MediaMagazine

english and media centre issue 49 | september 2014

CONCEPTS!

Doing research

(Mis)representations of climate change

Zombies

CLASSIFICATION

Cannes

Media and Identities

MM

English & Media Centre

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MediaMagazine is published by the English and Media Centre, a non-profit making organisation. The Centre publishes a wide range of classroom materials and runs courses for teachers. If you're studying English at A Level, look out for *emagazine*, also published by the Centre.

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Print: S&G Group

Cover: *Breaking Bad*

ISSN: 1478-8616

Welcome to the first *MediaMag* of the academic year, and to the next phase of your Film or Media course.

There should be plenty here to help you get into the swing of things: Steph Hendry's introduction to the Key Concepts underpinning all Media and Film Studies specifications is a must-read for AS students, while Jonathan Nunns' guide to how to use this very magazine to support your research projects could be the ideal jump start for your A2 independent research study or critical perspectives case studies.

Issues of representation, audiences and identities link several pieces: Jacqui Shirley introduces a new A2 AQA topic on Identities and the Media, while Harry Cunningham explores national identity and Britishness as a recurrent motif in *Skyfall*. Meanwhile Nick Lacey questions the media's reluctance to face the truth in its (mis)representations of climate change, and Roy Stafford considers a TV trilogy which represents a challenging and rarely seen perspective on World War Two from the viewpoint of young Germans. If you're studying media regulation, there's an interview with Lucy Brett from the BBFC on film classification, and a terrific case study on the banning of *Wolf of Wall Street* in Kenya. Other highlights include *In the Flesh* and for Film students, a student's superb analysis of the Japanese classic *Tokyo Story*.

On a more practical note, you can find out about life behind the showbiz desk at Reuters, and the work of a factual TV editor with the Olympics, the Royal Wedding, and Andy Murray's 2013 Wimbledon victory under his belt. And do read about the finalists of the *MediaMag* 2014 Production Competition, and watch the winning videos on our website – next year it could be you…

Enjoy a good read – and good luck for the new term.

Jenny Grahame

In our next issue: watch out for …

- Ways of making films which move audiences
- Regulation and copyright with Julian McDougall
- British documentary and *Nightmail*
- *Apocalypse Now*, *Girls* and *Line of Duty*
- The launch of our 2015 Production Competition, and a new exciting competition for would-be journalists and screenwriters.
- And lots and lots of science fiction…

The Event of the Year for Media Students: The MediaMagazine Student Conference, 16th December 2014

There are still some places left, but they're disappearing fast!

Don't miss out on your chance to hear presentations from a super-heroic line-up including, Jon Snow, Owen Jones, Destiny Ekaragha, Jake Wynne and Pete Fraser!

Get the lowdown on the challenges to news journalism, media representations of class, independent filmmaking, music video, production skills, and more.

Visit www.mediamagazine.org.uk to learn more – and get booking while there's still time!

The perfect end-of-term trip!

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The Front Page

The 2014 *MediaMag* Production Competition Awards – And the winners are …

MediaMag asked Daniella Rice, a student filmmaker and graduate of the NFTS BFI Film Academy, to report on the celebrations.

On Wednesday, 2nd July, at the *MediaMag* Production Competition Awards 2014 many young filmmakers from over 40 schools around the country gathered at the BFI, the heart of British film. The students were privileged to screen their films at the largest screen at the British Film Institute, NFT1. As the students arrived through the BFI entrance, their excitement was visible, the girls in glamorous dresses and the boys 'suited and booted'. A brief introduction to the afternoon ahead from Jenny Grahame and Pete Fraser set a more competitive tone in NFT1.

The BFI Science Fiction Award

This first category was presented by Mark Reid, Head of Education at BFI Southbank, as a prelude to the forthcoming BFI Sci-Fi Award Season, and proved a great success with the crowd. All films took a very mature approach to the genre, as demonstrated through the use of differently graded colour palettes, and cinematography which complemented the VFX and on-point choice of music. Mark endorsed the filmmakers' skill and 'sense of technological disturbia'. He awarded third place to *Genesis* (dir. Raymond Sloan), a film with a deceptively simple supernatural narrative; second place went to *The WiFi* (dir. Sam Hunt), distinguished by its strong cinematography and intriguing spy/alien narrative; and in first place, *Erebus: The Rise* (dir. George Rees-Jones), which had all the elements of a professional Sci-Fi film. George, who aspires to start his own production company, admitted that he 'didn't expect to win' but it 'felt cool' to have his work recognised.

The Music Video Award

The following award was judged and presented through video-link by Jake Wynne, whose career launched with music videos for Robbie Williams and the Spice Girls, amongst many others. After watching all the fantastic and high-quality music videos, the British talent of storytelling was clearly visible. Jake was impressed by the young filmmakers' work, as they 'had all the qualities that good videos need', and 'put professional music videos to shame'. Every video had a great sense of narrative and originality, and it proved very hard to pick the best work! In third place came *No Sleep Tonight* (dir. Olivia Downes), a video characterised by girl-power, depicting many different music genres; second came *Cocaine* (dir. Jack Cox), an endearing rock video executed with extreme professionalism. The winner was *He Wasn't There* (by Emily, Anna, Mila and Sharlebe), an arty and retro one-shot music video, executed with 'playful charm' as described by Jake Wynne.

Shorts, Trailers and the Rest

The next category included short films, fictional trailers, fictional film openings and a documentary. Presenting and judging the category was the very talented director Destiny Ekaragha, who was amazed by the outstanding pieces of work produced by such young filmmakers. Destiny began her career in the industry as a runner, before directing *Tight Jeans*, her very witty early short, screened at the event; its success led to her comic first feature film *Gone Too Far*. Before announcing the winners, Destiny gave some wise words of advice: the filmmakers should 'keep making shorts to build your confidence', but in the future, 'get a little job just to feed yourself'. In announcing the winners, Destiny said it could not have been more difficult to choose the top three films. In third place she chose *Sunday Morning* (dir. Nevan Brothers), a spectacularly well-shot bike-riding opening, described by Destiny as the 'kind of opening that you would see in the cinema'. Second came *About Me* (dir. Louis Agace and Hugo Salter), a documentary that won its place for its moving and uplifting approach to a personal story of special needs student Toby. And in first place *The Black Dot* (dir. Chris Bailey), an imaginative and disturbing film that left Destiny envious of their talent to set the scene and create a 'seamless edit' with an effective ending. The filmmakers were surprised – Chris exclaimed that he did 'not expect to have won', confirmed by co-writer Dominic Berry, who was

Chris Bailey and Dominic Berry, with Destiny Ekaragha 'amazed by the diversity of all the entries' and admired 'how difficult it must have been to judge'. The two filmmakers are working this summer to bring some more projects to life.

And the Awards for Creativity Go to…

The awards ceremony concluded with 'Special Awards for Creativity'. These awards were to congratulate those students whose films excelled in creativity and dedication. Jenny Grahame presented the first award, to three young filmmakers: Jack Cox, Harry Masih and Connor Little for their music video *Cocaine*, which shows 'boys doing what they do best'. As an NFTS BFI Film Academy graduate, I presented the next award to Ben Porro for his outstandingly creative film *Pop Culture* which that 'stood out' amongst the other music videos for its explicit social comment and witty take on social media. Finally, *The Last Supper* won an award for Finbar Shepherd and team for its impressive creativity, its daring and humorous concept and creepily strong characterisation.

The event ended in the BFI Blue Room, for photo opportunities, certificates for every entrant, the chance to network with each other and a couple of industry professionals... along with refreshments and a drink (or two!). Interestingly the filmmakers slowly made their way towards Destiny Ekharaga, seeking career advice and asking questions. The up-and-coming director said she was 'really inspired by all the filmmakers', and admitted she wasn't 'doing anything half as good at their age – if anything!', concluding that 'the future might be very bright'. Ben Porro, winner of the Creative Award, commented, 'You don't normally get to see this talent when you're googling around; it's just big names.' It was with this friendly and collaborative spirit that the event finished, as the filmmakers met others with whom to collaborate in future projects. After looking through all 150 submissions for the awards, Pete Fraser and Jenny Grahame left the room blown away by the 'amazing standard of work' and the 'really good atmosphere' of the event.

Daniella Rice, filmmaker @daniellarice

A Huge Thank You from MediaMag!

MediaMag congratulates all the competitors for their inspirational work, and in particular the staff of Bilborough College, Bradfield College, Sir Richard Collyer's College, Hurtwood House, John Madejski Academy, Latymer School, Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, and Wootton Upper School for outstanding productions. We'd also like to say massive thanks to Mark Reid and Dominika Widlak-Manka at BFI Southbank; Destiny Ekaragha and Jake Wynne for judging duties; Ben Fraser for editing and producing the show reels and photography; Lucy Webster, Fran Stowell and Andrew McCallum at The English and Media Centre, and Pete Fraser for showrunning and Exec Production. We hope to see you all – and even more of you – at next year's competition.

Catch up on Last Term's Big News Story: Phone Hacking

OK, so in July, former editor of *The News of The World* Andy Coulson went to jail, but Rebekah Brooks did not. Media academics have been debating how much (or little) the habits of the press have changed as a result of the Leveson report. The end of an era for the tabloid press, says George Brook, Head of Journalism at City University, London; a change in the culture of the press, due to the new sensitisation of the public and of advertisers, suggests Charlie Beckett, LSE Media Professor, and director of the Polis think tank into international journalism research. Meanwhile, Steven Barnett, Professor of Communications at Westminster University thinks the battle is only just beginning. If you're studying media regulation, the newspaper industry or media and democracy, use the following sites, with 'Coulson and Brooks' as search terms.

- http://www.thedrum.com
- George Brook on http://theconversation.com/
- Charlie Beckett on http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis
- Steven Barnett on http://inforrm.wordpress.com

And see Goom's cartoon on page 36 for another take on the story.

Into Film Festival 2014

Between 4th and 21st November, a festival of free screenings and workshops will take place, said to be the world's largest film festival for children and young people. A packed programme will involve 300,000 5-19 year-olds from all backgrounds and corners of the UK in watching and making films, many for the first time. Highlights will include exclusive premieres and previews of new feature films, free screenings, workshops, special events and Q&A sessions with industry experts, accompanied by innovative teaching resources. And there's still plenty of time to get involved – for more information, visit http://www.intofilm.org/festival

Ben Porro with Daniella Rice

Sci-Fi: Days of Fear and Wonder with the BFI

From October to January 2015, the BFI will be screening a huge UK-wide sci-fi season. Amongst its highlights will be the re-issue of Stanley Kubrick's landmark movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*, frequently acknowledged as one of the greatest films ever made. To see what's on near you, the full programme is available at www.bfi.org.uk

The Front Page was compiled by Jenny Grahame.

USING MEDIAMAGAZINE TO GET STARTED ON YOUR A2 RESEARCH PROJECT

'Research' seems to be a word designed to chill the heart of many A Level students, perhaps because it's something students have had little chance to carry out prior to A Level. However, it is a skill which is at the heart of the A2 coursework and will be introduced during the AS year.


SO, ER, WHAT EXACTLY MAKES A GOOD CASE STUDY?

A Level students often struggle with research. When it comes to it, a blank piece of paper can be a scary thing. You often realise that, given the choice to start anywhere, you really don't know where to begin. Luckily, there are tips that can be passed on and short cuts that can help you form a strategy and a framework to channel your energy and talent.

This article will offer some of those suggestions. Whilst it will focus on approaches that help with coursework tasks for the WJEC A/S and A2 Media and Film Studies specifications, the ideas and techniques will apply whichever specification you are doing, at either AS or A2.

Before starting to unpack these ideas and techniques, it is worth clearing up a common misconception: **research cannot be done without genuine and sustained hard work**. I have known students attempt to deliver presentations on films they have not seen and analyse the work of directors and filmmakers whose work they know superficially, at best. Not surprisingly, this is a good way to embarrass yourself, and will not result in a decent grade. Research can be made efficient by using the right techniques. When done with commitment and interest, it can also be exciting and rewarding – but what it will *always* be is hard work.

What the specs require

The nature of the research tasks at A Level runs against the flow of how most students have been taught to learn. Before A Level, most learning takes the form of factual knowledge, which students are rewarded for reproducing in exams or through coursework. A Level is different. Whilst factual knowledge remains vital, the ability to learn independently, to analyse and interpret, comes to the fore. Students have to develop skills in self-directed learning, finding things out for themselves, assessing the quality and accuracy of the information found, rather than relying on teachers to deliver this for them.

Given a clear task, most people can get to work on it. But what if you don't know what the task will be? All specifications give some sort of steer. The **WJEC A2 Media Studies Research Investigation** requires students to choose a topic, from any area of the media, create a title and generate **primary** and **secondary** sources to support the study. (Primary sources are the actual media texts themselves – TV shows, adverts, films and so on; secondary sources are all the books, articles and criticism written about them.) The only stipulation is that the task should focus on one key concept from a choice of three: narrative, representation or genre.

The WJEC's A2 Film Studies specification includes the Small-scale Research Project, which focuses on the film industry. This can take the form of anything from the work of key auteur directors, international film stars, leading film institutions such as major studios, and popular film genres.

Finding a topic – using *MediaMagazine*

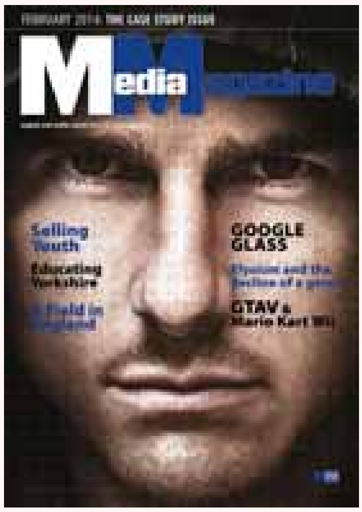
The hardest part is often deciding what to focus on and settign the parameters for your research. If there's a topic you're fascinated by (whether it's WWF or *TOWIE*, Middle Earth or *Dr Who*), then this might not be a problem. If, on the other hand, you're interested in a broad range of topics, it can be hard to find a focus narrow enough for a successful research project. This is where back issues of *MediaMagazine* can prove helpful.

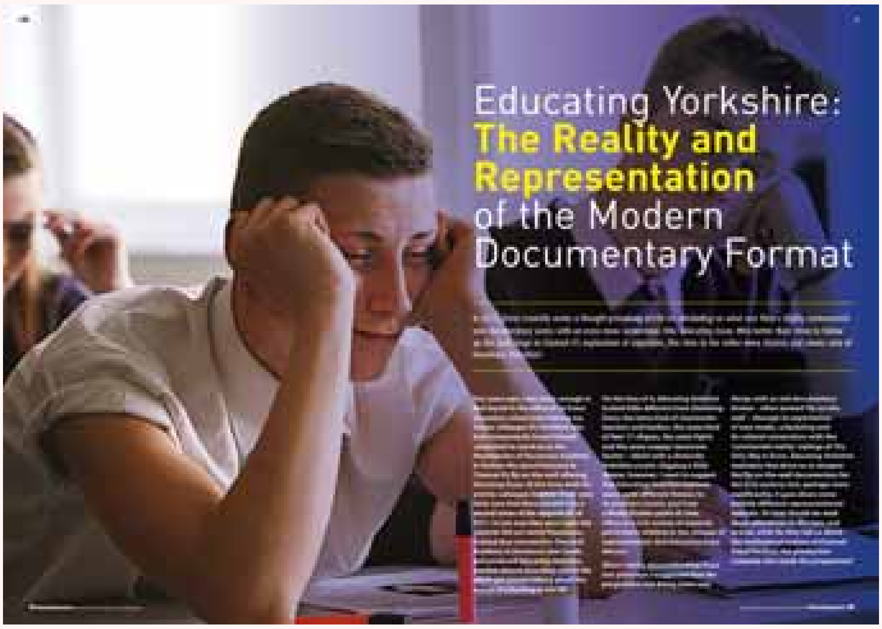
At random, let's look at edition 47 from February 2014 (a copy sporting the lovely Tom Cruise on the cover), to see if we can mine it for ideas.

Using issue 47 for a Media Research Investigation

OK, so for the WJEC A2, for example, you have to write a Media Research Investigation of 1800 words on either narrative, representation or genre.

The first thing to decide is which concept you want to use. Do you want to apply issues around **representation**, looking at realism, stereotyping and marginalisation? Would you rather study **genre**, seeing how key media




Educating Yorkshire: The Reality and Representation of the Modern Documentary Format

forms have evolved and changed over the years? Or how about **narrative** – applying classical narrative theory or Proppian character roles to key media texts? This is an early decision, and an important one, since it will determine what you can study and how you approach it.

Scanning the contents page of the February 2014 edition brings up some immediate results.

The article 'So, er, What Exactly Makes A Good Case Study' is an obvious starting point for a project, containing study tips and suggestions how to generate sources and structure your work.

In terms of inspiration, there is a wide range of possibilities in this edition. The representation of youth is a popular topic with many students, so the article '*Educating Yorkshire*: The Reality and Representation of the Modern Documentary Format' would be an excellent starting point. *Educating Yorkshire* (C4 UK 2013) could be the main focus text for a research investigation and be deconstructed as a documentary (perhaps in tandem with *Educating Essex*, also covered by *MediaMag* 39 in February 2012) in direct comparison to other key sources. You could link this to the article '*Attack The Block*: B Movie or Blockbuster?'. *Attack the Block* (Cornish UK 2011) would make an excellent comparative example, providing the chance to study how a documentary mediates reality in contrast to the more obviously constructed and, arguably,

more stereotypical representations of youth provided by Cornish's film. Both texts focus on young people and attempt, to varying degrees, to present them realistically – so there's a research topic right there. These texts could be topped up with reference to additional sources such as *The Inbetweeners* (C4 UK 2008-10) *Eden Lake* (Watkins UK 2008) *Hollyoaks* (C4 UK 1995 to present) or *Waterloo Road* (BBC UK 2006 to present), each of which presents a significantly different representation of young people.

This premise could be supported by a trawl through the *MediaMagazine* archives for other pieces on youth representation. With support from set text books such as *WJEC Media Studies: Study and Revision Guide* (C. Bell and B. Connell, Illuminate Publishing 2011) the foundations for an interesting and successful study are in place.

How about a title? Try this for size:

Fact or Fiction? Does documentary represent young people more authentically than fiction film? An analysis of *Educating Yorkshire* and *Attack The Block*.

With a relatively small shift of emphasis, these texts could be refocused to look at either genre or narrative.

Some alternative approaches

The article on *Educating Yorkshire* provides opportunity to analyse the **documentary genre**, so a next step could be the article, 'The Spirit of 13', focusing on the famed British director Ken Loach. This would enable you to compare and contrast a classical feature documentary designed for cinematic release, *The Spirit of '45* (Loach UK 2013) with a contrasting example structured, segmented and narrativised according to the very different conventions of a television fly-on-the-wall series.

If you wanted to explore ideas about **genre**, you could also focus on sci-fi. A starting point would be 'Poetry No More: What's Gone Wrong with Science Fiction?', an article examining the recent Matt Damon Film *Elysium* (Blomkamp USA 2013). The film could be directly contrasted to the edition's other sci-fi movie, *Attack The Block*. Both films could also be studied from a **narrative perspective**, applying structuralist theories and concepts such as Proppian character analysis and binary oppositions in the creation of compelling drama.

What other possibilities are there? Students of **narrative** could use the article 'Distributing *A Field in England*', which offers a starting point for analysing the unconventional narrative structure of this unusual, low-budget art film. A perfect contrast perhaps to a generic, classical narrative, high-budget film such as *Elysium*, or a mid-budget awards-friendly film such as *The Reader* (Daldry UK 2008, and the focus of the article 'Popular Film and Emotional Response'). What should be apparent is how quickly and easily ideas can be generated, using in this instance just

Finding your inspiration is essential for any research project. Once you have that, developing a focused, specific and interesting title is the next task.

Given those fundamentals, you have a study. Readily available study aids such as *MediaMagazine* are an obvious starting point for you to find ideas. This article drew inspiration from one single edition. Your LRC or online subscription will give you access to many more – there are nearly 1000 articles online. It's a one-stop-shop for students looking for the spark to inspire their research!

Jonathan Nunns is Head of Media Studies at Collyer's College and moderates for the WJEC.

one edition of *MediaMagazine*. You just need to have a few basic ideas about the direction you want to look in.

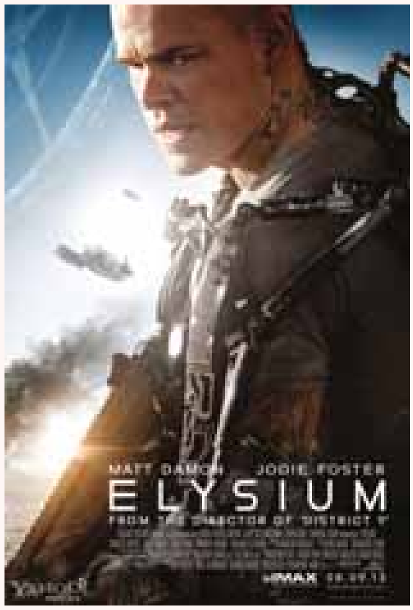
Title and focus

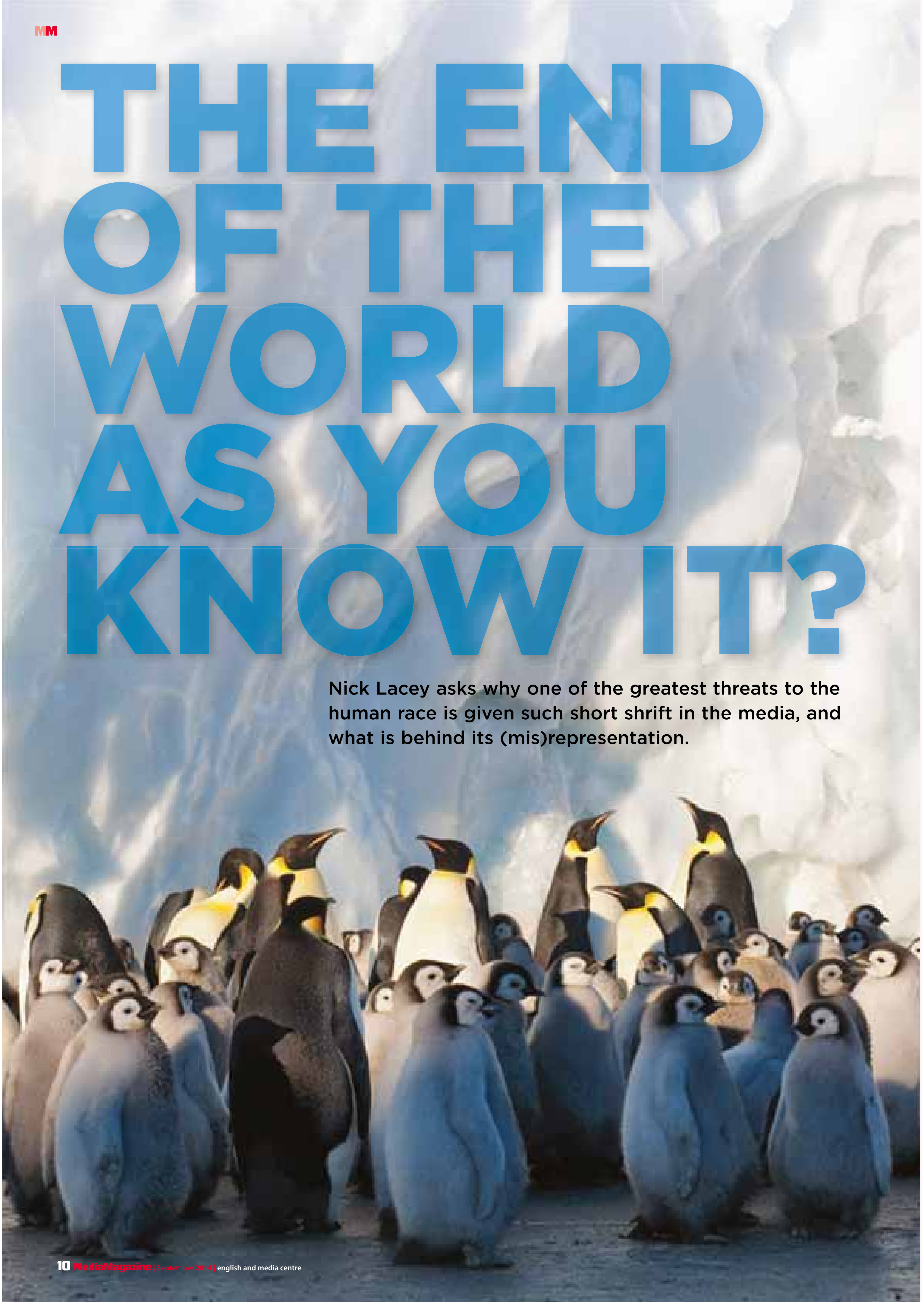
Creating titles can also be difficult. The key thing is the need for clarity and focus. A very general title is usually a bad title. So something like 'How are young people represented in the media?' is much too general, and will almost certainly lead to a vague and rambling response. Much better would be '*Attack The Block* and *Educating Yorkshire*: Positive Representations of Youth at Last?' This version has the virtue of specifying the core texts, naming the concept to be applied, and posing a clear question to which it would be possible to provide an answer by the end of the study.

An A2 Film Studies approach: the Small-scale Research Project

This assignment is comprised of a 1000-word research catalogue and a 1500-word presentation script. Again, the task presents students with a spectrum of options that may be difficult to navigate.

Looking again at the Feb 2014 *MediaMag*, the article on *The Reader* could be used as the starting point for a study of the directorial career of Stephen Daldry, or an analysis of the impact of awards like the Oscar and BAFTA as part of a study on film distribution. Another title could involve looking at the unusual distribution given to the low-budget indie film *A Field In England* (Wheatley UK 2013) compared to the studio-backed saturation release given the high-budget *Elysium*. Other possibilities could include auteur studies of either *The Spirit of '45* director Ken Loach or *Elysium* director Neil Blomkamp (whose previous film *District 9* was analysed in *MediaMag* 31 in December 2009). A study of 'New Waves' in film could stem from the article 'Beyond The French New Wave'. You could compare this article with one from the archives (*MediaMag* 9, April 2004) to see how the New Wave debate has changed over time. Studies of film genres such as science fiction and horror could come out of the articles on *Elysium* or *Attack the Block,* as could a study of documentary based around *The Spirit of '45*.





THE END OF THE WORLD AS YOU KNOW IT?

Nick Lacey asks why one of the greatest threats to the human race is given such short shrift in the media, and what is behind its (mis)representation.

organisations that produce research in an attempt to influence governments. We'll return to them – and other tanks – later.

However, newspapers that are more left wing, such as *The Daily Mirror*, are far more likely to report the dire consequences we face unless carbon emissions are curbed. For example, in an article linked to the high levels of pollution experienced in Britain last spring, the newspaper featured legendary weather forecaster Michael Fish, who lectures on the topic 'Climate Change – The Ultimate Weapon of Mass Destruction'. As Sir David King, the Government's chief scientific adviser, said 10 years ago, climate change is a bigger threat to our way of life than the

What do you think is the biggest threat to your future?

When I ask students this question the most common answer is 'exams'. From a teacher's perspective, you might think this would be gratifying, as it shows you are taking your education seriously. But actually it's rather sad that education is seen as a 'threat' rather than an opportunity. Yet it would be unfair to blame pupils for this; after all, it could be argued that the current education system seems to prize exam results (known in teacher-speak as 'measurable outcomes') above all else.

However, looking at the bigger picture, in reality the biggest threat to your future is global warming – which is highly likely to make our planet uninhabitable in relatively few years.

Or is it?

If you are a regular reader of right-wing newspapers (those that tend to have a pro-business and traditional view of the world, such as *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Express*, and *The Financial Times*), you might be forgiven for believing that the Earth may indeed be heating up, but that this is a natural phenomenon, and not in any way caused by the increase in human-made carbon emissions since the Industrial Revolution.

100 reasons...

Typical of this sort of coverage is *The Daily Express's* '100 reasons why climate change is natural'. The list starts off with this:

> There is 'no real scientific proof' that the current warming is caused by the rise of greenhouse gases from man's activity.
>
> Meredith 2012

This is not a good start for their argument, because it is simply untrue. The UN has released *three* reports this year based on a consensus from hundreds of scientists – see http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/climatechange/

The source of the list is given as the European Foundation, which has been described as a right-wing anti-European 'think tank'. Think tanks are

'War on Terror'. *The Guardian*, another 'left of centre' newspaper, regularly runs columns by George Monbiot, who argues we should use 'direct action' to protect our future.

Bias and balance

As Media students we should not be surprised that newspapers are biased in their reporting – or that they favour the perspective of the political party they support. The BBC, on the other hand, has a duty to be 'impartial' in its news reporting; and this usually is fulfilled by covering 'both sides of the argument'. So, in broadcast political stories, the Government will get their say, which is then 'balanced' by an

opposition viewpoint. When reporting stories which suggest the significance of climate change the BBC will often 'balance' the report with a comment from someone who *doesn't* believe that humankind is influencing nature.

Let's take an example: in February 2014, the former Tory chancellor Lord Lawson, a longstanding climate change sceptic, was given equal time on a BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme debate about climate change and flooding with Professor Sir Brian Hoskins, a climatologist. Lawson is also the chairman of the Global Warming Policy Foundation, a think tank that casts doubt on climate change science, and questions the economic costs of responding to it (Vidal 2014).

In the radio debate, both points of view are given *equal time*. This may give listeners the impression that there is considerable doubt about whether climate change is caused by humankind or by a natural phenomenon. However, scientific evidence states that there is a 95% certainty that humans are causing the global temperature to rise. The BBC's concept of 'balance' makes it appear a 50:50 blame, whereas it's actually 95:5 in favour of human-made warming.

Skating over controversy

From a scientist's perspective, climate change is heavily influenced by carbon emissions, which create the 'greenhouse effect'. You might therefore expect that a BBC Natural History programme would be clear about this. However, in the conclusion to the final episode of *Frozen Planet*, 'On Thin Ice', transmitted in December 2011, David Attenborough refuses to acknowledge that global warming is a direct consequence of human activities. If he had not done so, it would have reduced the commercial prospects of the programme – many broadcasters refuse to transmit programmes that state global warming is human-made, because the topic is seen as 'controversial'. This is particularly true in the United States.

Even though the programme failed to make a strong statement about human influence on climate change, the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF) criticised its content. GWPF, the think-tank fronted by Nigel Lawson, bills itself as 'Restoring balance and trust to the climate debate'. Lawson wrote an article critical of the programme in the *Radio Times* – see http://www.radiotimes.com/news/2011-12-07/climate-change--is-david-attenborough-right.

GWPF refuses to name the organisations or people who fund it, arguing that anonymity protects them from being persecuted for their views. However, this anonymity also leads to suspicion that its supporters are, in the main, the oil and mining companies that are most responsible for carbon emissions and so have most to lose should governments treat global warming seriously and regulate those industries.

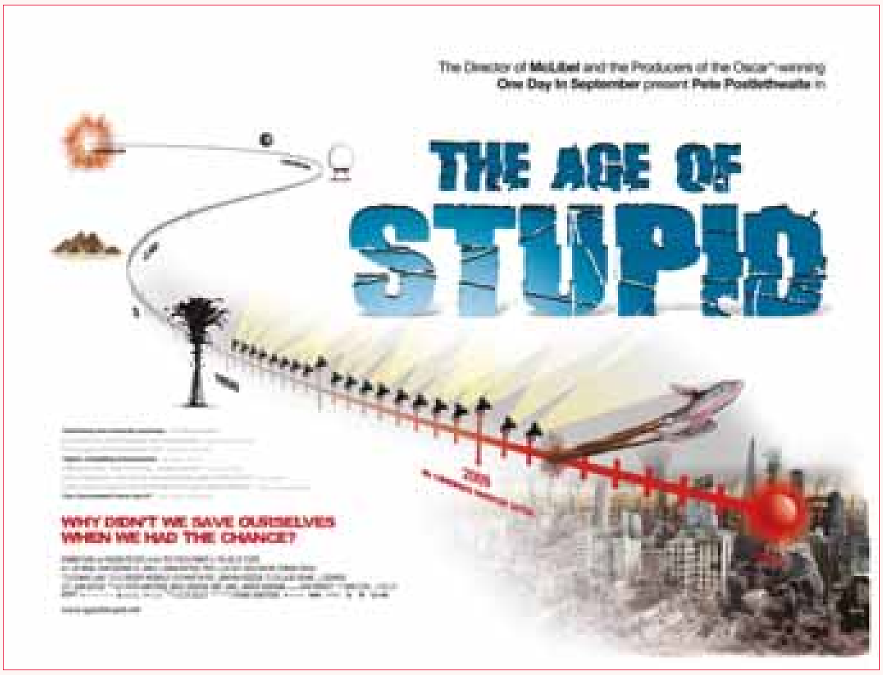
Peculiar denials

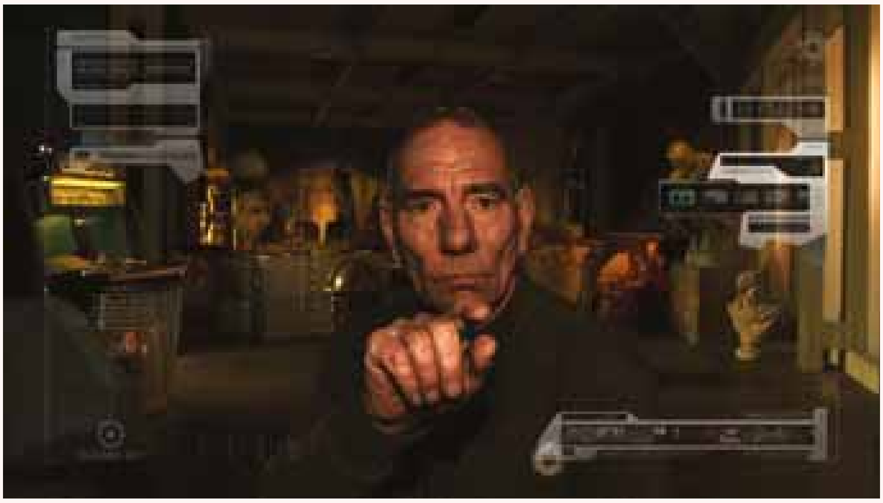
It seems peculiar that the single greatest threat to humankind's future should be treated with such scepticism in the media, when there is hardly any doubt that we are destroying our future. For example, severe weather is becoming more frequent as a consequence: the storms that hit southern England last winter; droughts like that experienced in California at the start of the year; the extensive flooding in Thailand in 2012. So why are right-wing newspapers and think tanks so dismissive of the idea that humankind is destroying the planet? After all, surely we will all suffer the consequences, irrespective of political viewpoint?

In order to prevent a disaster for our entire civilisation, governments will ultimately have to regulate carbon emissions, and develop a far greater exploitation of 'alternative' energy sources than we currently use. Those on the right of the political spectrum usually believe in the 'free' market ('free' in name only, not in reality) which means they are against any government intervention. If they admitted that humans are causing climate change, they would need to acknowledge that governments should intervene and regulate economies. Rather than do this, think tanks such as the European Foundation and GWPF ignore the reality of the situation, and use propaganda to prevent meaningful attempts to save the planet.

The Age of Stupid

Fanny Armstrong's brilliant documentary *The Age of Stupid* (UK 2008) outlines the catastrophe that faces us. It starts, in science fiction fashion, in 2055, when the planet is flooded and virtually uninhabitable. The keeper of the archive (played by Pete Postlethwaite) looks back on how the planet got into such a mess.





The bulk of the film is documentary footage from our time, showing how our climate is being devastated with very little being done to prevent the disaster. A scientist talks about how 2015 is the crucial date by which to stablilise carbon emissions if we are to prevent catastrophe. That's *next year*.

The Age of Stupid was crowd-funded; anyone could contribute toward the film's cost. This was necessary because commercial companies wouldn't, of course, finance a film with such an uncompromisingly grim message about our future. When I show this film to students they are, generally, unconvinced by what it is saying – which is strange, because it uses scientific evidence. Could it be that because the future is so grim people decide the best way to deal with it is simply to ignore the problem and hope it will go away? A bit like the ostrich that puts its head in the sand?

Human-made global warming will not go away, and it must be tackled. It is no longer enough to rely for support and action upon old politicians who will be dead by the times the worst effects occur anyway. It's you young people who must campaign strongly for meaningful action – because it is your future that is most at risk. As the older generation has failed to resolve the problem, young people are the only ones who can save the planet. But you don't have much time...

Nick Lacey is a freelance media educator and writer.

Follow it up

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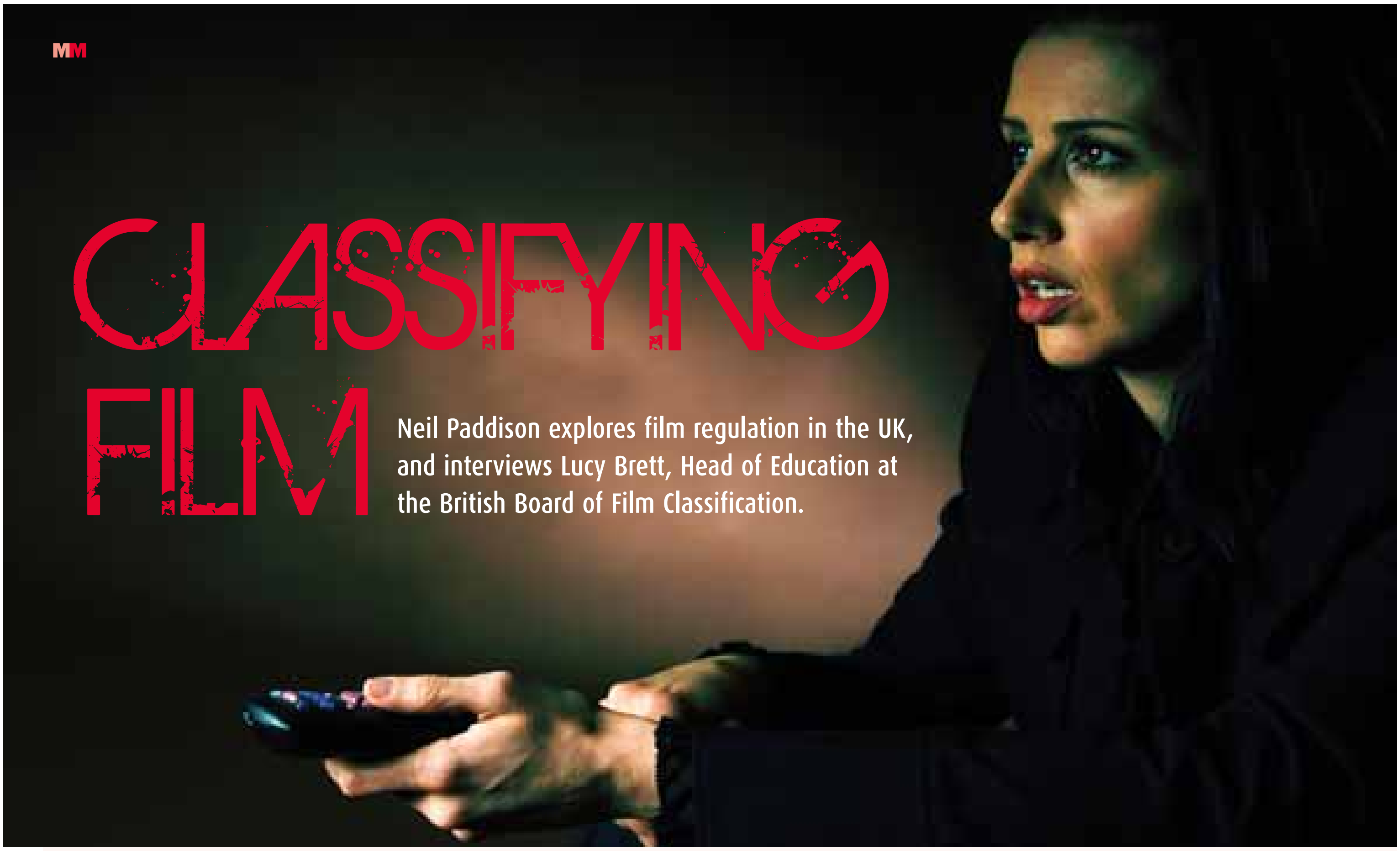

CLASSIFYING FILM

Neil Paddison explores film regulation in the UK, and interviews Lucy Brett, Head of Education at the British Board of Film Classification.

Earlier this year, students at Boston High School were lucky enough to be paid a visit by Lucy Brett, the BBFC's Head of Education. This article includes some of the key facts from Lucy's presentation, as well as her exclusive interview for *MediaMagazine*.

The BBFC regulates film for cinema or DVD release in the UK 'on behalf of local authorities', which reflects the economic advantage of nationwide regulation; without the BBFC, every local authority would have to classify films separately. Films are either passed (cut or uncut) or rejected. Few contemporary films are rejected. When the BBFC published a press release in 2011 to announce that *The Bunny Game* had been rejected, it said:

> **Recent media reports have repeated the mistaken claim that the BBFC has only ever refused classification to 11 works. Over the Board's entire 99-year history, the true figure is approaching 1,000 such decisions... In more recent years, the Board has typically refused classification to 1-2 works a year.**

In the early days of the Board, there were basically two rules: no nudity, and no portrayal of a living Jesus Christ. By 1916, there were 43 grounds for deletion, or the cutting of sequences, from offending films. These included 'scenes laid in disorderly houses', or brothels. The current rules are less euphemistic, and reflect the evolving society whose values and opinions inform the BBFC's guidelines. Indeed, the age categories are less value-laden than some earlier categories. In 1932, the 'H' category was introduced, with the H standing for 'horrific.'

According to Mark Kermode, writing in *British Horror Cinema*, it was

> **the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), whose impassioned entreaties to the Home Office led to the establishment of the new 'H' certificate.**
>
> British Horror Cinema 2002

Son of Frankenstein, starring Boris Karloff, was one of the earlier films to be given the 'H' category. Modern audiences are rather less likely to be scared by its pioneering special effects, which helps to explain its current PG rating. The re-classification from an H to a PG also points to the fact that regulation of the film industry is under constant review; film classifications can be changed to reflect public concern and changing social values.

There are limits to meaningful classification. The 'U' or universal category, for example, might apply to anyone under the age of 12, but below the age of 4 it becomes very difficult to predict exactly how a child might react to a film screened in a cinema. The darkness or the use of surround-sound systems might be as much an issue as anything happening on screen.

Regulation and classification are far more neutral terms than *censorship*, which has connotations of moral disapproval, cultural control, or even propaganda. But whilst we might think of cutting or banning a film as the only way of censoring film, there are other possibilities. For instance, regulators' messages can be *added* to a film. In India, for example, the Central Board of Film Certification currently requires filmmakers to add a 20-second anti-smoking message, 'with a voiceover of one of the actors who is seen smoking in the film' at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the film. In addition, it demands 'a static anti-smoking message to be displayed for the duration of the smoking scene in the film.' Last year, Woody Allen cancelled the screenings of his film *Blue Jasmine* from Indian cinemas in protest at these regulations.

Smoking is less of an issue in the UK, at the moment. Recent BBFC research

found that 'respondents across all target groups including teenagers, were clear that neither smoking nor alcohol were viewed as areas for concern for film classification.' Such research is one of the ways that regulation can be shown to be in step with public opinion. Another key way is the monitoring of complaints. *The Dark Knight* is a key film for looking at how the BBFC responds to complaints, and perhaps to media pressure. The *Batman* film, directed by Christopher Nolan, was the most complained-about film of 2008, with the BBFC receiving 364 complaints. There is a detailed case study of the classification of *The Dark Knight* on the BBFC website, which ends with the comment that complaints about the film helped to inform current guidelines on 'the tonal aspects of a work.'

If you are studying film, the BBFC website has a wealth of case studies (some of which are better than the films). But what if you fancy the idea of working for the BBFC? What's that like? Over to Lucy…

The MediaMagazine Interview:

Lucy Brett, Head of Education, BBFC, interviewed for MM by Neil Paddison and the students of Boston High School

Lucy Brett has worked at the BBFC since 2004, starting as an Examiner then becoming Education Officer in 2010. Before she joined the BBFC, Lucy taught Media Studies and was a journalist, writing for trade and consumer home entertainment magazines.

MM: As Head of Education, what does your role involve?

I run our education programme which includes a large visits programme where we go in to schools, colleges, universities and film festivals, to talk to children and young people about our work. We use these visits as an opportunity to ask young people for their views on recent decisions, and our broader work on communicating clearly with the public through tools like BBFCinsight, our newsletters and our website and Twitter feed. When I'm not visiting students, I manage our education website for young children (www.cbbfc.co.uk) and co-ordinate our education resources such as Case Studies and timelines, for the education pages of our main website www.bbfc.co.uk/education. We also produce resources such as classroom posters for teachers; organise research into teen opinions; work with partnership organisations to speak to different audiences at conferences and film festivals; and hold sessions with community cinemas for older audiences.

MM: What qualities make a good examiner for the BBFC?

Examiners need to have a broad interest and a broad mind, and must be able to watch a work, paying attention to detail, whilst also looking at the wider context of the work as a whole. They also need to keep in mind all the relevant legislation and the BBFC Classification Guidelines which are based on large-scale public opinion and reviewed every four to five years. It helps to love films, and examiners have a wide variety of different tastes. Most examiners come from backgrounds

which offer other expertise and experience, for example previous careers in law, the police, education, TV production, cinema exhibition, compliance, and other creative industries.

MM: What's the worst film you've ever had to watch? Was it classified or rejected?

There are some things I have seen at the BBFC which I would not choose to watch at home at all, but I used to work as a film journalist and reviewer so I have always been used to that.

Examiners are human beings and we all have our own sensitivities. The most distressing films for me are extreme reality works which include actual suicide footage, aftermath of terrorist attacks and executions. Works with very strong sexual violence like *A Serbian Film*, which was cut to achieve an 18 classification, can be difficult to watch.

MM: Which film do you think was the hardest one to classify?

Any film which sits on the borderline between two categories is hard to classify. You can be pulled very strongly in both directions, and sometimes you need to think really hard about who a film is for and how the likely audience will react. I find it hard to watch films or videos from genres to which I'm not usually drawn – I'd have to work much harder with a comedy that's not to my taste. I suspect the genre I find hardest is strong stand-up comedy, especially when it includes discriminatory attitudes, language or stereotypes.

MM: Does examining films ever spoil your enjoyment of watching films for fun?

No. Though sometimes I find myself distracted by listening out for swearing, or watching the audience if I'm in a cinema, to see what they are reacting to.

MM: Can a film's rating change its meaning for audiences?

An interesting question: just from my experience talking with students and other audiences over the years, I think it is possible. Certainly people can bring expectations to a film based on its rating. You can see that very simply when people mistake a film rated U as a film which is definitely aimed at children. I have also read quotes from film directors talking about the caché of certain ratings, for example 18s for horror films and how that fuels expectations and becomes an important part of the film.

MM: Might the '15' category actually encourage filmmakers to include bad language or violence in their films, just so they can achieve a rating that appeals to a teenage audience? Do teenagers avoid U, PG or 12A films?

It is possible, of course, that filmmakers might be mindful of the rating system here or anywhere else in the world when making a film, and therefore include or exclude details/swearing/gore/sex scenes and so on to try to achieve a rating but usually I'd imagine those decisions were creative or aesthetic.

Talking to teenagers, some of them might avoid lower ratings, but I find they have often watched a lot of films across the spectrum. Films like *Juno*, *Mama Mia*, *Frozen*, *Tangled*, *Coraline*, *Skyfall*, *The Dark Knight Rises*, *The Hunger Games* are known widely amongst 15-18 year olds.

MM: This interview will be published in time for the results of the Scottish referendum. Has the BBFC considered in advance what implications this might have for film classification?

The BBFC isn't a lobbying organisation, and we carry out our work by being designated by Parliament to do so. Our public consultation work, which we use to devise the Classification Guidelines, does include feedback from focus groups from across the UK, including Scotland. At the last review of the Guidelines, we saw little difference in attitudes between any of the regions and constituent parts of the UK. The review found high agreement levels with our ratings across the UK (92% agreed with the classification of films and videos they had seen recently).

MM: Do you think that film classification may have less relevance when so many younger viewers now have access to video-sharing websites such as YouTube?

I don't think so. What we see is a strong desire for the BBFC to classify films and videos available to stream and download. Platforms including Netflix and iTunes use BBFC classifications, even though they're not required to do so by law; the public tell us they want to see the same information and guidance online as they do in the physical world.

In terms of user-generated content, we're also working on a tool in partnership with the Dutch media regulator NICAM, that allows the public to rate a video when they watch it online, meaning video-sharing platforms could tailor parental controls in line with these ratings, or people can choose whether they want to watch a video based on the rating the crowd gives it. The tool is being tested by an Italian website at the moment and can be tailored to reflect any country's local sensibilities or Classification Guidelines.

MM: Given its history, what do you think the future holds for the BBFC?

It's really encouraging that the BBFC can continue to be useful to the public, even in the digital age. Our BBFCinsight information, which explains why a film received the classification it did, is very popular, and can be accessed on our website and on our free app.

We're also developing new services, such as the Classification Framework for Mobile operators, which they use to filter out content suitable for adults only. We're also being asked to classify apps specifically designed to provide TV content for children, which is an exciting new area for us. Essentially the BBFC will continue to work with the public to provide the tools and standards they want, for as long as they'd like us to.

Follow it up

- BBFC case studies of key films http://www.bbfc.co.uk/case-studies
- BBFC FAQs www.bbfc.co.uk/about-bbfc/faqs
- BBFC radio-documentary style podcasts on a variety of topics, e.g. horror, violence, and sex http://www.bbfc.co.uk/case-studies/podcasts
- BBFC Guidelines 2014 Research Report – detailed summary of focus group discussions with reference to recent films including *Black Swan* http://www.bbfc.co.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/2014%20Guidelines%20Research.pdf
- Find out how much it would cost to get your film classified! http://www.bbfc.co.uk/industry-services/fee-calculator
- How advertising in cinemas is regulated by the BFBC http://www.bbfc.co.uk/industry-services/theatrical-ratings/advertisements
- Guardian article on the classification of The Human Centipede 2 http://www.theguardian.com/film/2011/oct/06/human-centipede-2-18-classification
- Guardian article on BBFC's focus group research http://www.theguardian.com/film/2012/jul/11/censors-focus-sexually-violent-films?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3487
- India's rules on smoking shown in films screened in cinemas http://cbfcindia.gov.in/home.aspx?loc=home&va=45
- Request a speaker from the BBFC for your school or college http://www.bbfc.co.uk/education-resources/teacher-guide/request-speaker

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IN THE FLESH – RECASTING THE ZOMBIE GENRE

BBC3's brilliant *In the Flesh* has just won a BAFTA – amazing for first-time writer Dominic Mitchell, and particularly ironic at a time when the Beeb's digital 'youth' channel is about to be relocated online. Siobhan Flint explores its appeal.

Dominic Mitchell's BAFTA-winning supernatural drama series *In the Flesh* – his first-ever TV development – was first broadcast in March 2013 on BBC3 as a three part mini-series. Targeted primarily at a youth audience, its success has just seen it return for a second series. But this time Mitchell has six hours in which to explore and develop what have already been some very heavy themes for a 'zombie' drama.

Set four years after a zombie uprising in the contemporary fictional village of Roarton, Lancashire, treated zombies are rehabilitated back into society. Mitchell cleverly uses the dark premise of the zombie genre to delve deeper into some very real issues plaguing contemporary British society: prejudice, alienation, immigration, terrorism, crime, fear of the 'other' or the 'outsider', and the possibility that rehabilitation might actually work. When writing the text, Mitchell reflected on mental illness and those who have committed serious crimes. It's a dangerous proposition when we live in a society that has a fear of the 'reformed' and one that allows Mitchell to incorporate a political dimension to the text.

The narrative centres on Kieran Walker (Luke Newbury), a sensitive, softly spoken 18-year-old who rises from the dead having previously committed suicide. Under a government protection order, Kieran, along with thousands of others, is rehabilitated back into society as a medicated sufferer of 'Partially Deceased Syndrome' (PDS) rather than as 'zombies'. It's an interesting take on what sometimes appears to be a saturated genre (*The Walking Dead*, *The Returned*, *The Fades*) because it allows the audience to consider their own deep-rooted prejudices and where they might originate. Mitchell says, 'I wanted to ground it in that kind of realism – in what would happen if a zombie apocalypse happened in England for real?'

Visually, the text adopts a realistic aesthetic. The cinematography is naturalistic and serves to create a sense of gritty verisimilitude in an otherwise fantastical narrative. The dark and de-saturated colour palette reflects not only the bleak life and attitudes of those who inhabit Roarton, but also the feelings of those returning to such hostile environments.

Series 2 – The opening

The first episode begins with a flashback in which Kieran and another member of the 'undead' attack and savage members of the Human Volunteer Force (HVF – a militia headed by 'Bill' and formed by the locals of Roarton to hunt down and kill any 'rotters') in an empty supermarket whilst still in their rabid state. Mitchell adheres to all the usual visual conventions here to convey the zombies as the 'monster' figures. Close-ups of rabid violent faces feeding on bloody brains are juxtaposed with tense suspenseful music and low-key lighting (see Fig. 1 below). However, it is the representation of, and reaction to, the zombies in their treated state that allows for the exploration of the issues at the core of the text, and one in which we see the role of the 'monster' shift.

The scene cuts to a stark and clinical consultation room in which Kieran reveals his guilt and fear at the

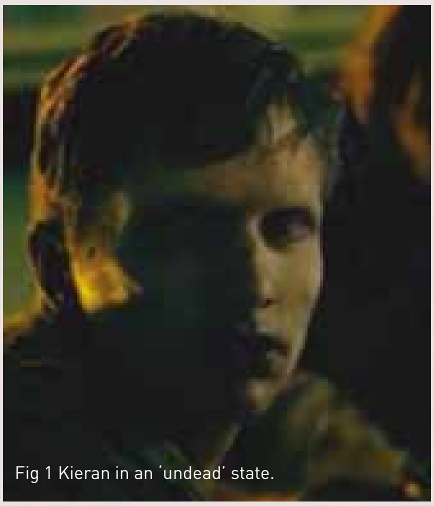


Fig 1 Kieran in an 'undead' state.


Fig. 2: Kieran now medicated and rehabilitated.

Fig.3: Bill leads the HVF and actively hunts 'rotters'.

prospect of returning back to the village in which he 'killed people' (see Fig. 2). Represented more like a patient in a psychiatric unit as he sits anxiously wearing the regulation white garb, he has, of course, good reason to be fearful. Roarton is a rural community where anonymity does not exist. The residents of Roarton view PDS sufferers as vicious killers and believe that: 'once a rotter, always a rotter'. This serves as a metaphor for the small-minded and fearful in society who cultivate stereotypes of the 'other' and make assimilation an impossibility. However, Roarton is also a reflection of wider society, a microcosm of Britain – a Britain driven by technology and social media in which anonymity is fast becoming an impossibility, and one in which it is all too easy to initiate a moral or social panic.

The consultation scene also allows the audience to question their own attitudes. When Kieran asserts that he is 'a zombie that killed people', the doctor replies, 'No Kieran, what are you?' and Kieran responds accordingly, yet unconvinced: 'I am a PDS sufferer and what I did in my untreated state was not my fault'. Of course, there are parallels to be drawn here between those with mental illness and those with drug addictions who have committed offences whilst un-medicated or under the influence of mind-altering substances. It makes us question the notion of behavioural ownership and rehabilitation and recovery. In a society largely consumed by fear and anxiety, this is often a difficult concept to accept and support, while in the event of a real 'apocalypse', even the most tolerant would probably not want a PDS sufferer living next door to them.

In a society that is obsessed with the visual aesthetic, Mitchell acknowledges that our physical appearance can play a large factor in whether we are accepted and included. The PDS sufferers are given coloured contact lenses and 'cover-up mousse' to ensure they are not visibly 'different' in a way that might expose and thus ostracise them. Adopting this belief is the key

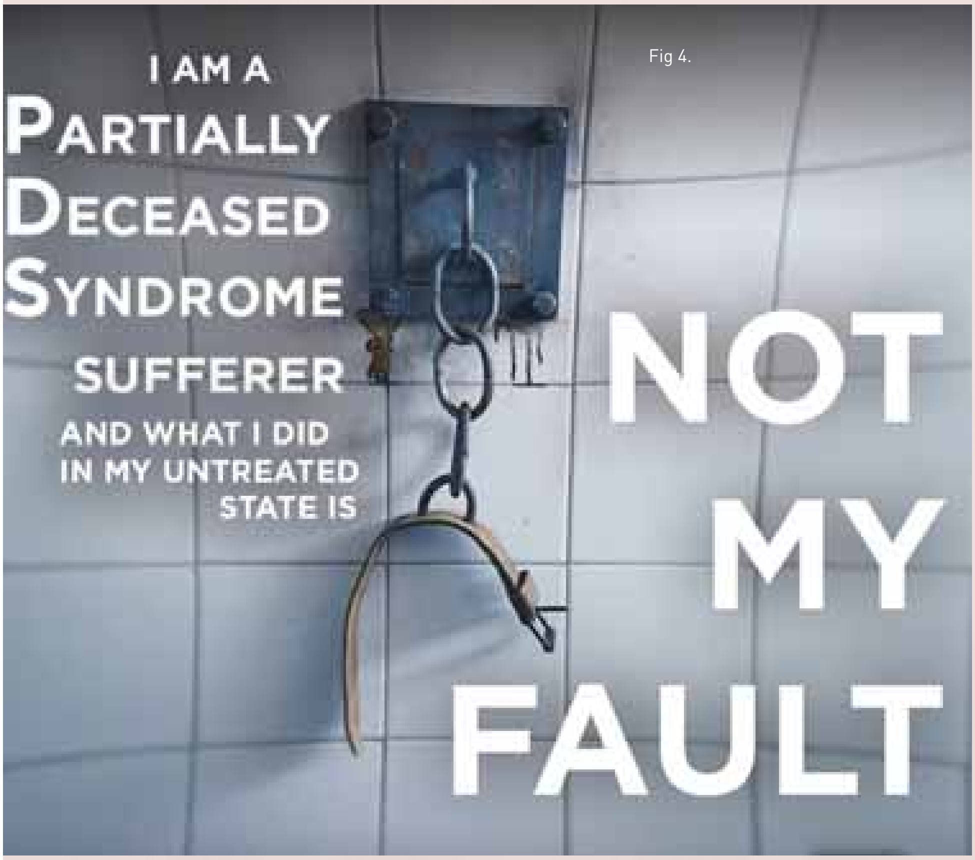


Fig 4.

to inclusivity and acceptance from others – it reinforces the idea that if we are not externally dissimilar to those around us, then we must hold the same ideological views and values. How can we fear or reject someone who seems the same as us?

However, Mitchell also establishes that this concept doesn't always exist in practise. Bill's hatred for Kieran predates the uprising, and serves as both a sub-plot and sub-theme as Mitchell carefully weaves the issue of homosexuality into the narrative. Bill sees Kieran's sexual orientation as a weakness and Kieran was ostracised by his community and viewed as an 'outsider' even whilst very much alive (see Fig. 3, page 19).

In the same spirit as the French supernatural drama *The Returned* (*Les Revenants*), in which the dead resurface in a small town, the families of the risen have to hide and conceal them for their own protection. When they are discovered they are hunted or segregated from society. Or, as in the climatic ending of the first episode, gunned down. Kieran's parents nervously welcome him back into the family, although they struggle to fully accept what he is and what he has done. They are in denial. The audience watch Kieran pretend to eat dinner with his family to pacify their own need to see him as 'normal'. Yet his sister Jem has become an active member of the HVF, and is rather more open in her opinion of what Kieran really is. This seems to stem largely from his suicide, which she finds difficult to forgive and accept: 'you never even left a note'. So Kieran now finds himself not only struggling for acceptance but also struggling with his conscience.

The politics of Season Two

The second series of *In the Flesh* sees Mitchell develop the necessary political dimension of the text. The residents of Roarton hold the belief that the Government has made a huge mistake by integrating such 'dangerous fiends back into the community', under a scheme which includes a PDS domicile care initiative and a legislative act to protect the PDS. They question, 'Who will protect us?', and a political backlash becomes inevitable (Fig. 4, above). This arrives in the form of a new extreme pro-living political party, 'Victus'. Drawing some obvious parallels to current political dogma, Victus do not claim to be anti-PDS, but more 'pro the living'; and they are gaining authority and credence. Maxine Martin has been elected as the Victus MP for Roarton. Her speech to the people can be viewed as an allegorical one that encompasses all the ignorance and fear that exists within such political parties and which feeds the minds of the already terrified and easily persuaded:

> "Do not be fooled by the lies peddled by the corrupt elite. These so called Partially Deceased Syndrome sufferers are not like you or me with normal hopes and dreams. They may pretend to be like us, but what lies beneath that mask of make-up and medication is a cold hard killer that cannot be reasoned with. The PDS sufferer in your home, in your shop, in your pub, is one missed dose away from tearing your head apart."

In essence, *In the Flesh* is a narrative that deals with loss, guilt and redemption. It acts as a social commentary on contemporary British society and explores our reactions and prejudices to those who are often viewed as 'different' and are ostracised as a result. Yet in Roarton, the living can be just as dangerous as the undead; and what the audience are really left to ponder is the notion that the most dangerous monster of all is, in fact, very much human.

Siobhan Flint teachers Media Studies at Colchester Sixth Form College.

THE TOOLS TO SUCCE$$

AN INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA CONCEPTS

Success in Media Studies is based on students' knowledge and understanding of the modern media and the relationship between media products, media producers and media audiences. Two things will help a media student succeed: a detailed knowledge of a range of media products, and a knowledge and understanding of media concepts. In the first of a series of concept-based articles, lecturer Steph Hendry introduces you to the basics.

Media concepts are often the starting point on Media Studies courses. Over the next few issues of *MediaMagazine* we will look at each of the concepts and consider how we can use them to analyse both media products or texts, and the media environment in which we find ourselves. If you are new to the subject, this will be an introduction to the ideas central to each concept. If you are a second-year student, you can use it as a refresher of the concepts at the heart of the subject.

Whatever assessments your exam boards requires, your knowledge of media products and your ability to analyse them will be tested in a variety of ways. For example, depending on which specification you are taking:

- you may have to create a **case study** analysing a number of media products in a topic area. You will need to consider the topic and products in a variety of different ways, identified by the media concepts.
- you will have to **research the way media products are constructed to help you plan your own production coursework**. Analysing real media products using media concepts will help you make informed decisions when working in a practical environment.
- you may have to **analyse the success (or not) of your own production work** – and a framework of media concepts should enable you to evaluate how your work compares to real media productions and how well you have followed your brief.
- you may be required to **analyse 'unseen' media products that you meet for the first time in the exam**. This tests your knowledge and understanding of media concepts, and your ability to analyse and comment on a range of different texts.

So, across all the different types of assessment, what is clear is that a knowledge and understanding of media concepts is at the centre of everything you will do in Media Studies. The media concepts may be approached in different ways in different assessments; and they may be discussed differently across text books and between teachers. Each Awarding Body describes them somewhat differently, but however they are categorised, there are seven basic media concepts with which you need to be familiar in order to achieve highly. Some examinations require a specific focus on one or more of them, so remember to take your teacher's advice on how to draw on them in assessments. What follows is an introduction to the concepts and some discussion on the interrelationships between them.

The categories – as defined by the AQA Media Studies GCE specification

In general terms, media products are divided into three categories. These categories are based on the way audiences access the media product:

- **Print** – paper based media products such as newspapers, magazines, print advertising;
- **Broadcast** – this term usually refers to audio or audio/ visual or moving image media and includes anything that is transmitted via radio or television. Films are usually included as broadcast too, even though they are sometimes accessed in different ways.
- **E-Media** – sometimes called **digital or online media**. Originally this meant anything that was accessed via some form of digital technology. This would now include websites, web advertising, social media, video and online games.

Media Language

Media language refers to the choices made by a media producer when constructing a media product. The 'language' will depend on the type of media product.

The producers will have deliberately chosen the media language they use. However, these producers do not always have a totally free choice; they may be influenced by the target **audience** they are trying to appeal to, or by the **institution** or organisational interests behind the construction. Some **genres** depend on the familiarity or repetition of specific media language choices; and there may be a range of **representations** expected by the audience. One of the primary skill-sets in Media Studies is the observation and recognition of media language choices, the ability to analyse the reason that a choice has been made, and its potential impact on audiences. This is the basis of good analysis; and the tools that help media students are the media concepts.

Representation

Everything you see in the media is a representation or, at its most literal, a **re**-presentation – the depictions of people, places, ideas and things are all constructed using media language choices. The media language choices are made quite deliberately as they will support a set of ideas that the media producer wishes to communicate. They may want to create the idea of a certain type of character; they may want to construct a location that has a specific atmosphere; they may want to shape the way the audience feels about a specific idea.

To take a few examples...

People

Teenagers are notoriously represented negatively. They are stereotyped as hedonistic party animals (*Skins* C4 2004-2013) or criminals (most news stories featuring 'youth'). Sometimes these stereotypes are challenged as in the recent BBC3 fly on the wall documentary *Junior Paramedics* (BBC3 2014).

Places

New York has seen its representation change over time. In the 1970s and 80s it was a dangerous place, infested by crime and the sex-trade (see for example *Taxi Driver* dir. M. Scorsese 1976); in the 1990s it became an aspirational city centring on shopping, leisure and hedonism (as portrayed in *Sex and the City* HBO 1998-2004). Immediately post-9/11 it became a city that showed resilience when under threat (see *Spiderman* dir. S. Raimi 2002). Interestingly, in the post-economic crash era, New York has recently had a lower profile in media products than in previous decades.

the guardian

Sleaze row leaves Cameron weakened as Miller resigns

Britain wasted £560m on anti-flu drugs, say scientists

Ideas and Things

Top Gear (BBC2 2002 onwards) creates representations of motoring and cars that associate a mode of transport with a set of ideas. Motoring is a male pursuit, and it is fun – especially when taking risks. Cars are seen as toys, and status is achieved by those prepared to risk the most and/or get involved in the most extreme stunts.

All of these representations are created through the media language choices made by the producer. They all contain **ideological** perspectives and may be influenced by **audience** and **institution** or be specific to certain **genre**.

Ideology and Values

All media products communicate ideas and values to the audience. Put simply: these are the attitudes and beliefs embodied within a media product. Some of these values may be explicit and easy to identify.

For example: the headline: **'EU Plot to Axe British Number Plates'** in the *Daily Express* (10th April 2014, see right) leaves no doubt as to the ideological values regarding Europe held by the newspaper. The choice of the word 'plot' has associations of subterfuge and underhand behaviour, and 'axe' is a violent word. The combination of these language choices creates a representation of the EU as a sneaky and dangerous organisation, reinforcing the paper's explicit ideological position that the UK should leave the European Union. The image of Prince George is unrelated, but adds to a nationalistic 'patriotic' stance. The

15p DAILY STAR

Heir's looking at you, kid!

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

UNITED WE FALL

PEACHES HOOKED ON 'SUICIDE GIRLS' WEBSITE

subject of the 'violence' is number plate design and the paper has managed to make a front-page news story from a somewhat petty issue.

The paper's **ideological** values can be discussed by analysing the **media language** choices and considering the type of **representation** being created.

Genre

Until recently the genre of a text was an important factor in its meaning. Media products were grouped according to categories – the Western movie, the film noir, the rom-com, for example – and could be identified by their use of recurrent and familiar codes and conventions. Genres helped audiences select (or reject) media products, and institutions found them useful in a number of ways, not least in the marketing of a product. In the contemporary era, genres are increasingly less concrete and predictable; across all platforms, old generic conventions are giving way to the blurring of genre differences, therefore subverting audience expectations. Nevertheless, genre can still be a useful starting point for analysis.

Narrative

Narrative is the term used to describe the way a media product structures and tells its story. The events of a story are the plot; and the narrative is the structure of the story and the techniques used to tell it. Like other media concepts, narrative is an outcome of media language choices, and representations are used to create characters that have specific roles within the telling of the story. All narratives rely on conflict in some way, and so narratives take ideological positions in their use of certain roles and in their resolution. Conventional narrative is linear, and follows a standard and logical structure. The analysis of narrative is a useful way of unpicking the values and ideologies within a media product; 'villains' frequently represent ideas and values that are rejected by the text, whilst 'heroes' often embody the ideas and values that are accepted and admired. However, there are many ways conventional narrative can be subverted, and the manipulation of structure and character creates particular experiences for audiences.

5p DAILY EXPRESS

MILLER QUITS IN DISGRACE BUT WILL GET PAYOFF

PEACHES GELDOF 'DEATH A MYSTERY'

EU PLOT TO AXE BRITISH NUMBER PLATES

Playboy Prince George

They want standard European car reg

The subversive narrative of *Breaking Bad*

'Heroes' are central to conventional narrative and the focus of a story: traditionally the hero is the character audiences will follow, and who has goals to achieve. Audiences tend to sympathise with the hero, willing him (traditionally it would be a 'he' rather than a female) to overcome obstacles and succeed. *Breaking Bad* (AMC 2008-2013) created an 'everyman' hero in Walter White – a character who was normal and found himself in a terrible and tragic situation. Audiences could identify and sympathise with him. But within the first episode of the hit TV series, Walt had made decisions that were clearly 'wrong' and 'immoral'; and much of the 'pleasure' in watching the show was to see how far the 'hero' would fall.

Audience and Institution

The final media concepts raise their own issues, but are also closely related. If we acknowledge that all media products need an **audience** if they are to survive, then it is clear that **institutions** produce texts with this in mind. Institutions need to find their audience, appeal to their audience, and reach and then maintain their audience. How they do this will depend on who that audience is of course, and what the institution thinks they will respond to. The primary aim of any media institution, from a newspaper group like *The Daily Mail* and General Trust to a Hollywood studio, is to make a profit: and so understanding their audience is crucial. We don't often hear about the failures: media products that are not successful are rarely discussed and tend to disappear quickly. Failures could happen because the marketing of the product wasn't effective, or because the product did not appeal to its audience sufficiently. Failure can be very expensive for institutions; but as high profile successes show, when media producers get it right the rewards are great.

The X-Factor Factor

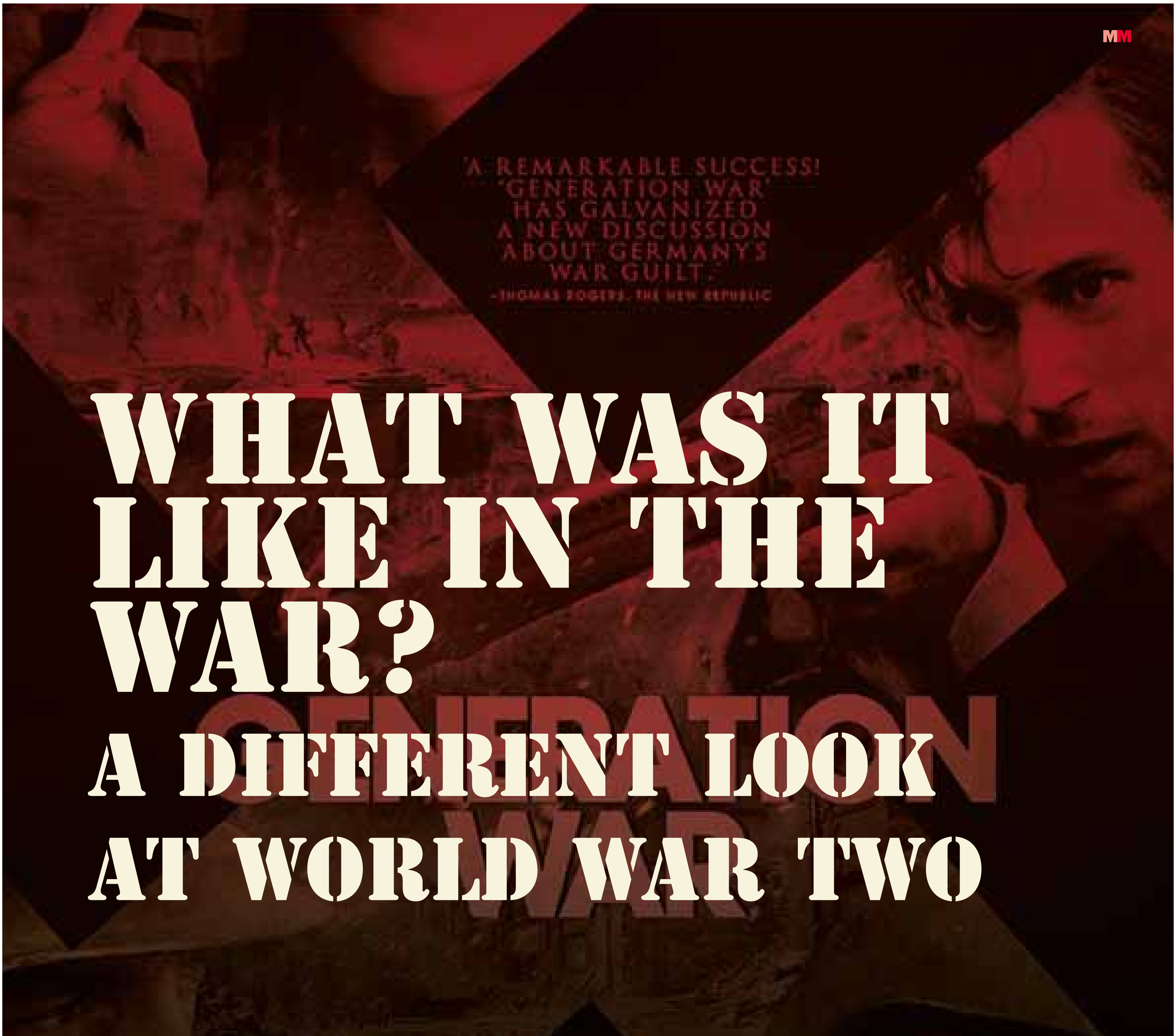
Even though it is currently showing a decline in viewers, *The X-Factor* (ITV 2004 onwards) still maintains some of the highest viewing figures on British TV. Its light entertainment, celebrity-led talent show format has proved to be incredibly successful, as has **Syco's** (Simon Cowell's production company) other main product *Britain's Got Talent*. Both programmes are supported by tabloid newspaper interest and a host of supporting programmes and online products (for example, a **YouTube** channel and website where clips can be watched). The institution (in this instance, FremantleMedia) has identified the types of pleasures, or gratifications, important to its target audience, and provides them using appropriate **media language** choices to add to the appeal. The **representations** on the programme tend to reflect conventional **attitudes and values** (with the occasional subversion, such as Susan Boyle, to keep people interested) and **narratives** that reflect mainstream values. The narratives 'talent will be rewarded' and the 'working hard overcomes adversity' are repeated constantly, providing reassurance for **audiences**.

Traditionally audiences were seen as passive receivers of the information, entertainment and messages sent by institutions. However, as the digital landscape has changed, enabling a greater degree of interactivity and autonomy for audiences, the relationships between audiences, texts/products and institutions are far more complex than that. The study of audience needs to consider audience behaviour and the ways different audience demographics use the media to receive a range of different gratifications. In today's digital world, audiences can take a far more active role in accessing, shaping and responding to media output. Not only can they directly influence the way texts are constructed but frequently they can also contribute directly to the content of media productions.

This introductory summary identifies just a few of the discussion points raised by the media concepts. These are the ideas that are at the heart of the subject, and will be central to your success in the exams and assessments you complete at the end of the academic year.

Next time: watch out for a closer look at media language.

Steph Hendry is a lecturer in Media at Runshaw College and a freelance writer and trainer. Follow her on Twitter @ albionmill



WHAT WAS IT LIKE IN THE WAR?

A DIFFERENT LOOK AT WORLD WAR TWO

World Cinema guru Roy Stafford evaluates the issues raised by a controversial trilogy of films about World War Two told by, and from the point of view of, young Germans – a very different perspective on the global events that still haunt much of Europe today.

On June 6, 2014 the few surviving veterans of the D-Day landings on the beaches of Normandy remembered their fallen comrades 70 years earlier. Most of us have learned something about those events through subsequent media representations, and for younger audiences today perhaps the best known of these is Steven Spielberg's film *Saving Private Ryan* (US 1998). A massive global hit, that film's most important achievement was that it provided an opportunity for young people to question their great-grandparents about the realities of a military campaign like the D-Day invasion. Spielberg's innovative use of camera and sound technologies represented the horror of the landings (which saw some of the heaviest casualty figures of the Second World War) in a way never seen before. (See *MediaMag* 37 for two useful articles.) The 'realism effect' of the scenes of carnage on Omaha Beach helped to create a discourse – an 'arena for discussion' – in which young and old could exchange ideas and emotions about the experience of war combat.

At the same time, the film was criticised for some of its historical inaccuracies, especially its American view of events, which tended to ignore the other allies. In the US, the UK and Canada, the three countries most directly involved in the Allied invasion of Europe, films and television dramas about World War 2 have been produced consistently since the 1950s. Most of the representations in these dramas, made by and for the 'victors', dwell on positive themes of heroism at the front and stoicism at home. There are important exceptions but overall 'remembering the war' is

carried out with the confidence that it was a just and fair war.

In other countries, especially across Europe, representations of 1939-45 have been more complicated. For the 'occupied' countries, there are still questions about who resisted and who collaborated. For the occupiers, there are questions about the mistreatment of civilians and the use of slave labour – and of course the use of internment and extermination camps in the Holocaust. In parts of Poland, for example, local populations found themselves occupied by Russians, Germans and then Russians again. What did 'national identity' mean for the millions of 'displaced people' at the end of the war? Many of these questions have remained unexplored for much of the ensuing 70 years; but communities are still living with the problems of the aftermath of war, as we have seen from the example of the Ukraine in 2014.

Generation War

A good way to gain some understanding of these important historical questions is to study a

wide range of wartime dramas from filmmakers based in different parts of Europe (or Asia and Africa). BBC2 offered an unusual opportunity to explore a German perspective on the events of 1941-45 when it screened the trilogy of feature-length TV films known (in the US/UK) as *Generation War* in April/May 2014. The German title of the film series is *Unsere Mütter, Unsere Väter*, literally 'Our Mothers, Our Fathers'. This points more directly towards the purpose of the series – to emulate the '*Saving Private Ryan* effect' and enable a dialogue between younger Germans today and the older members of their families.

The titles of each of the three films are *A Different Time*, *A Different War* and *A Different Country*, again directly referring to an attempt to explore what the war meant to a generation aged around 20 in the summer of 1941 – the generation born in 1919-1922 to the survivors of World War 1. There are five principal characters, close friends in Berlin. Wilhelm, the eldest, is already an officer in the German Army, having taken part in the invasions of Poland and France. His younger brother Friedhelm is a new recruit, seemingly more reluctant to fight but pressed to uphold the family honour by his father. Charlotte, secretly in love with Wilhelm, has signed up to 'represent German womanhood' as a nurse in an army field hospital. Greta and Viktor are also lovers. She aims to become a popular singer. Viktor is the most controversial character for many audiences – the son of a Jewish tailor. The narrative sends Wilhelm, Friedhelm and Charlotte east to the front that opens when Hitler starts the invasion of Russia. Greta meanwhile attempts to use her sexuality to seduce an important Gestapo officer in the hope that she can 'buy' an escape from Germany for Viktor.

A big success at home in Germany, the trilogy has been widely seen abroad, not least in Poland where it drew big audiences – and plenty of criticism for its representations of Polish partisans and anti-Semites. Because the films were shown on television they attracted audiences of millions for a single screening – rather than the few hundred thousand that even

a successful German cinema film might achieve over a long run. There have been several recent German cinema films that have attempted to tell different stories about the lives of individual Germans from 1941-5 but with the exception of *Downfall* (*Der Untergang* Germany 2004), about the last days in Hitler's bunker in Berlin, none of these films have been seen by large audiences in the UK. It's perhaps not surprising then that *Generation War* created a stir, with newspaper commentaries and a BBC2 discussion programme broadcast immediately after the transmission of the third film. Why were these films controversial?

The British and American perspective of German history

Because English-speaking cinema and television has had such 'confidence' in representing the war, it's not surprising that the British and American perspectives on events have become 'normalised', not just for English-speaking audiences but also for European audiences watching dubbed versions of Hollywood films. The films have been repeated on TV so often that a certain amount of complacency might have crept in – so that even when 'new' stories about the same period have been written, they are seen against the backdrop of conventions established over decades of production.

However, when faced with a German perspective on events, UK audiences aren't sure how to react. The most obvious symptom of this problem is the desire of audiences both to distinguish the 'good German' as a familiar character, and also to criticise films when this character appears because s/he is so conventional. Germans in war films are either 'good', or they are 'bad' and/or 'evil' Nazis. What is missing is the range between. Human beings are often both good *and* bad and act in ways that they later regret. Some are usually good, others are often bad. What is odd is that people who are like you and me, complete with human failings, are thought of as peculiar in many popular genre films. Here is the root issue with *Generation War*.

The BBC debate

The BBC2 discussion of the series featured three distinguished academics alongside one of the series producers from Germany. Chaired by Martha Kearney, a regular presenter of cultural programming on the channel, the discussion was intelligent and stimulating, and the three academic specialists in this period, historians Richard Evans and David Cesarani and writer/literature professor Eva Hoffman, all expressed their agreement on how well-made and exciting the films were. Nevertheless, they all saw a range of problems in representing the history of Central Europe during the Second World War.

Richard Evans, while asserting that the film was not plausible in historical terms, noted that it was as if 'five young Germans from today had been parachuted into the events of 1941-45'. He also admitted that it was impossible to represent characters from the 1940s in a modern drama in a historically accurate way. Of course, he is right, and that's why the film needs to be discussed as a *modern* drama, rather than a historical reconstruction. Its artistic intention is to engage younger Germans in an exploration of what their parents and grandparents might have experienced.

The second major issue raised was the depiction of the Poles, Ukrainians and Russians in the film, and more specifically their treatment of Jews. Again, the academics agreed that the events shown did have a historical basis, but that they weren't representative of the whole experience. They also agreed that it wasn't possible to cover the whole war in four and a half hours of television!

Perhaps the most difficult issue is the representation of how much ordinary Germans knew, at the time, about the extent and the horror of the Holocaust. The films do refer to this; and the narrative does include elements of the arrest of Jews and their transport to the death camps – but there isn't enough 'coverage' to satisfy some commentators in the UK or the US.

The danger here is that films about the period now concentrate so much on Holocaust stories that other experiences are lost or distorted in turn. There will always be a need for more films about the Jewish experience; but they need to be placed in context.

Filmic representations

What the BBC2 discussion did not do was to discuss this fascinating film trilogy in terms of how it worked as a long-form film narrative. Many years ago a distinguished film scholar, Victor Perkins, wrote a book entitled *Film as Film* (1972). All too often, the discussion of film and television programmes in the UK media fails to discuss films as films, but instead makes the naive mistake of 'reading off' the content of film narratives as if these were direct 'real' representations of real events unaffected by the process of mediation and the dialogue between filmic sounds and images and audiences in their many different formations.

Generation War was intended as popular entertainment on mainstream television. Inevitably it uses the conventions of mainstream cinema, including the generic conventions of the combat picture and the home-front melodrama. In order to produce three films, and to give equal weight to five personal stories, the narrative sometimes relies on artificial contrivances to enable characters to meet on the Eastern Front with its shifting lines of battle across Russia and Poland. None of the five characters are Nazis as such – although one becomes a cold-blooded killer with an unusual personal ideology. Another loses his belief in the reasons to fight; and all the characters do things that they might later regret. As the BBC discussants agreed, the five twenty-year-olds represent a generation that was bombarded by Nazi propaganda as young teenagers, but they still knew a world before Hitler; and the films contrast this generation with the teenagers of the Hitler youth, the children sent to fight in 1945.

The other issue for UK viewers is that all the action in the film refers to the Eastern Front, rarely covered in Anglo-American films apart from Douglas Sirk's *A Time to Love and a Time to Die* (US-Germany 1958), Sam Peckinpah's *Cross of Iron* (UK-Germany 1977) and the recent Edward Zwick film *Defiance* (US 2008). The comparison needs to be mainly with Russian and Polish films about the conflict. Most Anglo-American films about the war in Germany itself, like the other Spielberg hit *Schindler's List* (US 1998), tell stories that fit the Anglo-American perspective on the war and the Holocaust.

Other stories, other points of view

It's useful to consider as well other personal German stories, such as that of Sophie Scholl, a student in Munich who in 1943 began the 'White Rose' campaign to end the war. She was executed by the German state for treason, but has been remembered through several films, the best known of which is *Sophie Scholl, the Last Days* (Germany 2005) – distributed to every school in Germany. Two other recent films have also depicted the personal lives of young German women in the closing weeks of the war. *Lore* (Australia/Germany/UK 2012) describes the journey taken by a teenage girl and her younger siblings across Germany at the end of the war, while *Anonyma – A Woman in Berlin* (Germany-Poland 2008) is about a German journalist in Berlin during the final battle for the city in 1945 when she seeks the protection of a Russian officer, fearing sexual attacks by Russian soldiers. *Anonyma* is based on personal diaries and *Lore* is a literary adaptation. They are worth considering alongside the unexpected successful publication in the UK in 2010 of the 1947 novel *Alone in Berlin* by Hans Fallada, a classic story of wartime resistance to the war by an ordinary German couple. Together these films and novels provide a useful range of media representations of the period covered by Generation War.

Roy Stafford is co-author of *The Media Student's Book*, and author of The Case for Global Film at http://itpworld.wordpress.com

***Generation War* and other films discussed here are on UK DVDs.**

Love your viewfinder: framing your story

Any moving image pre-production storyboard work needs to start from striking and original visuals. In this extract from his new book *The Young Filmmakers' Guide*, Media Studies teacher Sean Richardson deals with the key to high grades in production: strong original photography.

Cinematic framing has been an art since filmmaking began, with directors of photography (DPs) working with directors to frame shots. As a student on a project, you are both the DP and the director, on top of the hundreds of other roles you fulfil.

Once you're ready to direct your production coursework, you will, as DP, frame your image with the viewfinder of your camera or camcorder. But before you get that far, you will already have undertaken extensive pre-production research to generate ideas about the framing and composition of each shot. You will need to have framed your shots correctly in order both to include particular features, and to eliminate unwanted aspects of your images that do not propel your story forward. Pre-planning and setting up your shots is central to this process.

In the universe of film, where you are dependent on what the camera actually captures, your viewfinder is king. Think of the shot, still or moving image, as a flat painting, seen through the viewfinder at all times. You may have seen footage of great directors at work, glued to a monitor, analysing what the images actually look like framed onscreen; there's a reason why Kubrick, Hitchcock, Coppola et al were all obsessing over the monitor rather than the 'real' space in front of the camera. What you *think* you are shooting is irrelevant; only the resultant footage is important. Terrible errors can often occur in student films, with inanimate objects sprouting from people's heads, or even worse.

Paying care and attention to your viewfinder will ensure your footage looks as good on playback as you imagined it would during the actual shoot. Over many generations we have learned to evaluate images in terms of age-old 'rules' of visual composition; and one compositional trick which helps is to concentrate on the rule of thirds (http://digital-photography-school.com/rule-of-thirds/). Cut out a piece of clear plastic the size of your viewfinder, and draw onto it a grid of two horizontal and vertical lines, thus dividing your image into nine squares. This provides you with a handy reference guide to the most important focus of your shot (Fig. 1).


Fig 1.

Leading lines in composition

Objects and elements within the photographic composition lead the viewer into the frame and guide the eye. The visual hierarchy of a picture or moving-image sequence – the order in which the human eye perceives what it sees – is a fascinating area to explore and exploit for your shoot. Objects such as streams, tree lines, walls and fences can create leading lines in a photograph; the way they are framed can exploit the way the eye prioritises and makes decisions when reading an image, and encourage us to draw particular meanings, associations or inferences from the image.


Fig 2.

Lines can evoke tone and feeling within an image. For example, sensual, curved lines, such as a road winding into the distance in Fig. 2, can evoke warmth and sensuality, drawing the eye into the image in a very attractive way. Horizontal lines in composition can signify equilibrium, a sense of the status quo, establishing a scene. On the other hand, vertical lines created by objects such as trees, shadows or door frames can be challenging and confrontational, creating an imposing feeling on the viewer. With Fig. 3 (see top middle column) the Peak District rocks create a dominant line in the composition, with the aeroplane trail criss-crossing the frame, creating a high impact image.


Fig 3.

Alternatively, an obscure angle using harsh textures and leading lines can be powerful and dramatic. A picture is evocative of a mood and we are conditioned to respond to images in a certain way. You can exploit this reaction to create a mood or a tone of your choosing by your shot selections. Consider this image of a heavily-textured tree shot from below, in which the tree dominates the frame, with its harsh textures almost palpable to the viewer.


Fig 4.

Imagine this as a still for a storyboard, evoking the brutal power of nature in a sequence from a drama. Or imagine it as the beginning of a slow-panning moving image shot that eventually reveals a character. The emotional impact of the framing and the angular lines and twists transfer across to the character – perhaps the antagonist of the sequence – who we can thus 'read' as twisted, rough or powerful, or perhaps as a generator of conflict within your narrative. So, apparently simple framing and composition choices can provide a 'shorthand' method of character creation in your digital story-telling.

Diagonals

Diagonal lines can be very directional elements in a filmic image. They have the power to draw the eye to key focal points in a shot, creating points of interest as they intersect with other lines, and often give images depth by suggesting perspective. They can also add a sense of action to an image and dynamically lead the eye to your key actor or point of interest in your compositional shot.


Fig 5: diagonals from classic film, *The Conformist* Bertolucci, 1970


Fig 6.

Classic Compositional Symmetry

Balancing the frame can be very effective and get great results. Symmetrical composition refers to a balanced shot, where each half of the frame is as important as and of equal weight to the other half. This is sometimes called more formal composition, if you are writing your pre-production commentary on how you storyboarded!

Asymmetry or *un*balanced composition can also sometimes be effective, as it can be more interesting and exciting. You could have a key actor in one side of the frame, dominating the space, drawing the viewer in, as in the image above (Fig. 6). This type of compositional experimentation is excellent and can achieve interesting results. The key is to experiment with each shot as you shoot, and play around with ideas... Do not be afraid to 'get it wrong' – remember, digital shooting is free. If it is not what you feel you want, press delete and take another shot.

Colour signifiers

Colour is very important in your shooting technique. If you shoot some exterior work on a frosty, wintry morning, then blues and whites may predominate. Blue, green and violet are cold colours, creating a sense of distance and rigidity. Ang Lee's *The Ice Storm*, 1997, is a masterclass in creating that rigid, fragile tone using the winter backdrop. The film deals with an ice storm that sweeps in, with one character, Mikey (Elijah Wood), electrocuted to death in the storm. Ang Lee paints a frozen vista beautifully,

Fig 7.

evoking the 1970's winter with blues and whites.

Reds, oranges and yellows are warm and sensual however, and you can experiment with the impact of this palette. To create audience engagement and empathy, you could bathe a character in a warm red light, for example. The hot tones would signify passion, sexuality and warmth, and this colour coding would transfer emotionally across to the character for the audience. The yellows, oranges and reds might come from a light source you have found on location, or from sunlight, or perhaps even firelight? Alternatively, if no such sources are available, you could adopt DIY or guerrilla filmmaking techniques, and experiment with orange or red material thrown over a lamp or light source. Suddenly, you have a warm filter effect and your shoot is bathed in an affectionate glow.

Fig 8.

In *Gladiator* (2000) Ridley Scott uses a warm colour palette to connote the family homeland of Russell Crowe's character, Maximus. As he trails his fingers through the corn in a highly stylised sequence, the non-diegetic audio, the mise-en-scène and the colours create a sense of warmth and family attachment.

Green is a suggestive colour evoking nature and a nurturing feel. The textures of woodland and rocks can give added depth to your still and moving image photography. If you photograph woodland in warm sunlight you can get some amazing effects – consider this image of a textured green, mossy rock, with warm sunlight creating an attractive glow, juxtaposed with the diagonal impact of the black shadow within the frame.

Fig 9.

Location shooting: interiors and exteriors

To achieve high grades with your film, you should use a mixture of locations, both exteriors and interiors, as you tell the story within your given sequence. Indoor and outdoor shooting both present their own unique challenges, but each can be very rewarding. The recreation of an office, a police station or a psychiatrist's study in an interior setting can be really effective; similarly, it is worth getting to the most dramatic location you can for your exterior shots. You may want to try to recreate the forests of Canada in a local wood, or suggest the feel of Eastern Europe in anwarehouse – and if you are daring and imaginative, you can!

The magic and illusion of film allows you to paint these scenes, using the tools I have outlined. The viewfinder is king, so what the frame depicts allows you scope to give the illusion of fantasy interiors and exteriors. But *always* keep that flat image of the viewfinder or monitor in your mind's eye.

Some practical warm-up exercises

1: Establish your locations

Go out on a 'recce' and get your 'principal photography' under way to pick up the establishing shots – which are so crucial in a project. Take shots with your compact or Digital SLR with the 'Rule of Thirds' grid turned on. And make sure you have an equal mix of location shooting: interiors and exteriors!

2: Before you get your video camera out, ask the key questions:

a. What is the purpose of this shot? what am I trying to convey or signify?

b. What is the most powerful way of presenting that shot/sequence?

c. What are the essential ingredients in my shot? What do I need to remove or crop out that does not fully tell my story?

3. Remember the importance of cropping and framing

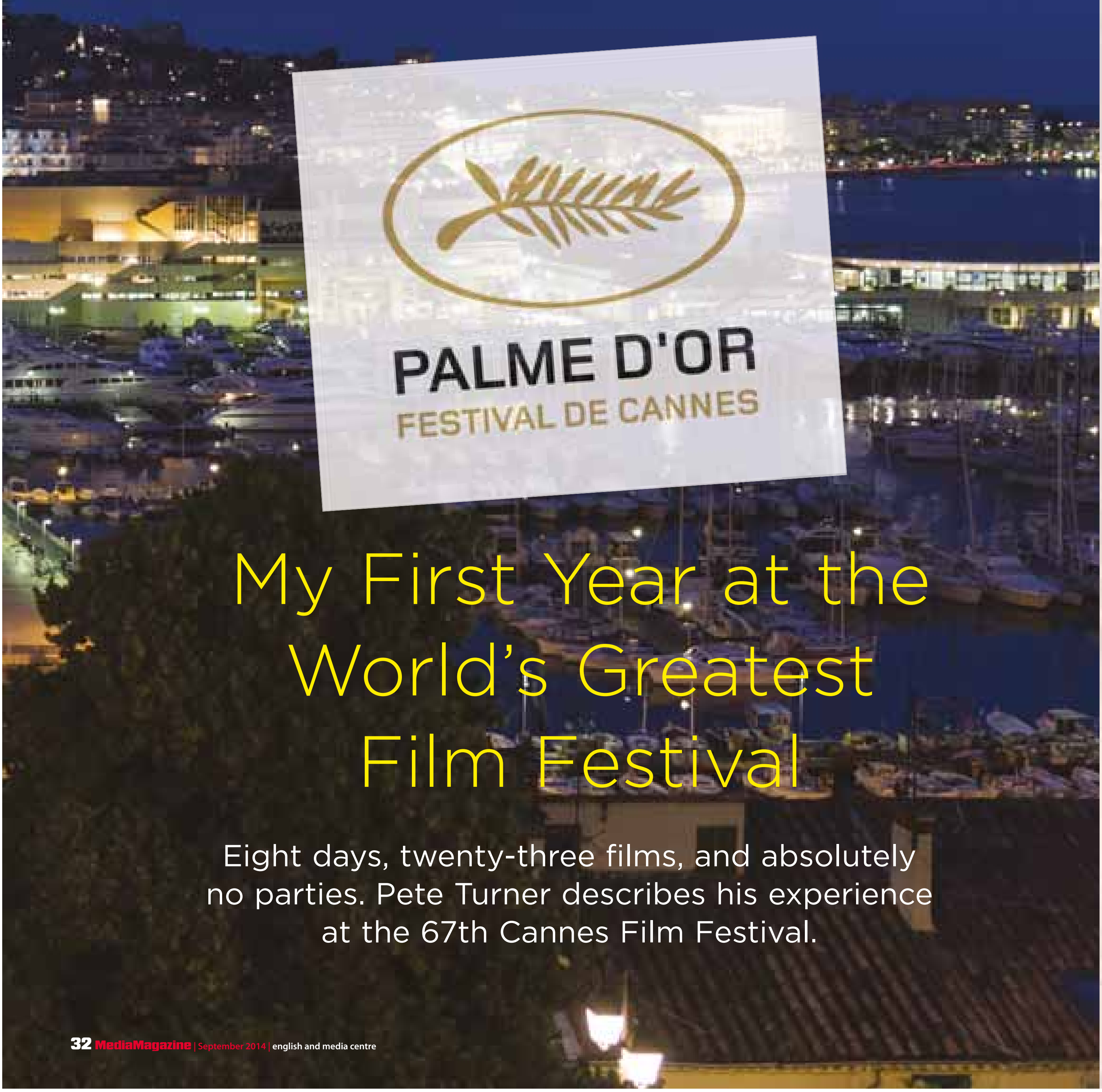
The images you use to establish your narrative need to set up expectation of the images to come. As you get into the habit of applying the rule of thirds to your visual compositions, then cropping the image mentally will become a feature of your shooting. You will crop out unwanted elements and objects that draw the attention away from the story you are telling.

4: Create interesting shapes and angles by standing in different positions that create a unique 'feel' to your film

Use the ideas on symmetry, asymmetry and colour to create a range of shots, and use this mantra to remind yourself that sometimes it's worth taking risks.

Sean Richardson teaches Media Studies at Penistone Grammar School, Barnsley and is Senior Team Leader for a leading Awarding Body. His book *The Young Filmmakers' Guide* is available from orders@zigzageducation.co.uk

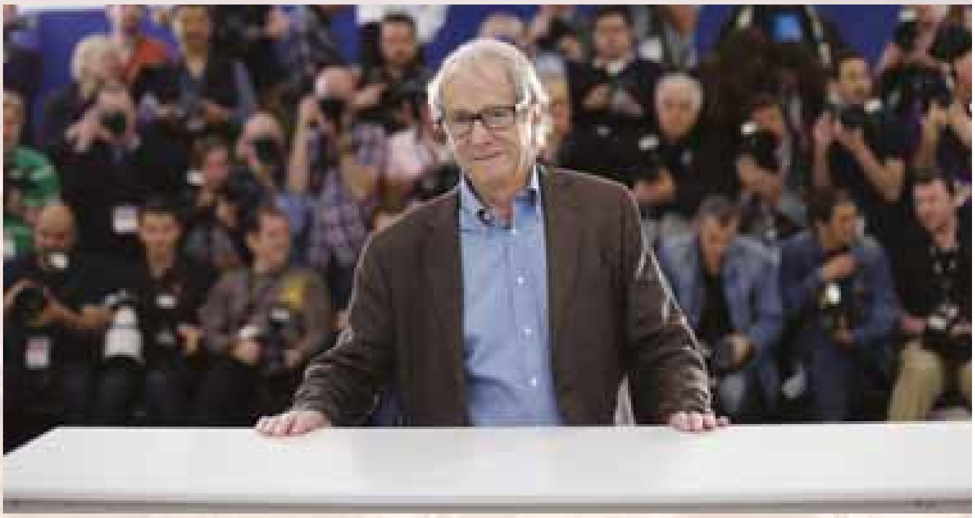
YES WE CANNES!



My First Year at the World's Greatest Film Festival

Eight days, twenty-three films, and absolutely no parties. Pete Turner describes his experience at the 67th Cannes Film Festival.

The world famous Cannes Film Festival, now in its 67th year, is a place where filmmakers from across the world come to share their cinema with an audience of critics, film industry professionals and elite viewers. The Festival is 12 days of films, films and more films. From Northern Africa to Turkey to Hungary, Australia and Argentina, there are representatives of World Cinema from across the globe. With so much press and attention everywhere you turn, Hollywood has unsurprisingly wormed its way in and also does its fair share of promoting, partying and stealing the limelight.



For the first time in my career as a film journalist, I got to attend the Cannes Film Festival for the festivities in 2014. In the eight days I attended, from the opening Wednesday to the following Wednesday, I viewed 23 films from many different countries, saw countless stars and film directors and didn't get an invite to a single party on the beach to drink myself silly until the sun rose over the posh villa/beachfront bar.

Not that I was there to party. That's for the Hollywood stars and the major power players. *Variety* magazine, *The Hollywood Reporter*, Harvey Weinstein and more hold infamous shindigs around town (and on fabulous yachts) during the Festival, but your average film critic isn't going to get any invites. Instead while the sun shone outside and the sunbathers lay strewn across the beach, I stood in giant queues and waited to see the latest press screenings in a darkened room out of the gorgeous Cannes heat.

I'm not complaining though. I saw some incredible films, even if I couldn't get into every screening. Out of the 18 films in the main competition for the coveted Palme D'Or prize, I got to see ten. These included films from the legendary British directors Mike Leigh and Ken Loach, the latest film from actor turned director Tommy Lee Jones and the unbelievable transformation of funny man Steve Carrell in the brilliant *Foxcatcher*. French New Wave legend Jean-Luc Godard was also there with his latest experiment in cinema and technology that featured some innovative if extremely headache-inducing use of 3D. While the Palme D'Or went to a three-and-a-half hour Turkish film (*Winter Sleep*), my pick of the bunch has to be *Relatos Salvajes* (*Wild Tales*) from Argentina, a portmanteau movie that had some of the most hysterically funny scenes I've seen all year.

In the Un Certain Regard section, my favourite of the bunch, *Feher Isten* (*White God*) from Hungary, won the top prize. This film has to be seen to be believed. After following the story of a dog who is trying to find his way back to his 13-year-old owner, *White God* suddenly takes a turn into completely unexpected and insane new territory. Again, it amazed me how hard I can laugh at over-the-top violence! Another actor turned director from America, Ryan Gosling, screened his derivative but fascinating directorial debut *Lost River* and even introduced

the film, much to the delight of some very excitable fans in the audience. I also got to sit just a couple of rows in front of Jessica Chastain and James McAvoy in the first screening of their newly re-cut (by Harvey Weinstein) *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby*. This had been screened, as originally intended, as two separate films at the Toronto Film Festival but at the behest of its infamous distributor, known by many as Harvey Scissorhands, is now a single film.

Between screenings, writing reviews in the press room, sleeping 5/6 hours a night and living on very quick and cheap trips to fast food joints, I also managed to squeeze in a couple of press conferences. I heard Best Actor winner Timothy Spall talk about the art of grunting in his latest film *Mr Turner* and saw the stars of *How to Train Your Dragon 2* including Cate Blanchett, Kit Harington (from *Game of Thrones*) and Jay Baruchel (from *This is the End*) talk about their upcoming animation sequel. Even if I didn't always get to attend the press conferences, I still managed to catch quick glances of the likes of Julianne Moore, Hilary Swank and Robert Pattinson as they breezed past.

All in all, it was an incredible experience. The website that I was writing reviews for managed to get myself and another writer press accreditation with blue badges. The press are divided into yellow, blue and pink passes; pink gets priority access to all the screenings followed by us blues, and finally the yellows are lucky to be let in if there are any places left. The two main cinemas, the Grand Theatre Lumiere and the Salle Debussy are massive and able to seat plenty, but there are still times when we were turned away. In order to get accreditation, you need to prove to the Cannes Film Festival organisers that your site/magazine has plenty of readers and that you are willing to write a lot about the Festival and the films.

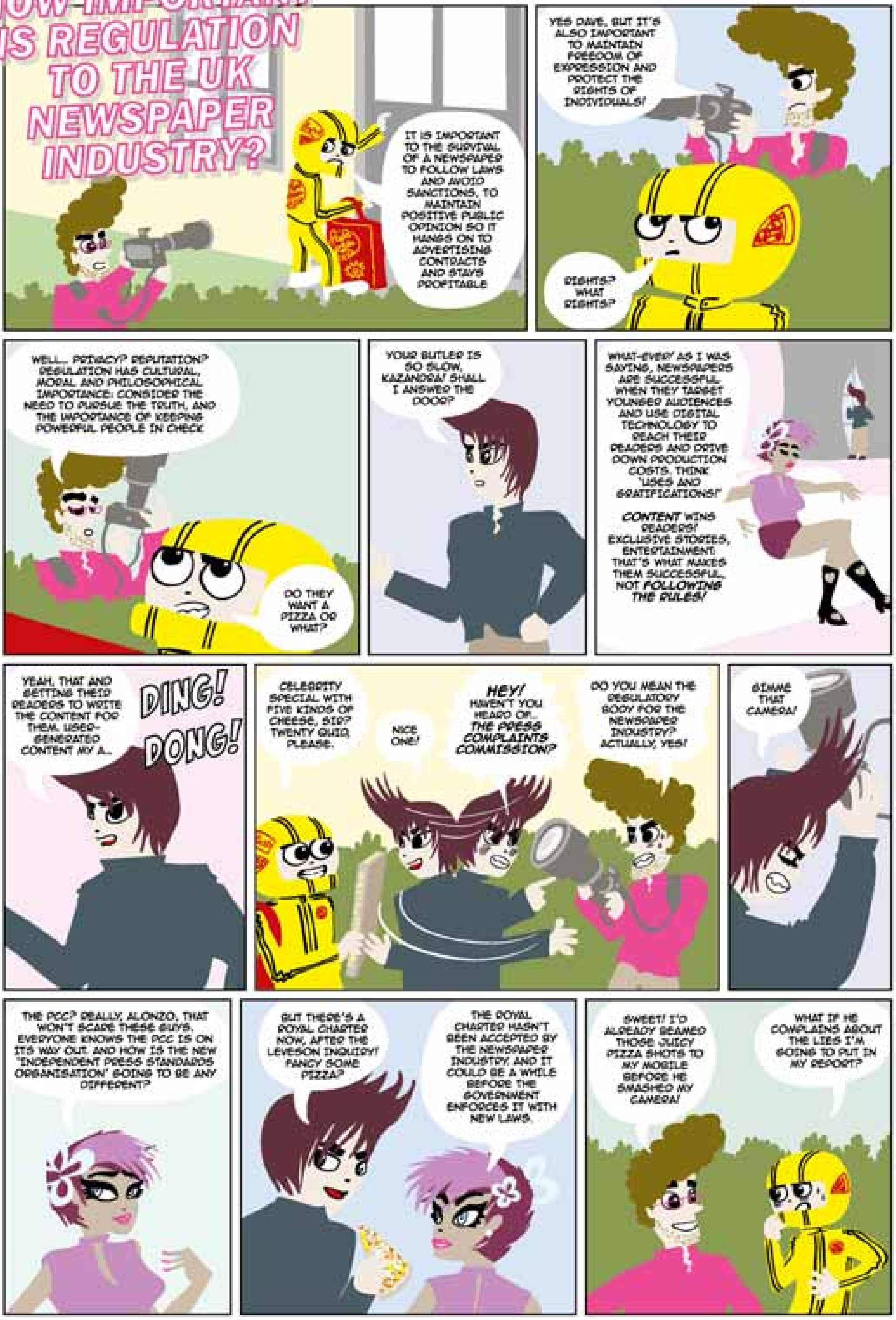
You Cannes too – how to get into the Festival

If you want to go the Cannes Film Festival and get press accreditation, then start a film blog, or get writing for another website. Ensure that you cover as many of this year's films as you can. Show then that even though you weren't there, you are still keen to write about the films and the Festival. Write news stories, features and reviews. Prove to anyone who reads it that you are capable of writing well and frequently, and that giving you a pass in 2015 will benefit them as well as you.

This year the cast of *The Expendables 3* rolled down the main street along the beach riding on a tank. The Croisette became a frenzy as a media scrum of snappers and fans fought to catch a glimpse of the likes of Arnold Schwarzenegger and Mel Gibson. It's symbolic of what has been happening in Cannes for many years now. The World Cinema that the Festival exists to celebrate is gradually becoming more and more crushed and rolled over by the publicity stunts of the major Hollywood studios. For that reason, those who are lucky (and hardworking) enough to get press passes must do everything they can to sing the praises of offbeat, unique films such as *Wild Tales, White God* and a brilliant documentary *Red Army* in order to ensure that they find the audience that they deserve without the backing of major studios and their marketing departments. Forget the parties, the beach and the Hollywood stars: the Cannes Film Festival is a brilliant chance to wallow in World Cinema and to soak up every drop of the silver screen you can manage.

Pete Turner is undertaking a PhD at Oxford Brookes University, writes a film blog at http://ilovethatfilm.blogspot.com/and is currently writing a book on The Blair Witch Project. All of his reviews from the Cannes Film Festival can be found here: http://www.tasticfilm.com/category/festivals/cannes-film-festival

HOW IMPORTANT IS REGULATION TO THE UK NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY?




WELL THE EDITORS' CODE OF PRACTICE, CLAUSE ONE, DOES COVER 'ACCURACY'. HE'D HAVE TO FILE A COMPLAINT UNDER THAT HEADING.
I KNOW THAT! I MEAN WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME?
I BET WHATEVER THEY PRINT IN THE PAPERS, NOTHING WOULD HAPPEN IF I COMPLAINED! FOR EXAMPLE, THE PCC WEBSITE LISTS OVER 250 COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE DAILY TELEGRAPH. ONLY SEVEN OF THOSE WERE UPHELD, AND FOUR OF THOSE WERE COMPLAINTS MADE BY PEOPLE IN POSITIONS OF POWER, IN PUBLIC OFFICE. AND ALL THE UPHELD COMPLAINTS WERE MADE BY MEN.
MAYBE SOME READERS DON'T UNDERSTAND THE RULES BEFORE COMPLAINING, ALONZO. BESIDES, THE PCC DOESN'T EVEN COVER ALL NEWSPAPERS. YOU CAN'T COMPLAIN ABOUT THE DAILY EXPRESS, FOR INSTANCE, BECAUSE THEY OPTED OUT IN 2010!
IN 2009, 14 PUBLICATIONS BREACHED CLAUSE FIVE OF THE EDITORS' CODE WHEN THEY PUBLISHED EXCESSIVE DETAIL ABOUT A SUICIDE INVOLVING A CHAINSAW.
YES, BUT THAT WAS THE RESULT OF *CHURNALISM*: MANY NEWSPAPERS REPORTED THE NEWS AGENCY STORY WITHOUT EDITING IT CAREFULLY ENOUGH. IN 'FLAT EARTH NEWS', NICK DAVIES SAYS NINETY PERCENT OF COMPLAINTS TO THE PCC ARE "REJECTED ON TECHNICAL GROUNDS." YOU'VE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT MATE!
REALLY, THE PCC SEEMS SO TOOTHLESS THAT I'M AMAZED THE NEWSPAPERS BOTHER EMPLOYING REPORTERS AT ALL! THEY COULD PRINT WHAT THEY LIKED AND NOTHING WOULD HAPPEN!
WELL THERE'S CERTAINLY A MOVE TOWARDS CITIZEN JOURNALISM, BUT THERE ARE SOME LAWS THAT AFFECT NEWSPAPERS, INCLUDING LIBEL LAWS, D-NOTICES, ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACTS, AND CONTEMPT LAWS.
BUT NOBODY INDEPENDENTLY CHECKS WHAT THE NEWSPAPERS ARE GOING TO SAY BEFORE THEY PRINT THEIR STORIES. HOW CAN THAT BE EFFECTIVE REGULATION?
IS THERE REALLY AN ALTERNATIVE? IT'S THE PECULIAR NATURE OF NEWS REPORTING. IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO CHECK AND CENSOR STORIES GIVEN THE HUGE VOLUME AND SHORT SHELF LIFE OF NEWS AS A CONSUMER PRODUCT. HEAVY REGULATION WOULD PUSH UK NEWS PRODUCERS OUT OF THE GLOBAL MARKET.
SINCE THE PHONE-HACKING SCANDAL AND THE LEVESON INQUIRY, THE NEWSPAPERS HAVE BEEN QUITE WELL BEHAVED. BUT THAT'S PUBLIC PRESSURE AT WORK, NOT REGULATION!
DON'T YOU THINK THE PUBLIC ARE GOING TO WANT TIGHTER REGULATIONS IN THE FUTURE?
IT WON'T MATTER. PRINT SALES ARE FALLING SO FAST THAT I THINK THE INDUSTRY WILL HAVE MOVED ONLINE BEFORE PRINT REGULATION CHANGES.
I GUESS. OKAY! LET'S GO SEE IF BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH HAS PUT HIS WHEELY BIN OUT YET.
OH LOOK, IT'S YOU EATING PIZZA, POSTED ONLINE ALREADY! LOL!
'SIX KINDS OF CHEESE?' THAT'S HARSH.
AT LEAST THEY SPELT MY NAME RIGHT FOR A CHANGE.

IDENTITIES AND THE MEDIA: STUDYING HOW WE SEE OURSELVES, AND HOW OTHERS SEE US.

How do the contemporary media represent the identities of different groups in society – and how have those identities changed over time? How far is identity being mediated by contemporary technologies and practices – and what are the social implications of this? Media teacher Jacqui Shirley explores the debates you'll be addressing in your A2 course.

Media and Identities is a new pre-set topic for **AQA's MEST 3 Section B**, replacing Representations from the 2015 exam onwards. In Section B of the paper, students chose one of four questions based on two pre-set topics: Media and Identities and The Impact of New and Digital Media. Each student will answer their chosen question, using their own individual case study with a wide range of media products. It often works well to study four main products, supported by briefer examples of other products.

In the **WJEC ME4** paper, concepts of identity can be explored in the context of the media industries and their relationship with audiences, for example through 360-degree coverage of case studies of *Sweet Sixteen*, *Lara Croft*, or *The Big Issue*.

The **OCR A2 exam Critical Perspectives in Media** addresses the issue in one of its pre-set topics, Media and Collective Identity. This should be studied through at least two media, and a range of texts, industries, audiences and debates.

Identity is the way we see ourselves, and the way different groups in society see us. It's the story we tell about ourselves, and we constantly update and change it. Identity isn't fixed, but changes over time and in different situations, and we can have multiple identities. For example: our online identity can be very different from the identity we have at college or at home. Would you really want your mum to see all of your online identities?

Individuals can use a range of media with which to identify, and to conceive versions of themselves; so the media can be seen as a set of resources or tools to inform personal identity and also to represent or display it. The way in which people use and respond to the media can become part of the way they construct their individual identity.

Identity issues

There are debates about the power relationship between the media and individuals. Some conventional identities are more acceptable than others, and conforming to a socially acceptable identity can allow people to 'fit in' to society. In this case, it could be argued that audiences passively accept media representations and ideologies, and use them to construct their identity.

There are many arguments about the influence of the media on young men and women's sexuality in an increasingly sexualised culture. Has this led to more liberal and open attitudes to sex and sexuality, or has it been a step backwards in terms of male and female sexuality and sexual identity?

Post-feminist theory has explored this issue and discussed the influence of the media on sexual identity. Many post-feminists argue that in contemporary media gender roles are less rigid, and women can more easily define their own identity. Through the interactivity of digital media, audiences can increasingly select, manipulate

or reject media representations, and thus can create their own identities. Do you think audiences accept media ideologies without question, or do they select and adapt them to construct their own identity? There have been many high-profile feminist campaigns in recent years, such as the website everydaysexism.com which provides a space for women to record sexist harassment they experience day to day, or the fantastically-named Twitter Youth Feminist Army. These examples suggest that individuals are actively responding to and manipulating the media to create their own voices and, in this case, challenging more mainstream representations and ideologies about gender.

Blurred lines?

The media are now more varied and diverse. People no longer define themselves as having a single identity –

if they ever did – and today our stories and identities are complex and often contradictory. Audiences recognise that there is a wide range of resources to use in constructing their own identity;

they are no longer restricted to a single stereotype, archetype or persona with which to identify.

Multichannel TV now offers us access to a huge choice of TV viewing and formats from across the world that we can watch on our TVs, tablets and phones, plus huge amounts of user-generated content online. But does 'lots' mean variety – or more of the same? How do different audiences use and respond to this choice? For example, Black British actors still say they have to travel to the US to get the serious or lead roles that UK TV and film doesn't offer them. How do Black and ethnic minority audiences use non-UK drama to construct their identity in the absence of representations in mainstream UK TV and film? It could also be argued, despite our apparent diversity, that there are still only a relatively narrow set of representations in the media, which circulate repeated ideas about, for example, sexuality and ethnicity. Do you think the media offers only a limited range of identities? Do some identities dominate, and are some marginalised?

Queer theory explores alternative representations that challenge dominant ideologies about sexual identity. For example, theorist Judith Butler argued that individuals can create, 'gender trouble' where they challenge existing dominant gender identities. The music industry is a good example of this. Macklemore had mainstream success with his song 'Same Love' that celebrated gay relationships in romantic soft focus, and supported the campaign for Washington Referendum 74 to legalise same-sex marriage. Music artists have a long history of exploring gender and sexual identities, including punk in the 1970s, the Riot Grrrl Manifesto in the 1990s and the recent emergence of Frank Ocean as an openly gay rapper.

Digital differences

Digital media and the internet play an important role in forming identity because they have changed the roles and relationships between audience and producer. Online technologies have enabled audiences to participate more actively, to play a bigger role in constructing their identity, exercise more choice in the media they use,

and also find new ways to display their public identity.

Web 2.0 has enabled active audiences to interact with and comment on the media and to become producers themselves. New Media theorist David Gauntlett argues that Web 2.0 platforms enable audiences to represent themselves. So rather than providing access to a narrow range of institutions, the media landscape is now a criss-crossing web of different connections in which audiences can choose to participate.

The media now also enable audiences to share their identities online, for example, by setting up their own profiles and home pages, and participating online in many different

friendship, social or interest groups. Online technology can also contribute to the construction and display of collective identities. It enables individuals to form communities that have a shared identity, for example, based on political values or ethnicity. Social media has a particularly important role in this respect, and there are many recent examples of people using the media to create collective identities and organise campaigns. To take one notable example: 17-year-old Fahma Mohamed's hugely influential online petition which led Michael Gove to invite all schools in the UK to take action to educate girls against female genital mutilation.

Such campaigns have the potential to exist 'outside' mainstream mass media, and to offer the tools for alternative or challenging identities. *The Guardian* newspaper became involved in Fahma's campaign. This could suggest that social media can empower individuals and groups and give them access to more powerful mainstream media. Or it could indicate that social media still need established mainstream media to really access power. Do you think technology is a threat to the construction of identities, particularly for younger age groups – or has it had a positive influence?

Repetition or challenge?

Finally we need to consider the values and ideologies that are communicated by these identities. Some will reinforce dominant ideologies in society and the media, others will challenge. Indeed, one question might be whether a single ideology does in fact dominate. Do you think the media are a progressive force, communicating new

ideas – as seen with Oscars this year for *12 Years a Slave* and the female-led *Gravity*? Or are they still dominated by traditional, more conservative values? Only one female director has ever won an Oscar, and Lupita Nyong'o is only the sixth African American woman to win an Academy Award.

The topic of Identities and the Media gives you ample opportunity to explore the important issues and debates current in the media today, and to think about your own relationship with the media. It explores the role of, and relationship between, the media and audience, power and resistance, dominant and marginalised identities, fluid and queer identities and the important role of social media. What story do you tell about yourself in the media you consume and produce, and in the way you use and respond to them?

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Follow it up

Post-feminist theory

Post-feminism argues that feminism has now achieved its goals of combating sexism and inequality, and is now surplus to requirements. Arising out of a backlash against feminism, it has been defined in many different ways, from a return to more conventional gender roles, to an attack on extreme forms of feminist thought; in its crudest form, it suggests that the role of women is no longer a cause for concern, and that political change is no longer required. In terms of popular culture, characters such as Bridget Jones, Carrie Bradshaw, Rihanna or Lady Gaga have been described as post-feminist.

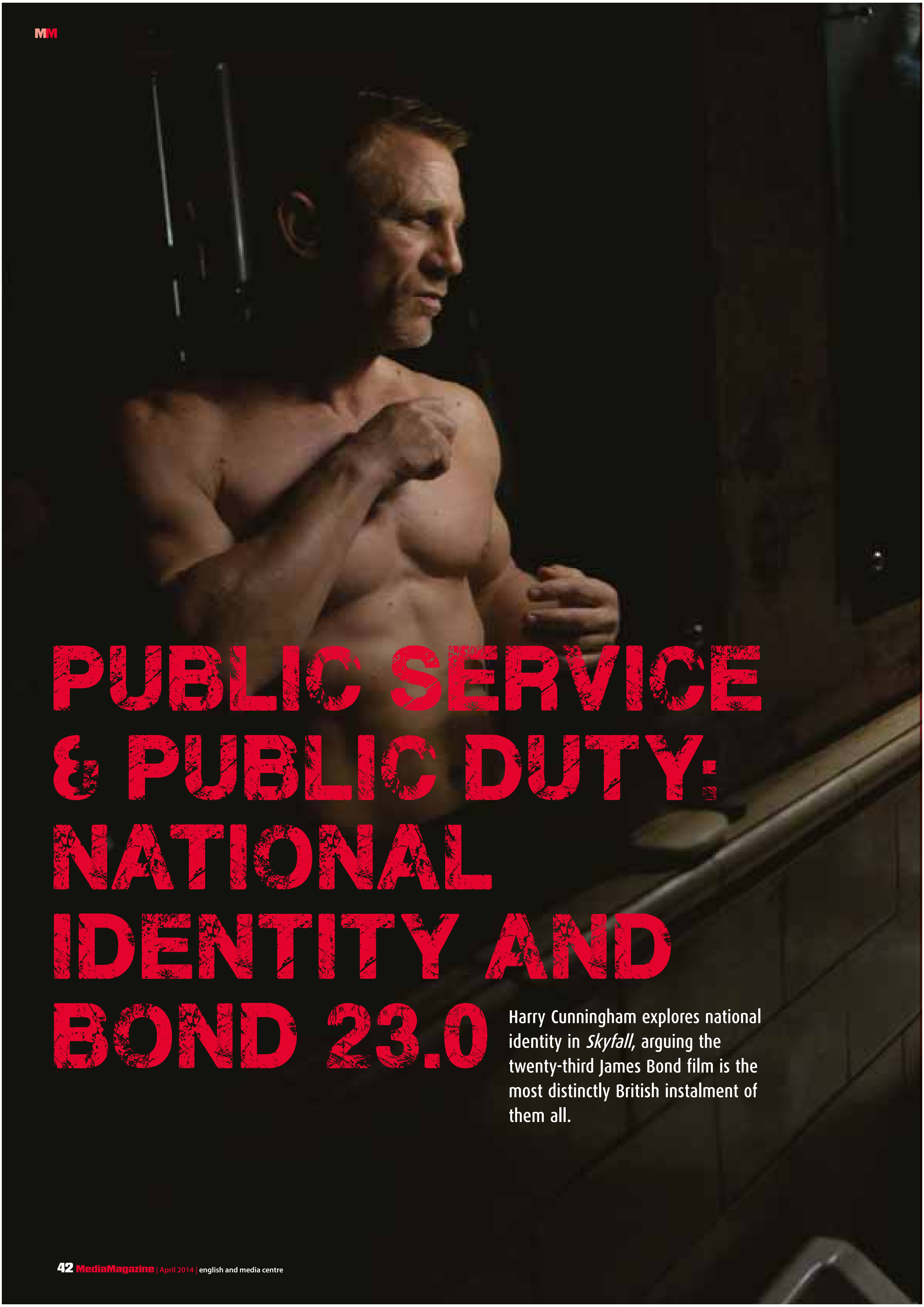
Judith Butler and gender trouble

Butler argues that ideas about gender – what it is to be a man or woman – are socially constructed; they are created by society. They are not natural or fixed and gender is a learned role that people choose to play or perform. This means that people can experiment with and challenge traditional gender roles and create what Butler called 'gender trouble'. The media often communicates dominant gender roles but can also be a place where audiences and producers can create gender trouble.

Butler, J. *Gender Trouble*. 1990. Routledge.

David Gauntlett on Web 2.0

Web 2.0 has enabled active audiences to interact with and comment on the media and to become producers, as well as consumers. Gauntlett argues that Web 2.0 platforms enable audiences to represent themselves. This gives audiences an active role in creating their own identity. www.theory.org.uk



PUBLIC SERVICE & PUBLIC DUTY: NATIONAL IDENTITY AND BOND 23.0

Harry Cunningham explores national identity in *Skyfall*, arguing the twenty-third James Bond film is the most distinctly British instalment of them all.

A key aspect of British culture has always been a sense of public duty, with characters determined to carry out their orders, regardless of danger or their own feelings. And the latest James Bond film, lauded by critics and described by some as the best Bond ever, is certainly no exception.

In the opening prologue, we see Bond so determined to get the, as yet unnamed, villain, that he is prepared to go to extreme lengths, including chasing the bad guy on a motorcycle through the rooftops of Istanbul and using a JCB digger to uncouple a train carriage and climb on board.

As the scene progresses, serious tensions begin to arise as another junior MI6 agent (later revealed to be Miss Moneypenny), who has been following Bond around in a truck, is forced to make an impossible decision. With Bond now fighting his enemy on top of the train, and with a tunnel approaching, Moneypenny is told to take a shot. In extreme close-up we see the panicked look upon her face as she protests to M that her 'shot is not clean,' but, with M becoming increasingly more irate, telling her to 'take the bloody shot,' she caves in and realises that following M's order to shoot is more important than her own judgement. Her fears are realised as a wounded and apparently dead Bond plunges from the train and into the river. M's reaction when she hears the news is not to apologise or to admit that her judgement was wrong but to turn around and stare absently out of the window and to the river Thames below, keeping her cool. It is also interesting that at the end of the film we are told that Miss Moneypenny, on the informal advice of James Bond, has opted for an office job rather than as a field agent. Her slight wavering over M's orders on firing the shot is perhaps a contributing factor in this decision.

Another key moment in which we learn that public service and pubic duty is the most important facet of an MI6 agent is when Bond returns from the dead. M informs him that if he is to continue as a field agent he must pass a series of tests. In montage we see Bond wearing an oxygen mask, on a running machine and working out, all the time whilst wired up to a computer, measuring his every exercise. He is unshaven, struggles for breath and caves in when an official reminds him that he can 'always [complete the tests] later'. At one point we even see him in silhouette alone and collapsed in a heap on the floor. In target practice he not only misses but seems to be constantly aware that he is under observation. He lacks the ultra-confidence, bordering on arrogance, that we have seen in previous films featuring Daniel Craig's Bond.

In the final scene in which he is required to play a word association game with a counsellor, it must be obvious to any observant viewer that he has not passed any of these tests; he is not fit for duty. This is later confirmed by Silva, who has hacked M's computer, yet Bond's utter devotion to his job and unflinching ability to perform his duty means his public service is more important to M than the fact he is not physically fit enough to continue working in the field.

The Public Inquiry

One of the most intriguing and certainly one of the most current set pieces of *Skyfall* is the public inquiry. Rather than retaliating to a terrorist attack by violence and invasion, true to British spirit, M must first dissect what went wrong in a televised public hearing. M's performance here is seen to be just as crucial as Bond's fieldwork. Indeed M's own job relies on her performance, as Mallory has threatened her with early retirement. Again, her sense of public duty overwhelms everything else: rather than retiring quietly as Mallory had offered, she insists on fighting on.

Indeed the way the hearing is shot highlights just how important it is. For it is intercut with shots of Silva's escape and of Bond's chase. As M appears to be failing so too does Bond. Bond loses Silva in a tube station, whilst M is being completely roasted by the committee. As Bond realises that Silva is actually heading for M and the inquiry, he tells her to leave the building immediately. M refuses to do so, due to both her sense of duty and also because leaving would cause catastrophic damage to MI6's reputation – which is arguably just as bad as an agent failing in the field. Indeed the chair of the committee, describing field work as 'old fashioned', tells M:

> "It as if you insist on pretending we still live in a golden age of espionage where human intelligence was the only resource available."

This implies that the committee, and perhaps the public, both real and fictional, finds MI6's work redundant: M, therefore, is fighting not just for her own survival but for that of the entire organisation in its current form and,

given the relatively mediocre reviews of *Quantum of Solace,* for the continuation of the series.

But M turns it around with a rousing speech that is nothing short of Churchillian. As she speaks to the committee in mid shot (providing glimpses of the TV cameras, policeman and journalists watching) Silva is poignantly seen making his way through the streets of London – the streets that M and MI6 are trying to protect. Thomas Newman's soundtrack 'Tennyson', with its staccato strings, is key to setting the tone here.

'I suppose I see a different world than you do,' M says, now in a wide shot that captures her at the centre of the inquiry bench as if she has regained control of the situation. She adds, She adds,

perhaps alluding to the threat posed by Al-Qaeda:

"I am frightened because our enemies are no longer known to us, they do not exist on a map, they are not nations, they are individuals."

As Silva marches into the building, callously shooting down the guards who stand in his way, M says:

"Our world is not more transparent now, it's more opaque. Before you declare us irrelevant ask yourself how safe do you feel?"

But it is as if the committee is concluding that M really secures her position and that of MI6. For as Bond prepares to save the day and stop Silva, she quotes Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem *Ulysses*:

"We are not now that strength which in old
days,
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are,
we are
One equal temper of heroic hearts
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

In short this poem embodies MI6's spirit and commitment to public duty in the 21st century. The organisation might not have the ability to move 'earth and heaven' – start wars with countries and retaliate so easily on enemies who hide in the shadows – but MI6's strength is in not giving up, no matter how challenging the circumstances or the enemy. And of course we see this play out in that very room when, as soon as she finishes her speech, Silva storms in with a gun.

Mise-en-scène: London

No article on *Skyfall*, indeed no article on any James Bond film, can conclude without an analysis of London itself, for the character of James Bond and MI6 are both inextricably linked to the city.

One of the key advantages for Bond and MI6 in setting the first part of the film in London is that they should be able to manipulate the city for their own advantages. However, since Silva is an ex-MI6 agent, this makes their knowledge almost redundant, as he knows just as much as Bond. This inevitably leads to a chase across the city between Bond and Silva. We see glimpses of Trafalgar Square on a sunny day with Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament in the background before Silva makes for the tube. Here we also see shots of Embankment station and Silva is able to make use of the tunnels

and service hatchways, including Gransborough Road, a disused station, to get to the inquiry. When he surfaces it is broad daylight and we see commuters and stunned onlookers as he makes off in a stolen police car. As Bond runs after Silva he exits at the wrong station, Westminster. As a result, we see him, not Silva, running past all the major landmarks of the city: The Cenotaph, Westminster Abbey and Big Ben. In many ways this positions Bond as an integral part of the British establishment in the narrative. If Silva attacks the city then he attacks Bond, and vice versa.

London also opens and closes the film. After the initial prologue in which Bond is apparently killed off the film re-opens with an establishing shot of MI6 headquarters at night. Unlike later

parts of the film it is raining heavily and inside we see a seemingly tortured M, alone and lit by only one desk lamp, writing Bond's obituary. Though her situation is troubling, MI6 and the city of London is seen as homely and when, in the morning, we then cut to another establishing shot of Parliament Square and see M's car driving through the various landmarks, she seems calm, almost comforted by the city.

The establishing shot of the last major sequence of the film is also full of British symbolism. The roof terrace where Bond and Miss Moneypenny converse is positioned perfectly so that we can see Big Ben and Parliament Square, and there are at least three union jacks flying from the various buildings, including one above MI6. As the camera pans down we see Bond dwarfing all of this once again, emphasising his relationship with the city and his country. As Miss Moneypenny brings him what M has bequeathed him – the bulldog ornament, a motif for duty and public service – we see more of the city, the Gherkin, the banking sector and Blackfriars Bridge. As she hands over the black box, a two-shot frames Bond and Moneypenny in between a British flag, suggesting that Moneypenny has been forgiven for her earlier wavering over her duty.

In short, both narratively and aesthetically *Skyfall* is a film full of symbolism and inexorably intertwined with British national identity.

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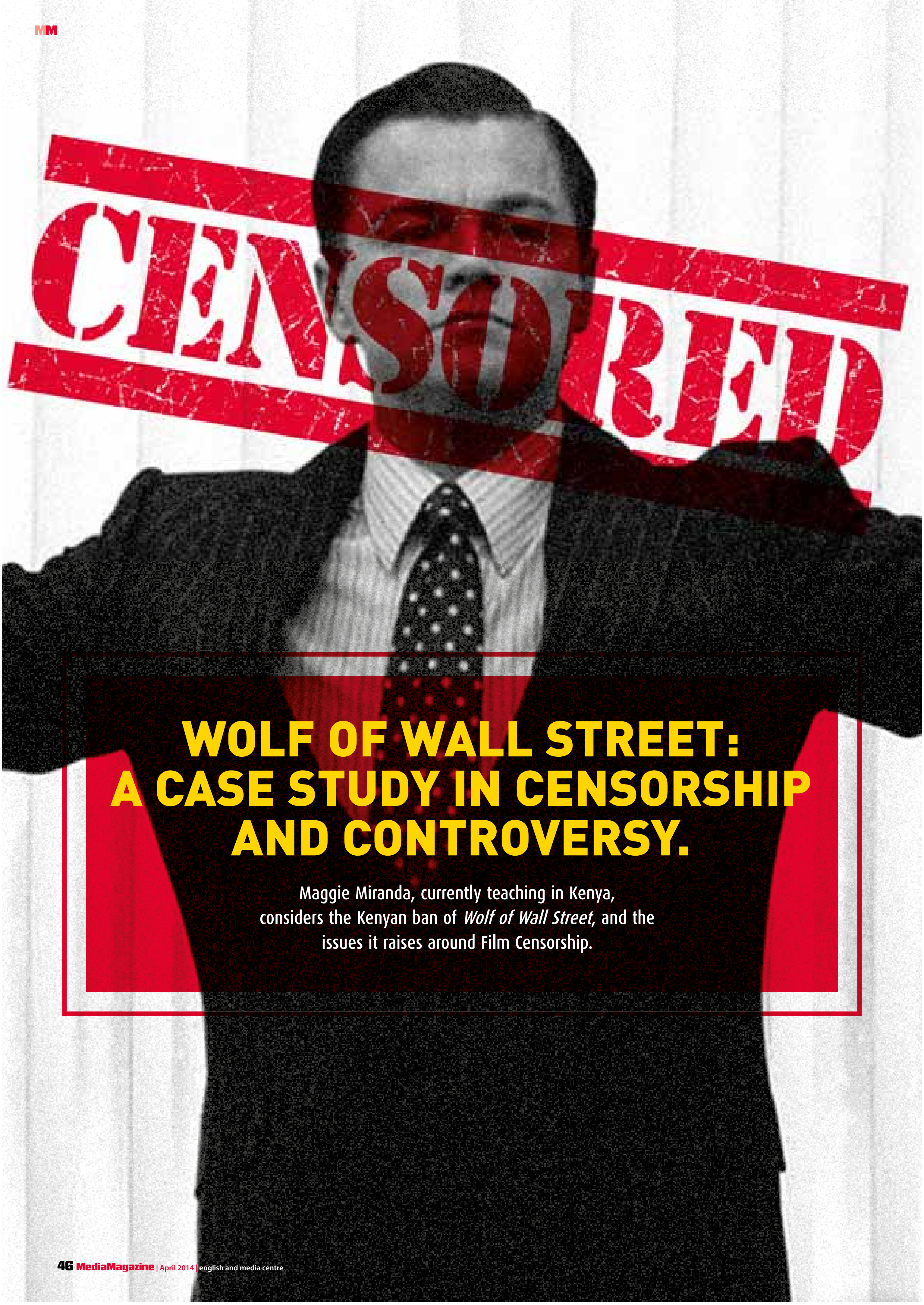


WOLF OF WALL STREET: A CASE STUDY IN CENSORSHIP AND CONTROVERSY.

Maggie Miranda, currently teaching in Kenya, considers the Kenyan ban of *Wolf of Wall Street*, and the issues it raises around Film Censorship.

Wolf of Wall Street (2013), directed by Martin Scorsese and produced by Leonardo DiCaprio, is a big budget, all-American Hollywood movie, and was one of the most critically acclaimed films of 2013. Yet the film was subject to a ban by the Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB) who said:

> **"There is a limit to everything and we believe the Kenyan public deserves better. *Wolf of Wall Street* has been restricted. The film is not for sale, exhibition or distribution in Kenya. Violators shall be prosecuted."**
>
> KFCB Facebook January 14

Here in Kenya, the film is widely known as 'Woof of Wall Street', the title of the film's bootleg DVD. In this article I will look at the film itself, the content deemed controversial, issues around censorship and the prospect of an uncensored adult category in film.

I finally got to watch this contentious film at 35,000 feet on a flight to Kenya (clearly the ban does not apply to Kenyan airspace itself!). I wanted to know what was so unacceptable about this film that it had to be banned.

So what's all the fuss about?

In the first few minutes of the film we are introduced to the central character Jordan Belfort (Leonardo DiCaprio). We are brought into his world, one of drugs and excess at every turn. He is rich and he lives his life recklessly. We watch as he crashes his helicopter because he is 'under the influence'. Talking straight to camera, he brags about taking drugs daily, a narrative trick that gets us immediately involved in his life. He has our attention. But he goes on to tell the audience that his favourite drug is money. He claims that 'money makes you a better person'. Scorsese explores and arguably refutes this claim throughout the film; and the focus is about money more than anything else.

Cut to Wall Street, where everyone is stressed, and everyone is swearing. Every character is using the ' f-word' frequently. I can remember an examiner from the BBFC telling me that when they watch and classify films, the number of 'f-words' is taken into consideration, and this may be the difference between a 15 and an 18 classification. But strong language alone does not warrant a ban. Does this film justify its ban? Or can it be argued that it is puritanical to ban scenes reflecting an adult world which were intended for an adult audience? As adults, should we be free to watch what we want to? And what place is there for moral codes in a pluralistic society? Kenya is a country like many others where there are people of different social classes and religions, living together with different opinions, traditions and interests.

Belfort tells us about his 'cocaine and hookers'. The film is dialogue-driven. Scorsese presents Belfort's wealth for us in a montage – a montage that creates the mood of hedonism and excess. The images flow: luxury homes, parties, Wall Street and fancy restaurants. In the film Jordan Belfort works on Wall Street for six months before he becomes a licensed broker. All is well until Black Monday, the Wall Street crash of 1987. So a jobless Belfort created the investment firm Stratton Oakmont and went on to con people into investing. He tells us:

> "The way I looked at it, their money was better off in my pocket. I knew how to spend it."

He is shown taking thousands of dollars from his customers; while he is talking to them on the phone he makes rude hand gestures. He treats people with contempt in his pursuit of money, and we are invited to wait to see him get his comeuppance. And of course Belfort doesn't win. His dad tells him: 'one of these days the chickens are gonna come home to roost'. It's a warning that is not heeded, and indeed is a prediction in the film. The narrative is driven forward to the point where we know he will fall, royally. By the end of the film Belfort has lost everything, his wife, kids, home, money and friends. None of the so-called riches in his life are permanent. He doesn't make his money honestly. He doesn't spend it wisely. The character is presented as a hedonistic fool.

When we watch as he recruits for his firm, even his salesmen come across as 'losers'. Scorsese never celebrates or applauds these guys, he just presents them; and I would suggest that he quietly invites the audience to laugh at them. In the office a worker gets her head shaved for $1000, money to be used to get breast implants. The company hosts regular antics such as 'dwarf-tossing', naked dancing girls and marching bands in the office. People in the firm are presented as wealthy, but also vacuous and superficial. *Forbes Magazine* calls to do a profile on the company. They call Belfort 'The Wolf of Wall Street' (a twisted Robin Hood). His wife stands by him, saying 'there's no such thing as bad publicity'. Perhaps the same can be said for imposing a ban on a film.

The film does include commercial sex workers in several scenes, some of which are quite explicit at times. But this is an 18 film. And there is no content that hasn't been shown in plenty of other films before.

The BBFC website states:

> "No theme is prohibited at 18. Adults are free to choose their own entertainment provided the material is not illegal or potentially harmful, so it is possible some themes tackled at 18 may be offensive even to some adult viewers."

So why would this film be viewed so differently in a country such as Kenya? Maybe some would be concerned that everything in this film, including the people, were commodities for sale. Maybe the members of the KFCB

were worried that the film presents a message that some people get ahead by exploiting others and engaging in acts of corruption for their own gain. But corruption and immorality are part of everyday life in many countries.

Materialism, morality and money

Throughout the film I personally dislike DiCaprio's character, and I don't believe that the film invites us to like him either. We are encouraged to laugh at him, and to sit in waiting for his downfall. And instead of banning a film

maybe this is the one area where there is room for some kind of 'puritanical' stance... How can we respect anyone who exploits, extorts and worships money at any cost? There's the moral high ground. Don't ban the film. The message is an important one. The film sits in judgment throughout. Scorsese himself has acquired tremendous wealth through his talents as a Film Director. The film begs many questions: what is an honest living? what are good ways to spend your money? and how should we treat others?

By the end of the film the central character pays the price for his mistakes. It's almost a type of Proppian folktale, a morality tale complete with villains and the quest for justice. I'm just not sure if there are any heroes in this story. There is more narration to camera, and the audience is engaged, not because we care about Belfort but because we want to see what's coming to him. And when a criminal investigation begins and the federal officers meet Belfort on his yacht, he tries to buy his way out of things. As the officers reject his attempt to bribe them, maybe these are the only heroes in the film. When Belfort doesn't get his own way, he takes thousands of dollar bills and throws them overboard, taunting them, 'Look fellas, a year's salary'.

As the film moves on, the authorities begin to close in on Belfort and investigate all his 'dodgy deals'. Over time his family and friends smuggle over $20m into Swiss bank accounts. The first of the group is arrested with a suitcase full of cash. When Belfort gets the news over the phone, he is 'off his head' on drugs but he tries to drive home anyway. He attempts to get into his Ferrari but can't climb in. This character looks beyond stupid.

Scorsese shows us a strange world in this film. At one of Belfort's parties his colleague starts masturbating in the middle of a room full of people. But it's not funny; he looks pathetic. Towards the end of the film Belfort is seen giving a speech in the office. He tells his workforce how he believes in all of them – but he comes across as phoney. And sure enough, Belfort betrays all his colleagues when he cuts a deal with the FBI and gives them names of all the co-conspirators. One of the workers urinates on a court order. These people are not above the law; they only think that they are. In the office the stockbrokers all beat their chests in unison, humming their mantra. The scene is every bit as ridiculous as when we saw it at the beginning of the film for the first time with Matthew McConaughey's character.

Funnily enough there is actually a *Wolf of Wall Street* Kenyan version on

YouTube where a group of workers imitate the film's stockbrokers. They also beat their chests in unison and hum. If this was the level of copycat behaviour resulting from watching this film, then maybe the KFCB did not have too much to worry about...

Of course Belfort doesn't only lose his money; his marriage does not survive either. In one scene he has sex with his wife on a bed covered with money and I wonder who does he love more, her or the cash? By the end of the film both are gone anyway. When his wife demands a divorce, some of us in the audience may even wonder why she stayed with him for as long as she did. As a final act of desperation, when he is losing everything, he snatches their daughter. He drives recklessly and crashes the car with his child inside. His windscreen wiper moves to and fro in the rain and everything is a blur. We watch through Belfort's eyes as the full reality of his life hits him. He has lost everything.

Belfort spent 22 months in jail. He was ordered to pay back millions of dollars to those that he swindled. The film ends showing him running seminars after his release from jail. 'Sell me this pen!' he tells his audience. He is a fallen man. Get-rich schemes usually involve exploiting others. I think of Michael Moore's documentary *Capitalism: a Love Story* (2009) and remember how he showed workers in a glass factory being laid off as part of cost-cutting. Ultimately, putting people before profits can never be right. Maybe this is another message in Scorsese's film. Many would argue that capitalism and consumerism in our modern world is out of control.

Media effects and moral panics

While I watched, I remembered David Cronenberg's film *Crash* (1998), rated 18. The film depicted a small group of people who get a thrill out of watching, or being part of, a car crash. *Crash* received lots of negative publicity, especially in the UK tabloids. It was banned by Westminster City Council so no-one could watch the film in central London. But this was an 'art-house' type of film which would have largely gone un-noticed if not for the moral panic that surrounded it. Did anyone honestly think that members of an audience would watch *Crash*, think any of it looked like a good idea and go out and copy it? Like *Wolf of Wall Street* the film raises the debate 'Should there be an Uncensored Adult category in Film?' As adults, are we free to watch what we want to? And, like *Wolf of Wall Street*, a ban on any film simply affords it a massive dose of publicity.

The 'hypodermic needle' theory of the effects of the media has suggested that we can be influenced by what we watch. But it has been argued that this theory patronises its audience, and puts forward the idea that films such as *Wolf of Wall Street* can, in and of themselves, put

things in our heads and 'inject' us with ideas. This theory is now largely seen as outdated. As audiences, we process information from a range of media sources, sometimes simultaneously. We have access to so much information and we are skilled consumers of the media. Most of us are not passive, unthinking consumers of film or other media.

In the 1980s there was a moral panic over the 'video nasties' that were seen as especially violent. Some films, such as *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974) and *Driller Killer* (1979), were banned from release on video. Later, the notorious *Child's Play 3* (1991) was linked to the case of the murder of toddler Jamie Bulger. And as Michael Moore showed in his documentary *Bowling for Columbine* (2002), Marilyn Manson videos were scapegoated after the shootings at Columbine High School.

To ban or not to ban?

Many years later, in 2014 we have seen the ban of *Wolf of Wall Street* in Kenya. It has also been banned in Malaysia and Nepal. Many people in Kenya were shocked at the decision to ban the movie. Why not just order cuts, like other countries, including the far more conservative UAE? And, of course, many members of the viewing public chose to watch the film precisely *because of* the ban, which made the headlines in the national newspaper *The Standard*:

> **US film creates buzz and curiosity after ban.**

Members of the public responded to the post on the KFCB's Facebook page suggesting that it was hypocritical to freely show TV series such as *Spartacus* and *Game of Thrones*, but to react to this film with a ban. Who is involved in the decision to classify or, in this case, ban a film? Do these censors ever really represent the public? Should anyone ever have the right to tell an adult audience what we can and cannot watch?

In the UK the BBFC passed the film uncut with an 18 certificate. A religious or moral standpoint would argue that the film's arguably excessive images of sex and drug use might affect a society's moral values. Scorsese has defended his film and talked of how it comments on crime in society. He suggests that Belfort is a type of 'confidence man', someone who takes your trust, takes your confidence and then betrays you; the world is full of these people. The film clearly does not celebrate Belfort's life, his material success at the expense of others, or his excesses. I would argue further that the film does not glamorise his lifestyle, but uses it to comment critically on capitalism and excess. The film shows all of it. Film should mirror life, not re-dress it or tone it down. There will be plenty of Jordan Belforts; he won't be the last.

Wolf of Wall Street was released on DVD in March 2014. In the UK you can buy a copy at your high street supermarket. The film was nominated for Best Picture at the Academy Awards and its lead actor Leonardo DiCaprio was nominated for the Best Actor award. In Kenya, film distributors and cinema halls appealed against the decision to ban the film. But irrespective of the KFCB ban, many pirate DVD traders were selling copies until they were arrested. Bootleg DVDs are widely available across the country, on street corners, by shopping malls. The irony of course is that many more under-18s may have obtained a copy in this way. Many students tell me that they have been able to download the film easily too. And probably far fewer people would have bothered to go to any efforts to get a copy of *Wolf of Wall Street* if it hadn't been banned. It might have been a better course of action to make a few careful cuts in edit. Any ban creates excitement around a film. In this case the ban made the Wolf howl loudly.

Maggie Miranda teaches Film and Creative Arts at the Aga Khan Academy, Nairobi, Kenya.

Follow it up

www.bbc.com/news/world-africa
http://allafrica.com/stories
Wolf of Wall Street Kenyan version on You Tube: http://youtu.be/fb6fwiFevFkhttp://www.bbfc.co.uk
http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/race/martin-scorsese

nordic noir – back to the originals?

Emma Calway evaluates the English-language re-makes of Scandinavian crime drama, and wonders why there are so many – and why there is such a reluctance to tackle the originals.

Hollywood and foreign cinema have always had a difficult relationship. US remakes of the Nordic noir originals are ten a penny, with adaptations of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Killing*, and *The Bridge* all gracing American screens – big and small. Nordic noir is a phenomenally successful Scandinavian export with fans all over the world. Why, then, does America feel the need to remake the originals? To answer this question we must ask: what exactly is 'Nordic noir'?

What is Nordic noir?

For those of you who have missed it over the last five years, Nordic noir is bleak, gruesome and dark, literally and metaphorically. The 'whodunnit' formula is turned on its head completely – stories are told in a new, compelling way. (*The Killing* featured one killing in 20 episodes.) The murder mystery genre is revived from the dead and is injected with themes that Hollywood may tend to shy away from: eco-terrorism, homosexuality, sexual abuse, loneliness, mental illness, familial complexities and religion, to name a few. These themes are the antithesis of the Hollywood blockbuster, where escapism is key to an audience's enjoyment. Multi-layered stories weave a web of intricate thematic plots – murder mysteries are no longer one-dimensional. Concentration is key – not only are there the subtitles to follow, but focus and attention is needed to understand what is going on with the plot.

It's not accidental that they also feature strong, independent female characters such as Sarah Lund, Elisabeth Salander, or Saga Norgen: gender equality is part of the so-called Nordic model, rooted in high levels of social protection and defence of human rights. Nordic noir generally takes on big corporations; politicians and the media are taken to task for corruption and foul play (the Medisonus pharmaceutical company in *The Bridge*) – something Hollywood may be less brave to tackle as it doesn't want to alienate advertisers or sectors of its audience.

Mise-en-scène

Winter abounds. It's bound up with the imagery of snow and ice – very apt for a genre that deals in chilling its audiences. Like many of the best dramas, most of these Nordic noirs have been based on literary texts.

> **We have a darkness in our landscape that comes through in our writing, our directing and our acting, and is at the very core of the Nordic noir thing.**

Adam Price, the Danish writer of Borgen

Broen/Bron/The Bridge's credits open with long lingering shots on the Bridge connecting Denmark and Sweden foregrounding the pivotal landmark that the drama is built around. The city becomes romanticised in much Nordic noir but it's also a very dark place – literally and metaphorically.

> **We are caught up in the darkness. We are caught up in the paranoid shit. The darkness, the evil and the misery – we just do those best.**

Kim Boyd, who plays Martin Rohde, interviewed in The Guardian 31.01.14

The Bridge is an intriguingly original idea, and now there has been a US adaptation based on the border between the US and Mexico – airing on the FX network – as well as an English/French version entitled *The Tunnel*. The idea is brilliant and producers have snapped up the concept, though they prefer to make their own version rather than showing the original. It may be that the makers of US TV think the

cultural nuances will not translate; but they may be missing the point: the themes and the characters transcend cultural barriers. That may explain why British viewers have taken it up with such gusto.

Audiences and institutions – Hollywood

There is a sense from producers and commissioners that a US audience will approach subtitles with trepidation, although arguably it's the Hollywood bosses and directors of the TV networks who are making these assumptions. They may also speculate that viewers will want to multitask while watching; whether shopping on the iPad, ironing, eating, any such tasks are very difficult whilst trying to studiously take in both subtitles and complex plots. By the primetime slot of 9pm, viewers may be sleepy or distracted.

English is the dominant global language, and US corporations are sceptical about the popularity of foreign cinema on their channels. This may relate to the size of America in comparison to small, European countries such as Denmark and Sweden. America is used to making its own entertainment – why would it need to look to the Scandinavian countries to offer up something new and original? Here in the UK we sideline Nordic noir to channels such as BBC4 – which got there first – and now channel 4 (*Mammon*). However, US TV channels do not show them at all. US audiences who are hungry for the shows have to hunt for them online – or wait for them to be released on DVD.

Hollywood wants to make lots of money – fast. So it is no accident that Daniel Craig played Michael Blomkvist

– who in the Larson novels is described as 'ordinary' and 'middle aged.' It's ironic that James Bond has actually ended up playing this mediocre-looking character (though anything but mediocre in personality) – albeit with a cardigan and a pair of spectacles on. Stars attract advertisers and sponsorship, as well as publicity.

Messages and values

Not only does sex sell American TV/ movies, but big names do that too. This partly explained why Daniel Craig was ushered into the role above. So is it also that US producers want their actors to be sexy and good looking? Well, yes partly. But it's not as if the characters in Nordic noir are all hideously ugly; though flawed, they are all in fact rather good looking.

Take Saga Noren (almost on the Autism spectrum though this is never outlined in black and white), Pater Veras (whose actions have his brother killed), Martin (whose affairs and terrible parenting end up with his son being murdered by his arch enemy – the very enemy responsible for the death of his own wife and child), Sara Lund (a workaholic, like Saga Noren – everything else suffers because her work always comes first – even before her son) or Lisbeth Salander (certainly not our usual pin up girl – she's no Cameron Diaz, after all). The major difference is that these characters are damaged or dysfunctional – or both.

While traditional US/English TV and big screen characters have always followed a similar pattern, in that, if they mess up, they have to redeem themselves, these characters do not necessarily have to redeem themselves

in order to get our sympathy. We can still empathise – and sympathise – with them even though we may not whole-heartedly agree with the personal actions that may have caused others to suffer. In the wake of modernism in literature, we now no longer trust the reliability of out narrator – in as far as the protagonists of these dramas act in a similar way to a narrator, then, we can also be unsure of their motives, feelings and actions.

Saga Noren has no social intelligence, but plenty of other sorts of intelligence. She misses social cues, often taking off her top to reveal her bra in the office where she works, sniffing her armpits or not laughing when a joke is told because she replies to Martin 'she does not find it funny.' Ironically she speaks the truth, and her universal appeal lies in the fact that there is a bit of Saga in all of us that we recognise which we can appreciate despite the cultural differences.

The flawed hero/anti-hero is a common theme in much TV and film; arguably in Nordic noir it has become central to the drama.

A history of re-makes

Hollywood has a long history of remakes; both foreign cinema and old classics (*The Italian Job*, *The Birds*, *Carrie*) have all gone through the makeover treatment. Producers know these stories are tried and tested; re-making an old classic or a hit drama is perhaps

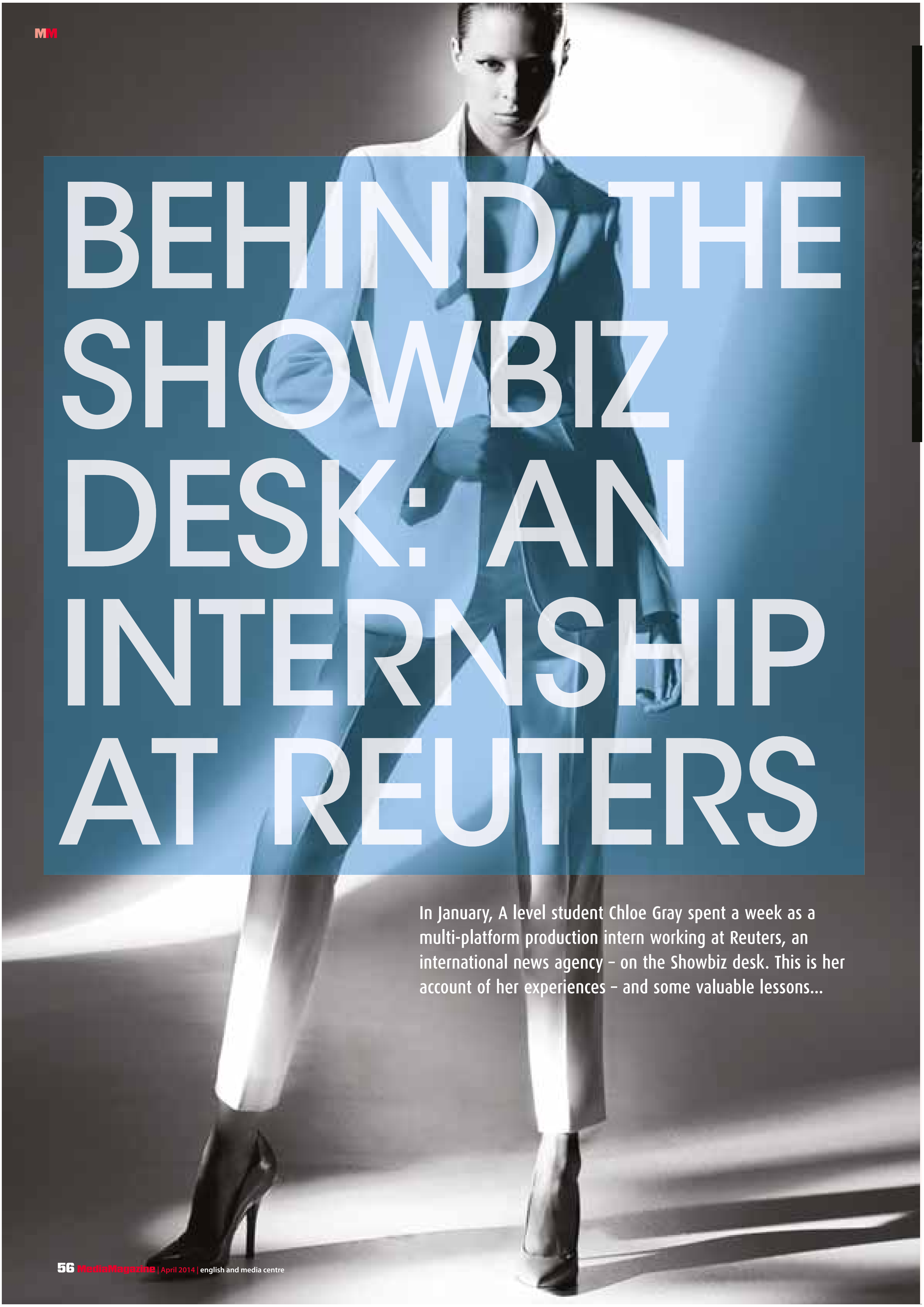
less risky than giving a new script a chance. It's a quick ticket to a fast hit – although as we have seen it doesn't always come off.

The Americanisation of series is common, and sometimes highly successful: the critics loved David Fincher's remake of *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, but the lack of a follow-up almost suggests it was superfluous since the Swedish version itself was a global box office smash. Different directors will interpret things differently so the medium can bring out different strands – surely a good thing? But Americanisation of the screen isn't simply about different cultural implications or interpretations; it's also, inevitably, about maximising profits and taking fewer risks.

There is a sense that Nordic noir needs to fit in with the cultural paradigm in order to be watched and understood beyond Scandinavia. *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* was the prime example of this: a global hit which US producers felt the need to remake within their own cultural values and mind-set. The darkness of the human psyche is a common theme which resonates with viewers worldwide. The formulaic set-up of American TV networks and Hollywood, both of which are obsessed with monetary recognition and making huge hits may perhaps have clouded artistic judgement. And in turn, audiences are now used to getting everything remade into the dominant language of English, so this, too, is also shaping habits.

Perhaps the US TV networks and filmmakers should take a risk, and jump head-first into the dark side – as we have done on our side of the Atlantic.

Emma Calway is content writer at My Big Fat Brighton Weekend and Brighton Holiday Homes.



BEHIND THE SHOWBIZ DESK: AN INTERNSHIP AT REUTERS

In January, A level student Chloe Gray spent a week as a multi-platform production intern working at Reuters, an international news agency – on the Showbiz desk. This is her account of her experiences – and some valuable lessons…

The job of a news agency is to gather, report and produce news which can then be sold to clients for their use in TV, web and print. There are of course many roles and divisions in an agency, but I was placed on the Showbiz desk within the Video News Department. The glamorous connotation of a week in 'Showbiz' was not entirely lived up to (early mornings, late finishes and lunchtimes consisting of hoovering-up a sandwich whilst juggling typing and phone calls to the editor) but it was exciting, inspiring and challenging. And I actually got the chance to be involved in news production and journalism, rather simply making hundreds of cups of tea a day – the expectation I had of being an intern.

I went out to three events but dozens more were attended by other journalists during the week that I was there. We produced on average two videos from each shoot we went to; there would be one for online consumers, and one for television. The online video was shorter, constructed and narrated to a particular angle which told a story, whilst the video intended for television clients was longer and muted, meaning that the visual material was viewed primarily as 'wallpaper' over which they could put their own narration.

The week working within the media led to me thinking about the process of news production. The TV set is no longer the centre of the home around which the entire family shares viewing experience; the internet no longer takes five minutes to dial up to; and the newspaper is no longer the single main source of the public's news. These different platforms now converge and interconnect to an extreme extent: TV catch-up on the internet, news on the television and TV stars in the newspapers. The merging of the news gathering media mainly means that in order for production to be cost-effective, timely and understandable, the journalist has to be able to work across all these platforms and create media from all angles at each stage.

The news industry is possibly the only one which does not benefit from running like an assembly line. A product cannot be passed on from one person to another. This is not a logical way of producing: the meaning of the story will be lost, and the process will be excessively time-consuming. The convergence of media platforms means therefore that media roles must also converge. The journalists at work within Reuters have to be able to embody the roles which once would have been separate jobs held by individual people. That means that journalists now must acquire the skills for all of the following roles.

Researcher

The research before an event is always stage one, and always a very significant step. The key questions to research are:

- What events have already taken place which are similar?
- How have other similar texts regarding similar events been portrayed?
- What about your new event is striking?

Movie premieres, award nominations, fashion shows and other events in the showbiz world are ones that repeat themselves multiple times. Both the BAFTA and the BRIT nominations took place during my placement, and it was my job to research who had been nominated for other such awards, such as the Golden Globes.

The next and distinctly less tedious task is to look at the video archive. For the release of the BAFTA news video, the nominated films were needed for cut-aways (glimpses of Tom Hanks in *Captain Phillips* being chased by Somali pirates, or Sandra Bullock slipping through space in the most multi-cultural British film ever made, *Gravity*) and unless these clips were already on hand, there were distributors to be contacted. Anchoring shots of the actresses and actors are important for events like this, but also need to be archived for other stories: if a breaking news story suddenly surfaces, then people need to be able to search the archive for any footage of that person involved.

The reporter's role

In my opinion, this is the most interesting part of creating a media product. Traipsing the streets of London became a regular occurrence during my week, swiftly travelling from the office to a shoot, to the office, to another shoot and so on. Black cabs and tubes tend to be any reporter's best friend, along with intercity trains and aeroplanes if national or international coverage is needed. Waiting, along with eating, can sometimes be the most prominent part of the event.

This is the moulding of your story: your final product will be determined by your success at the shoot. Once the event is over, you can no longer get more soundbites, more establishing shots or more detail: essentially, the event is 'now or never'.

Depending on the type of event and the importance of your report, you could simply be sitting down and note-taking at a press conference, or having a one-on-one interview with an important character. One of the most vital things to remember at this stage in production is that you cannot preconceive your story. When you have your 'reporter-brain' on, you have to ask all the questions before you can allow yourself the choice as to which direction your story will take. One journalist, suffering over a particular story, offered me this advice: 'I had my angle and I stuck to it and I shouldn't have done that. I didn't look into other aspects of the event.'

Script/story writer

The story is always derived from how the event takes place, backed up by the evidence you acquire in your reporting. The key questions to ask yourself are:

– what are the important aspects of the story

– what evidence do you have to support the story?

It is pointless stating that there was a huge, surprising turn of events when you have no evidence to support it. Yes, Blanchett may have given a booze-fuelled acceptance speech at the Golden Globes but with no evidence of what was said, no sound bites nor video footage, then the story is unsellable. It would be teasing the audience to write a story based around something that cannot be proven; and it would also produce a very irregular and incongruent story.

It's also important to know what establishing shots exist in the archive: if you have no footage of the movie or establishing shots of the people you might talk about, then it would be better to pick a different angle, allowing you to have fluid images to accompany what you are discussing.

Audio video (AV) editor

Being able to edit video and sound is clearly of huge importance to producing AV products, which can be displayed virtually anywhere on TV, on web pages and on social media. Yes, it can be aggravating when the mise-en-scène is outstanding but the camera has wobbled and it is not your fault.

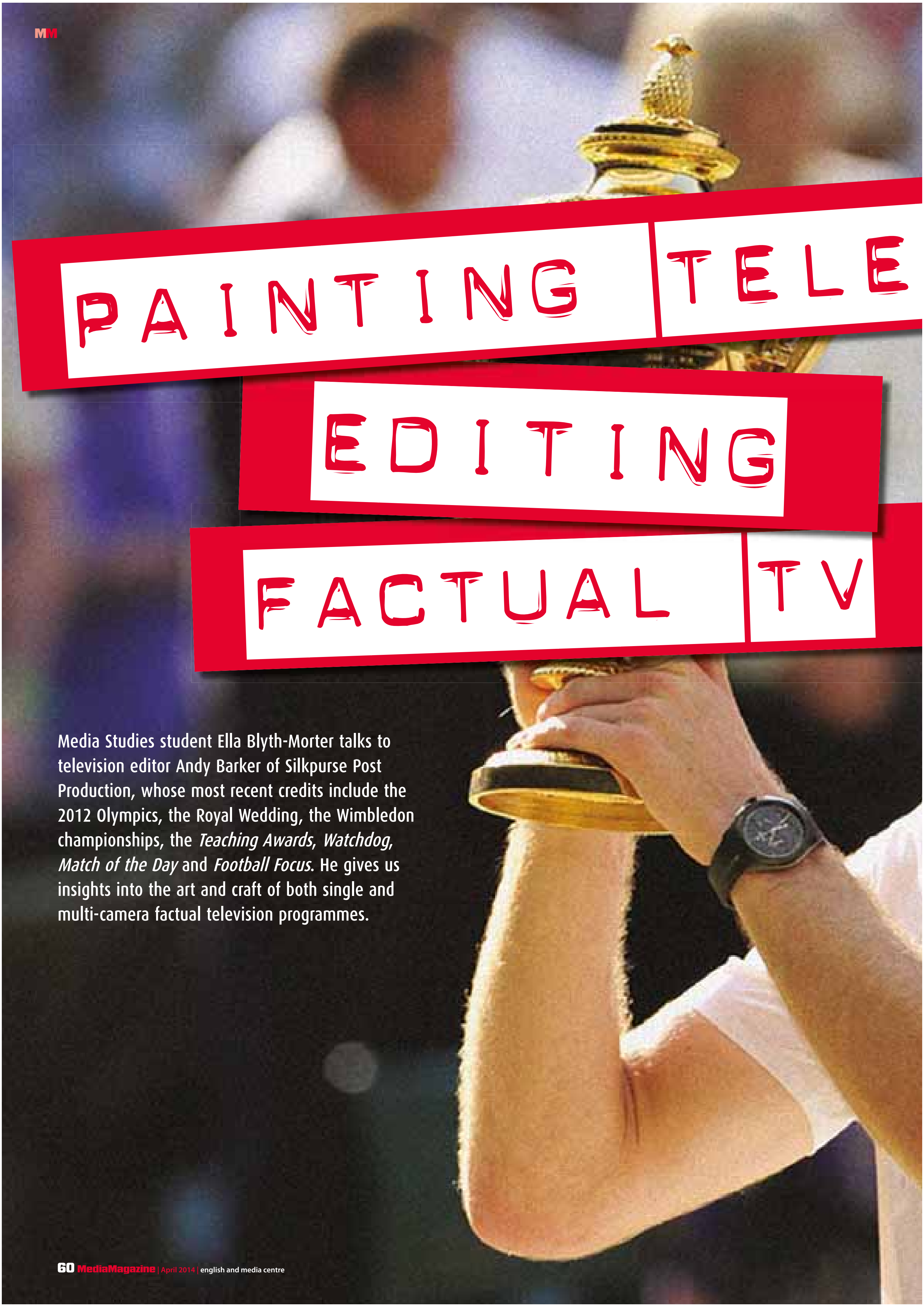
However, it isn't only about technical issues. At one fashion show event I attended, the cameraman had shot the clothes unsuccessfully – as a newbie to the world of fashion, he forgot that the materials and the clothes themselves are the focus of such an event, rather than the magnetic celebrity faces to which perhaps all cameramen tend to be attracted. This made editing a struggle, wading through plenty of footage which was beautifully shot, but inappropriate.

You also have to be ruthless. On the rare occasion that you have too many soundbites and too many amazing shots for your story, then you have to hack them away to deliver a product that is actually important, useful and exciting, rather than long and clunky.

So what about the intern?

So, what does all this mean for budding journalists like me? Being multi-skilled is essential: a basic knowledge of the broadcast, online and print industries is important, along with some expertise in one specific field. This will enable you to produce a product which will sell successfully across all media platforms. It is important to keep all options open, rather than closing the door on opportunities. As the media converge, it is likely that there will be fewer discrete jobs – journalists are increasingly expected to multitask, taking on at least four roles. The media industry can often be 'who you know' rather than 'what you know'; so experience is essential. And finally, despite being slightly terrified of my first day at Reuters, it was very clear that if you show a genuine passion for the industry, and confidence in yourself and your work, then you will be heard and respected by the professionals.

Chloe Gray is a Film and Media A Level student at Sir Richard Collyer's College.



PAINTING TELE EDITING FACTUAL TV

Media Studies student Ella Blyth-Morter talks to television editor Andy Barker of Silkpurse Post Production, whose most recent credits include the 2012 Olympics, the Royal Wedding, the Wimbledon championships, the *Teaching Awards*, *Watchdog*, *Match of the Day* and *Football Focus*. He gives us insights into the art and craft of both single and multi-camera factual television programmes.

Andy Barker worked as staff for the BBC for 27 years. Since 2011, following reorganisations at the BBC, he has been working as a freelancer. While the work can be unpredictable, it is never dull. He spoke first about the development of his career as an editor.

Ella: How did you begin your career with the BBC?

Andy: I joined the organisation straight out of university in 1983. Working for the BBC was the only job I really wanted, almost the only job I applied for, and it's the only job I've ever had. OK, I had to start at the bottom as a trainee engineer, but I stayed within the same department and became a video editor in 1991. It is a great job.

I've always liked TV and drama and in Year 7 my drama teacher encouraged me to take an interest in the lighting. I lit many of the school productions and became fascinated at the way it enabled me to combine an interest in the theatre with a fascination for pressing buttons. And it was that same teacher who suggested I look at the BBC. The TV industry was very different then. Many households these days have access to over 100 TV channels. Rewind to 1983, and there were just four. While there are more channels these days, finding paid work is very difficult due to the competition from well-trained graduates. Along with your qualifications you ought to try to get relevant work experience and create a 'show reel' or portfolio of your work to demonstrate your abilities.

Ella: So what is it that you actually do?

Andy: I work in post-production. Most programmes go through three stages before they get broadcast. There is pre-production, which is a preparation stage, when plans are made, artists are booked and scripts written, re-written and re-written again. Then comes production when the programme is actually filmed or recorded, whether in a studio or on location.

Finally there comes post-production, when all the recordings or 'rushes' as they are known (so called because historically they were the first copies 'rushed' back from the film developing labs to be edited in cutting rooms where the film was literally cut and

joined together) are edited together to make the finished programme. This stage can take anything from an hour to a whole year, depending on the type of programme; and most importantly, it's the final step. Anything that hasn't gone according to plan is usually fixed in post-production. This can range from factual inaccuracy or an unclear plot to not actually having the artist or contributor saying the words they were expected to.

Documentary programmes tend to take the longest in post-production. One of my colleagues has been working on the same four-part documentary series for over 15 months. Drama takes a similarly long time, as the pace and style of the drama can be greatly influenced by the editing. If you haven't the patience for drama or long-form documentary, a similar but simpler task is done by editors working on features, typically magazine programmes such as *The One Show*, *Countryfile* and *Watchdog*.

The hierarchy of importance might surprise some observers who often regard film and television as primarily visual media. Instead, a great deal of factual television is constructed around interviews and scripted voiceovers, with cutaways and archive material 'painted over' the talking heads to support the story. If words supply the content, then music can add pace, rhythm and tone, while the pictures provide illustration or evidence.

Ella: Describe your work editing with a single-camera video crew.

Andy: This is what we call single camera filming, in which you use one camera to film quite a long interview and then choose the best quotes to tell the story, and build the film around that. Once back from filming, the

producer is supposed to look through the tapes (or rushes, as they are still called) and select the best bits. Some do... many don't get round to it. You might have, say, footage lasting 120 minutes, which will form the basis of a three and a half minute package.

Using the Timecode on the screen as a reference, the next task is to select the best soundbites that tell our story, and cut them together. I don't really care what it looks like; all I'm bothered about is do the words make sense and is it about the right duration... (in this case 3 minutes)? Edited, the interviews themselves can make sense but the jump cuts are not very nice to watch. So we cover them with other shots: either a cutaway shot, which has been filmed as part of the shoot, or an archive shot or a 'paint' from the video library. Finally, we finish it off by cutting a creative opening sequence using music and soundbites, and also applying a 'look' or grade to the pictures.

Thankfully I don't just do magazine programmes like *Football Focus* and *Watchdog*. I work across a whole variety of types of programmes, and that's what makes my job so interesting and rewarding. In my BBC days, I might be editing a football match for *Match of the Day*; the next day a series of film clips for *The Alan Titchmarsh Show*; I could be putting the finishing touches to a major arts documentary, or spending a few days editing an opera. *Dead Ringers* with Jon Culshaw can be followed by a Tony Blair interview with Andrew Marr.

Often you are working with a producer who is responsible for the item, so you need to be able to get on with people for long periods of time. The days are often quite long, typically 10-12 hours. To offset this, I normally only work four days in a week. I also work quite a lot of

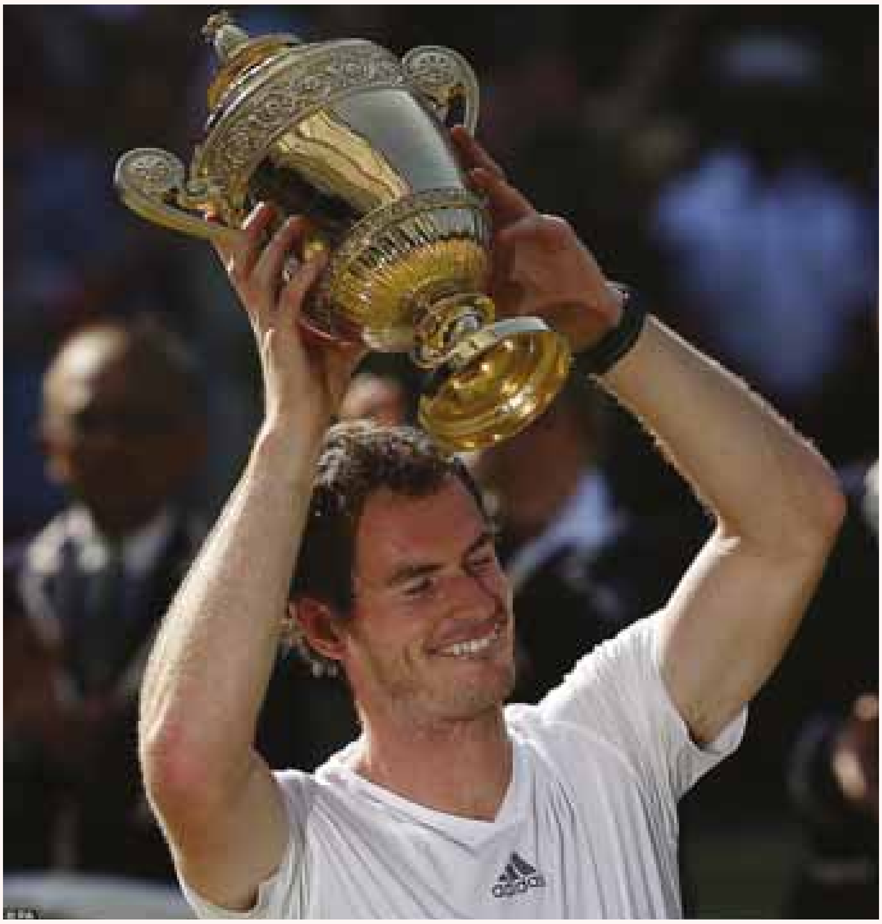
weekends, and my days off frequently change at short notice, especially now I'm working as a freelancer. If I don't work, then I don't get paid.

Multi-camera events: Wimbledon 2013

On Sunday 7th July 2013, most people were glued to their screens, watching Andy Murray spring to victory – in fact there was an average audience of 12.1 million and a peak of 17.3 million for the BBC's live coverage of the match. Meanwhile, however, Andy Barker, freelance video editor, was hard at work putting together a two-minute piece reviewing Murray's success in the tournament. Luckily for both of the men, Murray was indeed successful; so Barker's piece aired and Murray claimed the most prestigious prize in tennis.

Andy has worked at the press, media and broadcast centre at Wimbledon for 12 years now. The BBC has the biggest studio at Wimbledon, where there are a range of facilities. The smaller studios at Wimbledon are leased out to other broadcasters, so that foreign sports journalists can provide live coverage of matches. The BBC aims to achieve coverage for the world, so up to 10 of the 19 courts can be covered at any given time. At the start of the tournament, there are 110 men and 64 women competing.

Andy works as one of seven video editors for the BBC. The job is highly pressurised; he works ten-hour shifts every day for fifteen days (the middle Sunday is his only day off). A three-minute piece takes four hours to edit. This is often a 'round-up' piece – basically a resume of the matches of that day. There are many, many hours of footage to scan since so many matches are filmed. However, the job is made slightly easier with an internal BBC system that can be used



to search certain shots. By keying in search words like 'Murray back hand' or 'Djokovic smash', he can call up the shots he wants. These 'round-up' pieces are based upon the spoken word of a reporter: the video editor has to find relevant clips to match the words.

Other work includes 'light pieces', which break up the constant tennis coverage with something easy to watch. For example, Andy worked on pieces such as the use of drugs in tennis, and another which involved interviewing various employees at Wimbledon, such as ball boys and girls and lines judges, and asking them why they thought they had 'the best job in the world'. There has been even more emphasis on portraying the atmosphere of Wimbledon this year. You may have

noticed the coverage of Henman Hill and new cameras to get the reaction of the crowds there. There is also more behind-the-scenes footage now with the use of 'go-pros', which are handheld wide-angle lensed cameras. This is the camera that was used to film the footage in the changing room after the final.

There is a whole two-week empire built around Wimbledon. Ultimately it is based around the tennis players; but we should be hugely thankful to the editors, as well as the many others at the Media Centre, who bring us that coverage!

Ella Blyth-Morter is an A Level Media Studies student at Richard Hale School, Hertford.

Follow it up

For a brief introduction to single camera production, try watching *Making Media* (BBC DVD)

OZU AND THE DIRECTORIAL DREAM: WHAT CAN WESTERN AUDIENCES LEARN FROM TOKYO STORY?

The classic Japanese masterpiece *Tokyo Story* (Yasujiro Ozu, 1953) features regularly in the top ten of lists of the best films of all time. It tells the simple story of an elderly couple who visit their adult children in Tokyo, but find them wrapped up in their own lives; only their widowed daughter-in-law makes time for them. AS Film student Katie Crosson wrote about the film for a summer holiday AS/A2 transition project exploring the differences and similarities between foreign-language and Hollywood cinema. Here are her thoughts.

Critics have applauded Ozu's *Tokyo Story* for its wide appeal, reaching the level of high art and becoming exceptionally well regarded amongst cinephiles worldwide, yet remaining a popular family drama amongst the Japanese masses. In this sense, Ozu has achieved what could be considered the director's dream: creating a thought-provoking masterpiece that is also highly popular – a reality that seems to seldom exist when analysing run-of-the mill, sure-fire Hollywood successes or artsy, low-budget indie cinema that may gain prestige, but rarely attracts the attention of the masses.

But why does Ozu's narratively simple, character-driven depiction of post-war Japanese family life appeal so widely? One explanation for the film's widespread success has to be its sheer ability to reveal aspects of human nature in a new light, and teach an audience a great deal not only about Japanese life, but human life as a whole.

Pace and silence

As a viewer from the UK exposed predominantly to British and American cinema, I noticed many differences between *Tokyo Story* and conventional Hollywood films. For example, the slow, naturalistic pacing gives the film a completely unhurried feel, allowing the audience to observe the onscreen reality as if it were in front of them. It is punctuated by countless, lengthy silences that make conversation seem much less smoothed-out and glamorous than is typical in Hollywood films, and gives both characters and audience pause for thought, allowing time to consider pivotal moments and intriguing interaction (of which there is plenty).

A detached perspective

Another notable deviation from the typical Hollywood formula is Ozu's distinctive camera style. Although certain shots are reminiscent of American films (for example, the *Citizen Kane*-esque deep-focus, layered shots), camera angles in *Tokyo Story* are truly iconic – the camera remains at sitting height and middle distance throughout, never intruding with invasive or

glamorous close-ups (Ozu claimed that people are 'beyond forgiveness or individual glamour'), and keeping a respectful distance in intimate/highly emotional scenes, such as the death of central character Tomi Hirayama. This technique ensures that the audience remain detached onlookers, never looking down upon any of the characters, mirroring the general theme of the film – that judgement should not be passed nonchalantly, and that everything takes its course. The audience are encouraged to perceive the characters as fulfilling the roles that they must, rather than simply being selfish or cruel. As a British viewer, I found this perspective particularly interesting, and found the distinct lack of heroes and villains refreshing and charmingly humanising. I feel that a Western audience could learn a great deal about the motives and desires of various family members/generations from Ozu's portrayal of 'the way things are'.

A slow opening and in-depth characters

The opening scene sets up a sequence of long, drawn-out establishing shots, introducing the ambience of the film and thoroughly familiarising the audience with the on-screen reality of the film. The realistic pacing of the scene both suggests there is a lot to take in and encourages the viewer to take a close look. The opening music establishes the tone for the tale as a whole: peaceful, yet tinged with a beautiful kind of sorrow.

In contrast, the first time we are introduced to the elderly couple, Tomi and Shukichi Hiryama, the pair appear distinctly hopeful, cheerfully appreciating simple pleasures with such remarks as 'what beautiful weather' with a look of joy so pure and sincere it leaves the audience struggling to comprehend the fact that neither actor is, by Hollywood standards, particularly famous. Their subtlety and skill teaches Western audiences that star status isn't necessary for truly exceptional performances.

Such extraordinary performances are hugely important in establishing the nature of the film as an in-depth character study, as opposed to a more conventional narrative-orientated Hollywood movie. Ozu claims that obvious plots bore him, and this is apparent in the intricacy and unpredictability of *Tokyo Story*.

A story without a resolution

Unconventionally, there is no real *resolution* to the story, in the sense that there is no 'good guy' to root for, or any explanation of what happens to each character after Tomi's death. The end of the film is where we stop following the characters, rather than the end of the story, simulating a snapshot of real life; and although the final scenes are tear-jerking, the characters' sadness and the coming of death is presented as merely a part of life, rather than an overdramatised end-of-the-world-scale catastrophe. The realistic nature of the situation makes it particularly touching and raw; there is no hiding behind extravagance. There are no happy endings; happiness is not discussed within the film as something one

can specifically set out to obtain, but rather as something that runs through humanity, visiting (and leaving) each and every person at different moments – the film suggests that this is something to embrace rather than to fear.

The general philosophy of the film as a whole separates it from generic Hollywood style. Ozu celebrates the beauty present in ordinary human life, and deals with poignant emotional moments in a nuanced and delicate way, avoiding over-glamorisation that distances the audience from the characters onscreen, or the need to artificially heighten or exaggerate reality. *Tokyo Story* calls to mind an untranslatable phrase *mono no aware*, integral to Japanese philosophy, which essentially means 'the tears we shed at the transience of things' and 'an empathy towards things'. Sensitivity and natural change or progression are themes within the film that are explored in depth and dealt with in an exceptionally interesting and revealing manner without any need for beautification.

Understated ordinariness

Key scenes in the film are arguably less focal than in typical Hollywood, due to Ozu's/the characters' specific interpretation of what is important. The most touching and seemingly poignant moments in the film, with the greatest impact on both characters and audiences are totally understated and, ultimately, ordinary. For example, in one of the most beautifully executed scenes Tomi is simply talking to her grandson in the fields – the music is delicate and playful, and Tomi looks utterly contented and at peace watching her grandchild play. She talks slowly and pauses frequently, allowing the audience to cherish every precious, tranquil moment in empathy with her. Sadness is evoked when Tomi begins to question her grandson's plans for the future, and contemplates 'By the time you're a doctor I wonder if I'll be here'. She muses over the transience of life in a matter-of-fact, accepting tone, whilst focusing primarily on enjoying the moment with her grandson entirely. Through Tomi's eyes we are shown how beautiful such simple moments can truly be, and finding such beauty in quotidian human life provokes virtually any audience to feel pensive and emotional.

In terms of clarity of narrative, 'important' scenes, such as the journey to Tokyo, take place off-screen, revealed only later through dialogue. This minimises dramatic irony, preventing the audience from obtaining a privileged position. To the elderly couple, Tomi and Shukichi, what they're *actually doing* seems to be of little importance: they are not on a mission, but content in each other's company, valuing family and love in an almost Capra-esque fashion. All they truly need to achieve happiness is what they already have, enhanced by their acceptance that nothing lasts forever, and that human life and contentment is thus fragile. This is particularly evident when their daughter can no longer put them up due to a business meeting, and laughing and joking they announce 'We are really homeless now'. In this particular moment, all they have is each other, and that is enough. This strong appreciation of their current status, reflected in their kind, understanding nature, is revealed countless times, such as when their son, Koichi, has no time for them, and they empathise, suggesting 'a good doctor is a busy doctor'; or when their young grandson incessantly nags 'aren't we going?', and they simply comment 'boys *should* be lively'. It seems patience is a dying virtue.

By the end of the film, conventional definitions of the word 'family' are challenged. The assumption that blood relationships inevitably translate to closeness is challenged. Noriko, the widowed daughter-in-law, is the only member of the elderly couple's family who truly puts herself out to accommodate them and make them

feel welcome in Tokyo. Careful editing conveys Noriko's selflessness when a shot of her patiently fanning her parents-in-law is directly followed by a shot of their biological daughter fanning herself. This juxtaposition provokes the audience to question whether it is truly the difference between selflessness and selfishness, or actually the difference between loneliness and being loved that shapes how the two women respond to their family members. Noriko is more than happy to spend time with her parents-in-law – a change from spending her time alone. She never complains, and smiles through everything, remaining strong for those around her. When asked 'isn't life disappointing?' she replies with a wide smile on her tear-dampened face 'yes, it is'. In this sense, she is far more similar to her parents-in-law than anyone else in their family, and seems to have learnt much more from them.

Western assumptions, family values

In contrast to the Western assumption (arguably based on the absurd concept that after the age of 45 people can no longer learn, or even find anything out) that the elderly are out of touch with the younger generations, *Tokyo Story* suggests it is in fact the younger generation that do not understand their elders. The children of Tomi and Shukichi assume the couple would quite happily spend their time without their family, relaxing in Tokyo spa resorts, and that they are tired all the time – they underestimate their own importance to their parents, and the value of spending time together as a family. Nevertheless, Tomi and Shukichi appreciate everything their children do for them, whether or not it is what they want; they empathise with the difficulties of trying to please.

Ozu suggests that when Shige describes her parents to a friend as 'just some friends from the country' she is ashamed of not wanting her parents to stay with her, and this shame humanises her. Unlike classical Hollywood drama, where bad characters do bad things and good characters do good things, the film suggests that sometimes people just have to do what they need to do. While it may be construed as selfishness, it is a part of human behaviour, and doesn't truly determine character. Her parents would rather see her happy and busy, than with nothing else to do other than accommodate them; this is confirmed when Tomi explains to Noriko that her apparent loneliness saddens them deeply.

There can be few parts of the world where *Tokyo Story* wouldn't in some way connect with audiences; its honest and beautiful study of human life seems endlessly relatable. I feel that there is a great deal a Western audience could learn from the film in terms of values, perspectives and culture. Even after reading that *Tokyo Story* was voted the third greatest film of all time by the BFI, the film still exceeded my expectations. It proved to me that an in-depth study of a certain culture doesn't need to be exclusively relevant to that time period, country or social climate, and that a film can indeed be simultaneously very successful, artistically iconic and highly regarded. If Ozu hasn't achieved the directorial dream with *Tokyo Story*, I'd like to see someone that has.

Katie Crosson has just competed her Film Studies A Level at Rawlins Academy, Leicestershire. *Tokyo Story* is available on DVD and Blu-ray from Amazon, MovieMail and BFI Shop.