefly what you have said and how you have answered the question.

A2 — MS4: Media: Text, Industry and Audience

From Principal Examiner: Barbara Connell

- **Section A**: be prepared to talk about the **three main texts** you have explored for each of your chosen industries. Think what each of your chosen texts tells you about **genre, narrative and representation**.

- Be clear about what is **important** about each of these **concepts** (e.g. narratives are generally constructed to reinforce or challenge 'dominant ideologies', representations convey ideologies about the society we live in). Make sure you can discuss ideas like this in conjunction with **examples** from your chosen texts.

- **Section B** looks at **industry** and **audience**: as with Section A, start by being clear about what each of your chosen texts tells you about the industry you have studied and what they tell you about audiences and/or users.

- As with Section A, be able to support points you make about your chosen industry or audiences/users by **close reference to key moments or key aspects** of your three main texts.

- You may well be using some **audience theories** to discuss audience issues: always make sure you are applying these to **appropriate** examples. Don't be afraid of **questioning** a theoretical perspective – but do give your reasons.

Exam Board	AS	A2
Media Studies (AQA)	**Mest1: Investigating Media**	**Mest 3: Critical Perspectives**

Mest1: Investigating Media

Principal Examiner: Jamie Saunders

- **For Section A: Use note-taking and planning time effectively** and pick up on the **hints** in the introductory paragraphs provided.

- **Focus on the question(s)** and make **detailed references** to the (unseen) media product.

- **Learn media terminology** and use it with confidence and **only use media theory** if relevant to the question.

- **For Section B**: Prepare **individualised, contemporary** and **broad** cross-media studies. *Do not* provide a descriptive account of the cross-media study but *do* **maintain question focus.**

- **Avoid** hypothetical and generalised examples but **select detailed and concrete examples** from the cross-media study to support ideas/arguments (remember to focus on print examples too).

Mest 3: Critical Perspectives

Principal examiner: Jacqui Shirley

- **Section A** the focuses are:

  o **Question 1 – media concepts**, the question will focus on **one concept** in particular. Make **detailed references to the two products** to support your points.

  o **Question 2 – media issues, debates and theories**.

  o **Question 3 – wider contexts**.

  o In Section A aim to make **a range of points** in each of your answers, not just one.

- In Question 2 you'll get more marks if you include examples of **other media products**, but you can still pass if you don't. In Question 3 you should add examples of **other media products** to support your answer.

- **In Section B** use **your own individual case study** to answer the question, it should be different from the other students in your class. Focus on about **four media products in detail**, with brief references to other ones.

- In Section B **answer the question,** don't just write everything you know about your case study. You'll get more marks if you answer the **'why'** of the question as well as the **'how'**. Use media debates, issues, theories and wider contexts to do this

- And if you really want to impress your examiner, keep a look out for **really up-to-date examples** of **media products and issues** that are happening in the media now that you can add to your own case study and to your answers in Section A.

Exam Board	AS	A2
Film Studies (WJEC CBAC)	**FM2: British and American Film**	**FM4: Varieties of Film Experience**

FM2: British and American Film

Principal Examiners: Jill Poppy and Steve Robson, assistant

- **Section A:** Be clear about what each of your case studies and other examples tells you about **producers and audiences** in the **UK and US**.

- In the exam itself, aim **to look at the question first** and make notes on what examples and case studies you can use to answer it **before looking at the stimulus material** which will suggest other ideas to you. The best answers tend to use the stimulus material as a springboard into using **your own case studies and examples.**

- **Section B** focuses on British film. Make sure you can demonstrate through examples **what makes the films you have studied British** and what they reveal about British society and culture. Similarly with **Section C**, be clear about **what makes the films American** and what they reveal about American society and culture.

- In **Sections B and C**, think how the narrative of your films is constructed and how the characters and **narrative** convey particular **messages and values.**

- Similarly, identify **key moments** in the films you are studying which will enable you to explore how people and issues are **represented**.

FM4: Varieties of Film Experience

Principal Examiner: Patrick Phillips

- Be clear about what your chosen films reveal about **the topic** you're studying. Be prepared to discuss in detail **key moments** from your two main films. Be able to show how **micro and macro features** underline the points you want to make.

- Always aim to develop your points through **close discussion** of your film. Try to **avoid** simply describing what happens in your film.

- **Section B:** All the topics in this section are based on **spectatorship**. Make sure you understand **what is meant by spectatorship** and be able to discuss your chosen films and topic in relation to that.

- **Section C:** Aim to have **specific examples of the 'critical reception'** of your film (perhaps **key quotations** you can discuss) and be aware of any **controversies** the films created. Aim to be able to test out aspects of the critical reception through discussion of **key moments** from your chosen film.

- Similarly be able to apply **relevant film critical approaches** to your chosen film by looking at **key moments**.

REGULATING THE PRESS-PACK

balancing the rights of the media and the public at times of tragedy

In our last issue, *MM* considered the culture of the press and its impact on the coverage of distressing news events such as the multiple shootings by Derrick Bird and Raoul Moat. In response, Will Gore, the Director of Public Affairs at the Press Complaints Commission, describes the tensions and dilemmas involved in reporting and regulating the coverage of such events, and the proactive role of the PCC in providing both support for those involved and guidance for acceptable standards in journalism.

As the body that regulates newspapers and magazines in the UK, the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) is well aware of the difficulties a community can face when the media descends *en masse* to cover a major news event, especially where death and injury are at the heart of the story.

The tragic shootings in Cumbria last summer have become a clear case in point, as Paul Willis reported in your last edition, with media outlets vying for information. And yet **such events should – indeed must – be reported in an open and democratic society**. For the PCC, therefore, the issue is finding a **balance** between the rights of newspapers to cover the news and the rights of individuals (especially the bereaved and the vulnerable) to maintain their privacy and to decide whether or not they speak to journalists.

Of course, for the Commission's services to be effective they need to be well-known. Fortunately, the majority of people know about the PCC (over 80% according to public opinion surveys in 2010 and 2008). But that is not always enough, which is why the Commission increasingly seeks to work proactively to raise understanding of its work and to contact people who we believe might be subject to media scrutiny as the result of a specific story or incident. We do not simply sit in London and await complaints.

When news first started to filter through of the Cumbrian shootings (shortly after the second shooting had taken place), we immediately recognised that journalists would wish to cover the incident in some depth. As a result, we contacted local police and hospitals straight away, sending information about the PCC and encouraging people who had concerns about media activity to get in touch. This is standard practice for the Commission when a serious and high-profile incident arises: liaising with public authorities to ensure that they can assist in our communication with local people.

Over the subsequent few days our staff had several conversations with police communicators during which we explained that our role was not confined to examining complaints about material that had already been published. In fact, our approach is **increasingly designed to avoid problems arising in the first place**.

In particular, the PCC can play a vital role in ensuring that those who do not wish to speak to the media – especially those who are attempting to come to terms with personal tragedy – can avoid unwanted questioning by journalists. To achieve this end, the Commission has developed a system by which individuals can contact the PCC and make clear that they are not speaking to media outlets. We will pass on these so-called **'desist requests'** to relevant executives at newspapers and magazines. Ignoring such a request can lead to a serious breach of the Editors' Code of Practice and an adverse ruling from the PCC, which no editor wants.

concerns that remain untackled.

There is no doubt that the media – like any profession – make mistakes, which is why it is essential that newspapers and magazines can be held to account by members of the public through the Press Complaints Commission. On the other hand, journalists have a legitimate job to do and must be permitted to do it properly, by acting with sensitivity and within the framework of the Editors' Code of Practice. The task of the PCC is to ensure that everyone – especially those who unwittingly find themselves the subject of media scrutiny – knows what type of journalistic activity is acceptable and what is not.

Will Gore is the PCC's Director of Public Affairs. He can be contacted via email: will.gore@pcc.org.uk

The PCC and the Editors' Code of Practice

The Press Complaints Commission is an independent body which administers the system of self-regulation for the UK newspaper and magazine industry. We do this primarily by dealing with complaints, framed within the terms of the Editors' Code of Practice, about the editorial content of newspapers and magazines (and their websites). The Code covers issues such as accuracy and privacy in reporting and how journalists should behave in gathering the news, and can be seen on our website: www. pcc.org.uk.

There are a number of provisions in the Code that newspapers must abide by when reporting a death:

- The press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information (Clause 1);
- Journalists must not engage in harassment (Clause 4);
- In cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries and approaches must be made with sympathy and discretion and publication handled sensitively (Clause 5, i);
- The press must not include excessive detail when reporting suicide, in order to minimise the risk of copycat cases (Clause 5, ii).

Further information and contact details

More information on how we work may be found on our website: www.pcc.org.uk. If you have any queries at all, please do not hesitate to contact us directly and we will be happy to help. All of our services are free to use.

Our contact details are as follows:
Press Complaints Commission
Halton House
20/23 Holborn
London EC1N 2JD
020 7831 0022 (24 hour emergency advice line: 07659 152656)
Email: complaints@pcc.org.uk

Interestingly, the Commission's jurisdiction in the provision of this service also extends to broadcasters, enabling individuals to feel secure that their wishes will be respected across different media platforms. (Broadcasters have voluntarily accepted the PCC's jurisdiction in this area because Ofcom, the regulatory body for TV and radio programmes, is not empowered to intercede with such pre-publication issues.)

In Cumbria, both in the immediate aftermath of the shootings and, more recently, as the inquest hearings begin, the PCC has passed on such desist requests from relatives of those killed by Derrick Bird. Any suggestion that journalists have ignored the wishes of those who seek to avoid media attention would be speedily investigated by the Commission.

It is important to the PCC that our contact with community representatives has an appropriate level of continuity. As is well-known, we dealt with several dozen complaints about articles that caused distress and offence to those affected by the tragedies in and around Whitehaven. What is less widely known is that senior staff of the Commission, including Director Stephen Abell, travelled to Cumbria for meetings with local

police, the editor of the Whitehaven News and local clergy (including the Archdeacon of West Cumberland), who had played a prominent role in the aftermath of the shootings. We wanted to make certain that those with direct access to local people could remind them of our ongoing desire to ease their concerns; we also wanted to learn whether there were things we could do differently – and better – in the future.

For there is no doubt that the PCC must constantly strive to improve the public services it offers as a means ultimately to improving standards in the press.

That is why we have recently undertaken a major revision of our guidance for members of the public who find themselves in the spotlight as the result of the death of someone close to them. And it is why we will continue to liaise with police forces, coroners, hospital authorities and others up and down the UK to ensure that those who need our guidance can gain access to it – both now and in the future.

When the inquests into the deaths of those killed by Derrick Bird take place, a PCC representative will travel to Cumbria once again to meet with families and to listen to any