Edited by

Anna Cooper and Russell Meeuf

# PROJECTING THE WORLD

## Representing the "Foreign" in Classical Hollywood

# PROJECTING THE WORLD

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# Contents

*Acknowledgments* *vii*

Introduction: Classical Hollywood and Transnational Culture 1
**Anna Cooper and Russell Meeuf**

**Part 1: Islands and Identity**

1. Isles of Fright: Gothic Tropics and Island Horror 23
**Louis Bayman**

2. Charlie Chan's Multicolored Passport: Territorial Hawaii and Classical Hollywood's Transnational "Foreign" Detective 47
**Elizabeth Rawitsch**

3. "The Jungle Is My Home": Questions of Belonging, Exile, and the Negotiation of Foreign Spaces in the *Tarzan* Films of Johnny Weissmuller 69
**Gábor Gergely**

4. Inhabiting the Space of the Other: Josef von Sternberg's *Anatahan* 89
**Edward K. Chan**

**Part 2: European Vacations**

5. America's Travelogue Romance with Italy, 1953–1969 115
**Ian Jarvie**

6. Prestige Film Aesthetics and Europeanized Hollywood in the 1950s 137
**Chris Cagle**

7. "Our Love Is Here to Stay": Transatlantic Relations in 1950s Hollywood Musicals about Paris 159
**Anna Cooper**

**Part 3: Desert and Savannah Adventures**

8. In the Foucauldian Mirror: Budd Boetticher's Mexico and the United States in the 1950s 181
**Saverio Giovacchini**

9. From the Pampas to the Jockey Club: Familiar Exoticism in Hollywood's Argentina 209
**Fernando Gabriel Pagnoni Berns, Mariana Zárate, and Patricia Haydee Vazquez**

10. John Wayne's Africa: European Colonialism versus U.S. Global Leadership in *Legend of the Lost* (1957) 233
**Russell Meeuf**

*Contributors* *255*

*Index* *259*

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# Introduction

## Classical Hollywood and Transnational Culture

Anna Cooper and Russell Meeuf

In Billy Wilder's 1948 film *A Foreign Affair*, set in American-occupied postwar Berlin, Marlene Dietrich sings a number in a seedy black market nightclub in a ruined street:

> Black market
> Eggs for statuettes
> Smiles for cigarettes
> Got some broken down ideals?
> Like wedding rings?
> Shhhhhhh, tiptoe—trade your things!

Dietrich's song underscores the film's stark image of the U.S. occupation of Germany, one largely focused on how the black market for American consumer goods such as cigarettes and chocolate bars leads supposedly wholesome GIs into tawdry behavior. In one scene, two U.S. soldiers use candy bars to try to lure a young German girl out to a bar and, it is implied, to a sexual encounter (not realizing that the fräulein in question is actually a stuffy midwestern U.S. congresswoman, played by Jean Arthur, investigating troop morale in Berlin).

The contrast between Dietrich's morally flexible lounge singer and Arthur's upright American, however, provides an easy dichotomy that too often lets the film's nuances go unnoticed: the film's protagonist must choose between a sexy, manipulative vision of Europe and a chaste, honest representative of the U.S. middle class. Displacing geopolitics onto the bodies and behavior of women, the film seems to suggest an allegory for postwar isolationism, dramatizing the "corrupting influence of Europe, the superior morality of the heartland, and the dangers of foreign entanglements."[1] The generic conventions of the romantic

comedy, of course, mean that our hero (an unscrupulous army captain played by John Lund) will choose the stuffy congresswoman, even if reluctantly: the film ends with him trying to evade her sexual advances and insistence that he return to Iowa with her to become a respectable husband.

But this simple narrative closure fails to rein in the film's complex exploration of international capitalism and sexual politics, especially since *A Foreign Affair* spends much of its narrative complicating the typical relationships between sex and consumerism in Hollywood. The links between sexuality and American-style consumer capitalism are often assumed to be central to the geopolitics of classical Hollywood, as their persistent synergy within classical Hollywood films supposedly seduced people around the world into a "Pax Americana"[2] in the early to mid-twentieth century. Yet here, within this Hollywood film directed by a German émigré, the relationship between sex and capitalism is considerably darkened, as Dietrich is effectively shown to be a black market sex worker, trading sadomasochistic sexual favors with her American army captain lover in exchange for food and other necessities. And the images of GIs plying poor German women with chocolate in exchange for companionship offers a bitterly cynical view of American economic investment in Europe, even when played for laughs as it is in *A Foreign Affair*. This Hollywood film thus subtly critiques U.S.-style capitalism and its typical glamorization of women's consumption as a justificatory theme, undermining the supposed benevolence of the U.S. occupation of Europe. The film reflects a deep sense of unease not about the corrupting power of Europe but instead about the failures of U.S.-led consumerism (and masculinity) *in* Europe, an anxiety that the film's generic ending cannot reconcile.[3]

As this example attests, film texts are often deep and subtle, rich and rewarding to interpret. They can powerfully buttress dominant ideologies, or they can subvert them—even when made within a hegemonic apparatus such as the Hollywood film industry. So it is surprising that, within scholarship on Hollywood cinema's relationship with twentieth-century U.S. international relations, there is a marked tendency to take the film text as somehow transparent, as too obviously colonialist in content to merit further study. While critics and scholars acknowledge that Hollywood films were enormously appealing and persuasive (of what?) to audiences around the world, this is all too often treated

as warranting every possible kind of explanation except for digging into the content and form of the films themselves. Ruth Vasey's generally quite accomplished book on classical Hollywood's distribution practices and negotiations with foreign governments, for example, makes the following opening remarks:

> A motion picture may be set in New York or ancient Rome, but if the movie is a product of Hollywood we know that the fiction will be governed by a set of narrative and representational conventions that will override the social, geographic, and historical characteristics of its nominal locale. The world according to Hollywood is an exotic, sensual cousin of the realm outside the cinema.[4]

This is a sweeping claim about Hollywood film texts that, rather than being proven, is treated as the premise for an industrial study. We see this sort of assumption again and again. Rheinhold Wagnleitner, for example, writes that

> The so-called Americanisation of European culture was *not* a by-product of the political, military and economic successes of the United States in Cold War Europe but was actually at the *centre* of that process. . . . By virtually representing the codes of modernity *and* material abundance, America signified the defeat of the old, the traditional, the small, the narrow.[5]

Yet Wagnleitner fails to engage with the content or forms of this culture at all and instead investigates the relationship between Hollywood and the U.S. State Department. And again, Ian Jarvie (notwithstanding his contribution to the present volume) wrote in his 1992 book about Hollywood distribution in Europe from 1920 to 1950 that "Whether Hollywood produced art or commercial products, its dominance in world film trade was a fact—a fact deserving historical explanation."[6] Certainly it deserves historical explanation, but doesn't it also deserve digging into the texts themselves to explain this dominance? These are simply a few examples from a clear pattern in scholarship on the relationship between Hollywood and U.S. foreign relations in the twentieth century, which has fairly consistently taken a reductive approach to the film text and has instead privileged extratextual concerns such as distribution, reception, and runaway production.

This is the gap that this volume seeks to redress, bringing together recent work that challenges this pattern through detailed and sophisticated engagement with the Hollywood film text at the level of geopolitics. Each chapter of this volume takes a different approach, drawing on various traditions of textual analysis and film theory, but what they all share is a belief that Hollywood films, far from being monolithic, are ideologically nuanced in ways that need to be teased out and analyzed to be fully understood, even as these films can also be terrifically forceful in representing an American vision of the world. There is no one-to-one relationship, we believe, between production conditions and content; rather, each film text must be examined in its own right for the ways, perhaps both intentional and unintentional, that it engages with geopolitics.

The frequent disregard of the Hollywood film text when studying Hollywood's geopolitics is all the more surprising when you consider the centrality of textual studies to scholarship on European imperialism. Ever since Edward Said identified the British and French novel as a locus for understanding the ideological textures of these empires and their continued effects on the world today, literature departments have proliferated with scholars engaging with written texts through the lens of colonialist geopolitics in sophisticated ways. Though there are some exceptions (to be discussed below), film studies has largely not partaken of this long-running trend in geopolitical reading—despite the fact that classical Hollywood cinema, like the British and French novel, is unquestionably *the* most important popular art form in a period of unprecedented global dominance for the culture from whence it arose. Such a focus on the geopolitics of the Hollywood film text is clearly overdue, as the rich and captivating chapters of this volume demonstrate.

Examining the internal logics and visual spectacle of Hollywood cinema from roughly 1930 through 1965, *Projecting the World* explores how midcentury Hollywood envisioned America's international relationships, where "America" is both a state with a growing role in international politics and a vague but powerful vision of consumer modernity. At times, this exploration reveals the myriad ways that Hollywood films seek to seduce or suture spectators into alignment with U.S. global leadership, indicating the surprisingly complex cultural negotiations underpinning the projection of U.S. global power and the spread of global capitalism. Other times, the films reveal a deep ambivalence about

the cultural transformations of a more global world, highlighting the tensions of identity thanks to a variety of cross-cultural exchanges. In both cases, this book illustrates how Hollywood films negotiate the shifting historical contexts of internationalization, offering far more complex narratives about transnational exchange than is typically acknowledged in classical Hollywood movies.

This is not to suggest, of course, that such films provide a perspective on the world that radically decenters whiteness, maleness, or Western privilege. The films analyzed here address questions of identity, transnational exchange, global political power, and consumer modernity from the privileged perspective of (mostly) white males grappling with America's growing world power. By interrogating these privileged narratives, this book shows the anxieties, accommodations, and incoherencies underpinning Hollywood's engagement with the world beyond the United States.

## Hollywood and the World

Although, as argued above, we believe that the Hollywood film text has received short shrift in studies of the relationships between U.S. cinema and U.S. foreign power, this work is nevertheless not without precedent. Indeed, even though (as discussed above) industrial studies of global Hollywood have tended to make problematic assumptions about the film text, such work also underpins the present volume, and its importance should not be underestimated.

A number of such studies have demonstrated the importance of international markets to the U.S. studios and their work to secure the place of Hollywood films in the world market. Thomas Guback's out-of-print but highly illuminating 1969 study of the international operations of Hollywood shows an industry becoming much more international in scope, expanding international ("runaway") productions and making huge investments in international film industries to expand their global production efforts.[7] Later, Jarvie's *Hollywood's Overseas Campaign*,[8] Vasey's *The World According to Hollywood, 1918–1939*,[9] and John Trumpbour's *Selling Hollywood to the World*[10] meticulously documented the imperatives for internationalization for the studio system and its commitment to producing films that would cater to international audiences. Such studies indicate the global nature of Hollywood economics well before the current era of multinational media conglomeration and situate the

texts studied here within the history of Hollywood's global production and distribution practices.

Other work in reception studies has shown how the products of Hollywood as an international industry have functioned as important cultural artifacts in the negotiation of cultural and national identity for global audiences. Maltby and Stokes's collection *Hollywood Abroad* explores the vital and sometimes contradictory role that Hollywood products played in the production of both national identity and cultural modernity for international audiences.[11] For example, Charles Ambler's essay in that collection on the popularity of U.S. westerns in Central African mining communities in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s shows how Hollywood cinema provided a range of styles and fashions that could be adapted to life amid the highly exploitive labor conditions, much to the chagrin of British colonial authorities who sought to regulate the cinematic diet of the communities. Sporting cowboys hats and makeshift chaps and carrying wooden pistols, these "Copperbelt cowboys" used the visual spectacle of Hollywood westerns to engage with the idea of modernity against the backdrop of colonialist industrialization.[12] Likewise, Hideaki Fujiki's monograph about Japanese stardom in the 1910s and 1920s reveals the importance of U.S. film stars such as Mary Pickford and Clara Bow to the development of Japanese stardom, both as icons against which Japanese femininity could be distinguished and as templates for emerging visions of independent womanhood.[13] Several other studies, including Ellwood and Kroes's anthology *Hollywood in Europe*,[14] Jennifer Fay's *Theaters of Occupation*,[15] and Uta G. Poiger's *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*[16] also provide engaging accounts of the lived realities of this internationalization, exploring the myriad ways that Hollywood films were negotiated into local and national cultures, particularly in Europe.

The last fifteen years or so of scholarship have seen some emergent work on the geopolitics of the Hollywood film text rather than the economics of Hollywood's international dominance or the historical reception of U.S. media abroad. In Melani McAlister's book *Epic Encounters*, for example, we see how Hollywood blockbusters about the Middle East such as *The Ten Commandments* played an important role in the shifting discourses of U.S. foreign engagements in the early years of the Cold War. Situating the film within the Suez Crisis of 1956, McAlister shows how media culture helps articulate the evolving foreign

policy of the United States, especially as the United States challenged the hegemony of European colonialism around the world and articulated a model of global capitalism.[17] Christina Klein in her book *Cold War Orientalism* similarly argues that Hollywood musicals such as *South Pacific* and *The King and I* participate in U.S. middlebrow cultural discourses that enlist popular support for U.S. intervention abroad by creating sentimental narratives about the benevolence and humanitarianism of U.S. global power. Rather than being based on colonial domination, this vision of Cold War Orientalism, Klein argues, cultivates emotional appeals for a heightened U.S. presence that help usher its neocolonial subjects into Western modernity and capitalism.[18]

Even more recently, a series of works in film studies has expanded on this interest in cinema and the negotiation of U.S. international relationships, especially in Europe. Robert Shandley's *Runaway Romances* examines Hollywood runaway productions made in Europe between 1946 and 1964, reading these films as allegories of their complexly transnational production conditions.[19] Likewise, Vanessa Schwartz's *It's So French!* documents the transnational cinematic exchanges between Hollywood and the French film industry in the postwar period, teasing out the dynamics of cross-cultural exchange between the two cinemas.[20] Colin McArthur's book Brigadoon, Braveheart *and the Scots* forcefully critiques a Hollywood that manufactures its images of other cultures more or less whole cloth to suit its own ideological purposes.[21] When released, Anna Cooper's monograph *An American Abroad* will expand on this research trajectory, examining postwar Hollywood films about Americans traveling abroad in Europe as texts portraying a complex and fraught cultural encounter between American hegemonic power and a Europe that is being economically, socially, and culturally dominated from across the Atlantic.[22]

Even stars and directors of the 1940s and 1950s who are lauded as quintessentially American also reveal complex, transnational meanings upon closer textual scrutiny. Russell Meeuf's *John Wayne's World*, for example, explores the global stardom of an actor who was closely linked to ideas of U.S. patriotism and jingoism. While John Wayne is often held up as an exemplar of fundamentally American rugged masculinity, Meeuf uses Wayne's international popularity in the 1950s to demonstrate how Hollywood articulated a set of masculine values around borderless competition and the importance of a cosmopolitan identity

amid a modernizing landscape. These values, Meeuf argues, are central to the transformations of modern identity thanks to the globalization of capitalism, showing how cinema manages the cultural changes stemming from postwar U.S. internationalization.[23] Similarly, Elizabeth Rawitsch's *Frank Capra's Eastern Horizons* rethinks the quintessential Americanness of the acclaimed director, demonstrating how Capra's vision of U.S. national identity relied on shifting engagements with the spaces of the "East" in order to imagine the idea of Americanness. Capra's America, Rawitsch argues, was deeply invested in the creation of a global community overseen by U.S. and European global leadership.[24]

Much of this work on Hollywood is clearly inspired by research demonstrating the power of cinema more broadly as a technology and medium closely linked to the projection of Western imperial power. As outlined in Ella Shohat and Robert Stam's *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, the technologies and images of cinema have long made the film text an important artifact for understanding the mediation of colonial ideologies. The images and narratives of cinema—especially the films of Hollywood as well as those of the British and French film industries—have helped construct the non-Western world as an exotic space of adventure for Western men, suturing audiences into assumptions about the primitivism that lies beyond the boundaries of Western "civilization" and the need for Western dominance in these regions.[25] Yet many studies of colonial and postcolonial cinemas have followed the dominant trends in literary studies, focusing largely on the British and French Empires and their devolutions. Priya Jaikumar's *Cinema at the End of Empire*,[26] Prem Chowdhry's *Colonial India and the Making of Empire Cinema*,[27] Dina Sherzer's edited volume *Cinema: Colonialism, Postcolonialism*,[28] Bernstein and Studlar's collection *Visions of the East*,[29] and most recently Ponzanesi and Waller's anthology *Postcolonial Cinema Studies*[30] all take this approach. Meanwhile, E. Ann Kaplan has tried to synthesize a broader theory of postcolonial film aesthetics via gaze theory in her *Looking for the Other*.[31] Other important work in this area has focused on silent cinema, including Jennifer Peterson's *Education in the School of Dreams*,[32] Fatimah Tobing Rony's *The Third Eye*,[33] and Alison Griffiths's *Wondrous Difference*,[34] which all focus on colonialist aspects of silent cinema and contribute innovative and important theoretical approaches to the field. The present volume takes a similar approach but is among the first to focus more specifically on Hollywood

in the sound period—a period marked by U.S. expansion and dominance in the periods leading up to and following World War II.

Our thread of scholarship is particularly indebted to the work of Victoria de Grazia, whose book *Irresistible Empire* describes the emergence of what she calls a "market empire" in Europe in the twentieth century. Organized around the seductive appeal of U.S. commercial goods, this "market empire" helped promote a modern and consumerist subjectivity linking the United States and Europe within transnational circuits of trade. In contrast to more coercive models of international influence, then, the "market empire" uses the irresistible and affective pleasures of consumer society—refrigerators, cars, and movies, for example—to lure populations into alignment with U.S. models of capitalism and globalization.[35] As such, de Grazia's work helps foreground the power of emotion, seduction, and pleasure to the cultural work of imperialism, especially to an understanding of cinema, that more than any other object of transnational exchange in this period sought to engage international audiences in the pleasures and contradictions of consumerist identities—work that is crucial to the present volume.

Hollywood's output in the midcentury decades, after all, coincides with the development of contemporary global capitalism. This is the period not only when America was approaching the zenith of its world power but also when its vision of power helped secure the uneven transformation of Western colonialism into modern neoliberal globalization.[36] The dominant historical narrative concerning globalization and transnational culture often looks for moments of rupture and rebirth, discrete points on a timeline that mark the boundary between the "old" and the "new." The present project, on the other hand, sees our contemporary global moment as part of a continuous history of cultural globalization in which a particular U.S.-inspired model of modernity steadily permeated large swaths of the world. As the United States ascended to a position of global power in the buildup to World War II and emerged as the world's superpower in the postwar years, a variety of forces—from official U.S. foreign policy to the growth of international trade to the informal cross-cultural exchanges facilitated by increasing travel and migration—intensified U.S. investments (both economic and emotional) in an idea of global community. While this historical period is often ignored in historical discussions of globalization and neoliberalism, the

midcentury era proved foundational in the emergence of a U.S.-led consumerist transnational culture, as research such as de Grazia's attests. The present work seeks to close this gap, examining the midcentury period in Hollywood as a long period of complex and varied representations of U.S. power rather than focusing on a single moment of upheaval.

## Themes and Organization of This Book

While firmly grounded in the theories and methods found in previous work, the emerging research on midcentury Hollywood tries to more specifically locate the pleasures and allure of U.S. imperialism (as well as the anxieties of a more internationally connected world) within the film text. As a collection of this emerging research, the present volume helps expand our understanding of "global Hollywood" by asking directly how Hollywood cinema represented the United States and its role in the world as well as the cultural changes wrought by burgeoning forms of globalization. Hollywood films, after all, are not simply products in colonial chains of distribution, like refrigerators or soap; they are complex texts that produce and reproduce meanings, cultural ideals, and hierarchies. They represent America's and Americans' relationships with the world in a variety of ways, both explicitly (as when an American businessman visits Italy and experiences a series of cultural exchanges with Italians) and implicitly (as when an American-made film is set in China and is entirely about Chinese people but the characters are played by white Americans and speak only English). Yet they often do so with what Edward Said, speaking of European Orientalist texts, called "positional superiority," which he defined as "put[ting] the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand."[37] It becomes crucial to explore how Hollywood films envisage America's relationships with the rest of the world, teasing out the complex transnational exchanges that are conceptualized within them and examining how, and indeed whether, these films continually give America the upper hand.

The "whether" in the above sentence opens up a key point, which is that these films are not necessarily monolithic in their representations of U.S. power. Although there are certainly many times when America and Americans are endowed with positional superiority within these films, the chapters that follow equally explicate moments of rupture and incoherence. Rather than reading

Hollywood films in this period within the strict logics of imperial domination and subordination, such research examines the nuanced cultural exchanges—the slippages, contradictions, and negotiations—that nevertheless subtly lure audiences around the world (including in the United States) into alignment with the vision of U.S. global leadership that was beginning to be articulated by policy makers around midcentury. Far from being a simple or obvious process—as it is often assumed by scholars to be—the "Hollywoodization" of stories and locations around the world is rich, complicated, and discordant.

Such readings, of course, are not confined solely to the most popular and acclaimed films that have come to be accepted as quality productions. In fact, another important theme running throughout this collection is the issue of quality versus "badness." Some of the films analyzed here were made as prestige productions. Cagle's chapter on the "Europeanization" of Hollywood is explicitly about how the notion of "prestige" was shaped by transnational exchanges. Cooper's work on *An American in Paris* explores how this film conceived of transatlantic culture as a marriage of "high" European art and "low" American forms such as jazz, while Giovacchini's chapter examines how the Mexican-set films of Budd Boetticher rise above general trends in the western genre as complex, nuanced pictures of cross-cultural encounter. On the other hand, many of the films discussed here are frequently considered to be "bad." Gergely, for example, explores how the *Tarzan* films of Johnny Weismuller, long considered obviously terrible, must be reconsidered for their complex transnational negotiations of selfhood and otherness. Bayman looks at a cycle of B-movie gothic horror films, showing how these films' debased status enables them to transform into dreamlike spaces of the American colonial imaginary that make no appeal to reality. Chan's work on von Sternberg's *Anatahan* also deals with the various fraught cultural encounters both in the text and in the reception of a bizarre and oft-pilloried film. And Jarvie grapples with a series of "bad" romantic comedies about Americans traveling in Italy from the 1950s to the early 1960s, exploring what this badness tells us about the ways that Hollywood cinema was changing in the wake of changes in U.S. power in Europe. Since such films' poor quality—in particular their hackneyed representations of the "exotic"—have often served as an excuse not to bother to examine them in a scholarly vein, this issue becomes central here and is in fact a key site of these films' interpretive richness.

The cinematic negotiations of culture and power explored in this volume are fundamentally visual and spatial, and this is another common theme. Hollywood cinema imagines the world beyond the borders of the United States according to the spatial logics of social power, organizing and representing the world according to the needs and fantasies of a U.S.-led transnational culture. Some spaces are imagined as exotic locales perfect for white male adventurism, while others are imagined as modern metropoles suited for the expansion of American capitalism or as picturesque and antiquated safe spaces for white Americans to holiday. Others still become liminal spaces where Western audiences can revel in the pleasures of losing oneself to other cultures (all the while maintaining power and privilege, of course). Each of these kinds of spaces is examined in this collection, with each chapter analyzing a different inflection of that space in Hollywood's projection of the world.

Given this emphasis on space and power, several authors use Michel Foucault's idea of heterotopia to explain cinema's ability to imagine alternative spaces, spaces with the power to inform our understandings of the material world. For Foucault, heterotopias are spaces that reimagine or remap the rules governing the "normal" spatial order, creating physical spaces or sensory experiences that often resemble either utopian or dystopian models of the world (but aren't actually utopias or dystopias). Such experiences reorganize perceptions of the material spaces of the social world, offering a framework through which to understand the possibilities—and failures—of the physical world.[38] Cinema, some argue, functions as a heterotopia, as a representation of space and spatial relations that provide real sensory experiences of alternative spaces. Such experiences then frame the assumptions guiding the perception of space and power in the material world. For Gergely's examination of the Weismuller *Tarzan* films, for example, the spaces of the African jungle in the films are a heterotopia within which alternative conceptions of transnational identities can be imagined onscreen (through Tarzan as a liminal human/animal and Western/African figure). The identities imagined in such spaces then help frame ideas about exile and identity amid the material realities of migration and citizenship in the United States in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Similarly, Giovacchini's examination of Boetticher's westerns show how the director represented the spaces of Mexico as a heterotopic reflection of American culture, an alternative image of what the

United States is not, for better or worse. Giovacchini traces Boetticher's heterotopic vision of Mexico to the director's time spent as a young man in Mexico, calling attention to the relationship between travel and cross-cultural exchange in the material world and the capacity to imagine complex transnational relationships onscreen, an argument further explored by Edward Chan in his discussion of Josef von Sternberg's *Anatahan*. Arguing that von Sternberg's travels in Japan functioned as a heterotopic experience for the director, Chan explores von Sternberg's attempt to make a "Japanese" film and how his attempt reflects the history of U.S. cultural exchange in the postwar years. The use of heterotopia as a key theoretical concept in several chapters, then, reflects a larger concern of this book: examining the most prominent and resonant spaces used by Hollywood in this period to explore the allure and anxieties of global modernity, transnational exchanges, and consumer identities.

This book is organized into three sections, each united by the type of landscape depicted in the films discussed therein: islands, iconic European holiday destinations, and deserts/savannas. Typically, scholarship on transnational Hollywood has focused on the relationship between U.S. cinema and particular countries or regions; in departing from this pattern, we seek to open up space for transnational connections between different regions and the ways they are represented by Hollywood in ways that are not usually visible.

The first section turns to the trope of the island as a space of fluid identity and cross-cultural exchange. Focusing largely on the 1930s and on representations of island territories in Asia, the chapters in this section explore the various ways that islands and other tropical paradises—in Japan, Hawaii, the Caribbean, Africa, and elsewhere—can function as imaginative spaces in which imperialist ideologies are destabilized and racial and national identities become liminal.

Louis Bayman starts off with an engaging exploration of the cycle of gothic horror films set on tropical islands in the 1930s and early 1940s. Tracing how U.S. culture has long conceived of the island as a marginal or accidental space of colonization open to possession by white men with civilizing designs, Bayman looks at how these films represent complex negotiations of dominant U.S. concerns about race, gender, and miscegenation. *Island of Lost Souls* and *I Walked with a Zombie* depict, respectively, U.S. conceptions of the Pacific islands and the Caribbean islands, with the latter taking place in Haiti not long after the U.S.

occupation had been forced out. Both films allegorically depict the overthrow by racialized “monsters”—whether zombies or animalized half-men—of the white men who have created them in these liminal island conditions.

Next, Elizabeth Rawitsch examines Asian and Asian American cinematic detectives on Hollywood screens in the 1930s. Mr. Moto, a Japanese detective played by the Hungarian-born Peter Lorre, engaged in complex triangulations of racial identity as he traversed national borders in his quests for information and often went undercover and passed for white. Mr. Wong, a San Francisco–based Chinese American detective, was at the other end of the spectrum, staying largely in one place. Charlie Chan, in contrast with both of these other characters, was a transnational figure, born in China and speaking with a thick caricatured Chinese accent but having inhabited the Hawaiian islands for decades. Given Hawaii's unstable status as not quite protectorate, not quite state in this period, Rawitsch reads Chan as a figure reflecting contemporaneous U.S. concerns about the Pacific.

In the next contribution, Gábor Gergely addresses one of the most iconic white men set against the adventurous spaces of the jungle: Tarzan. Analyzing Johnny Weissmuller's *Tarzan* films of the 1930s and 1940s, Gergely carefully teases out the discourses of exile and identity characterizing Weissmuller's appeal and the pleasures of an animalistic white man not fully home in the jungle or the metropole. Although set in Africa rather than on an island, these films, set in the tropics, show similar negotiations between colonial self and other that we see in other chapters in this section. Tarzan's “exilic body,” Gergely demonstrates, articulates a series of discourses about foreignness, liminal identities, and the capability of the other to truly make a new nation their home. These issues were central not only to shifting discourses of U.S. citizenship in the 1920s and 1930s but also to the star persona of the foreign-born Weissmuller, whose citizenship was questioned after he shot to fame as a U.S. Olympic swimmer in the 1920s. Weissmuller's Tarzan, then, uses the foreign space of the jungle to pose resonant questions about not just U.S. national identity but also the very essence of national identity in a world increasingly marked by transnational migration and exile.

For the final chapter in this section, we turn to the 1950s and Josef von Sternberg's strange film *Anatahan,* made in a Kyoto studio using entirely Japanese

actors and filmed in Japanese. Chan argues that this film represents a failed attempt by von Sternberg to create a work of "universal art" that would cross international borders. In making the film, the director tried to completely submerge himself in Japanese culture while simultaneously creating a space that existed only in his imagination, created in a studio backlot and using his characteristic lighting techniques to spotlight the sexuality of the sole female character, Keiko (Akemi Negishi). The result was a film that was largely rejected by audiences both in Japan and elsewhere due in part to its unstable national identity.

The second section takes on the prominent role of Europe in the U.S. imagination, especially after World War II. From the late 1940s to the early 1960s America took an unprecedented influence in Western Europe, as the Marshall Plan and other military, economic, and cultural interventions "Americanized" large swaths of European life and transformed the region to a consumer capitalist economy. At the same time, older European colonial capitalism was devolving in the wake of the wars, causing the United States to reimagine its own position on the world stage. Finally, in the same period American tourism to Europe increased exponentially—brought about by the advent of the jet, the strength of the dollar in relation to European currencies, and the increasing prosperity of the American middle class and the centrality of encounters with "Europe" to American middlebrow culture. All of these historical influences, or at any rate the dominant ways they were conceptualized in the United States, can be witnessed through textual analysis of Hollywood films set in Europe in this period.

Ian Jarvie's chapter on an oft-disregarded cycle of Hollywood romantic comedies set in Italy in the 1950s through the 1960s opens the section. Arguing for their coherence as a cycle—not a genre—Jarvie explores how these films illustrate the development of U.S. tourism in Europe as it increased due to promotions by the Hollywood film industry working in conjunction with the U.S. government. Starting with prestige productions such as *Roman Holiday* and *Three Coins in the Fountain*, the films of this cycle slowly degenerate in quality, ending with banal and cynical representations of American tourists in Italy such as *Gidget Goes to Rome* and *Come September*. Jarvie also explores how these films, as runaway productions, were themselves made within a complex cross-cultural encounter that results in hybridized American-Italian textual influences.

Chris Cagle takes a different tack, looking at how European cinema in the 1950s informed the aesthetic choices made in Hollywood in this period. His two case studies, *Bonjour Tristesse* and *On the Beach*, were Hollywood-backed films made abroad as runaway productions, and each used innovative cinematographic techniques to evoke European film aesthetics to American audiences. Cagle shows how the nature of the prestige production in Hollywood was evolving in the late 1950s due to the popularity of European cinema, with its taboo sexual subjects, distinctive visual style, and star iconographies, while simultaneously maintaining some traditional "prestige production" characteristics such as the use of picturesque landscapes.

Anna Cooper's chapter on representations of Paris in the 1950s Hollywood musical rounds off the section on European vacations. Rather than the typical focus on runaway productions, Cooper zeroes in on films that were *not* filmed on location, which she argues can open up our understanding of how "Paris" functioned as an abstracted, dreamlike space in Hollywood cinema that stood in as an archetype of otherness to the U.S. imperialist self. Analyzing *An American in Paris* and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, she explores how these films' backlot–made visual representations of Paris function to turn the French capital into a playground for American tourists that is inflected with dominant U.S. conceptions of the spatial politics of gender.

The last section takes on the spaces of male adventurism that tend to dominate Hollywood's vision of Latin America and Africa, spaces against which white men negotiate their social power. Rather than seeing such spaces as one-dimensional backdrops to the imperialist explorations of Euro-American adventurers—dangerous landscapes within which white men demonstrate their natural superiority to the environment and to the "primitive" cultures that call such spaces home—these chapters demonstrate how the rugged terrains of Latin America and Africa that dominated Hollywood's imperial imaginary also provided multivalent and contested spaces, sites where emerging visions of U.S. global power and national identity were negotiated.

The first essay of this final section, by Saverio Giovacchini, examines how the 1950s Mexico-set bullfighting films of Budd Boetticher reflect the director's own complex encounters with this country. A far cry from the typically racist representations of Mexico from the Hollywood western of this period, Giovacchini

argues that Boetticher's films such as *The Bullfighter and the Lady* present rich transnational cultural encounters that refuse to reduce Mexicans to mere racist stereotypes. At the same time, however, there are complex power dynamics at play within these representations of Mexico; Giovacchini invokes the Foucauldian concept of heterotopia, or the space in which dominant rules are contested and inverted, to show how Boetticher's films occupy a border or "mirror" territory in between the self and the other.

Similarly, Argentina in the 1940s was a space marked by complex negotiations of national identity, making it an ideal site to articulate burgeoning U.S. investments in Latin America, according to Fernando Gabriel Pagnoni Berns, Mariana Zárate, and Patricia Haydee Vazquez. Argentina has always considered itself more culturally European than its Latin American neighbors, so when the dictates of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy in the 1940s pressured Hollywood to reimagine its depictions of (and economic investments in) Latin America, Argentina's blend of European, cosmopolitan nightlife with the exotic appeal of the rugged pampas region offered the Hollywood studios a locale that was both comfortingly familiar and pleasingly exotic. Examining a series of Hollywood films from the 1940s set in Argentina—including Carmen Miranda's *Down Argentine Way* (1940), *They Met in Argentina* (1941), the Fred Astaire film *You Were Never Lovelier* (1942), and the Rita Hayworth film *Gilda* (1946)—the authors demonstrate how shifting U.S. cultural and economic interests in Latin America helped make Argentina the go-to South American locale for reimagining U.S.–Latin American relations.

Finally, just as the Good Neighbor policy charted a new direction for U.S. global leadership in Latin America, U.S. policy makers after World War II articulated a new relationship with their European allies in Africa, promoting national autonomy, decolonization, and entrance into the global economy. These shifts form the backdrop to Russell Meeuf's discussion of the John Wayne adventure film *Legend of the Lost*, a 1957 U.S.–Italian coproduction also starring Sophia Loren and Rossano Brazzi. Meeuf shows how the Sahara serves as a contested space in the film for competing visions of European colonial humanitarianism and U.S. economic libertarianism, with Wayne providing a model of an ideal entrepreneurial, global masculinity. As the European Brazzi and the American Wayne compete for the affections of Loren (who plays an ambiguously ethnic

local), the film participates in the geopolitical changes of the mid-1950s as the United States led the transition from colonialism to economic imperialism.

Each chapter, then, speaks to the nuances, contradictions, and incoherencies in cinema's power to dramatize America's encounters with the wider world in the midst of shifting geopolitical roles for the United States as well as transformations in the meanings of the "foreign" and the "exotic" for U.S. audiences. Far from providing outdated narratives of clear-cut U.S. dominance or the monolithic spread of U.S. cultural norms, the films analyzed here engage with a wide range of transnational tensions, pleasures, and desires as they project Hollywood's contradictory visions of identity and modernity in a global world.

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5. Reinhold Wagnleitner, "American Cultural Diplomacy, the Cinema, and the Cold War in Central Europe," in *Hollywood in Europe: Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony*, ed. David W. Ellwood and Rob Kroes (Amsterdam: Vu University Press, 1994), 197.
6. Ian Jarvie, *Hollywood's Overseas Campaign: The North Atlantic Movie Trade, 1920–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), xiii.
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36. Ibid.
37. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), 7.
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# Isles of Fright

## Gothic Tropics and Island Horror

Louis Bayman

This chapter considers a cycle of Hollywood horror films that take place on fantastical tropical islands.[1] These hidden societies host natural, human, and supernatural threats to American protagonists whose unexpected (usually shipwrecked) arrival in turn provokes a crisis of island authority. Preceded in 1929 by the Jules Verne adaptation *The Mysterious Island*, the cycle played out in a flurry from the simultaneous production of *The Most Dangerous Game*, *King Kong,* and *White Zombie* and then *The Island of Lost Souls*, all in 1932, returning in wartime with *Horror Island* (1941), *King of the Zombies* (1941), *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943), and *Isle of the Dead* and *Fog Island* (both 1945). This cycle coincides with the final years of the relatively brief time when the United States was a direct colonial power and just prior to its achievement of nuclear power and superpower.

Hollywood horror in the 1930s can be seen as a development of what Lea Jacobs has called "the decline of sentiment" in American cinema of the previous decade,[2] occurring amid a toughening of American life and increasing inter-imperial rivalry. In this context, the island setting is as ideologically charged as that of the haunted house or the journey into the African interior. Through discussion of *The Island of Lost Souls* (1932) and *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943), this chapter will develop the notion that horror "has been underwritten by racial coding, the generic history that includes the colonial-influenced gothic novel, and from a film tradition haunted by the legacy of American slavery and later

neo-imperialism."[3] The island voyage is different from the journey to an African "heart of darkness," as the previously central place of colonization has now become a marginal or accidental endeavor. The cycle gains further historical significance because it modifies what is termed the "Manichean allegory" of European colonial tradition. Although the native in the island cycle is usually still evil, or possesses magical and essentialized characteristics,[4] the cycle also rejects Europe's civilizing mission. European and native are both antagonists of American individualism, and colonialism is itself a source of horror, with the cycle at turns naturalizing and uneasy over the place of Americans in such lands.

While *The Island of Lost Souls* is notable for its typicality within the island cycle—dealing in binaries of race and species, offering male-centered action and adventure, and drawing on fears of sex, gender, and miscegenation—*I Walked with a Zombie* is remarkable as a departure from it by suggesting an acceptance of difference and even of resistance to gendered and racialized systems of hierarchy. This chapter will add to the postcolonial analysis that classical film undertook "the search for treasure islands by lending a scientific aura to those quests,"[5] but note that it does so within a genre that makes no appeal to audience credulity, for the gothic swaths its fears in the fantastic, set in worlds that could clearly never have existed. Although island narratives may generally function to engender enthusiasm for imperial conquest,[6] the ones considered here seek to engender horror, and as B movies, their "badness" allows a certain degree of disrespectability, ultimately rejecting the positions of mastery that the history of colonial representations traditionally offers. Indeed, *Lost Souls* quickly became a notorious pre–Motion Picture Production Code "affront to the religious no less than the moral order."[7] The loss of moral certainty attending the film points to fears in American society not of a lack of knowledge but instead of intellectualism itself, described by Richard Hofstadter in the following way:

> Within only two generations the village Protestant individualist culture still so widely observable before the First World War was repeatedly shocked by change. It had to confront modernism in religion, literature, and art, relativity in morals, racial equality as a principle of ethics and public law, and the endless sexual titillation of our mass communications. In rapid succession it was forced to confront Darwinism (*vide* the Scopes trial), Freudianism, Marxism,

> and Keynesianism, and to submit in matters of politics, taste and conscience to the leadership of a new kind of educated and cosmopolitan American.[8]

The foreign settings of classical horror provide then a glimpse into how neither systems of knowledge nor scientific auras are entirely free of mystical properties or disturbance and can, as part of the very systems of control that belong to the imperial imagination, create abject terror. As a ritual theater of violence with its own sacrificial victims, the Hollywood B movie provides an especially intense experience through which otherwise abstract categories such as the moral or social order, race, or superiority are given symbolic form.[9] This chapter will demonstrate how island fantasies make visible the haunting legacies of colonization, slavery, and repression in characters who embody ideas of hierarchy, progress, natural difference, and social inequality—and of their overturning.

## Sighting Land

The sighting of land recalls the founding values of America, evoking myths of possibility, freedom, and adventure. An island existence can take on a more metaphorical meaning through American isolationism from Europe and its neighbors. Islands are also fundamental to the historical development of the country (not to mention the discoverers' belief that the Americas were "a group of islands in the Ocean Sea," which was only fully dispelled a "little more than two centuries ago").[10] America fixed its eyes upon the oceans when expansion finally moved beyond the frontier.[11] Its expansionist designs were already allegorically presaged in Captain Ahab's obsessive seaborne pursuit in *Moby Dick* (1851), while the country's sense of destiny and its burgeoning trade and military might were tested in naval affairs, until "With the seizure of the Philippines, Guam and Wake Islands in 1898, American colonial possessions now ringed the Pacific, with Pearl Harbor as the navel of an imperial ocean."[12]

In the context of American national history, then, islands stand for places of refuge and possession and as a *tabula rasa* for enterprising civilizational designs. By the 1930s, images of islands proliferated in popular life as advertising for luxury passenger ships presented Pacific idylls for tourists to capture on newly popularized color film stock[13] and air travel created a "popular interest in oceanic space," while Matthew Fontaine Maury's mid-nineteenth century maps, the first

to represent the Pacific as an integral region, "were widely used in American schools during the critical years of US expansion as an imperial power."[14] Islands not long charted and conquered could now be visited by the leisured tourist and displayed in the theater houses of any small town in America. But the notion of what constitutes an island is not a given fact and is itself subject to history. The generic image of a closed little circle amid the sea brings to mind the geological energies that first gave rise to habitable land and forms part of a spatial imagination from which the island in classical Hollywood draws.

Islands have been understood in Western tradition to offer a fixed, static, unchanging nature abstracted from wider society and even from transitory existence in general. Exemplary yet separate, islands provided a recurrent setting for parable or legend:[15] Eden was thought to lie east of Asia, the Celts told of rebirth in a Fortunate Isle in the west, and the ancient Greeks imagined reincarnation to occur on the Isle of the Blessed, while originary myths such as the *Aeneid* and its colonial Portuguese reworking *The Lusiads* include island episodes. Island desertion ensures the primacy of pure reason in Ibn Tufail's twelfth-century Arabic text "Alive, Son of Awake," thought to have inspired *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), the guarantor of the incipient moral supremacy and triumphant individualism of middle-class Englishness. It is as if they offer a natural site of control conditions on which to test the essence of man and his place within the cosmos (as can be divined in the negative by John Donne's protestation in his XVII Meditation [1624] that "No man is an island entire of itself; every man / is a piece of the continent, a part of the main"). These are only some examples of what Denis Cosgrove has called the "persistent cultural assumption" that the island represents,

> a self-contained, centralized world. . . . Ulysses' wanderings after the fall of Troy are conducted through islands, construed environmentally and morally as distinct worlds, for example, Polyphemus's and Circe's realms. . . . Thomas More's imaginary island world of *Utopia* (1516) and Shakespeare's magical island of Prospero in *The Tempest* worked the lore of islands into imaginary worlds that served as social and moral prisms for viewing the actual one.[16]

Unlike Atlantis—the parable of the impermanence of civilizational wealth sank

into an unfathomable sea—island fixity gives rise to mythologies of cyclical temporality, operating according to different laws of development than those that produce progress. The island is typically a place the voyager passes through—islands are starting points for each of Sinbad's seven voyages in *The Arabian Nights*, and the middle part of Dante's passage is through the imaginary southern island of Mount Purgatory in *The Divine Comedy* (1320). Whether as places of origin, rebirth, moral development, or desertion, islands provided what in philosophical terms could be called stages of being, not of becoming; this latter is a property that belongs instead to the voyager, whose intellectual, spiritual, moral, or material transformation he can put into effect only elsewhere.

Such visions distinguish islands from continental connectedness and imply the technological and intellectual superiority of those who undertake expedition to distant shores over the people they discover there.[17] Islands are thus caught up in relations of hierarchy and domination, culminating in the Enlightenment ideal that "sailing to the ends of the earth, is in fact travelling in time. . . . Those unknown islands that [the traveler] reaches are for him the cradle of humanity."[18] Such confidence is part of the changes in conceiving of global space consequent on the discovery of the New World. As scientific endeavors progressed to make the world "finite and potentially knowable"[19]—Columbus was already able to pronounce in 1503 that "the world is small"[20]—the ambitions of colonists became correspondingly infinite, driven to achieve "knowledge of, and individual command over, space."[21] Representational methods including Mercator's map (1569), Galilean astronomy, Bougainville's and Cook's chartings of the South Seas, and Humboldt's geophysical measurements developed new conceptualizations of space. The invention of rules of perspective and new artistic forms, from landscape painting to the novel, were also part of the production of new ways of seeing that developed, relayed, and refined notions of rational order, comprehension of space, and ownership and cultivation of land. Both colonialism and narrative involve the ordering of the world's (fictional or otherwise) material according to ideas of progress or development. It is not coincidental, then, that "the fifteenth through to the twentieth centuries saw an explosion in the number of island narratives, with literally hundreds of variations produced in response to European empire."[22] With the rise in the twentieth century of the United States as a global power and of its cinema as a popular disseminator

of narratives, Hollywood reproduced the historical association of islands with either regression or timelessness and with natural essence, distance, and separation. Such characteristics could make the island a paradise, but they could also be imagined to constitute mortal threats. It is this point that the rest of this chapter considers.

## *The Island of Lost Souls*

*The Island of Lost Souls*, released at the end of 1932, was an adaptation of H. G. Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, a satire of colonial narratives and specifically the "boys' book." As the genre of "late-Victorian and Edwardian imperial romance"[23] germinated by *Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean* (1858) and *Treasure Island* (1881–82), the boys' book taught the moral virtues of an imperialist spirit in a context of the Victorian invention of boyhood. More than Wells's fairly earnest social critique, the disrespectable, scandalizing B movie upends the moral purpose of its imperial predecessors. Named "quite definitely repulsive" for its hints of miscegenation by the Breen Office (which vetted Hollywood scripts), the film received various bans including an Australian restriction on viewing by those of aboriginal origin. Charles Laughton's performance as Dr. Moreau gained particular public notoriety.[24] Laughton played the crazed scientist with a God complex whose experiments in diverting evolutionary progress populate an uncharted island with lab-created beast-men. The arrival of a shipwrecked man, Parker, provides Moreau and partner Dr. Montgomery with a test for their only female creation, panther woman Lota, whom they deem will have achieved humanity if she falls in love with Parker.

Consistent with the history of island representations, Moreau's island is a strange, distant land shrouded in the otherworldly concealment of misty fog. The island represents a fixed frame, first shown in long-shot from the sea before the opening credits wash up onto a sandy shore, and returns to engulfed in flames at the end of the film as the heroes flee from the chaos unleashed by the rebellious beast-men. The topography of the island recalls Arnold Böcklin's painting *The Isle of the Dead* (1880), which gave its name to one island horror set on a typhoid-hit Greek island (1945), a gloomy land that moves, spatializing zones of progress from an inhospitable shoreline rocky wilderness past jungle undergrowth to cultivated gardens with, in *The Island of Lost Souls*, Moreau's

compound at the center.[25] The journey through Moreau's island is presented without establishing shots that would orientate the spectator within the environment. Weaver-Hightower describes the "master of all I survey" presentation of the island landscape in colonial narratives,[26] but *Lost Souls* denies such a position and, by doing so, denies the presentation of the landscape as easily comprehensible by and ordered for either the arriving voyager or the spectator's gaze.

Much in the film's representation of the island does accord with the representational systems of Enlightenment-era tradition and their implied task of subjecting tropical nature to control. The island is host to multiple examples of wildness: of savagery, of sexuality, and of the doctors themselves, who have been cast out of civilization. The film accords with accounts of tropical nature in which "Climbing plants were seen as ambitious, insectivorous ones as immoral killers. . . . Visually, the excesses and overbearing presence of nature in the tropics were often [in European representation] conveyed by close focus on the bizarre."[27] Moreau himself comments on the island's "curious" limestone, and particular values are conferred upon the land itself. Chiaroscuro lighting in the film exemplifies how darkness in tropical horrors "resides not in a single black figure but in the blackness that is attributed to shadows and unseen terrain. Thus, connotations of monstrosity inhere in the jungle itself, which becomes a repository for white racial and sexual anxieties."[28] European understandings of the tropics centered on them as cultivating pathologies of racial, sexual, and moral disorder, as environments prey to disease and animality.[29] It is repeated in *The Island of Lost Souls* that Moreau's island lies off the charts and that it "stinks throughout the south seas," both polluting and resistant to cartographical orientation (matter out of place, as Mary Douglas's definition of dirt would have it).

Still in an Enlightenment vein, the island replicates the ideological positioning of the New World as "objectified as nature" in a Cartesian separation from "the European mind."[30] *Lost Souls* institutes such a binary opposition between Moreau's island and civilization, as represented by an unnamed harbor town, drenched in bright sunlight, where happy couples reunite after their journeys' end. In a stone-pillared neoclassical building at the harbor—all solidity, light, and regularity—the American consulate enunciates the language of cartography and the law to aid Parker's sweetheart Ruth get to the island. In the consulate a

half-open blind over a window frames a little palm outside. A cut to an unnaturally overgrown lily sprawling in Moreau's compound emphasizes the grotesque aspect of the contrast with the island's out-of-control nature.

Yet *Lost Souls* works by entwining primitive wildness with a fantasy of scientific ambition out of control in a manner in keeping with the source tale's late Victorian fears of the atavistic remnants of the beast in man. In so doing it confuses the separation of reason from wildness that the consulate—and European colonialist tradition—would aim to institute. Moreau, whose name christens the island, is a proponent of an unlimited Darwinism, shifting from torturous experiments in his "house of pain" to savoring his "excellent brandy" and so combining cruelty and delicacy in an extreme individualist amorality. He describes his work as the highest development of the human mind yet keeps the beast-men enslaved and adhering to his commandments. The connection of savagery to science occurs also in the visual design of the film: patterns cast in the gloom of Moreau's cluttered lab resemble those of the dark, overgrown jungle outside, and its lamps, rather than illuminate, give a similar low-watt hue to the fires and torches carried by the natives as they perform their rituals. Horror is produced by native savagery but also by the very practices of science and rational instrumentality that distinguish the colonial adventure.

Nor is the film a straightforward valuation of rugged American heroism either. Both Moreau and his subjects are marked as deviant, but the shipwrecked American Parker[31] is far from the successful ego-ideal of audience identification that action heroes conventionally present. Parker is introduced screaming in the trading ship's bed after being rescued, and he subsequently jumps at the ship's caged animals and is tossed onto Moreau's departing vessel by the trading ship's captain. Parker is lit in ways that are more common to female stars of the period, Brylcreemed and sparkling, to bring out a softness in Parker distinct from the chiaroscuro that shrouds Moreau. Objectified sexually both by panther woman Lota and Moreau, who leers voyeuristically at him (all the while claiming to be undertaking scientific observation), Parker occupies positions more common to Hollywood heroines while he waits to be saved by his sweetheart, Ruth.[32]

The bestial voracity of Lota is an uncanny realization of the legend of sexual opportunity provided by South Seas women. Ruth is somewhat sexless in comparison, and when she arrives she sleeps alone for protection from a danger that

A distant island, bizarre nature, and entrapping interior in *Island of Lost Souls* (Paramount Pictures, 1932).

Moreau only alludes to as "one experience" that Parker had "at night in my jungle." One may perform various readings of the ambiguities regarding Moreau, and it has been pointed out that *Lost Souls* is "Another classical horror film that exploits the theme of a male couple [Moreau and Montgomery] seeking to create human life homosexually."[33] All winks and lascivious deliberation, Moreau's interactions with Parker have the feel of solicitation. In one arched flourish he tells Parker to "sleep well" and then slips into darkness; Parker lowers his head, apparently disavowing a shared but unsaid meaning. Given the film's air of elliptical deviance and the polarization of heterosexual love objects between bestial Lota and boring Ruth, these gaps in articulation equal repression, an intriguing motif in a film that deals with the overreaching ambitions of knowledge. A ship hand tells Parker before he first arrives on the island that he "doesn't know" about the "mystery" of the island "and if I did know, maybe I'd wanna forget." The film's abrupt final words are the injunction to Parker and Ruth fleeing the burning island: "Don't look back." Such repressions replace the failures represented by both Moreau's perversion of scientific discourse and Parker's deficient heroism: failures of science and knowledge but ultimately of masculinity to conform to ideal—and normative—heroism.

The ambivalences of *Lost Souls* thus upset the binary oppositions whose importance it has, however, established. Moreau creates beasts who are men and is both scientist and madman, rationalist and deity, patriarch and queer, a cruel baby of a master and a stereotyped colonialist who, physically darker in tan makeup, is also a deranged savage. In addition to its disruptive employment of binary relations, the film elaborates an important aspect about colonial identity, which is that the savage is quite literally the creation of the colonialist—in this instance, of Moreau's laboratory. Further, while prior colonial narratives either held out the possibility of the missionary salvation of the natives or suggested a hierarchical but fruitful interdependence (exemplified by Crusoe and Man Friday), here the colonial mind-set causes its own destruction. Cracking the whip he learned to use as a boy in Australia, Moreau insists on going out to personally put down the beast-men's rebellion, but they overrun his compound and cut him to pieces with his own medical scissors. In this lies the horror's distance from its boys' book progenitors, as it displays a popular Wilsonian anticolonialism through the grotesque cruelty of Moreau's colonial excesses. The film

is nevertheless imperial in a way more suited to American global adventure. Parker, Ruth, and Montgomery flee, leaving all the inhabitants for dead. Such engulfing firepower hints disturbingly at looming methods of imperial warfare while offering a glimpse of an incipient superpower ready to abandon direct rule for more distanced methods of control.The positioning of the colonist as the ultimate source of horror leads to another ambivalence, one whose significance is increased given the underclass B-movie audience at which the film is aimed. Darker, swarthier, shorter, hairier, misshapen, and so damned by bodily difference, the monstrousness of the beast-men in the film draws on the "animalization" fantasy that Fanon described in the "zoological" colonial perception of a racialized hierarchy of species.[34] But their rebellion becomes a collective assertion of humanity as they overrun the compound and scream, looming in extreme close-ups, that "you made us things, not men, but beasts! Things!" The film presents then not only horror at colonial or worker rebellion but also pathos in their reduced state and righteous anger. A recurring motif of unclaimed point-of-view shots repeatedly places the spectator in the position of the natives, including from high in the trees and looking at Moreau from within a cage. Thus, while identification with the failed heroism of the main character Parker is often made difficult, the spectator is continually returned to the position of another anonymous beast-man. In a film in which heroism is absent and that denies stable points of orientation, the doomed rebellion of the enslaved beasts could suggest that the final horror of the film may just be that in an age of chaos and economic depression, the beasts are us or at least are the popular classes from whom 1930s Hollywood drew its audiences—a world away from the public schoolboy outlook of superior masculinity of the *Treasure Island* imperial tradition.

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*The Island of Lost Souls* is an especially outlandish example of the island cycle, grafting *Frankenstein's* (1931) scientific inducement of life onto the olden European wickedness of *Dracula* (1931), the film that inaugurated the 1930s Hollywood gothic genre and whose star, Bela Lugosi, is cast here as the Sayer of the Law. Although the failed heroism of its main protagonist is unusual, the ambivalences on which *Lost Souls* is built are typical: typical of the wider cycle's horror of both the savage and his Nietzschean overlord and of the gothic, a genre terrified by its own delight in deviant sexuality, uncontrollable ener-

gy, and alternating states of domination and helplessness. Elaborating the evils of subjection, the gothic echoes historic debates about conditions wrought by capitalism: justification for slavery was provided by the claim that nonwhites were not fully human, later concerns around wage labor focused on the worker's alienated humanity, and emerging critiques of female servitude viewed labor as "white slavery."[35] When placed in a Caribbean context, such subjection could refer variously to the destruction of the societies on which the New World was founded, their repopulation by millions of enslaved Africans, and the fear of black revolt against being white property. A gothic apprehension of deadness in life in fact lends itself to colonial apprehension of blackness and anticolonial critique: Frantz Fanon spoke of "a dying colonialism" and proclaimed that "the black man is not a man," his "morbid body"[36] living in a "zone of nonbeing."[37]

These varied meanings converged in U.S. discourse on the Caribbean island of Haiti, the first black republic, which was founded after slave revolt.[38] It was subject to U.S. occupation from 1915, but the Haitians forced the occupiers out by 1934 in a struggle that formed the central event in foreign politics and in black consciousness around the inauguration of the island cycle. The very existence of Haiti signaled a rebellious black independence, which achieves increased potency given the island's beliefs in possession and magic, specifically voodoo. This syncretic religion developed from beliefs brought over by African slaves and offered apparent proof of the distance of Haitians from the protestant American worldview and contact with hidden forces to which that worldview has no access. The island cycle introduced the zombie as a figure of horror in film in the Haiti-set *White Zombie* (employing Lugosi again as an evil colonial master on a Haiti visited by a pair of honeymooning Americans), instantly an icon of the continuing life of past violence and dehumanization of plantation labor.

Through these associations, the Hollywood zombie belongs to what Chris Vials calls a "politics of disavowal,"[39] which engages "a public ambivalence toward colonialism found in the larger public culture of the United States during the 1930s and 1940s . . . [which] ultimately serves empire, however, neither by ignoring injustice, nor through an implicit paternalism, but by disavowing the humanity of its racialized victims."[40] Similar to the beast-men of *Lost Souls*, the zombie is bearer of both a violent otherness and of pathos. The zombie is also the subject of the most remarkable of the island films, *I Walked with a Zombie*, in

which disavowal also points the way beyond the ambivalences that mark the rest of the genre. The film's gothic sensuousness connects zombification to romance itself and offers a validation of a black existence that it presents as not a deadening but rather a revitalizing force amid a dying colonialism.

## *I Walked with a Zombie*

Set on a fictional island named St. Sebastian (a clear stand-in for Haiti), *I Walked with a Zombie* was the second partnership by French director Jacques Tourneur and the new head of RKO's horror unit Val Lewton, begun directly after shooting the commercially successful *Cat People* (1942) and a similarly artistically distinctive and female-centered low-budget horror influenced by antiracist sensibilities. A Canadian nurse, Betsy, arrives on the island to look after the sick wife of a plantation owner, Paul Holland. She encounters Holland's alcoholic younger half brother, Wesley, and falls in love with Paul, but he is resistant to the point of cruelty, and Betsy resolves instead to cure his eerily mute wife, Jessica. The men's mother, Mrs. Rand, proudly practices Western medicine, but their black housekeeper, Alma, persuades Betsy to let Jessica undergo voodoo healing. In the extended ritual, none other than Mrs. Rand is present at the very magic she had condemned. At the end of the ceremony, Wesley kills Jessica and walks with her into the sea, while Betsy is taken into Paul's loving arms.

The film begins on Betsy's recollections in voice-over as a couple walks in the distance along the shore, framed by summer clouds overhead. This nostalgic image is the inversion of the seaborne approach to a site of conquest that marks island adventures. Here, the landlocked subject looks out to the ocean waves, establishing the film's interest in the interplay of physical constriction and unbounded romantic feeling—an interest it shares with the contemporary women's film, to which *Zombie* is related. The natural vastness contrasts to the next sequence, an office interior in Ottawa before Betsy's departure whose snow-edged window is framed by little wooden rectangles. Unlike the contrast with the harbor town in *Lost Souls*, home signifies cold restriction. The island estate where Betsy goes, Fort Holland, is instead marked by an intermingling of domestic and tropical space. A dense patterning of vines, palms, blinds, furnishings, ornamentation, and their shadows draping over each other offers a flowing sensuousness distinct from the entrapment of the wilderness in *Lost Souls*. *Zombie* beautifies horror, its compositional care foregrounding enervating deliberation over vital

spontaneity. A morbid aestheticism is present also in the reference to Saint Sebastian. An icon of his violent martyrdom is replicated in a black stone fountain in Fort Holland's grounds, a figurehead taken from a slave boat and named "Misery" by locals. It strains forward in a kind of fixity-in-movement—and inanimate life—that is characteristic of art, zombification, and island society and that Betsy mimics when she is initially spurned by Paul and runs to the edge of a rocky promontory sprayed by the crashing waves.

The film claims inspiration from two sources, a newspaper report titled "I Walked with a Zombie" and Val Lewton's stated desire to make a *Jane Eyre* (1847) of the West Indies,[41] but it is not especially similar to either. The film instead offers an exercise in absent centers that resist stable meanings. Vials describes a political void at the heart of the film because it never fully disavows Haiti or upholds black rebellion,[42] while Fujiwara discusses how narrative gaps, restrained performance, and the subordination of the characters to decor mean that the film takes the "elliptical, oblique . . . to astonishing extremes."[43] In keeping with its enervating aestheticism, enchanting surfaces are in the film underlain not by rational articulation but by negation. In their first conversation, on the boat to the island, Paul tells Betsy that the beauty she sees around her is "only death and decay," predation and putrescence, from the flying fish jumping for their lives to the dying night stars whose sparkle is the sign of a vitality light years past.

Communication in the film is equally unfathomable. Betsy remarks to her carriage driver that despite its history of enslavement and decline the island is still "beautiful." He replies with "if you say, miss, if you say" in a smiling, implied contradiction that dislocates literal from actual meaning and, as with the ellipses of the film, contributes to conveying the existence of an unspoken realm beneath surface meaning. That this realm contains threat becomes explicit when Betsy meets Wesley drunk in town and a local calypso singer (played by Sir Lancelot) sings a song that mocks the Hollands. Although the singer apologizes slightly too obsequiously for its inappropriateness, he reappears at their home to disrupt their evening meal, but his purpose or intention is, unsettlingly, never explicit.

The mocking calypso is an example of how the aural presence of the island habitat breaches the fort. The film's first ghostly moments occur when disquieting sobs echo through the house and apparently summon the mute Jessica from slumber. The sobs belong to the maid Alma, giving aural manifestation

to subaltern suffering. Paul explains this away to Betsy by saying that the locals celebrate death and cry when a baby is born (inverting ritual expression of emotion). But soon afterward, laughter breaks in the house at the birth of a baby, an unarticulated contradiction, like that of Betsy's carriage driver, of the white commentator's claim to self-assured knowledge of black life. A decisive breaking of the family's defenses comes during the voodoo ceremony: Wesley mocks the "mysterious, eerie jungle drums," and Alma says that they "speak" and provide healing; eventually, it would seem so to Wesley too, who is set "on edge" by the hot winds that whistle through the house, losing his resistance to the ritual worldview, finally killing himself and Jessica at the culmination of the ceremony. Alternatively, the film's Romantic musical motif, taken from Chopin's "Tristesse," provides a paler, private music, truncated and even clichéd in comparison to the refusal of harmonic progression in the insistent drumming. Unlike the clear provenance of "Tristesse" either in a visible source (when Paul plays a domestic piano) or as strictly extradiegetic, the drums exploit sound's potential to envelop but be unplaced, and it is not always clear if they are diegetic or not.

Such strategies increase the significance of background elements and endow black life with greater force than would otherwise be the case. The central white family is meanwhile paralyzed by blockages, detached, sterile, and frustrated, already living a kind of zombified existence from which only Wesley and Jessica's deaths bring "release." That their entrapment is part of their worldview is rendered visually in one scene when, on either side of the iron gate that separates the grounds of their fort from the rest of the island, Wesley insists to a now more credulous Wesley that the voodoo rituals are "nonsense." But the film shows voodoo as part of an integrated system in interaction with nature: Alma gives directions to the Hounfort by drawing a map in the sand, while Betsy walks Jessica through a giant cane field traversed in fluid, subjective, camera movement past a dead animal and various other ritual uses of natural objects for semiotic means. The pulsating, swaying apparently free-form movements of the ceremonial dance occur in an open wooden structure and as a collective experience that contrasts to the gated enclosure that marks the fort.

It was mentioned above that the horror of *Lost Souls* resides in the failure to maintain binaries whose importance the film has, however, instituted. Something similar occurs in *Zombie*, but rather than monstrous, the effect is harmonizing

Design motifs in *I Walked with a Zombie* (RKO Pictures, 1943)

and part of the romanticized and sensuous experience of flow in the film. Robin Wood described *Zombie* as "built on an elaborate set of apparently clear-cut structural oppositions—Canada-West Indies, white-black, light-darkness, life-death, science-black magic, Christianity-Voodoo, conscious-unconscious, etc.—and it proceeds systematically to blur all of them."[44] These oppositions converge on Jessica, Paul's sick wife. Her pale ghostliness appears to be the apogee of white sterility, and yet mute and expressionless and possibly under a zombie curse, the character of her malady connects her to the condition of enslaved blackness. Her one decisive action is to open the fort gate, suggesting an opening to native beliefs as the finale stages the integration of all the oppositions of the film. Wesley kills Jessica with an arrow from the Saint Sebastian masthead and walks with her into the sea, while parallel editing connects this to the termination of the ritual ceremony, the two apparently finding "peace" while Betsy and Paul unite in embrace. Paul refers to Betsy's romantic feelings as "enchantment," and the film parallels romance and voodoo as two possessing, irrational, and even fatal forces. As Jessica and her voodoo doll float in the shallow water, the film finally conforms to Todorov's definition of the fantastic as it "hesitates between a natural and a supernatural explanation"[45] in a fitting conclusion of the motif of flow belying the elliptical uncertainty.

The island films more generally center on the vulnerability of woman, who furthermore is the traditional site of contact in imperial exploration, from the figures on ships' mastheads[46] to Lota in *Lost Souls*, being charged with "the maintenance of the boundaries between races, by engaging or not engaging in sexual activity."[47] She is the victim of threatened contagion in early zombie films, yet in *I Walked with a Zombie*, with its flow, voids, and sensuousness, a female subjectivity predominates. Suggesting similarities in the subalternity of blacks and women, after Jessica, a second site of intersection[48] is found in the zombie Carrefour, his name meaning "crossroads." Appearing first in total silhouette—rendering blackness both as absence and visible—he inverts a generic trope common to the interwar zombie films, one that previously expressed a fear of black centrality: looming tall, centered, frontal, the physical opposite of the willowy ethereality of Jessica. Finally shown standing rigid in the sea at Paul and Jessica's drowning, Carrefour is the unspoken evidence of black presence, a positive, authoritative confirmation of the durability of black life and the one centered

element within the film's design, who in this is an incarnation of the island territory itself.

## Journey's End

To return to the cultural history of island representation traced near the start of this chapter, the two films discussed here, as with the rest of the island cycle, also employ their island settings for their separation from home. Their distance enables presentation of an indeterminate yet enclosed, even hidden land on which is isolated a particular social system whose difference reflects back on the moral framework of the voyager. In all of this, they replicate imperial narratives. The islands are discovered from the perspective of the Western voyager; their difference exists in relation to Enlightenment epistemology and bourgeois-Protestant assumptions of morality, social order, and domesticity, and they conform to colonial representations of the exotic weirdness of tropical wilderness and landscape. Yet these films deny the presentation of the island as a place of potential possession, being not treasure but terror islands for those who would seek to impose their order on them. The timelessness of island conceptions has become regression, decadence, and degeneration (as is common in the use of foreignness in gothic narratives). Contrary to the "Manichean allegory," the European colonial mind-set is as terrible as—if not actually the source of—native savagery, and European masters are themselves othered, or even monstrous. The protagonist, unlike the Crusoe archetype, is denied personal progression, and his life depends on extricating himself from the land—an intriguing motif, given the contemporary extrication of the United States from the practice of direct colonial rule. *I Walked with a Zombie* stands alone in this regard, for its central couple settles into a new life on the island in apparent acceptance that openness to the native life can revitalize and ennoble them.

In 1493 Hartmann Schedel drew a map of the world that placed semihuman creatures and anthropophagi at its farther edges. Unlike Schedel's map, the island cycle represents no early explorer's fear of the unknown but rather modernity's fear of the known—an example of how, by the twentieth century, humanity had gained knowledge of the surface of Earth but lost assurance in itself. The popular horror genre turns this loss of assurance, its withdrawal from projects of the achievement of mastery, into terror. Moreau in *Lost Souls* personifies an individualistic scientific extremism whose negation is found in *Zombie*

in which the possibility of voodoo possession challenges not only rationality but also the unique integrity of the individual soul. In neither film can wilderness be controlled; in *Lost Souls* the solution is to flee the burning island without looking back, while in *Zombie* it lies in acceptance of its positive force.[49] As island narratives, these B movies take their place amid an "emerging discourse of cultural relativism"[50] and a growing interest in the relationships between modern society, group cohesion, rationality, and ritual. W. B. Seabrook's popular 1929 travelogue about voodoo in Haiti, *The Magic Island*, places near its beginning an unsettlingly gothic evocation of such relationships:

> we white strangers in this twentieth-century city, with our electric lights and motor-cars, bridge games and cocktail parties, were surrounded by another world invisible, a world of marvels, miracles, and wonders—a world in which the dead rose from their graves and walked. . . . [I learned that] Voodoo in Haiti is a profound and vitally alive *religion* [whose miracles and sorcery are] a secondary, collateral, sometimes sinisterly twisted by-product of Voodoo as a faith, precisely as the same thing was true in Catholic medieval Europe.[51]

The island horror cycle is only one example of how islands can be envisioned, and alternatives are possible.[52] Their particularities developed in relation to the period of colonial expansion yet also point beyond the limits of this moment. The cycle came to an end as a new set of concerns arose after the termination of World War II and as America's Pacific victory over Japan reduced the ocean's importance in geopolitics and the onset of the Cold War turned civilizational discourse back toward that of West and East.[53] American visions of civilizational missions of exploration were now reimagined as travel to distant worlds or futuristic visions of an Earth yet to be. The modern science-fiction genre, born in an America of airpower, atom bombs, and the domestication of technological innovation in household consumer goods, superseded this phase of island imaginations. Yet within them, one can divine a crucial moment in U.S. consciousness, a culture between colonialism, rebellion, and a new, emergent imperial hegemony.

## Notes

1. I would like to thank Michela Coletta for her comments on an earlier version of this chapter.

2. Robert Boyce, *The Great Interwar Crisis and the Collapse of Globalization* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
3. Laura Wyrick, "Horror at Century's End: Where Have All the Slashers Gone?" *Pacific Coast Philology* 33, no. 2 (1998): 125.
4. Abdul R. JanMohamed, "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonial Literature," *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 1985): 67.
5. Ella Shohat, "Imaging *Terra Incognita*: The Disciplinary Gaze of Empire," *Public Culture* 3:2 (Spring 1991): 45.
6. Rebecca Weaver-Hightower, *Castaways, Cannibals, and Fantasies of Conquest* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 205.
7. Thomas Doherty, *Pre-Code Hollywood: Sex, Immorality, and Insurrection in American Cinema, 1930–1934* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 308–10.
8. Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1964), 43.
9. To borrow a point made in relation to the anthropology of ritual symbolism and funeral rites. See Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry, eds., *Death and the Regeneration of Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 218–19.
10. Denis Cosgrove, *Geography & Vision: Seeing, Imagining and Representing the World* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2008), 90.
11. Jeffrey Geiger, "Imagined Islands: *White Shadows in the South Seas* and Cultural Ambivalence," *Cinema Journal* 41, no. 3 (Spring 2002): 98.
12. Cosgrove, *Geography & Vision*, 190.
13. Jeffrey Geiger, *Facing the Pacific: Polynesia and the U.S. Imperial Imagination* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).
14. Cosgrove, *Geography & Vision*, 196.
15. See Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith, eds., *Islands in History and Representation* (London: Routledge, 2003).
16. Denis Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 94.
17. Laleh Khalili, "Sinews of War and Trade," inaugural lecture at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, YouTube, March 16, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmnwdbW2NIM&list=PL1z_PGhPjwcpF1B-jah2zW5UsmL71PhKP6&index=1.
18. 1800, cited in Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye*, 198.
19. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), 244. See also Donald E. Pease, "New Perspectives on US Culture and Imperialism," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, 22–37 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993).
20. Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 5.
21. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 244–46.
22. Weaver-Hightower, *Castaways, Cannibals, and Fantasies of Conquest*, xiii.
23. Ian Duncan, "Introduction," in *The Lost World,* by Arthur Conan Doyle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), xi.

24. See Alison Peirse, *After Dracula the 1930s Horror Film* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013).
25. A vision, albeit in degenerated form, of islands as integrated natural and social wholes, an idealization that marked the Venetian genre of representations of island societies such as Tenochtlitan (for a discussion of such idealized spatialization of progress, see Cosgrove, *Geography & Vision*).
26. Weaver-Hightower, *Castaways, Cannibals, and Fantasies of Conquest*.
27. Nancy Lys Stepan, *Picturing Tropical Nature* (London: Reaktion, 2001), 48–49.
28. Rhona Bernstein, *Attack of the Leading Ladies: Gender, Sexuality, and Spectatorship in Classic Horror Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 166.
29. See Stepan, *Picturing Tropical Nature*, and Charlotte Rogers, *Jungle Fever: Exploring Madness and Medicine in Twentieth-Century Tropical Narratives* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012).
30. Michela Coletta and Marayna Raftopoulos, "Whose Nature? Whose Knowledge? Epistemic Politics and Environmentalism in Latin America," in *Provincialising Nature: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Politics of the Environment in Latin America*, by Michela Coletta and Marayna Raftopoulos (London: ILAS, 2016), 1.
31. Whose name is changed from the Freudian overtones of the source tale's Prendick to the notion of natural cultivation in Parker.
32. Although *Lost Souls*'s panther woman exemplifies how "gender serves as the most consistently exaggerated category of difference in horror cinema," my analysis diverges from the conclusion that it demonstrates "the genre's reliance on the monstrous male and victimized female" (J. David Slocum, *Violence and American Cinema* [London: Routledge, 2001], 12), since the male is the principle victim.
33. Harry Benshoff, *Monsters in the Closet. Homosexuality and the Horror Film* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1997), 52.
34. Neel Ahuja, "Postcolonial Critique in a Multispecies World," *PMLA* 124, no, 2 (March 2009): 557.
35. See Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 40.
36. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks* (London: Pluto, 1986), 12.
37. Ibid., 10.
38. See Carol Boyce Davies and Monica Jardine, "Imperial Geographies and Caribbean Nationalism: At the Border between 'A Dying Colonialism' and U.S. Hegemony," *New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 151–74.
39. While in Romero's 1968 "Living Dead" restarting of the zombie cycle, the threat comes not from a foreign land with exotic natives but instead is within suburban America itself from which, in the 2004 remake, they escape *to* an island.
40. Chris Vials, "The Origin of the Zombie in American Radio and Film: B-Horror, US Empire, and the Politics of Disavowal," in *Generation Zombie: Essays on the Living Dead in Modern Culture*, ed. Stephanie Boluk and Wylie Lenz (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011), 42.
41. Chris Fujiwara, *Jacques Tourneur: The Cinema of Nightfall* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland, 2003), 85.
42. Vials, "The Origin of the Zombie in American Radio and Film."
43. Fujiwara, *Jacques Tourneur*, 86.

44. Robin Wood, "American Horror Film," in *Movies and Methods,* Vol. 1, ed. Bill Nichols (London: University of California Press, 1985), 209.
45. Cited in Fujiwara, *Jacques Tourneur*, 87.
46. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 24.
47. Shohat, "Imaging *Terra Incognita*," 112.
48. Paul Willeman, "Notes towards the Construction of Readings of Tourneur," in *Jacques Tourneur*, ed. Clare Johnston and Paul Willeman, 16–36 (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh Film Festival, 1975).
49. As such they can be seen as a populist realization of the literary genre that Rogers has identified as connecting madness, exploration into the wilderness, and medical theories, which "undermine the Cartesian tenets of modern society and question the notion of progress on which it is founded" (Rogers, *Jungle Fever*, 1).
50. Geiger, "Imagined Islands," 99.
51. William Seabrook, *The Magical Island* (New York: Harcourt, 1929), 19–20.
52. Rod Edmond mentions how "Pacific peoples, the Tongan writer Epeli Hau'ofa insists, are ocean dwellers inhabiting a 'sea of islands'. [Saint Lucian-Trinidadian poet] Derek Walcott has spoken similarly of the Caribbean. . . . The boundaries of islands are porous and shifting, advancing and retreating each day with the tide. Sea and land become interchangeable. Micronesian seafarers, for example, inverted the western conception of a navigational environment by thinking of their canoes as stationary, with the islands moving towards and past them." Rod Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial Discourses from Cook to Gauguin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5–6.
53. Cosgrove, *Geography & Vision*, 202.

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2

# Charlie Chan's Multicolored Passport

## Territorial Hawaii and Classical Hollywood's Transnational "Foreign" Detective

**Elizabeth Rawitsch**

There were only forty-eight stars on the American flag when author Earl Derr Biggers introduced the fictional Honolulu police detective Charlie Chan to readers in 1925. Originally serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post* and republished as *The House without a Key*,[1] the debut Chan novel was set in the Hawaiian Islands, which had become a U.S. territory in 1898. Yet while citizens of Hawaii automatically became American citizens and American citizenship was granted to anyone born in Hawaii,[2] *The House without a Key* suggests that the territory's national status confused most people on the American mainland: "Only about one person out of a thousand in this country knows that Hawaii is a part of the United States, and the fact annoys us deeply over in the Islands," the Hawaiian-born *haole* (resident, nonindigenous) Barbara Winterslip explains to her Boston-born cousin.[3] "Then there was the senator who came out on a junket, and began a speech with: 'When I get home to my country—' Someone in the audience shouted: 'You're there now, you big stiff!'"[4] Despite its annexation, mid-1920s Honolulu remained at least partially other in the mainland imagination.[5] Located a multiple-day steamship journey away from the California coast,

territorial Hawaii could be simultaneously American and not-American, both familiar and exotic.

While existing critical analysis of the Charlie Chan character has tended to focus on the representation of his Chinese heritage,[6] Chan's tenuous connection to place and the subsequent representation of his nationality are equally central to understanding how the boundaries of American identity were constructed—and repeatedly redefined—on both the page and the screen between the 1920s and 1940s. Three of the six Chan novels—*The House without a Key* (1925), *The Black Camel* (1929), and *Charlie Chan Carries On* (1930)—were set in and fascinated with territorial Hawaii's cultural positioning,[7] as were their early movie adaptations—*The House without a Key* (1926), *Charlie Chan Carries On* (1931), and *The Black Camel* (1931)—albeit in a less explicit manner. Following Biggers's death and the end of ready-made source material in 1933, Hollywood further centralized and promoted the series' emphasis on geography as the famous Honolulu detective was sent on worldwide adventures in *Charlie Chan in London* (1934), *Charlie Chan in Paris* (1935), *Charlie Chan in Egypt* (1935), *Charlie Chan in Shanghai* (1935), *Charlie Chan at Monte Carlo* (1937), and more. Consequently, the representation of Chan's citizenship began to shift, blurring between Chinese, Hawaiian, and American over the course of three decades and forty-seven films.

Beginning with an analysis of the role of the Asian detective in late 1930s Hollywood—when the Chan franchise was at its height and when the Chan-like investigators Mr. Wong and Mr. Moto also graced screens across the country—this chapter will consider Chan's transition from a Chinese citizen resident in Hawaii to an American citizen at home anywhere in the world. Because 1930s Hawaii was an imperial territory rather than a state, Honolulu provided a liminal space in which the national identity of the Chan character could be far from clear-cut. And at a time when American politics were steadfastly isolationist—focusing on domestic problems caused by the Great Depression rather than conflicts overseas—Chan's late 1930s globetrotting took on added ideological significance, marking a cautious prewar reembrace of the "foreign."

## The Asian Detective in Late 1930s Hollywood

The foreign detective was already a familiar literary trope by the time Charlie Chan made his way to Hollywood. Stories featuring Hercule Poirot, Agatha

Christie's fictional Belgian detective, had been published on both sides of the Atlantic from 1920 onward, most famously in *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934).[8] While Poirot lived in England and conducted the majority of his investigations there, Christie's British characters continued to consider the inspector exotic. For example, after meeting Poirot in *Murder in Mesopotamia* (1936), British nurse Amy Leatheran confesses, "I don't know what I'd imagined—something rather like Sherlock Holmes—long and lean with a keen, clever face. Of course, I knew he was a foreigner, but I hadn't expected him to be quite as foreign as he was, if you know what I mean."[9] Whereas Sherlock Holmes is identified as "British" (or at least not foreign), Poirot's eccentricities—a fastidious personal appearance, a sensitive stomach, and insistence on extreme punctuality—continue to be linked to his Belgian heritage and continue to mark him as an outsider, even as his crime-solving skills bring him international acclaim. Yet while outsider status was a social stigma, it also tended to work in the literary foreign detective's favor, providing him with a fresh, impartial perspective on cases and granting him access to people and places that the local police could not reach.

Faced with a wealth of international heritages to choose from, why then did Hollywood turn to Asians and Asian Americans for its cinematic foreign detectives in the late 1930s? Perhaps it was because the racial group was, in many ways, more marginalized than others, making Asians the ultimate outsiders. Although American citizenship was conceived of as universal and inclusive, it has frequently been exclusionary in practice, with race and ethnicity (rather than country of origin) serving as the primary factors determining whether or not potential immigrants will be welcomed into America's melting pot. For example, increasing numbers of Chinese immigrants in the late 1800s led to mass panic about a perceived "yellow menace," and popular discourses argued that unlike European ethnic groups, the Chinese "were unassimilable and . . . a threat to the working class, to American democracy, and to other American institutions."[10] With the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) and the Quota Act (1924), entry into the United States was barred to all Asian peoples, including Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos. The Chinese Exclusion Act further declared that "hereafter no State court or court of the United States shall admit Chinese to citizenship,"[11] meaning that any then-resident alien Asians could not be naturalized as American citizens until the quota was lifted in 1943. By 1930, the U.S. Census Bureau recorded 74,954 people of Chinese descent living in the United

States, 59 percent of whom were foreign-born and, effectively, trapped in their marginalized "alien" status.

Paradoxically, it was only when America's borders were closed to Asians that people of Asian descent were tentatively welcomed in America's cinematic spaces. As Eugene Franklin Wong noted in his seminal 1978 study of Asian Americans in the media, exclusionary immigration measures such as the Quota Act "gradually provided a psychological incentive and social climate given to the acceptance of an image of a non-villainous Asian" within popular culture.[12] The passage of time following the passage of the Quota Act rendered Hollywood's Asians and Asian Americans nonthreatening. They could finally be part of America's national on-screen community rather than a danger to it.

While Hollywood's representations of Asians can be traced back to the silent period—including *Broken Blossoms* (1919)—there was a marked increase of fascination with Chinese culture on American screens during the late 1920s and 1930s. It is significant that this change occurs after World War I, when the American government practiced isolationist foreign policy, steadfastly declining involvement in international affairs following the economic and human costs of World War I. Locations across both oceans became sites of speculative fantasy. The Limehouse district of East London came to life in adaptations of Sax Rohmer's Fu Manchu stories: *The Mysterious Fu Manchu* (1929), *The Return of Fu Manchu* (1930), *Daughter of the Dragon* (1931), and *The Mask of Fu Manchu* (1932). Chinese culture within China itself was depicted in *Shanghai Express* (1932), *The Painted Veil* (1934), and *The Good Earth* (1937). Meanwhile, Chinese populations within the United States were represented by the benevolent Asian detectives Charlie Chan, Mr. Moto, and Mr. Wong.

Indeed, Charlie Chan was far from American popular culture's only fictional detective with an Asian heritage in the 1930s. Between 1934 and 1938, *Collier's* magazine serialized twelve stories featuring San Francisco–based Chinese American investigator James Lee Wong,[13] and from 1935 to 1938 the *Saturday Evening Post* filled the gap left by Biggers's Chan stories with serialized tales of the Japanese spy Mr. Moto.[14] While both characters quickly made their way to Hollywood—Mr. Moto in 1937 and Mr. Wong in 1938—neither sustained Chan's popularity or longevity, a fact that, as demonstrated below, may be related to how their national identities (in addition to their heritages) could be perceived

as Asian.

Mr. Moto features in eight films—*Think Fast, Mr. Moto* (1937), *Thank You, Mr. Moto* (1937), *Mr. Moto's Gamble* (1938), *Mr. Moto Takes a Chance* (1938), *Mysterious Mr. Moto* (1938), *Mr. Moto's Last Warning* (1939), *Mr. Moto in Danger Island* (1939), and *Mr. Moto Takes a Vacation* (1939)—all produced by Twentieth Century Fox, the studio that also held the rights to the Chan franchise. Throughout the series, Moto is a mysterious figure whose motives and occupation are unclear. When first introduced in *Think Fast, Mr. Moto,* he is a businessman who dabbles in sleuthing as a hobby, but in *Thank You, Mr. Moto*—only months later—he is a real detective working for a private importing company, and by *Mr. Moto's Last Warning* he is a fully fledged member of Interpol. It is unclear if these shifts are clever covers adopted by his spy character or the result of revisionist rewriting. Likewise, Moto is untethered to any one particular location. *Think Fast, Mr. Moto* introduces the character in San Francisco's Chinatown, yet he spends the rest of the movie in transit, solving crimes aboard a cruise ship to Shanghai. While he returns to Chinatown in *Mr. Moto Takes a Vacation,* it is unclear if that is where he calls home. Moto's work seems to keep him moving, from London and the Gobi desert (*Thank You, Mr. Moto*) to Siam (*Mr. Moto Takes a Chance*) to Devil's Island (*Mysterious Mr. Moto*) to Egypt (*Mr. Moto's Last Warning*) to Puerto Rico (*Mr. Moto in Danger Island*). Whereas Charlie Chan would quickly become the "famous Honolulu detective," Mr. Moto is not strongly associated with any one place or career. Very little is revealed about his personal life (including his first name, which is shown as "Kentaro" on a business card in *Think Fast, Mr. Moto* but never spoken in the films). He remains foreign—never seen on Japan's shores—but also never quite belonging on America's shores.

Moto does, however, frequently pass, successfully masquerading as other characters as he goes undercover. In *Mysterious Mr. Moto* alone, he disguises himself as a famous Japanese criminal, an inconspicuous Japanese houseboy, and a cranky German artist. The casting of Hungarian American actor Peter Lorre as the Japanese Moto gives his passing as a German in particular a potentially menacing undertone. As film critic Ken Hanke argues, "If there is a central weakness to the series at all, it lies in the strange notion of perpetually dressing up Moto in elaborate disguises that never manage to bamboozle the viewer into believing

they are anything but disguises. Bluntly put, Lorre is always invincibly Lorre no matter how much make-up and crepe hair he hides behind."[15] In other words, as Yiman Wang argues, "Contrary to conventional racial passing, which hinges on erasing all traces of performance and disguise, screen passing in the form of yellowface or blackface masquerade highlights the white actor or actress behind the racially marked screen persona."[16] The slippage between two races is intentional; a yellowface actor is simultaneously Oriental and white. While characters within the film believe that Moto is a chameleon secret agent, the contemporary viewer is always aware of the paratextual discourse of Lorre as a 1930s movie villain; by 1937 the *Detroit Free Press* had proclaimed him "Europe's one-man chamber of horrors" based in large part on his performance as a serial killer in *M* (1931).[17] Lorre-as-Moto therefore reinserts potential yellow peril fear into Moto's German disguise, suggesting that there is something possibly horrific about an Asian character passing as white, even if the character's Asianness is, itself, a yellowface performance to begin with.

In some ways, James Lee Wong falls on the other side of the cultural spectrum. Played first by British actor Boris Karloff and then by Chinese American actor Keye Luke, the character appeared in six films produced by Poverty Row studio Monogram Pictures: *Mr. Wong, Detective* (1938), *The Mystery of Mr. Wong* (1939), *Mr. Wong in Chinatown* (1939), *The Fatal Hour* (1940), *Doomed to Die* (1940), and *Phantom of Chinatown* (1940). As the movie titles suggest, Wong is particularly linked to San Francisco's Chinatown. Assorted tongs (secret Chinese organizations) are willing to consult with him in *Mr. Wong in Chinatown*, *The Fatal Hour,* and *Doomed to Die* when their doors are shut to white San Francisco policemen. Wong's home, which doubles as his office, further demonstrates his active connection to his cultural heritage. Its assorted Chinese artifacts are not merely decorative; Wong plays several of the musical instruments that line the walls of his study. Finally, while Mr. Moto travels the globe, James Lee Wong is firmly rooted in place. All of his films take place in San Francisco, and when presented with the opportunity for travel, he declines, sending his valet and a Chinese government agent to China to return stolen items at the end of *The Mystery of Mr. Wong* and *Phantom of Chinatown,* respectively. This may be due in part to budgetary reasons; Monogram was a much smaller studio than Fox, and convincing international set pieces would have been expensive to produce. Yet

in terms of characterization, Mr. Wong has a much stronger connection to place than his fellow Asian detective, Mr. Moto.

Casting also plays a significant role in Wong's characterization. Hugh Wiley's short stories describe Wong as a six-foot-tall Yale graduate whose towering height sets him apart from other (often diminutive) people of Chinese descent and whose American-based education suggests a strong degree of assimilation into American culture.[18] The cinematic Wong, however, is described as having been trained in Heidelberg and Oxford, and he boasts a perfect English accent courtesy of the British Karloff. By altering Wong's background—he comes to Chinatown via London—the films complicate the character's nationality and add a layer of distance between his Chinese heritage and his American life. Karloff's casting also complicates the Wong character, because he—like Lorre—was best known at the time for his performances in horror movies, including *Frankenstein* (1931), *The Mummy* (1932), and *The Mask of Fu Manchu* (1932). Drawing upon the discourse of the yellow peril, Fu Manchu was a Western-educated Chinese villain who sought to use the West's own weapons to destroy it, and while Karloff's Wong detects murder instead of dishing it out, audiences could hardly fail to compare the actor's two Chinese roles.[19] While the pressbook for *Mr. Wong, Detective* includes two separate prefabricated stories about the physically painful yellowface makeup process that Karloff underwent for the film, claiming that "It was necessary for Gordon Bau, the makeup man, to have the upper part of Karloff's eyelid brought down and glued to the lower section, thus causing him to view everything with a blur,"[20] Hanke notes that Karloff is presented "with a minimum of make-up (as contrasted with his 1932 Fu-Manchu)," which consequentially "presented one of the most dubious Chinese since Edward G. Robinson in *The Hatchet Man*."[21] In other words, like Lorre's Moto, Karloff's Wong is also simultaneously Asian and not Asian as a result of yellowface makeup and star discourses.

Both the Wong and Moto films began to lose popularity in the wake of World War II, due in large part to America's international relationships with China and Japan. Despite Moto's frequent passing, viewers could always see through his mask, meaning that Moto was ultimately considered a Japanese character, and Japan's increasing militarization and aggression against China meant that the nation "was becoming a problematic mirror to the West, reflecting America and

Europe's progress and excesses in its own military and industrial triumphs."[22] When America declared war against Japan following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the Japanese spy immediately became a problematic hero. On the other hand, the United States was allied with China during World War II, which allowed the Mr. Wong series to continue, particularly since Wong's Chinese heritage was tempered by his geographic connection to San Francisco. Yet as World War II drew on and it became clear that the communists rather than the nationalists were gaining a foothold in China's simultaneously occurring civil war, even Wong's connection to Chinatown became problematic, in large part because the Quota Act left little room for differentiation between Chinese and Chinese American. It is ultimately Wong's and Moto's relationships—or lack of relationships—to geographic place that spell the undoing of both Asian detectives.

I argue, however, that Charlie Chan was not simply an Asian detective or a foreign detective; he was a transnational detective. While there is no consensus as to the definition of "transnationalism" as it relates to film studies,[23] my use of the term is meant to indicate cross-fertilization and transcultural exchange on the textual level (theme, character, setting, language, etc.) rather than during pre- or postproduction. It is precisely the ambiguity of Charlie Chan's national identity that allows his films to continue through World War II and beyond. Even more so than the foreign detective, the transnational detective was successful at passing and blending; the very looseness of his national identity is a virtue—and crucial to his success—within his line of work. The transnational detective's crossing of borders combined with a blurring of national identities—rather than one or the other—grants him unusual access to popular culture. Before turning to an examination of precisely how the Chan films accomplish this, however, we must first consider the ways in which America's borders were far from stable during the late 1930s.

## American Imperialism and Territorial Hawaii in the 1930s

Expansionism has frequently been seen as one of the defining characteristics of American identity. By 1890 when the continental United States spanned from the Atlantic to the Pacific and the "Wild West" was declared tamed, the perceived end of the frontier era accompanied a profound sense of loss.[24] Without

physical room to grow, there was a fear that the American nation would stagnate. However, America's western expansionism did not, in fact, end in 1890; it simply crossed the Pacific Ocean.

As H. W. Brands argues, "Empires do not happen by accident. America, like Britain, gained an empire because Americans wanted one and went out and got it."[25] While the United States annexed the majority of its colonies through the conclusion of the Spanish-American War in 1899, the colonial relationship between Hawaii and the United States began earlier, in 1893, with the American-backed overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom: "A group of *haole* businessmen in the islands conspired with American government officials to overthrow the constitutional monarchy of Hawaii and succeeded with the help of U.S. marines."[26] While most histories claim that Hawaii actively campaigned for its annexation by America—and would continue campaigning to become a part of the union until it achieved statehood over sixty years later[27]—the relationship between them was decidedly unequal, with Hawaii falling under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, unable to elect its own governor. The territory became an indeterminate social body that was not quite a state yet not merely a possession.

In other words, although the American nation had been founded by a rejection of British colonial bonds, it willingly imposed colonial ties itself, arguably betraying one of its founding principles.[28] Indeed, a sense of nostalgia and loss permeates Biggers's Chan novels, such as when cousins Dan and Minerva Winterslip think back to the precolonial days of Hawaii in *The House without a Key*:

> "The 'eighties," he [Dan Winterslip] sighed. "Hawaii was Hawaii then. Unspoiled, a land of opera bouffe, with old Kalakaua sitting on his golden throne."
>
> "I remember him," Miss Minerva said. "Grand parties at the palace. And the afternoons when he sat with his disreputable friends on the royal lanai, and the Royal Hawaiian Band played at his feet, and he haughtily tossed them royal pennies. It was such a colorful, naïve spot then, Dan."
>
> "It's been ruined," he complained sadly. "Too much aping of the mainland. Too much of your damned mechanical civilization—

> automobiles, phonographs, radio—bah! And yet—and yet, Minerva—away down underneath there are deep dark waters flowing still."[29]

The Winterslips primarily see Hawaii in the 1880s as a place—"a land" or a "spot"—rather than a culture, a place whose isolation left it unspoiled by modern technology and media. King Kalakaua and his "disreputable friends" were fickle and potentially naive, but their antics were colorful, comic, and entertaining. They seem to argue that territorial Hawaii should not emulate the mainland but instead should have stayed in its pure, natural state. Bowker, the cabin boy, calls Honolulu "the South Seas with a collar on, driving a Ford car. Polynesia with a private still and all the other benefits of the white man's civilization,"[30] and his mocking tone similarly suggests that there is something unnatural about Hawaii as an American protectorate. Minerva's mind will wander back to this conversation with Dan right before she discovers that he has been murdered, as though his dwelling on a preimperial past that could no longer be was a dangerous state of mind.

Fully admitting territorial Hawaii into statehood—allowing it to leave its limbo between a native Polynesian way of life and fully joining the modernized Western world—was also perceived as being potentially dangerous, however. Political objections to Hawaiian statehood ultimately came down to anxieties about race.[31] According to the 1930 U.S. census, in comparison to mainland America, which was 88.7 percent white, territorial Hawaii's population was 21.8 percent white, 13.8 percent native Hawaiian, 37.9 percent Japanese, 7.4 percent Chinese, 17.1 percent Filipino, and 1.9 percent Korean.[32] In other words, while America claimed to be a "melting pot" where, to quote Israel Zangwill's eponymous play, "all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming" into a unified body of American citizens,[33] it bears emphasizing that mainland America was far from racially diverse in comparison to its territories, and while the "races of Europe" were successfully intermixing on the mainland, the races of Asia were not. Given Japan's increasing militarism throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the idea of a state where people of Asian descent would form the majority and Caucasians would be in the minority made many white Americans nervous.[34] America's melting pot, in other words, only comfortably applied to select racial heritages.

Instead of focusing on race, constructions of cultural belonging in Hawaii centered on familiarity with the island way of life. Strangers and newcomers were dubbed *malihinis.* When John Quincy asks Charlie Chan if he is a *malihini*, Chan is quick to reply: "Not in the least. . . . I am *kamaaina*—old-timer. Pursing the truth further, I have been twenty-five years in the Islands."[35] In other words, 1930s Hawaii was a place where people of Asian heritage not only could be in the majority but also could find a sense of community that the American nation denied to them through its immigration policy. Indeed, it is important to note that Biggers's Chan never claimed to be "American." Throughout all six novels, Chan consistently refers to himself as "Chinese," and because Biggers's Chan was born in China (not Hawaii) and because territorial Hawaii was subject to federal immigration laws, he never would have been eligible for American citizenship. Put another way, the color of Chan's passport almost certainly would have been black—the color of Chinese passports in the 1930s—rather than the dark red of American passports or the slightly lighter red of U.S. territories. Regardless of precisely when Biggers's Chan immigrated, he remained a Chinese citizen and was therefore politically a foreigner, even if he was culturally embraced by his fans.

Hawaii essentially had the misfortune to be the crossroads of the Pacific within an isolationist moment when America was repeatedly choosing nonentanglement over participation in international politics, opting instead to focus on domestic concerns. Although the Hawaiian Islands were no longer isolated from Western civilization due in large part to their annexation as an American protectorate, their history and distance from the mainland allowed them to serve as a liminal space where constructions of national identity could blur and where a cautious reembrace of the "foreign" could occur.

## Hollywood's Charlie Chan in Transnational Transition

The Chan novels were fascinated with Hawaii as a liminal location, so it is no surprise that territorial Hawaii also featured in Hollywood's Chan movies. Much of *The Black Camel* (1931), for example, was filmed on location in Honolulu. "Take a moment to enjoy the palms of paradise," publicist Jimmy Bradshaw entreats as his arm sweeps across a vista that includes both a sandy beach and verdant mountains in the distance. His love interest Julie O'Neil, however, is un-

impressed. "Save that gag for the tourists," she retorts without turning her head.

Indeed, Honolulu appears to function as a paradise specifically for tourists in *The Black Camel*. The "Royal Hawaiian Hotel"—the "Pink Palace of the Pacific" that was built to foster a new era of resort travel to Hawaii in 1927—is identified as a landmark from across the waters of Diamond Head by onscreen titles. Twenty female high school students clad in leis perform a song in Hawaiian for the entertainment of visiting actress Shelah Fane. Smith, the British beachcomber, is able to make his living by selling oil paintings of the tropical scenery to visitors. The islands are a space for *malihini* leisure, staffed by a *kamaaina* workforce. *The Black Camel*'s territorial Hawaii appears to be the very mix of media and mechanical civilization that Biggers's Dan Winterslip feared, a culture that not just apes but also caters to mainland America.

Chan's geographic connection to Hawaii is one that Hollywood repeatedly touted. Indeed, the phrases "the famous Honolulu detective" and "Lieutenant Chan of the Honolulu Police" tend to be used at least once in all of the Chan films. Curiously, however, it took until *The Black Camel*—which was several films into the Chan series—before viewers caught a glimpse of the one location that most firmly cemented the Chinese citizen as a resident of Hawaii: his home. A one-minute cutaway sequence reveals Chan in what was presumably his dining room, seated at the table with his wife and ten children while he finishes a cup of tea. The casual banter that Chan shares with his family about school and report cards communicates that this is a physical space where he feels relaxed. Wooden sconces that vaguely resemble Chinese characters frame a large picture window, and ornamental slabs of bamboo line the walls. A large bell hangs in a decorative stand, and a single porcelain teapot sits on the sideboard directly behind Chan's shoulder. However, there are few indisputably Asian signifiers here: the sconces may simply be Art Deco, bamboo also lines the walls of native huts, and it is unclear if the teapot is a genuine Chinese artifact or merely *chinoiserie* (an American imitation of Chinese material goods). Furthermore, in contrast to the location that immediately precedes it—the hut that Smith shares with a native Hawaiian woman—there are no grass skirts, leis, or other identifiably Hawaiian objects on display. The plain, domestic decor of Chan's home ultimately reads more "American" than "ethnic." It presents a blurred national identity.

In some ways, however, the most intriguing aspect of Chan's house in *The*

*Black Camel* is the view from his dining room window, with the Hawaiian valley below stretching out toward the sea. Logically, Chan's house must then be situated at a higher elevation, specifically on the slope of Punchbowl Hill. The location of Chan's home therefore differentiates him from the majority of Honolulu's Chinese population, which lived in the thirty-seven acres of Chinatown's "littered, claustrophobically congested streets" between River Street, Nu'uanu Avenue, Queen Street, and Beretania Street.[36] With one detail of Hollywood set design, Chan is set apart from and elevated above the ethnic enclave of Honolulu's Chinatown. He becomes distanced—literally and figuratively—from others of his nationality.

The location of Chan's house has moved from Punchbowl Hill by the time of *Charlie Chan in Honolulu* (1938), but it still remains outside Chinatown's claustrophobic borders. The opening title sequence dissolves to reveal the exterior of a single-story beach house that is separated from the gently lapping waves of the ocean by a white picket fence. A strain of ukulele music enters the score as a second dissolve reveals a mailbox labeled "Chas. Chan."[37] These Hawaiian signifiers remain contained outside Chan's home, however. A third and final dissolve shows Chan, his wife, and his now-expanded family of thirteen children around a different dining table. A bay window is located directly behind Chan, but this time it is covered with floral curtains that obscure the ocean view. The walls are wainscoted, and the fireplace mantle is covered with assorted vases, none of which look Asian in origin. The interior of the Chan family home is once again devoid of Hawaiian signifiers, but by the mid-1930s it also lacks Chinese signifiers (beyond the chopsticks that the Chan family uses to eat meals). Within the span of seven years, the Hollywood production design has altered Chan's house from that of a Chinese citizen resident in Hawaii to that of a Hawaiian resident of indeterminate heritage.

As established above, Biggers's Chinese-born Chan would have been denied American citizenship due to the restrictive immigration policy of the Chinese Exclusion Act. Similarly, Hollywood's Chan would have remained a legal alien in spite of his Hawaiian residence. In addition to the blurred national identity presented by the films' production design, Chan's mid-1930s globetrotting away from Honolulu—to London, Paris, Egypt, Shanghai, Monte Carlo, and beyond—offered Hollywood a further opportunity to meditate on the

character's inherent "foreignness"; his adventures in overseas locations could discretely comment back upon "the famous Honolulu detective's" relationship with imperial America.

National signifiers in Chan's foreign-set films therefore take on special significance. For example, when on the case in *Charlie Chan in London* (1934), the detective proclaims that "Englishmen mind own business, not always Chinamen." Yunte Huang argues that "nothing . . . marks Chan's foreignness more than his pidgin speech and his rat-a-tat fortune-cookie aphorisms,"[38] and in this example both apply. However, Chan's aphorisms "are often intended more to baffle than to enlighten his interlocutors. Their confounding effect derives less from the semantic opacity of these sayings than from the unfamiliarity of their origin."[39] Chan's frequently meaningless banter is used not to impart Eastern wisdom but rather to befuddle his Western suspects and throw them off guard. Is it Chan's meaning in *Charlie Chan in London* that Englishmen mind their own business but Chinese citizens do not always mind their own business? Or is his meaning that Englishmen *should* mind their own business and not interfere in the business of the Chinese (as, for example, in the colonial meddling of the 1839–60 Opium Wars)? "Regret do not understand English, only American," Chan confesses later in the same film. Could Chan be ever-covertly drawing parallels between British imperialism in China and American imperialism in Hawaii? Regardless of the answer, Chan's pidgin aphorisms are an indication of how he, like the best foreign detectives, turns the cultural margin into a place of power rather than one purely of alienation.

Chan also turns the cultural margin into an advantage by using his suspects' prejudices against them. When the intoxicated French artist Max Corday meets Chan for the first time in *Charlie Chan in Paris* (1935), he exclaims, "Me velly happy to know you. Maybe you likee havee little dlinkee?" There is a beat before Chan replies, during which the detective appears to quietly smile to himself. "Very happy to make acquaintance of charming gentleman," he says. Then, putting firm emphasis on each word, he announces that "Me no likee dlinkee now. Perhaps later." The other guests in the room laugh delightedly at Chan's imitation of Corday's exaggerated pidgin English, able to identify his wit as well as differentiate between his unusual speech pattern and a heavy accent. If the detective's suspects underestimate Chan's intelligence because of

his foreignness, they do so at their own peril.

So too do Chan's coworkers. When preparing to greet Chan for the first time in *Charlie Chan on Broadway* (1937), Inspector Nelson tells Officer Smith to "have the band blast out something Oriental. What *is* the Chinese national anthem anyway?" he asks. "I don't know," Smith replies, "why don't you give 'em [the jazz standard] 'Chinatown, My Chinatown'?" Yet Chan clearly seeks identification as a representative of territorial Hawaii rather than an ethnic enclave. As he tells his fellow officers at a police banquet being given in his honor, "Police of New York and Honolulu have one thing in common: both live on very small island. But while we have big volcano, you have biggest shakeup. Someday hope to greet honorable brothers in Hawaii where roll of surf replace noise of subway and hot rhythm of Broadway cooled by strains of Aloha." Chan's comparison of Long Island and the Hawaiian Islands makes Hawaii seem like a paradise, a place of community rather than criminal activity. Indeed, the commissioner approves Chan's choice to return to Honolulu rather than spend an extra week in New York City (as his son Lee desires).

The Chan films of the mid-1930s show Chan gradually shedding what few ethnic signifiers he possesses in favor of the American melting pot. The Chinese detective resident in Hawaii gradually comes to represent all-American values in his global adventures. In 1941 following the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor and America's entry into World War II, cinema history would be retrofitted to make Chan's cultural Americanism official. In *Charlie Chan in Rio* (1941) when Miss Ellis chides "Remember, Mr. Chan, I'm an American citizen," Chan replies, "Am proud to say, so am I. We should get on splendidly together." In a film that ends with Chan's son Jimmy receiving notification that he has been drafted into the American army, patriotism is at the fore. Future Chan movies would imply that the detective was working for the U.S. war effort, and by time of *The Scarlet Clue* (1945), Chan would outright declare, "I am Charlie Chan, representative of federal government" rather than "Honolulu detective." His transition from territorial resident to full-fledged American was complete.

In *The House without a Key*, Biggers's Chan confessed that "I have unlimited yearning for travel. . . . But it are unavailable. I am policeman on small remuneration."[40] By ignoring the financial strains of a detective's salary and repeatedly sending Chan across established national borders, Hollywood used

the detective's ambiguous nationality to examine the boundaries of American culture. The films changed the color of Chan's passport from black to light red to dark red as his implied national identity switched from Chinese to Hawaiian to American. "Come, come, come, all the world knows of Charlie Chan," Moroccan inspector Jules Joubert exasperatedly proclaims in *Charlie Chan at Monte Carlo* (1937), and by the end of the 1930s Hollywood was certain that Chan was—or at least should be—more than just a "foreign" detective; he was a transnational detective at home anywhere in the world.

Ultimately, while Chan's contemporary Asian detectives Mr. Wong and Mr. Moto remained aliens and foreigners in the late 1930s, the Honolulu detective found continued box office success. His overseas ambassadorship for both America and its territories allowed Hollywood to cautiously reembrace the "foreign" within the climate of isolationist America. By traveling to exotic locations across both the Atlantic and the Pacific, Hollywood's late 1930s Chan films could engage with the question of precisely where America's borders lay. The nationally liminal space of territorial Hawaii provided a springboard from which the cultural—if not political—terms of American citizenship could be reevaluated.

## Notes

1. Earl Derr Biggers, *The House without a Key* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1925).
2. "Persons Born in Hawaii," U.S. Code, Title 8, Chapter 12, Subchapter III, Part I, §1405.
3. Biggers, *The House without a Key*, 38.
4. Ibid., 39.
5. For more on how mainland America viewed Hawaii from 1920 to 1950, see Jane Desmond, *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World* (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1999); Jeffrey Geiger, *Facing the Pacific: Polynesia and the U.S. Imperial Imagination* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007).
6. For example, see Eugene Franklin Wong, *On Visual Media Racism: Asians in the American Motion Picture* (New York: Arno, 1978); Jessica Hagedorn, ed., *Chan Is Dead: An Anthology of Contemporary Asian American Fiction* (New York: Penguin, 1993); Yunte Huang, *Charlie Chan: The Untold Story of the Honorable Detective and His Rendezvous with American History* (New York: Norton, 2010).
7. Biggers, *The House without a Key*; Earl Derr Biggers, *The Black Camel* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1929); Earl Derr Biggers, *Charlie Chan Carries On* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1930). Biggers's other Chan novels include *The Chinese Parrot* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1926), *Behind That Curtain* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1928), and *Keeper of the Keys* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1932).
8. Agatha Christie, *Murder on the Orient Express* (New York: Dodd Mead, 1934), originally serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post* from September 30, 1933, to November 4, 1933. The Poirot character was introduced in Agatha Christie, *The Mysterious*

*Affair at Styles* (New York: John Lane, 1920), originally serialized in *The Times* from February 27, 1920, to June 26, 1920.

9. Agatha Christie, "Murder in Mesopotamia," *Poirot in the Orient* (London: HarperCollins, 2001), 67.
10. Joseph F. Healey, *Diversity and Society: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge, 2007), 215.
11. "An Act to Execute Certain Treaty Stipulations Relating to the Chinese," May 6, 1882, Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789–1996, General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11, National Archives.
12. Eugene Franklin Wong, "The Early Years: Asians in the American Films Prior to World War II," in *Screening Asian Americans*, ed. Peter X. Feng, (London: Rutgers, 2002), 53. Reprinted from *On Visual Media Racism* (New York: Arno, 1978).
13. Hugh Wiley, "Medium Well Done," *Collier's,* March 10, 1934; Hugh Wiley, "The Thirty Thousand Dollar Bomb," *Collier's*, July 28, 1934; Hugh Wiley, "Ten Bells," *Collier's*, August 4, 1934; Hugh Wiley, "Long Chance," *Collier's*, December 15, 1934; Hugh Wiley, "A Ray of Light," *Collier's*, May 25, 1935; Hugh Wiley, "Jaybird's Chance," *Collier's*, July 20, 1935; Hugh Wiley, "Scorned Woman," *Collier's*, September 14, 1935; Hugh Wiley, "Three Words," *Collier's*, November 2, 1935; Hugh Wiley, "No Witnesses," *Collier's*, February 15, 1936; Hugh Wiley, "Seven of Spades," *Collier's*, September 5, 1936; Hugh Wiley, "The Bell from China," *Collier's*, March 26, 1938; Hugh Wiley, "The Feast of Kali," *Collier's*, June 25, 1938. The short stories refer to the character as "James Lee" or "Mr. Lee," while the films would refer to him as "Mr. Wong."
14. John P. Marquand, "Mr. Moto Takes a Hand," *Saturday Evening Post*, March 30, 1935, to May 4, 1935, republished as John P. Marquand, *No Hero* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1935); John P. Marquand, *Thank You, Mr. Moto* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1936); John P. Marquand, *Think Fast, Mr. Moto* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1937); and John P. Marquand, *Mr. Moto Is So Sorry* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1938). The character does not acquire anything resembling a first name until the third novel, *Think Fast, Mr. Moto,* when he presents the name "I. A. Moto" on a business card.
15. Ken Hanke, *Charlie Chan at the Movies: History, Filmography, Criticism* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1989), 256.
16. Yiman Wang, "The Art of Screen Passing: Anna May Wong's Yellowface Performance in the Art Deco Era," *Camera Obscura* 20 (2005): 168. See also Mark Winokur, *American Laughter: Immigrants, Ethnicity, and 1930s Hollywood Film Comedy* (New York: St. Martin's, 1996).
17. "Lorre Prefers Roles of Villains," *Detroit Free Press*, January 4, 1937. For more on the construction of Lorre's star persona in the 1930s, see Sarah Thomas, *Peter Lorre, Face Maker: Stardom and Performance between Hollywood and Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), esp. chap. 7.
18. Wiley, "Thirty Thousand Dollar Bomb."
19. Urmila Seshagiri, "Modernity's (Yellow) Perils: Dr. Fu Manchu and English Race Paranoia," *Cultural Critique* 62 (Winter 2006): 162–94; David Shih, "The Color of Fu-Manchu: Orientalist Method in the Novels of Sax Rohmer," *Journal of Popular Culture* 42, no. 2 (2009): 304–17. Fu Manchu was British in origin but was used in multiple Hollywood films.
20. *Mr. Wong, Detective* pressbook (Monogram Pictures 1938), 3, 9.
21. Hanke, *Charlie Chan at the Movies,* 257–58.

22. Susan J. Napier, *From Impressionism to Anime: Japan as Fantasy and Fan Cult in the Mind of the West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 55.
23. For a summary of the academic debate, see Will Higbee and Song Hwee Lim, "Concepts of Transnational Cinema: Towards a Critical Transnationalism in Film Studies," *Transnational Cinemas* 1, no. 1 (2010): 7–21.
24. Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1921).
25. H. W. Brands, *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 20.
26. Adria L. Imada, "Hawaiians on Tour: Hula Circuits through the American Empire," *American Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (March 2004): 113–14.
27. See, for example, John S. Whitehead, *Completing the Union: Alaska, Hawai'i, and the Battle for Statehood* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004).
28. See David Healy, *U.S. Expansionism: The Imperialist Urge in the 1890s* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), esp. 4 and 54. Amy Kaplan notes that "no major films have chronicled the three-month-long war in Cuba or the subsequent three-year-long war in the Philippines, although films have been made about virtually every other war in U.S. history"; see *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 146. Hollywood, in other words, is not proud of this phase of American history.
29. Biggers, *The House without a Key*, 10.
30. Ibid., 81.
31. For more on the role that race played in American imperialism, see Rubin Francis Weston, *Racism in U.S. Imperialism: The Influence of Racial Assumptions on American Foreign Policy, 1893–1946* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972). For a counterargument about how race was an antagonistic force to American empire rather than a driving force behind it, see Eric T. L. Love, *Race over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
32. *Census of Population and Housing, 1930* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1930), https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html. In *The House without a Key*, John Quincy Winterslip notices that the trolley from Waikiki to Honolulu paused every few moments "to take aboard immigrants, Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiians, Portuguese, Philippinos [ibid.], Koreans, all colors and creeds. . . . Mr. Kipling was wrong, the boy reflected. East and West could meet. They had" (108).
33. Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot: A Drama in Four Acts* (London: William Heinemann, 1909), 33.
34. Whitehead, *Completing the Union*, 30. "Hawaii knows that it is the 'Japanese problem' that is barring the islands from statehood," confessed Walker Matheson in "Hawaii Pleads for Statehood," *North American Review* 247, no. 1 (Spring 1939), 135.
35. Biggers, *The House without a Key,* 91.
36. Huang, *Charlie Chan*, 55.
37. "Chas." was a popular abbreviation for "Charles."
38. Huang, *Charlie Chan*, 154–55.
39. Ibid., 157.
40. Biggers, *The House without a Key,* 246.

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3

# "The Jungle Is My Home"

## Questions of Belonging, Exile, and the Negotiation of Foreign Spaces in the *Tarzan* Films of Johnny Weissmuller

**Gábor Gergely**

"Swim!" Tarzan commands, and one after the other three graceful figures, stunt doubles standing in for Tarzan (Johnny Weissmuller), Jane (Maureen O'Sullivan), and Boy (John Sheffield), dive into the water some twenty meters below at the end of *Tarzan's New York Adventure* (1942). The happily reunited jungle family are the opposite of fish out of water: they navigate the aquatic world as confidently as they negotiate dry land or the tree canopy of the rain forest. And yet the jungle home of Weissmuller's Tarzan can be read as reflexive on his status as an outsider rather than a superman. This chapter argues that a variety of filmic and some extrafilmic discourses are invoked by classical Hollywood to construct Weissmuller's Tarzan, perhaps surprisingly, as lacking in speech, intelligence, humanness, and belongingness rather than possessed of excess power. Tarzan's jungle home is a space that is both normative and outside what I call, after Halberstam and Livingston, the "human loop."[1] The Weissmuller *Tarzan* films construct an other space, an exilic space, to articulate ideas about belonging, foreignness, and exile through a projection of American imaginings of the space in which the exilic other moves.

Relatively little has been written about Weissmuller's *Tarzan* films, despite the huge success of the series: according to a September 1934 article in *Modern*

*Screen*, "the first Tarzan picture took in about $5,000,000."[2] At one point Weissmuller, as athlete and actor, was one of the most recognizable people in the world, comparable in terms of fame and marketability to Michael Jordan,[3] yet he remains something of a white spot in scholarship. Images of Tarzan, especially as played by Weissmuller, are relatively easily found on the covers of academic publications, such as those on issues of masculinity[4] or boys in children's literature,[5] but it is much harder to find scholarship devoted specifically to Tarzan, despite the character's enduring currency as a cultural phenomenon.[6] This critical oversight has begun to be addressed over the past two decades with a number of articles exploring the films in relation to the source material,[7] the musical dimension to the films' civilized-savage dichotomy,[8] the articulation of American fantasies about the other space of Africa,[9] and the significance of Weissmuller in a narrative of U.S. power and dominance in the 1920s.[10] I return to some of these notions later in this chapter.

I argue that the star body of Johnny Weissmuller is deployed in a highly coded discourse around foreignness and the ability of the other to make the space of the host nation his own.[11] I suggest that together with a publicity campaign that framed Weissmuller as foreign, extraordinary, dumb (although cunning), and an object of (feminine) desire, the films articulated important ideas about the home, belonging, and embodiment. In doing so, MGM's early *Tarzan* films imagine Tarzan as retaining a recognizable aspect of an identity that is attributable to nature rather than nurture and in this sense remain "true" to the source novels. Although "ape" comes first, Tarzan is still an "ape man." Thus, his "natural" or assigned identity (to borrow a concept from gender studies) as human is retained despite his nurture by and among apes and as ape. The only difference between the filmic and the literary ape man is that Burroughs's Tarzan was a lost British lord whose nobility was genetically coded and thus natural, while Weissmuller's Tarzan is an exilic body whose otherness is innate and thus ineradicable. Either way, true nature trumps nurture.

Because of my chief concern with the ways in which the Weissmuller *Tarzan* films contribute to a nativist discourse around exile, immigration, and belonging through the space that they produce, this inquiry focuses primarily on close textual analysis. I look at two films of the MGM series more than others. These are *Tarzan the Ape Man* (1932) and *Tarzan's New York Adventure*. I privilege these

two films because for both, how space is negotiated is a central concern. In the first film, the difference between Tarzan, Jane, Jane's companions, the porters, and the (imagined) indigenous tribe is the chief focus of the narrative. These differences are expressed eloquently through the ways in which space is produced by and around these actors (in the sense of both those who perform actions and those who perform roles). In the last of the MGM outings, Tarzan travels to New York and spends much of the film strangely flatfooted and earthbound until a conflict with "the law" prompts him to take dramatic flight. Both films interrogate questions of belonging through their exploration of bodies who belong and bodies who do not in a space that is here for one and elsewhere for the other.

## Space and the Other

The *Tarzan* films can be understood as narratives around all too perfect integration into an alien environment. Lefebvre's concept of the production of space helps me locate my discussion in a theory of space that suggests that all interactions with our environment—whether movement through space or construction of sophisticated structures—produces the space around us.[12] I argue that Tarzan and Jane are limited in the ways in which they produce the space of the jungle; nonetheless, their interactions with the jungle produce a space that is their own.

Tarzan can be seen to inhabit an "exilic space." I developed the idea of the exilic space in *Foreign Devils*, where I argued that the way in which the exiles negotiate space in Hollywood cinema produces a space we might term exilic.[13] There are two dimensions to this exilic space. The first dimension is the way in which space is produced within the narrative as the exilic bodies move through and interact with their space. Tarzan's use of lianas transforms the canopy of the jungle into an elevated highway, and he turns the crocodile-infested rivers of the rain forest into pleasure pools in which to paddle. Space is produced through use. The subversive (nonnormative) modes of negotiation of a normative space make this space exilic. The exiles in the focus of *Foreign Devils* interact with their environment in subversive ways. For example, Lugosi's Dracula flies in the shape of a bat and lives in a crypt, where others lie dead.[14] In this sense he produces a space of living out of a space of death. He may do so a few thousand miles from Dracula's haunts, but Tarzan too subverts and thus produces anew the space in which he moves. When he moves through the jungle, he uses it in a way that no other denizen of the jungle does. He walks upright, even when climbing trees;

he swings from lianas and swims in a front crawl, an action unseen outside the human realm. He is not of the jungle yet also not of the human world.

The second dimension is the way in which the films—or the normative discourse of a highly industrialized center of cultural production, Hollywood—produce the space around the exiles. In addition to the diegetic production of space through the actions of those who interact with each other and their environment in the film text, a particular space is produced by the filmmakers around the actors deployed in the filmmaking process. Thus, Tarzan the character produces the exilic space by running on a nigh-vertical tree trunk on two legs, just as W. S. Van Dyke (and the creative and technical crew) produces the exilic space by constructing a world to be inhabited by their creation. The filmmakers construct a space in which they imagine their vision of the ape man. It is important to note, for it goes to the very heart of the matter, that Tarzan is played by the man chosen as the only one suitable to portray the Ape Man onscreen.[15] Weissmuller was the ideal Tarzan because his body and personal story meshed with the story the filmmakers wanted to tell. The space produced by the filmmakers in which the foreign other comes to interact with bodies that belong to the host nation is what I call normative space. The exilic space is produced through the foreign other's subversive interaction with the normative. Thus, the exilic space "can be read both as a representation by the exile, and as a representation of the host's idea of and discourse surrounding the exile."[16]

Foucault's notion of the heterotopia, another space used as a space of recovery or containment of bodies in transition or trauma, helps me conceive of the space produced around Tarzan and Jane as a space in which the at-risk body of the exilic other is contained. For Foucault, a heterotopia is a precisely circumscribed "elsewhere" or even "nowhere," a space of crisis "reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis."[17] Heterotopias are beyond the space of the normative and operate as "counter-sites . . . outside of all places."[18] Heterotopia is where bodies in crisis go (or are sent) to recover and to be recovered. In Foucault's formulation, heterotopic spaces are the hospitals, army barracks, honeymoon destinations, cemeteries, and all spaces where real or ritual bodily transformations take place away from the everyday spaces in which such transformations would have a destabilizing effect.[19] I see the Tarzan films as constructing a space that is "here," by

which I mean a normative space produced by the center of cultural production/nation as well as an elsewhere/nowhere. In this sense, the *Tarzan* films construct a space "beyond the human loop."[20] But here Foucault's fifth principle of the heterotopia comes into play: "heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. In general, the heterotopic site is not freely accessible. . . . To get in one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures."[21] The hunters and explorers, one after the other, invade the remote Mutia Escarpment in the MGM series of Tarzan films. They have no permission and face terrible dangers after breaching the boundaries of the heterotopic space. In narrative terms, it is their movement beyond the normative space that triggers the conflict. But in terms of discourse, in breaching a space that is sacred for the indigenous peoples and by entering without permission, they also show that Tarzan lacks a type of power that would put him on a par with the jungle residents whose sacred spaces crumble before the explorers. This power is iterative performativity, or the ability to cause things to be sacred, or simply to be, through speech and performance.[22]

## Foreignness and the Weissmuller Star Persona

Before he became a film star, Johnny Weissmuller was a star athlete. He grew up in Chicago, where he learned to swim and was picked for the U.S. team by Olympic swimming coach Bill Bachrach.[23] Weissmuller was unbeaten in all races over all distances between fifty yards and half a mile between 1921 and 1929, when he retired from amateur sports. His biographer notes that questions were raised about his citizenship in 1924, when he qualified for the U.S. Olympic team.[24] Not insignificantly, 1924 marked the year when the Immigration Act was passed, hot on the heels of the Quota Act of 1921, introducing a discriminatory system, which distinguished between desirable "Nordic" immigrants and those from undesirable ethnic backgrounds, as nativist and racist discourses came to dominate American concepts of citizenship.[25] Having been born in Temesvár, Hungary (now Timisoara, Romania), with a name that could be taken for Nordic, Weissmuller secured his U.S. passport using his U.S.-born younger brother's baptismal records and made great efforts to suppress the facts surrounding his birth.[26]

The Hollywood publicity machine picked up on the theme of Weissmuller's foreignness when he was first selected to play Tarzan in W. S. Van Dyke's 1932

*Tarzan the Ape Man*. Ida Zeitlin's four-page introduction of the latest Hollywood sensation in the August 1932 issue of *Screenland* notes that he was "born in Pennsylvania en route from Austria to Chicago."[27] In a June 1932 article in *Modern Screen*, one of the first pieces on Weissmuller's casting as Tarzan, Eugene Chrisman explains how the "emaciated young Austrian lad" was ordered to swim to "cure a withering sickness."[28] The Hollywood press was as unconcerned about the truth of Weissmuller's place of birth as they were about his mythical "infantile disease that left him with a crippled body."[29] Both of these themes serve to articulate Weissmuller's extraordinariness. He is displaced from North America and relocated in a space beyond U.S. soil at a time when nativist discourses dominated concepts of belonging. He is also displaced from the realm of reason. The articles show him as a child destined to wither who nonetheless grew. Weismuller overcame atrophy by generating muscle growth, as if it were a question of willpower, and transformed his body, once relocated to the land of opportunity, into one having excess power by expending energy he did not possess.

These themes of foreignness and unnatural strength were coupled with the theme of Weissmuller's erotic appeal. He was explicitly set aside from the typical Hollywood hunk. "[A] million women will get such a thrill as not even Clark Gable ever gave them," wrote Chrisman in *Modern Screen*.[30] Weissmuller was therefore positioned as the object of an exceptional kind of feminine desire. "Gawd, whadda physique," begins Zeitlin in her piece for *Screenland*.[31] She attributes this "ecstatic tribute" to a Weissmuller fan, her "eyes glowing, cheeks scarlet, lips parted and aged about 17."[32] Weissmuller does not elicit romantic feelings in the analysis of the Hollywood press. He causes women to have an orgasm on the spot just by setting eyes on him. Weissmuller is represented as the male equivalent of the dumb blond. Indeed, the popular press regularly referred to Weissmuller as "dumb."[33] These three prongs of the Hollywood publicity campaign for Weissmuller as the new star in MGM's firmament fix him as erotic, exotic, and exilic. In what follows I show how these print media representations echo, amplify, and make explicit the filmic discourse.

## Tarzan's Jungle

Although not an exilic body by definition in that Weissmuller did not migrate to the United States by fleeing a real or perceived threat in his home country, he was nonetheless positioned by the filmic and extrafilmic discourses around him

as a foreign other. As I explained, the Hollywood publicity press picked up on his foreign birth and explicitly located him beyond the United States at a time when nativism had come to the fore as a determinant of citizenship. Similarly, the film texts placed Tarzan in the realm of the exilic. First, Tarzan is positioned beyond "the human loop," the community that excludes those who are placed beyond the normative. The body beyond the human loop is "the body at risk, the provisional body."[34] Here "human loop" means the community that produces the discourse and the space that frames the (exilic) other as nonhuman, animal, or already dead. Tarzan is placed beyond the human loop spatially and discursively via a range of strategies. He is referred to as "Ape Man" or simply "Ape" by those around him, his body is constantly at risk from man and beast, and he suffers a series of injuries that point to the precariousness of his existence in the jungle, making his an at-risk body. His exclusion from the human loop is also expressed in spatial terms by the filmic representation that frames him in the jungle and, as we shall see, by placing him within a shared frame with the wild beasts of the jungle. This is in contrast with the explorers who are separated from the wilderness, in the filmic text and in the production context, through background projection.

Tarzan is also cut loose from the "social bond." I take this term from Clive Seale's *Constructing Death*, in which he argues that the line between life and death is not as neat or easily drawn as we might think or like it to be. He suggests that culture's purpose is to provide a protective canopy against the distressing awareness of the inevitability of death.[35] As I argue elsewhere, then, "Exilic bodies excluded from social participation, constructed by normative discourse as subhuman and bestial[,] are also, by extension, excluded from participation in culture."[36] They are therefore forced outside the reach of what Seale calls culture's "sheltering canopy."[37] Unloosed from the "social bond," Tarzan goes without the canopy of culture that lessens the horror of death. Surrounded by the literal canopy of the jungle for Tarzan, death is commonplace. When one of his ape family is shot by Harry Holt (Neil Hamilton) in *Tarzan the Ape Man*, Tarzan's reaction is that of an animal: he lets out a great yell of pain when the shot rings out, then prods his fallen kin for signs of life. When he sees none, he accepts the fact. It is only through his association with Jane that Tarzan develops an understanding of the concept of loss. When we first meet him, Tarzan lives in a space beyond the human loop, one in which he is cut loose from the social bond.

Tarzan is not of the jungle, but he dominates it and negotiates its spaces with perfect ease. In this sense he produces a space that is amenable to him while living in a space that remains unknowable to him, one in which danger lurks at every corner. He climbs trees with the agility of the monkeys that he regards as his kin. He swims with the speed of a crocodile and easily outpaces Jane as she runs along on the shore. When he needs to cover great distances in a short time, he swings from tree to tree using lianas. Bady notes that "in a somewhat fantastic conceit that has since become a visual cliché, there is always a vine that happens to be pulled *to* the point from which Tarzan needs to begin to swing and *away* from the point toward which he needs to go."[38] Tarzan thus commands the jungle and, through his subversive mode of negotiating it, produces a space that he can call home. But he is not entirely at home. His presence constitutes a disturbance of the space of the jungle. He is under constant threat from other producers of the jungle space, whom he has usurped. The apex predators, the lions, the leopards, and the crocodiles attack him every time his guard drops or he is weakened by a fight. In an extended scene, Tarzan makes his escape after Harry shoots and wounds him. Tarzan runs along the jungle floor, and a lioness charges him. He wrestles with the lion and eventually kills it with his knife. Tarzan limps away from the contest, only for a male lion to emerge from the jungle and attack him in turn. Again, he wrestles the beast and eventually kills it with his knife. While Harry and Jane's father make their way through the jungle and shoot everything that moves whether a hostile intention is in evidence or not, Tarzan is the only character in the film who is routinely attacked by the beasts of the jungle. His difference from the other humans in the films is encoded in the types of threat that he faces: his body is regularly at risk of being punctured (by teeth, claws, and gunshot), making his an at-risk body positioned beyond the human loop by the space that he produces and the way that the "natural" inhabitants of the space he subverts react to him.

Tarzan's interaction with the built-up space of the metropolis in *Tarzan's New York Adventure* can tell us more about the space he produces in the jungle. What is remarkable about his adventure in New York is the awkwardness of his body in the urban space. His graceful figure and powerful muscles are hidden by the ill-cut suit bought from a Chinese tailor in Africa. Within the film's racist discourse, this is a significant motif. According to the saying clothes make

the man, but Tarzan is marked as other. Clothes cut by a tailor placed beyond the community imagined by the film as constituting "us" (white, Anglo-Saxon, Christian) cannot make Tarzan a man. They make him an ape in a suit. Tarzan is rendered awkward by the clothes in the same way that Samson is made weak by the loss of his locks and plods around the urban space as if physically bound and restrained. It is in stepping outside the law (in the legal sense as well as the laws regulating the negotiation of space: maps, signs, gravity, etc.) that he recovers his bodily power. In a bizarre custody battle scene, where Tarzan and Jane fight to nullify the guardianship of Boy awarded to the big game trapper who kidnapped him, Tarzan rebels against the court. Threatened with being held in contempt, Tarzan climbs out the courtroom window and sets off on a rooftop escape to find and recover Boy without help from the law. Tarzan brings his knowledge of the jungle—*connaissance* in the Foucauldian sense of knowledge of an object and the rules that govern the relationship between object and subject[39]—to the problem of a New York rooftop escape. He applies his jungle-honed skills to produce a space he can negotiate in his own unique manner. Whereas in the jungle he swings from lianas, in the asphalt jungle he uses ladders—not to climb but to propel himself from one roof to another—and ropes hanging from flagpoles to swing between buildings. When he is pursued up the cable of the Brooklyn Bridge, he strips off the ill-fitting double-breasted suit, revealing the swimmer's torso underneath, and takes a majestic dive into the depths below. By stripping off the suit he performs his death-defying leap out of the "here" of New York to a space that is elsewhere, beyond the human loop. In subverting/producing both spaces in the same, or at least similar, manner, in being able to apply his jungle-acquired knowledge in the context of the big city to the same effect (to escape from hostile inhabitants), Tarzan demonstrates the constancy of his relationship to both spaces and can be seen to be as alien to the African rain forest as he is to the asphalt jungle.

## The Jungle Home

It is worth examining the way in which Jane experiences the space of the jungle compared to Tarzan. Jane's journey from the colonial space—the other space reproduced as normative by the colonizer—into the heterotopic elsewhere is played out as her father's team of hunters and porters make their way across the sacred Mutia Escarpment. Although throughout the series of films Tarzan

insists on the sanctity of the escarpment, this is routinely disregarded by those who penetrate his jungle. This indicates his inability to wield iterative performativity.[40] Unable to speak (in the voice of the normative), Tarzan cannot impart sanctity to a space. The jungle is heterotopic for him, a body in crisis. But it does not operate as a heterotopia for the normative bodies of Harry and Jane's father. As they negotiate the perilous path perched high on the towering rock, a series of porters fall to their deaths. Harry and Jane's father never lose their footing. Jane, however, slips and nearly falls to her own death. We see her dangle on a rope, the sheer cliff re-created behind her on the studio backlot in one shot and represented as a hand-painted backdrop in another. Here her crossing over into the exilic space inhabited and produced by Tarzan is foreshadowed. For now she remains in a space that is "here" while being dangled in front of a space that is elsewhere, nowhere even, produced by a body who lacks the "civilized" explorers' power to iterate possession of space. As we will see, her eventual passage into the elsewhere of the jungle is initially reluctant. However, her excursion into the other space frees her from the constraints and expectations of the normative order represented by Harry and her father.

Once she has crossed over into Tarzan's jungle realm, we see Jane preparing to wash in a stream. Tarzan, sitting in the branches above her, looks at her curiously. She shies away from his gaze and orders him out of her "boudoir." In naming the riverbank her boudoir—and in using the delicate French word with its connotations of both propriety and the impropriety that room serves to hide from view—Jane produces a distinctly petit bourgeois space out of the jungle setting. While Tarzan's efforts to create a space fit for a man actually produce a space for an ape man, Jane's command of language—and her power of iterative performativity to cause things to be through speech—gives her a kind of power over the jungle that, as we have seen, Tarzan lacks. Thus, Jane is able to re-create domesticity in the jungle, bringing a conventional mode of production of space to the elsewhere of the jungle. And indeed, in later installments of the series we see the jungle home as created by Jane. The animal den in which Tarzan lives in the first film is gradually replaced by a petit bourgeois space of settled domesticity: a kitchen complete with running water, sink, and dishwasher; an elaborate lift that allows Jane to ascend to the jungle home that would otherwise remain inaccessible to her; and a boudoir she shares with Tarzan into which he carries

her at regular intervals to consummate their jungle marriage. However, pointing to Tarzan's inability to cause things "to be" through performativity, in spite of his regular attempts to father a child, the marriage remains unblessed by children apart from the adopted Boy.

## The Cinematic Jungle as Countersite of the Nation

So far we have seen how Tarzan produces a unique space in the jungle by the manner in which he negotiates it and how Jane has the ability to inscribe the jungle with a signifying act expressing her hierarchical position as a member of the human loop above Tarzan, who is framed by the filmic discourse as exilic. I would like to discuss in these last paragraphs the space produced by the film around the actors within it.

The heterotopic quality of the jungle space is most clearly apprehended in a comparison of the rules that govern the relationship between it and the different bodies that negotiate it. One of the key differences is the different bodies' relationship to the wild beasts, the "natural" producers of the space of the jungle. In the scenes in which Tarzan fights the lions, Weissmuller and his stunt double are shot in the same frame as the wild beasts. Although a stunt double is clearly used in the first fight with the lioness, the actor who fights the male lion is not easily told apart from Weissmuller. Even in the first fight, where the stunt double is clearly smaller and less powerfully built than Weissmuller, in some shots we do see the star himself occupy the same physical space as the living lion. In brief, Weissmuller does at times occupy the same frame as the beasts that attack him, and this in itself is significant. The fights may be staged and might at times feature stunt doubles and inanimate lion props, but Tarzan and, just as important, Weissmuller share a physical location with the beasts not only in the diegetic sense but also in terms of the filmmaking process. The spectators are invited to experience the thrill of watching a human wrestle a beast that is capable of mauling him to death. We even see one of the lions take Tarzan's shoulder between its jaws.

While Tarzan shares the beasts' space, the other human characters do not. Their encounters with the wild beasts are mediated through background projection and editing. They—the actors who play the explorers—are cut off from the source of danger. For example, when the explorers cross a hippo-infested river, the hippopotamuses and the human actors do not share the same space,

although very polished trick photography makes it appear as if they do. When they try to repel a largely imaginary assault by the beasts, Harry and Jane's father shoot out of the frame, through the gulf of the editor's cut, and into the frame occupied by the wild animals. Likewise, Jane's screams as she watches two porters devoured by crocodiles during the perilous river crossing emanate from the space that the safe bodies of the explorers occupy into the elsewhere in which the beasts roam. So while their filmic selves are understood to be present in the other space/space of the other thanks to suspension of disbelief, continuity editing, and effective trick photography, the actors remain isolated from that elsewhere. In this sense the bodies of the actors who play the explorers remain within the human loop: they are at no stage coded as at-risk bodies.

This separation of the normative bodies from the other space and the immersion of the other body in the elsewhere of the jungle can be clearly apprehended in the scene where Jane, Harry, and Jane's father first hear Tarzan's famous jungle cry. They are shot against a background-projected jungle scene, with the porters existing only within that projected space of the background. Harry, Jane, and her father prick up their ears as they hear Tarzan's call. The sound reaches them across the gap between the studio set and the background-projected image. Motivated in part by the need to integrate existing footage into new material,[41] the explorers are generally shot in soft focus to flatten out the background behind them. This makes it easier to blend the existing and new footage as the illusion of depth is eliminated. But in doing so, the difference of the space occupied by Tarzan is brought into the foreground. This difference is found in the emphasis on Tarzan's immersion in his jungle habitat through the use of depth of field photography. This contrast, the insertion of one into the space of danger through the emphasis of depth of field and the isolation of the other from that space of danger through the use of background projection combined with a flattened-out image, is part of the filmic discourse that produces the exilic space around the body of Tarzan, thereby inscribing his body as exilic. The use of background projection in the explorers' encounters with the tribes and beasts of the jungle serves to maintain their bodies as "safe bodies" as opposed to the at-risk body of Tarzan.[42] Inasmuch as they produce different spaces around themselves and the filmic discourse produces a different space around Tarzan and the explorers, the ape man and the colonizers can be said to occupy different spaces within the same "nowhere," the heterotopic space, at the same time.

The space of the jungle can therefore be read as a countersite of the nation, or a heterotopia from the point of view of the nation that produces the cinematic space of the jungle as an elsewhere/nowhere into which the nation can project its anxieties surrounding the presence of other bodies within its normative space. There is more than one way in which the African jungle of the MGM *Tarzan* films can be thought of as a heterotopia. One such way is Jane's endless honeymoon: she undergoes a transformation there from demure young lady into a sensual woman. That she never returns to civilization suggests that she is in a permanent state of ecstasy, with its attendant series of traumas represented by the regularly occurring animal attacks that disrupt her pleasure. Just as Jane is in a permanent state of pleasurable crisis, Tarzan is in a permanent state of crisis, too. His crisis is that of his inalienable and unchangeable otherness. However, what interests me most here is the heterotopic function of the jungle for the national community that produces and consumes the film.

*Tarzan the Ape Man* deals with an idea that is distressing and ultimately distasteful: it explores the effects of dislocation from culture and the space of the normative of a "white" or "civilized" man into a space beyond reason and order. It imagines what would happen to someone brought up without the "sheltering canopy of culture" working to keep thoughts of death at bay. It explores the daily struggle for survival of a human unarmed with technology, sophisticated knowledge (what Foucault and Lefebvre both call *savoir*[43]), or a secure and socially bonded identity. This is a threatening concept, one that needs to be played out safely removed from "here." But this central concern of *Tarzan the Ape Man* is curiously inflected by the positioning of Weissmuller's star body as foreign. The extrafilmic discourse of the Hollywood publicity press, as I have shown, is also at work within the film text through the ways in which space is produced by the various actors (characters, play-actors, technical and creative crew). As a result, the film can be read as (also) a projection of anxieties surrounding the possibility of a foreign body ever to become fully integrated into the host community.

This question about the possibility of full integration is an equally distressing and distasteful question, one that occupied America uncommonly during the period that followed the country's involvement in World War I, widely regarded in the United States as a European war.[44] Throughout the 1920s and 1930s ideas around American citizenship and patriotism were tested in arts, the media, and politics. The projection of a childhood immigrant into the distant African

jungle, a space into which we do not quite know when and how he arrived, is part of a somewhat coded national discussion around the question of nativism and the role of immigration in the self-image of the American nation. What we then have in the MGM *Tarzan* films is a series of texts that one after the other ask whether Tarzan belongs to the jungle or to the human realm. Is he "man" or "ape"? The films never quite answer that last question, casting him instead as both: an ape man.

The films show Tarzan as being totally at home in a jungle that is never wholly accepting of him. They produce a space around him that reveals him as exilic by his subversive mode of negotiating it. But it is a space in which he moves with the agility of one who is of that space. This is a very complex system of representation, but the idea of the heterotopia helps us map it as the exploration of a difficult question through the creation of an imagined space outside and beyond the nation, an elsewhere and a nowhere, where the carefully selected foreign-born body of the childhood immigrant is let loose. This exilic body is then imagined to occupy and negotiate that space in ways that space in "reality" does not enable. But that space is produced by a discourse rooted in the perception of the foreign other as beyond the human loop, cut loose from the social bond and incapable of functioning "normally" within the space of the host nation. To answer Bady's question about the lianas,[45] this is the reason why they are always drawn to the point from which Tarzan wants to go. The vines have been placed by a hand that is producing a heterotopic space designed as the site for the exploration of the humanity and belongingness of the exilic body, and thus the space is produced with preformed ideas about the way in which the exile will negotiate it. The *Tarzan* films may appear to be projecting the world beyond the United States, but they can be more productively thought to produce a nowhere, an imagined space, in which the exilic body is imagined to articulate ideas about the ability of the foreign other to make that space his own.

## Tarzan and the *Banlieu*

What this examination of the world projected by the MGM *Tarzan* talkies has sought to show is that the African jungle of these films was not so much a representation of the African colonial space (although that is also undoubtedly at play) or a representation of the American imaginary of itself (although that is clearly apprehended too) but, more important, a representation of space that

explores the period's burning question about migration, immigration, and the possibility of full integration into a space that one was not born into.

Tracing this concern into the present day, we can begin to see how subversive modes of negotiating space in our world today are linked to challenging normative productions of space. The *parkour* that originates in the Parisian *banlieu* aims to overcome the barriers that normative space represents for the excluded other. It is no accident that parkour, invented and codified in Lisses, south of Paris, is rooted in that most contested site of marginalization and exclusion: the banlieu, which is "among the most alienating and dehumanising urban clusters in the world."[46] The desire to produce anew a space that was produced by the normative order to contain the disadvantaged, the immigrant, and the ethnic other around the periphery of the metropolitan center points to the real challenge that subversive modes of negotiating normative space represent.

Similar to parkour, the extreme climbing scene of Russia is characterized by a movement beyond and, perhaps more crucially, above the normative space. This movement above affords extreme climbers a different viewpoint of the space below, a space that might be helpfully conceived as excluding and rejecting them. Parkour and extreme climbing bring together a playful engagement with the built environment, a ludic reinterpretation of spaces where a wall becomes a walkway and a giant crane becomes a climbing frame, with a celebration of the thrill of the real harm that might punish the slightest mistake.

Echoing both but substituting dangers that seem more real for the thrill of the leap and the potential fall that *traceurs* embrace, the refugees contained by French and UK border forces at Calais who try to cross the English Channel on foot through the Eurostar tunnel can be thought to challenge the normative space at its strongest point, the international border.

Subversive modes of producing space, or reproducing the normative space as one enabling flight, might be productively interlinked with Tarzan swinging through the African jungle as powerful ways of articulating and challenging exclusion from normative space by seeming to defy the universal laws of physics and the man-made laws of an unequal society.

## Notes

1. Judith/Jack Halberstam and Ira Livingston, *Posthuman Bodies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 15.
2. Ruth Biery, "Dumb Like a Fox," *Modern Screen*, September 1934, 44.

3. Mark Dyreson, "Johnny Weissmuller and the Old Global Capitalism: The Origins of the Federal Blueprint for Selling American Culture to the World," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 25, no. 2 (2008): 268.
4. Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim, eds., *You Tarzan: Masculinity, Movies and Men* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1993).
5. Annette Wannamaker and Michelle Ann Abate, eds., *Global Perspectives on Tarzan: From King of the Jungle to International Icon (*New York: Routledge, 2012).
6. Tarzan has rarely been offscreen since his 1918 debut in *Tarzan of the Apes*. Indeed, the Swedish Alexander Skarsgård donned the famous loincloth in 2016's big-budget outing: *The Legend of Tarzan* (David Yates).
7. Walt Morton, "Tracking the Sign of Tarzan: Trans-Media Representation of a Pop-Culture Icon," in *You Tarzan: Masculinity, Movies and Men,* eds. Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim, 106–25 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1993). See also Aaron Bady, "Tarzan's White Flights: Terrorism and Fantasy before and after the Airplane," *American Literature* 83, no. 2 (2011): 305–29.
8. Clara Henderson, "'When Hearts Beat Like Native Drums': Music and the Sexual Dimensions of the Notions of 'Savage' and 'Civilized' in *Tarzan and His Mate*, 1934," *Africa Today* 48, no. 4 (2001): 91–124.
9. Brady Earnhart, "A Colony of the Imagination: Vicarious Spectatorship in MGM's Early Tarzan Talkies," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 24, no. 4 (2007): 341–52.
10. Dyreson, "Johnny Weissmuller and the Old Global Capitalism."
11. I say "his" because I stick to an investigation of men in exile. For women in exile, see Diane Negra, *Off-White Hollywood: American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom* (London: Routledge, 2011); see also Antonella Palmieri, "'America Is Home . . . America Is Her Oyster!': The Dynamics of Ethnic Assimilation in Alida Valli's American Star Persona," in *Stars in World Cinema: Screen Icons and Star Systems across Cultures*, ed. Andrea Bandhauer and Michelle Royer, 81–91 (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015).
12. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1991).
13. Gábor Gergely, *Foreign Devils: Exile and Host Nation in Hollywood's Golden Age* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 87–125.
14. Ibid., 92–99.
15. Most publicity pieces focus on the difficulty the filmmakers had in finding the right actor for the part. "All day long the director in charge of the casting of 'Tarzan' had been going through test after test of actors who aspired to play the title role. All day long he had discarded one after the other with grunts of disapproval rapidly growing more vituperative as the day grew late," wrote Mary Sharon in "Tarzan," *Silver Screen*, March 1932, 18. "It is doubtful that any other man in the world has the grace, the strength and the physical perfection to measure up to the superman of Edgar Rice Burroughs' imagination. For weeks director Van Dyke combed the country for a man to play the part. Dozens of Hollywood's 'he-men' were tested and found wanting," wrote Eugene Chrisman in "Because a Girl Laughed," *Modern Screen*, June 1932, 46.
16. Gergely, *Foreign Devils*, 92.
17. Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 24.
18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., 24–25.
20. Halberstam and Livingston, *Posthuman Bodies*, 15.
21. Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 26.
22. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (London: Routledge, 1993).
23. Dan Streible, "Johnny Weissmuller," *American National Biography Online*, 2000, http://www.anb.org/article/18/18-01851.html.
24. Ibid.
25. Ali Behdad, *A Forgetful Nation: On Immigration and Cultural Identity in the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 129–42.
26. Streible, "Johnny Weissmuller."
27. Ida Zeitlin, "The Newest Hollywood Thrill," *Screenland*, June 1932, 52.
28. Chrisman, "Because a Girl Laughed," 46.
29. Sharon, "Tarzan," 18.
30. Chrisman, "Because a Girl Laughed," 46.
31. Zeitlin, "The Newest Hollywood Thrill," 51.
32. Ibid.
33. See Biery, "Dumb Like a Fox," 44.
34. Halberstam and Livingston, *Posthuman Bodies*, 15.
35. Clive Seale, *Constructing Death: The Sociology of Dying and Bereavement* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 149.
36. Gergely, *Foreign Devils*, 88.
37. Seale, *Constructing Death*, 149.
38. Bady, "Tarzan's White Flights," 313. Bady then curiously finds fault with the *Tarzan* films for being "conspicuously uninterested in examining this conceit" (313), as if suspension of disbelief was not necessary elsewhere in the Tarzan films.
39. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. S. Smith (London: Routledge Classics, 2002), 16.
40. Butler, *Bodies That Matter.*
41. The footage was left over from Van Dyke's *Trade Horn*, a box office hit in 1931, as most histories of the Tarzan films rush to point out.
42. Halberstam and Livingston, *Posthuman Bodies*, 15.
43. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 16; Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 10.
44. See Behdad, *A Forgetful Nation*. For a discussion of the question of the visibility of (racial) difference, see Sarah E. Chinn, *The Technology and Logic of American Racism: A Cultural History of the Body as Evidence* (London: Continuum, 2000).
45. Bady, "Tarzan's White Flights," 313.
46. Maria Daskalaki, Alexandra Stara, and Miguel Imas, "The 'Parkour Organisation': Inhabitation of Corporate Spaces," *Culture and Organization* 14, no. 1 (2008): 55.

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# 4

# Inhabiting the Space of the Other

## Josef von Sternberg's *Anatahan*

**Edward K. Chan**

> In Cannes the Pasha of Marrakech once asked me why I had not visited him while in his domain. I told him I would have paid my respects had I ever been to Morocco, whereupon he said he had seen a film of mine and that it contained scenes photographed on streets that he recognized. I smiled when I told him that this was no more than an accidental resemblance, a flaw due to my lack of talent to avoid such similarity.
>
> Josef von Sternberg, *Fun in a Chinese Laundry* (1965)

What does it mean for a Hollywood director to make a film immersed in another culture? This chapter discusses Josef von Sternberg's *Anatahan* (1953),[1] which is based on a true story: several[2] Japanese men stuck on an island with one Japanese woman, all of whom refuse to acknowledge the end of World War II. Von Sternberg's intention was to create less a commentary about history and Japan and more a film that was, in his words, "completely synthetic."[3] *Anatahan* uses Japan as a site from which to tell a "universal" story that is not dependent on specific cultural values, and yet von Sternberg was immersed in a very different cultural and linguistic environment while making the film. Does this film represent a substantive understanding across cultures? Or does it, instead, show the limits

of such an understanding? I am interested in capturing how this imaginative act functions and what it presents as a cultural text.

For the past ten years or so, I have been cataloging films that show some type of substantive connection between Japan and the United States. The far from exhaustive list currently contains almost four hundred films, and my project is to distill especially the cultural intersections between the two cinemas. I have tried to place the films into overlapping but sufficiently discrete categories that would, I hope, help us better understand the connections between Japanese and American cinema specifically and the two cultures more generally. Thus, these groupings are sometimes based on representational stereotypes such as geisha, cowboys, samurai, and gangsters; spatial dislocations such as visiting or living in the other country; genres such as westerns, chanbara (samurai swordplay films), and anime; national pastimes such as music and baseball; lifestyle issues such as transcultural romance and high school; transnational adaptations; and so on. My current listing contains forty-five overlapping categories. In part, this chapter is the beginning of an attempt to explore and construct a category of these films that try to, as we might describe it, inhabit the space of the other—that is, directors who try to make films in the other culture.[4] I want to make note at the outset that I am *not* searching for cultural authenticity, but I *am* questioning what it means to create cinema outside one's inherited culture—to inhabit, if only imaginatively, the space of another culture. This is not a question of ethics—whether we *should* try to do such a thing because such attempts are likely inevitable—but instead is a question of hermeneutics: what does it mean, or how do we interpret these attempts?

For *Anatahan,* von Sternberg used all Japanese people for the cast and crew and Japanese as the main language. In this regard, it was an ambitious project that deserves recognition for trying to cross cultural/national borders. In many ways, it would have been more viable for von Sternberg to make his film having the actors speak in English, as in some of his other exotic films: *Morocco,*[5] *Shanghai Express,*[6] and *The Shanghai Gesture.*[7] Another strategy that von Sternberg could have employed is having the actors "look Japanese" but speak in English, as in Rob Marshall's *Memoirs of a Geisha* (2005),[8] or in a perhaps even more egregious masquerade, a white actor playing a Japanese character, as in Marlon Brando's performance in *The Teahouse of the August Moon.*[9] Moreover, unlike

fellow contemporaneous American director John Huston in making *The Barbarian and the Geisha* (1958),[10] von Sternberg was not trying to create a film using English but "in the Japanese manner."[11] His approach was not to represent Japanese culture but instead to use an incident from Japanese history to produce a completely constructed piece of universal art. Indeed, he wanted to create something that was "intentionally unrealistic," abandoning "slavish verisimilitude."[12]

But regardless of his intentions, I propose that von Sternberg had a heterotopic encounter in Japan and created a cinematic space in which cultures clash, giving us neither an ethnography nor a universal work of art but instead a cultural text that is neither American nor Japanese. *Anatahan* exists somewhere in a heterotopic space between these cultures. Some of the responses to the film have exhibited an uneasiness about what kind of cultural representation is being viewed, as will be discussed below. This response then presumably leads to both Japanese and non-Japanese viewers trying to come to terms with von Sternberg's artistry, trying to resolve the elements of cultural difference in order to engage the cinematic space. Ultimately, published accounts of this film have been unable to do this and thus tend to reject the film. What we are left with is a film that shows the incommensurability of cultures and the limits to inhabiting the space of the other through cinema. *Anatahan* reflects von Sternberg's heterotopic encounter through which he tried to create a universal cinematic space beyond cultural difference but ended up with something in between cultures.

## Heterotopia

As von Sternberg himself described it, *Anatahan* was "a not easily understood experiment in indirect mass psychoanalysis."[13] Aesthetically, the film plays out like an ethnographic documentary, with von Sternberg voicing the English narration that explicates the action and dialogue, the latter of which is exclusively in Japanese. As von Sternberg intended it, the film would show very simply that we all, whether Japanese or American or of another culture, share in the same human experience. At the same time, the film also produces the scene of the exotic for the non-Japanese viewer. It provides an opportunity for us to participate, through the process of cinematic identification, in a cultural milieu different from our own. Von Sternberg was trying to create a film that resolved cultural difference into an artistic universalism, but he failed. This failure is not

necessarily in terms of artistic achievement; instead, it is the incommensurability of cultures that could not be resolved within the cinematic space. In Japan, von Sternberg encountered what Michel Foucault called a heterotopia—an epistemological destabilization—and this affected the creation of *Anatahan* and ultimately rendered it a cinematic curiosity.[14]

In one sense, Foucault might say that all films are heterotopic in that they create a space where radically different cultural structures of thought can be brought together—not to be resolved but instead to be nothing more than incommensurate. So, too, my category of films that inhabit the space of the other are films that don't necessarily allow for the working out of intercultural understanding; they are films that show us the incommensurability of cultural logics. This is not to say that intercultural understanding and communication are not possible, because of course they are. However, there is never such a thing as perfect understanding, let alone communication (artistic or otherwise), in that translational process. The moment of heterotopia is precisely that moment when the clash of cultural logics becomes apparent.

Here, we should reflect on that which inspired Foucault's conception of heterotopia in *The Order of Things,* namely a Chinese encyclopedia imagined by Jorge Luis Borges:

> This book first arose out of a passage in Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought—our thought, the thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography—breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other. This passage quotes a "certain Chinese encyclopaedia" in which it is written that "animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking [suckling?] pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera,* (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies."[15]

The impossibility of these categories does not lie in their rationality as categories, nor does it suggest that there is no worldview that can accommodate them. Rather, the impossibility is the lack of reconciliation with a Western understanding of the various categories of animals (and, for that matter, with thought itself). It does not matter whether this taxonomy really exists in an actual China. The point is that we can imagine a "China" that has a radically different way of ordering things. Borges's China is an imaginary space "at the other extremity of the earth we inhabit, a culture entirely devoted to the ordering of space, but one that does not distribute the multiplicity of existing things into any of the categories that make it possible for us to name, speak, and think."[16] Foucault's uneasy laughter is important (and often forgotten by those who use his notion of heterotopia). The confrontation with this "other" order of things provokes a sort of hysteria that emerges as mirth but covers over a more subtle and unsettling questioning of the Western world's *episteme.* It calls into question our own ways of thinking, believing, and acting. In this preface Foucault is setting up his investigation of the epistemological shift from the classical to the modern age; however, what I want to take away from this version of Foucault's heterotopia is this disturbing yet amusing reaction to another culture's ordering of things.

Von Sternberg describes precisely this type of heterotopic confusion during the making of the film in quite honest terms:

> We were dealing with involved ideas, not primitive communication, which seemed complicated enough. If one asked for beer, unless one was in a tavern, it was assumed that you might be talking about an animal that swallowed bad dreams. When motioning for someone to come closer, it was taken to mean goodbye. The word for ostrich was the same as for hernia, both *kuchi* or *ana* meant a hole, but *ana* was also an exclamation of joy or disgust, while *kuchi* could mean the mouth or a door, something decaying, or, by adding a sound—a venomous snake. If one pointed to designate an object, the finger was inspected. "No" could mean "yes." One could not praise a dish by asking for more, as the host might then feel that he hadn't given his guest enough. In short, there was much to make a foreigner watch his step.[17]

It is these moments of cultural confusion and dislocation that are evoked by Foucault's notion of heterotopia in *The Order of Things.* Foucault described heterotopic encounters as "disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this *and* that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy 'syntax' in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite one another) to 'hold together.'"[18] In other words, heterotopias create moments of cultural confusion that stop us in our tracks, forcing us to reevaluate our own epistemic systems.

Even while experiencing this heterotopic encounter with Japan, von Sternberg tried to create a universal space in *Anatahan,* a space in which he tried to reconcile the other (Japan) with the Same (the West). As he reiterated over and over again, he was not trying to create something Japanese but rather something that was universal. However, what he created is a cinematic space that shows the incommensurability of Japanese and American cultures. Precisely because he did not Westernize the story, he ended up creating a film that reflects the heterotopic encounter. This film entangles our understandings of our cultural selves but also our relationships with cultural others. This is the strangeness that audiences and critics seemed to experience when watching the film (as discussed below). They could not see it as either a Japanese film or an American film. For the Japanese it was not Japanese but other, and so the Japanese producers had to promote it as a foreign film in Japan.[19] For Americans and Westerners, it was also other (despite the explication of the English narration) because of its attempt to represent another culture. Neither Japanese nor non-Japanese viewers could assimilate the film into von Sternberg's proposed universalism (the Same). As Peter Johnson notes, "Heterotopia disturbs and unsettles wherever it sheds its light: cultural spaces, disciplinary borders and notions of subjectivity."[20] Another quality of heterotopia is "where appearance is hidden, but where the hidden appears."[21] In *Anatahan,* the visual space of Japan hides von Sternberg's attempt at universalism, while Japanese culture remains hidden even as it is shown on the screen.

Although I do not have the space to construct a general theory of the relationship between film and heterotopia,[22] what I do propose is that heterotopia provides us with a productive way to understand the curiosity that is *Anatahan.*

Von Sternberg set out to create a universal art object; however, the resulting film plays more as a sort of ethnography. Moreover, it is an ethnography of an imaginary space that is nominally labeled Japan but is in fact more like the "China" that we get in Borges's encyclopedia—fabulous rather than realistic. The film occasions a self-reflexive epistemological scrutiny of our ways of knowing. Can Japanese culture be captured in film? Can it be captured by a cultural outsider? Can we access the universal through the particular? Are there underlying human archetypes such that this story can be transposed into other cultural frameworks? These are some of the questions raised by a film such as *Anatahan* that we must work through.

Michael Richardson meditates about identity in relation to time and, more important for my purposes here, space. "Engagement with space . . . ," he writes, "is always disturbing. . . . To pass from one's own territory into an alien land is . . . dangerous and even has a certain aberrant quality about it."[23] While we can identify our location in time with reference to our ancestors, he argues, it is much more difficult to create a stable relationship with space, as the boundaries of this latter are ultimately fluid and arbitrary. Nevertheless, we desperately attempt to fix space when we travel outside our home into the space of an other.

> Whether it be a package tour or an anthropological expedition, the primary concern appears to be to frame the experience of travel within familiar terms of reference. What is sought is an encounter with something "different," something outside oneself that is separable from oneself. No matter what the physical difficulties, or even dangers, involved, everything is done to restrict the risk of psychic contamination. Difference is asserted but only to the extent that it either remains difference or else is converted into the familiar.[24]

Upon confronting the space of an other, we seem to be caught in this dialectic between difference and the familiar, the other and the same—though, of course, the hope is that we can escape these parameters as we try to negotiate the space of the other in some "authentic" way or, for von Sternberg, in terms of universalism. Either we experience the other space as the exotic—that which is wholly outside the home—or we are compelled to transform cultural difference into the familiar, a kind of cognitive colonization. This binary, however, breaks

down with a film such as *Anatahan.* As Song Hwee Lim remarks (while quoting Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden), "the 'trans' in 'transnational' is first and foremost a spatial marker, and one of its functions or effects is to destabilise the notion of place, for transnational cinema is 'most "at home" in the in-between spaces of cultures, in other words, between the local and the global'"[25] Though von Sternberg tried to erase cultural difference and elicit the familiar, *Anatahan* lies precisely in this destabilized space between cultures.

What I want to emphasize is the ideological question(s) raised by a film such as *Anatahan.* That is, can a film or its director inhabit the space of the other? *Anatahan* represents most clearly for me the presence of two cultural logics that never quite seem to mesh. The film is neither a realistic nor an authentic picture of Japanese culture—but again, it does not aspire to be so. Instead, the film is a piece of art that marks that moment of cultural incommensurability that occasioned Foucault's laughter. As such and as we will see below, the film's reception by both Japanese and non-Japanese audiences has been mostly mystified when not outright dismissive.

## Production and Text

In his autobiography, von Sternberg somewhat surprisingly calls *Anatahan* his best film, for which he found "almost ideal conditions" in Japan.[26] Despite his own feeling, the film was much less commercially and artistically successful than his earlier work with Marlene Dietrich and other films. Though set on the island of Anatahan, the film was mostly shot in a Kyoto studio: "Giant cryptomeria roots were hauled in and turned upside down to form *a jungle that existed only in my imagination.*"[27]

The film is based on an account written by one of the survivors, Michio Maruyama[28]—one of those World War II–era stories that have a mythical status for Americans: entrenched Japanese soldiers refusing to believe that Japan had lost the war in August 1945. For Americans during the 1950s, I suspect that it confirmed the stereotypes of Japanese fanaticism and the existence of kamikaze pilots and the like. But it is to von Sternberg's credit that he was trying to transcend those stereotypes of the enemy and trying to get at a universal humanism applicable to any culture.

After a credit sequence with footage of goldfish swimming in water set to gong-like music (more reminiscent of Bali or Java than Japan), *Anatahan* opens

abruptly with the narrator saying, "Nineteen days out of Yokohama, we were practically drifting toward Saipan at six knots an hour." After this preface explaining the voyage of the Japanese ships that would soon be bombed by U.S. forces and the survivors shipwrecked on the island of Anatahan, we move to the jungle environs, where the camera provides, via dolly, moving close-ups of the jungle vegetation as if sailing into its nonlinear depths. As in von Sternberg's other films, the images exude shadow and light, almost as if it were a film noir set on a tropical island rather than a concrete jungle. Indeed, the only female character, Keiko, becomes the femme fatale, eliciting lust, possessiveness, and murder in the thirteen men stuck on the island with her: "Sternberg constantly returned to tales of men seeking and mostly failing to dominate women, and women in turn using their erotic power over men to survive."[29] In this way, Keiko is not unlike other von Sternberg female leads—beautiful and alluring, sometimes with a pouting defiance toward those who try to possess her. She is the focal point of the narrative and characters, and the film tries to represent her sexuality with a few nude shots but even more so with the camera: "On the island, Keiko is given Dietrich lighting for her sulky and impassive face."[30]

When the twelve shipwrecked soldiers arrive on Anatahan, it seems to be abandoned; however, a man and a woman do live there whom the soldiers believe to be husband and wife. We eventually learn that Kusakabe and Keiko are not actually married. As the years progress the other men start to lust after Keiko, and the group eventually throws off any semblance of military order. After the other men find two guns from the wreckage of a U.S. plane, the social dynamic shifts considerably as the men start to make claims on Keiko with the authority of their guns. As successive men make a play for her affections, each one is killed in turn by other rivals. Eventually after leaflets are dropped on the island declaring the war to be over, Keiko finally decides to leave the island by herself and swims out to patrolling ships for rescue. Later, letters from relatives and friends are left on the island asking the stranded men to return to the Japanese homeland, which all but one finally do.

Besides Keiko, the strongest presence in the film is the somewhat monotonic voice-over narration of events. The narration often uses first-person plural but at times situates itself in individual characters, such as when the narrator alights on the jealous Kusakabe and asks Keiko, "Who are you combing your hair for?"

Guns enable the power play for Keiko in *Anatahan* (1953, Daiwa Productions).

At times, the narrator is an anonymous observer with knowledge of events yet to come. As biographer John Baxter describes it, "Superficially, von Sternberg acts as *benshi* for *Anatahan*, explaining the story, interpolating philosophical observations, and translating portions of the dialogue, but he exceeds that role by assuming the characters of the castaways, explaining what 'we' did or thought and even anticipating the action."[31]

For von Sternberg, the greatest artistic achievement of film was not to capture reality, nor was it to distill some kind of cultural authenticity. As he proclaims in his autobiography, "the ideal film, if ever made, will be completely synthetic."[32] Regarding *Shanghai Express,* he states that "I had delineated a China before being confronted with its vast and variegated reality."[33] Moreover, he "thought the canvas of China, as evoked by [his] imagination, quite effective."[34] In other words, von Sternberg wanted to create his own idea of China rather than the real thing. This is true also of his *Morocco,* about which Gary Cooper claims that "None of us had ever been to Morocco, and I remember asking von Sternberg if he could point the country out to me on a map—and I don't believe he could."[35] Furthermore, as Sachiko Mizuno reveals in her invaluable essay on the film, "Although *Anatahan* was preconceived by Kawakita [one of the producers] and Sternberg to be a film that disseminated an 'accurate image' of Japan, ultimately they could

not find common ground as to what an 'accurate image' meant."[36] Von Sternberg's preoccupation with the naturalistic forces of life and the human passions overrode verisimilitude; thus, the actual story and representation of Japan were of no concern. "Upon his arrival in August 1952, Sternberg told the journalists that he was not interested in the real Anatahan incident."[37] Instead of either similitude or authenticity, his aim was to cinematically express a poetic truth as an auteur: a tale about the evil that human passion pushes us toward—a dynamic that, for him, transcends culture.

It is notable that the film contains documentary footage, spliced into the narrative, of Japanese soldiers returning home after the surrender.[38] For some critics, this disrupts the visual continuity of the film along the same lines that the stilted narration distances the viewer from the story and characters in the film. However, for Japanese audiences the footage might even be taken as offensive, so soon after their utter defeat and only one year after the end of the official occupation. Indeed, as von Sternberg states, "During the first few weeks, while working on my version, rumbles of protest reached my ears to the effect that not many Japanese were fond of the idea that a foreigner was to exploit an ignominious episode in their national history."[39] Yet he persisted, driven by the desire to produce a universal masterwork.

Although *Anatahan* went through many different incarnations—different edits, some versions with new footage, some versions with English narration by von Sternberg and some by "a young English-speaking Japanese man"[40]—the circumstances of production were perfect for von Sternberg because he had complete artistic control. As the credits pronounce, the film was "written, photographed and directed by JOSEF VON STERNBERG." In the same way that he mystified Japanese journalists and film critics about his indifference to the actual events that took place, he also defied their expectations when it came to casting. Most of the actors were drawn from kabuki theater and dancers such as Akemi Negishi, who plays Keiko.[41] Indeed, von Sternberg rather proudly proclaimed that "none of those chosen were familiar with the kind of acting I required."[42] It is difficult to say what kind of acting he required, but what we often get in the film are somewhat stilted performances and overacting.

Because von Sternberg was in a foreign land, he had to have tremendous linguistic help: "Two interpreters were needed, one to translate into Japanese what I had said, and the other to translate back into English what the first translator was

saying so that I could check whether my meaning had been correctly transmitted."[43] Von Sternberg was not ashamed that he could not communicate with the crew and actors directly in their language, and this sentiment reflects his belief in the universal applicability of the Anatahan story.[44] As he proudly declared in his autobiography, "I have directed over a thousand human beings, ranging from the infant to the very old, conveying my wishes as swiftly as possible, whether they spoke my language or not, and whether or not they had the slightest idea of what I was after."[45] In fact, "[i]nstead of using verbal languages to make the cast understand his idea, Sternberg chose to largely depend on the visual aids to articulate how meanings of actions in each sequence constitutes [sic] a psychological and dramatic flow, in order to minimize miscommunications through language."[46] And yet despite the difficulties involved in making the film, "many extant testimonies and production materials suggest that Sternberg and his Japanese crew undertook various efforts to understand each other and make the film that the director firmly envisioned."[47]

It is worth pausing for a moment to consider what kind of film *Anatahan* is. For von Sternberg, it was a universal work of art. Yet the main producers, Nagamasa Kawakita and Yoshio Osawa (both uncredited in the film), marketed the film variously as a "foreign film made in Japan" as well as a "'Japanese' film to the European market."[48] In large part, the difficulty with how to market the film has to do with not being able to predict how it would be received. According to various commentators, *Anatahan*'s reception was mixed, at best. It puzzled or outraged audiences. It is "a film that is both in and outside time."[49] It places the viewer in an uneasy position, some elements interposing themselves on the viewer and continually reminding us of its strange artifice: "His camera rarely assumes the perspective of a character; instead it stares from the outside . . . emphasizing its own real presence."[50] As Richardson notes, the film "may even be called an 'ethnographic' film, even if it is one of the strangest ever made."[51] And among his films, it stands apart: "the universe of *Anatahan* is the most radically circumscribed of all of Sternberg's isolated universes."[52]

The viewers—both English-speaking and Japanese—are stuck on the outside of the diegesis: the former who must rely on the narrator because of the language and cultural barriers and the latter because they did not seem to recognize it as a Japanese film. Mizuno tells us that it was a "commercial and critical failure

in Japan and America."[53] She goes on to state that "In a roundtable discussion published in [Japan], the journalists lambasted the film by severely critiquing Sternberg's direction, his exotic view, the cast's amateurish acting, and his idea of making a film out of the story in the first place. They criticized Kawakita and Osawa for granting Sternberg complete control over an expensive film production that only objectified the Japanese on screen."[54] In part, this reaction by Japanese critics reflects a nationalist sentiment being ashamed of the true-life incident but even more so because it was directed by a foreigner who could not overcome the cultural barriers between Japan and the West.[55]

And it was not only the film critics who disparaged the film: "The Japanese public refused to take seriously or ignored the complex text of *Anatahan* and, either explicitly or implicitly, they regarded it as a mere reflection of exoticism, colonial desire, and unnecessary paternal sympathy of an American filmmaker.... Many critics put the film aside as 'foreign' or remained indifferent as the film disappeared from the media discourse."[56] Mizuno describes the reaction of one Japanese critic: "while insisting in his essay on how much the Japanese public as a whole detested the incident as a national shame, [Fuyuhiko] Kitagawa spoke as a national representative and suggested that Sternberg did not understand Japanese postwar sentiments."[57] Of course, for von Sternberg, rejection by the Japanese would probably neither have surprised nor disturbed him, since he was after universal truths. Yet, the film did not fare much better outside Japan: "Audiences for the English-language version were puzzled and chilled by his detached, almost uninflected voice and his refusal to find anything either alien or reprehensible in the events on the island. There is no moralizing, no propaganda. The effect is one of an entomologist peering into a nest of insects."[58]

## Culture and Universalism

Von Sternberg was a director who crossed many cultures. He was born in Vienna, went to New York as a child, returned to Vienna, and went back to New York. He also traveled all over the world: China, Japan, Germany, Indonesia, and so on. It would seem that his life paralleled his films, even if he only visited some countries in his imagination. He took much pride in constructing locales that spoke to filmgoers' tastes for the exotic. In such locales, he could then focus on his obsessions: the raw sexual power of women such as Dietrich, Gene Tierney, and Negishi as well as the deterministic forces of fate and human passions, the

atavistic savagery of human beings. So, in a sense, going to Japan to make a film was not an entirely new experience for von Sternberg.

However, despite being well traveled, the transnational pivoting that von Sternberg attempted in *Anatahan* is often fraught with barriers and unintended outcomes. One of the most touchy of these minefields is the act of representing another culture, especially without linguistic and cultural familiarity. It is a lofty and worthwhile goal to try to empathize with the other, even as it is impossible to fully transcend cultural difference. As such, this type of film that seeks to inhabit the space of the other will likely tread on sensitivities, and often this type of representation and appropriation of a culture different from one's own will produce an artistic object that differs from that other culture's expectations and desires. As von Sternberg tells it, "My story . . . did not deal with the long ago, but with an event that had just happened; furthermore, I planned to picture the Japanese exactly as they were, not as they imagined themselves to be, and I wished to show that they were no different than any other race of people, much as they would like to be considered apart from the rest of mankind."[59] He also says that "The men I pictured were not the Japanese of a counterfeit folklore, they were ordinary human beings subject to the ordinary strains without which there is no life."[60] In the film, the people stranded on Anatahan are brought "down" from civilization and devolve into a savage state, where sex, power, and alcohol shape the everyday life on the island. (Indeed, one of the main pursuits in the film seems to be drinking coconut wine and singing folk songs.)

Yet, there is another way in which crossing cultures is treacherous. One impetus behind the making of *Anatahan* was producer Kawakita's horror at discovering how earlier representations of Japanese culture were received outside Japan: "The laughter [of a German audience watching a Japanese film] was directed at the every day [sic] gestures and customs of Japan."[61] Kawakita wanted *Anatahan* to be a corrective to this humiliating reception of Japanese film in the West. According to Mizuno, *Anatahan* was a result of "Kawakita's philanthropic ideal of advancing mutual cultural understanding between Europe, America and Asia through cinema."[62] What von Sternberg eventually produced, however, was less a corrective and instead a representation that showed the Japanese in a not-so-positive light—base if not seemingly barbaric actions: lust, killing, envy, patriotic fanaticism, and the breakdown of social order in general. Furthermore, the

perfectly synthetic work of art turned out to be something in between cultures, reflecting the heterotopic encounter: the English narration and von Sternberg's universal humanism conflict with the Japanese language and characters.

As is clear from his life and films, von Sternberg had a taste for the exotic. While his desire was for artistic perfection, his cinematic materials were often the vicissitudes of cultural difference. As Baxter puts it, "Travels in Asia had altered his European sensibility. From an admiration for clear white planes, smooth curves, and the architectural clarity of glass and steel, his tastes turned to the religiously charged tribal art of the Third World, of which he accumulated a large collection during the 1960s."[63] In *Anatahan,* the Japanese characters resort to a kind of tribalism as the social hierarchies and interactions break down through alcohol and weapons. Their primitive clothing is often contrived from what's available in the jungle. In place of his former "European sensibility," von Sternberg turned toward the visual chaos of the jungle.

Of course, to create the space of the other, a film director must marshal the signifiers of the particular culture. Using all Japanese actors is only one step in such an endeavor. Having all the actors speak Japanese, especially without subtitles, is another. In *Anatahan*'s diegesis there are also the Japanese folk songs that the stranded sailors on the island sing. At one point, the characters create a Shinto shrine to worship at. They also practice other Japanese rituals such as the *Ohigan* festival to worship ancestors, and "[w]e celebrated the new year like good Japanese soldiers; we paid our respect in the direction of the imperial palace and sang our national anthem." Perhaps the strongest signifier of Japan occurs toward the end of the film with an aerial shot of Mount Fuji: "We soared like eagles over our sacred mount."

At times, the narrator must explicate the Japanese customs and sentiments. Although in von Sternberg's design it hardly matters that Keiko is a Japanese woman—she could be any woman at all, stuck with thirteen men of any culture—the narrator dutifully explains her qualities in terms of Japanese culture: "She was a Japanese woman, trained to obedience." And later, "Obedience to a husband is considered to be the prime virtue of Japanese womanhood." The narrator also relates the fervid patriotism often associated with the Japanese during World War II: "All that kept us alive was the thought of our country, our fatherland. Somewhere to the north was another island, an island that we loved and

Celebrating "the new year like good Japanese soldiers" in *Anatahan* (1953, Daiwa Productions).

longed for and could never forget so long as we had breath in our body."

However, while using the exoticism of Japanese culture, von Sternberg tried to create a film that shows the universal human condition. To be successful in such an endeavor requires surmounting cultural difference on several levels: for the director himself working with the Japanese actors and crew, the text of the film itself, the reception of the film by audiences, and the marketing of the film. Von Sternberg did almost everything he could to couch the film within the context of the universal: "The reason why I decided to make a film adaptation of the Anatahan incident was not because the incident is pertinent to Japanese nor because it happened to non-American people. How do human beings behave in the most unfortunate situation? This point is what I am most interested in. It doesn't matter what kind of racial background these people have."[64] Even in the marketing of the film in Japan, he tried to train people's attention to the film as a universal text: "The film's theater pamphlet carried a message by Sternberg to the Japanese audience. The comment emphasized that Sternberg wanted to transform the real Anatahan story into an abstract tale about human isolation that would be identifiable to any viewer in the world."[65]

Even the narrator tries to put the characters' actions in the context of universalism, as in one of the many instances in which he philosophizes about humanity: "It is said that human beings react according to a set pattern, whether they are in a primitive or a civilized society." Regarding the behavior of two characters who find guns and use them to force their desires to possess the woman, the narrator declares, "But they were still human beings and that classification is sufficient to cover quite a variety of behavior." Von Sternberg clearly tried to concoct a universal tale, something like Akira Kurosawa's more celebrated *Rashômon* (1950).[66] (And we might well ask whether *Anatahan* would be as lowly evaluated if it were by a Japanese director.) Yet, what we have is not a universal story of archetypal human behavior and motivation but instead a curiosity that eludes a comforting categorization.

## The Limits of Cinematic Transnationalism

Von Sternberg's universalist aspirations aside, the exotic culture of Japan seems to have held a certain fascination for Hollywood directors at this time. *Anatahan* was not produced by Hollywood, but several Hollywood movies were made in Japan during the 1950s,[67] even though the U.S.-led Allied occupation ended in 1952. However, most of these films used American actors and crew, and the primary language is English: *Tokyo File 212,*[68] *Back at the Front,*[69] *House of Bamboo,*[70] *Navy Wife,*[71] *The Teahouse of the August Moon, Sayonara,*[72] *Escapade in Japan,*[73] *The Geisha Boy,*[74] *The Barbarian and the Geisha,* and *The Manster.*[75] These films were primarily American films that were set in Japan and thus mostly impose an American cultural frame onto the setting of Japan.

Indeed, none of the other American filmmakers who made films in Japan at this time immersed themselves in Japanese culture so thoroughly as von Sternberg. With the belief that filmmaking could transcend cultural difference, he clearly approached this film with a mixture of exotic fascination and artistic universalism, but what resulted was a heterotopic clash of cultures. In relation to my category of inhabiting the space of the other, *Anatahan* far exceeds what other Hollywood directors were doing at the same time in terms of using Japanese cast and crew as well as language. Other attempts at inhabiting the space of the other by American or Japanese directors on the same level of cultural immersion would come much later (Paul Schrader's *Mishima* in 1985, Hiroaki Yoshida's *Iron Maze* in 1991, Clint Eastwood's *Letters from Iwo Jima* in 2006),[76] which seems

to suggest that contingency and personal motivation, rather than a historical moment, are the main drivers of filmmaking of this type.

As an example of inhabiting the space of the other, *Anatahan* draws our desire toward that elusive yet compelling desire we often call "the intercultural" or "the transnational," a wish to transcend a singular cultural worldview. To put it simply, the film—and other films that fall into this category as well—is an attempt at cinematic empathy, standing in someone else's shoes. Carl Plantinga writes about what he calls "the scene of empathy" in film, "in which the pace of the narrative momentarily slows and the interior emotional experience of a favored character becomes the locus of attention. . . . Such scenes are also intended to elicit empathetic emotions in the spectator."[77] Empathy is an important and powerful emotional device mobilized by cinema as an art form, and I do not doubt that it works at the level of the individual. But how does it operate at the level of culture and cultural ideology? We Americans, with our predilection for abstract liberal humanism, particularly like to think that identification is possible and desirable in order to see from another individual's point of view, as if these viewpoints are readily interchangeable, as if we are all interchangeable, individualized subjects of democracy regardless of race, class, gender, sexuality, and other forms of social difference. Transnational cinema of the type I discuss here, as a vehicle for producing empathy on a cultural level, would seem to be a powerful tool in creating representations that elicit this kind of empathy; however, as with all instances of navigating cultural difference in any artistic form, we must acknowledge cinema's cultural/ideological limits. As the responses to *Anatahan* show, the film's experiment with transcending cultural difference—despite what ideological value we might attach to it—failed and resulted in a cinematic curiosity that seems to perplex audiences from its initial release until now.

Indeed, *Anatahan* and other films that qualify for this category are among the many forms of transnational cinema, which, as Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden define it, "arises in the interstices between the local and the global."[78] For Ezra and Rowden, transnational cinema often relies on "emotional identification to do its work, the sense of familiarity with other cultures and with the natives of those cultures as people worthy of the two or three hours of intense emotional investment that a given cinematic text demands."[79] But does that projected sense of familiarity through film always, or even usually, succeed? This is

the risk that filmmakers such as von Sternberg must take in order to cross the particularities of cultural difference and attempt to imagine the space of the other. However, as an ideological act, there are certain limits on the cinematic imagination, and *Anatahan* seems to have traced those limits for us.

## Conclusion

Mostly, *Anatahan* has receded into the archives of media consciousness with only a few pieces of scholarship on the film. Von Sternberg continues to be remembered for his work with Dietrich rather than this attempt to inhabit the space of the other. What the reactions to the film seem to indicate is that *Anatahan* is an enigma. Why would someone want to create a film about such a "shameful" event? Why would a foreigner in Japan choose this story over others? Why would a director make a film in such an alienating way? What we are left with is "the film's strangeness that defines its putative inaccessibility" and "the viewer held at a kind of confined remove."[80] The film opens up a space for working out cultural difference, but at the same time it highlights the failure of universalism to overcome that difference and the limits of film for facilitating that universalism. Trying to inhabit the space of the other, von Sternberg created a film that puzzled audiences and estranged critics, but what it really succeeded at was reflecting a heterotopic space in between cultures. As we watch the film, we must ask ourselves, is it possible to use film as a way to step outside our own culture and inhabit the space of the other? For *Anatahan,* it was, in the end, not possible and resulted in a curiosity as the final entry in von Sternberg's oeuvre.

With its somewhat cumbersome title, my category of inhabiting the space of the other sits apart from conventional modes of transnational cinema, especially in its more recent form as a by-product of global capitalism.[81] The absence of white English-speaking characters in *Anatahan* sets it apart from the more conventional Hollywood productions that emerged in the 1950s or even afterward. Thus, Western viewers have no diegetic character through which to insert themselves into the film, only the alienating voice-over narrator. At the same time, it did not work as a Japanese film, marked as it was as the creation of a foreigner.

I will end by asking how *Anatahan* and my category of inhabiting the space of the other fit into the work of transnational film studies. In 2010, Will Higbee and Song Hwee Lim called for a "critical transnationalism" that "interrogates

how these film-making activities negotiate with the national on all levels—from cultural policy to financial sources, from the multiculturalism of difference to how it reconfigures the nation's image of itself."[82] For the most part, this call was meant to address the newer form of transnational film that has emerged since the 1990s. Clearly, *Anatahan* predates this phenomenon but can still in many ways benefit from such a critical transnationalism. Yet, the form of transnational film I am examining here calls out for a different lens through which to approach these types of film. "The multiculturalism of difference" is the main point on which my analysis rests: to what degree can filmmakers transcend their own culture in order to represent that of another? While the study of transnational film can address the three areas that Higbee and Lim identify—"a national/transnational binary," "a regional phenomenon," or "diasporic, exilic and post-colonial cinemas"[83]—we should also be attuned to the manipulation and negotiation of cultural difference in the construction and reception of films that try to transcend the national and to the cultural/ideological limits that such an engagement entails.

## Notes

1. Directed by Josef von Sternberg (1953; San Diego: Cinema Source, 2009), DVD. The film is sometimes referred to as *Ana-ta-han, The Saga of Anatahan, The Only Woman on Earth, The Devil's Pitchfork,* and, in French, *Fièvre sur Anatahan.* According to Tag Gallagher ("Josef von Sternberg," *Senses of Cinema*, Issue 19 [March 2002], http://sensesofcinema.com/2002/feature-articles/sternberg/), von Sternberg himself changed the title five times.
2. In the film there are thirteen men, but in the actual incident there were thirty-two. See Wilbur Cross and George W. Feise Jr., *Anatahan: Lost Survivors of "The Island of the Living Dead"* (Bennington, VT: Merriam, 2012).
3. Josef von Sternberg, *Fun in a Chinese Laundry* (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1965), 100.
4. Other examples of this category include *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters,* directed by Paul Schrader (1985; New York: Janus/Criterion, 2008), DVD, and *Letters from Iwo Jima,* directed by Clint Eastwood (2006; Burbank, CA: Warner Bros., 2007), DVD. At the moment, the only Japanese film I know that tries to do the same thing but in the other direction is *Iron Maze,* directed by Hiroaki Yoshida (Tokyo: TRNS-Tokyo Film Partners, 1991), VHS; however, it does use some Japanese, and there are Japanese characters.
5. Directed by Josef von Sternberg (1930; Universal City, CA: Universal, 2006), DVD.
6. Directed by Josef von Sternberg (1932; Japan: Golden Age, n.d.), DVD.
7. Directed by Josef von Sternberg (1941; Japan: Broadway, n.d.), DVD.
8. Directed by Rob Marshall (2005; Culver City, CA: Sony, 2006), DVD.

9. Directed by Daniel Mann (1956; Burbank, CA: Warner Bros, 2006), DVD.
10. Directed by John Huston (1958. Los Angeles: Twentieth Century Fox, 2011), DVD.
11. Philip K. Scheuer, qtd. in Russell Meeuf, "John Wayne's Japan: International Production, Global Trade, and John Wayne's Diplomacy in *The Barbarian and the Geisha,*" in *Transnational Stardom: International Celebrity in Film and Popular Culture,* ed. Russell Meeuf and Raphael Raphael (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2013), 36. See also Keyes Beech, "Hollywood's Oriental Fad," *Saturday Evening Post,* May 10, 1958.
12. Philippe Demonsablon, qtd. in von Sternberg, *Fun in a Chinese Laundry,* 291.
13. Ibid., 285.
14. Unfortunately, Foucault never fully formulated heterotopia. The two main instances are Foucault's preface to *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1970) and his published lecture "Of Other Spaces" (1967), *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 22–27. Peter Johnson points out a third instance in a radio broadcast titled *Utopies et Heterotopias* (1966; France: INA, Mémoire Vive, 2004, CD) in "History of the Concept of Utopia," *Heterotopian Studies,* 2012, http://www.heterotopiastudies.com. In this chapter, I will refer only to the short but suggestive preface to *The Order of Things.* "Of Other Spaces" is more an attempt to describe "enacted utopias" in real-life spaces that contain logics that veer away from everyday life: the cemetery, the boarding school, the ship, and so forth. See Gábor Gergely's chapter in this collection for more on this latter version of heterotopia.
15. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xv. The quotation comes from Borges's "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins" (1952).
16. Ibid., xix.
17. Ibid., 287.
18. Ibid., xviii (emphasis in original).
19. Sachiko Mizuno, "*The Saga of Anatahan* and Japan," *Spectator* 29, no. 2 (2009): 19.
20. Peter Johnson, "The Geographies of Heterotopia," *Geography Compass* 7 (2013): 800. Johnson describes the version of heterotopia in "Of Other Spaces"; however, this statement also fits with the version from *The Order of Things.*
21. De Cauter and Deheane, qtd. in Johnson, "The Geographies of Heterotopia," 798.
22. Three interesting articles that draw out the relationship between film and heterotopia are Ryan H. Blum, "Anxious Latitudes: Heterotopias, Subduction Zones, and the Historico-Spatial Configurations within *Dead Man,*" *Studies in Media Communication* 27, no. 1 (2010): 55–66; Adrian Ivakhiv, "Cinema of the Not-Yet: The Utopian Promise of Film as Heterotopia," *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture* 5, no. 2 (2011): 186–209; and Hye Jean Chung "Media Heterotopia and Transnational Filmmaking: Mapping Real and Virtual Worlds," *Cinema Journal* 51, no. 4 (2012): 87–109. Blum posits a heterotopian "subduction zone" created in Jim Jarmusch's *Dead Man* as one type of cinematic space. Ivakhiv tries to construct "a model of cinema as a form of *hetero*topia" (187, emphasis in original). Chung speculates about a "media heterotopia" that layers different geographical places into the cinematic image and carries the socioeconomic conditions of possibility for the composited image.
23. Michael Richardson, "Phantom Travel and Travelling with Phantoms," *History and Anthropology* 9, nos. 2–3 (1996): 310.
24. Ibid., 314.

25. Song Hwee Lim, "Is the Trans-in Transnational the Trans-in Transgender?" *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film* 5, no. 1 (2007): 42.
26. Von Sternberg, *Fun in a Chinese Laundry,* 283.
27. Ibid., 289 (my emphasis).
28. Von Sternberg could not have read this book before filming, as it was not translated into English until 1954.
29. David Thompson, "Six Chapters in Search of an Auteur," *Sight & Sound* 20, no. 1 (2010), http://old.bfi.org.uk/sightandsound/feature/49586.
30. John Baxter, *Von Sternberg* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2010), 253.
31. Ibid., 255. Before sound films, a benshi, who would narrate the film for the audience, accompanied the exhibition of films in Japan.
32. von Sternberg, *Fun in a Chinese Laundry,* 100.
33. Ibid., 263–64.
34. Ibid., 263.
35. Gary Cooper, foreword to *Fun in a Chinese Laundry,* by Josef von Sternberg, n.p.
36. Mizuno, "*The Saga of Anatahan* and Japan," 19.
37. Ibid., 17. She adds further that "Sternberg puzzled the journalists at the press conference held in Tokyo in August 1952 by telling them he knew the incident by reading only four lines of the description reported in *The New York Times* in 1951" (23).
38. According to Thompson, these "documentary shots were later inserted against his wishes" ("Six Chapters in Search of an Auteur").
39. Von Sternberg, *Fun in a Chinese Laundry,* 284. Von Sternberg had run into similar accusations of being a cultural outsider and thus incapable of making a film on the subject when he made *The Blue Angel* in Germany (241).
40. Mizuno, "*The Saga of Anatahan* and Japan," 10. "Kawakita's substitute narration [of a young Japanese man speaking English] reflects the market-oriented need for Japanese film to be more 'authentically' Japanese—and not to be mediated by an American director's voice" (19–20).
41. Baxter, *Von Sternberg,* 253.
42. Von Sternberg, *Fun in a Chinese Laundry,* 286.
43. Ibid.
44. He also was somewhat out of his linguistic and cultural element when directing *The Blue Angel* (directed by Josef von Sternberg [1930; Kino Video, 2001, DVD]), though he did speak some German.
45. Von Sternberg, *Fun in a Chinese Laundry,* 166.
46. Mizuno, "*The Saga of Anatahan* and Japan," 14.
47. Ibid., 17.
48. Ibid., 19.
49. Thompson, "Six Chapters in Search of an Auteur."
50. Gallagher, "Josef von Sternberg."
51. Richardson, "Phantom Travel and Travelling with Phantoms," 322.
52. Glenn Kenny, "Tuesday Morning Foreign Region DVD Report: 'The Saga of Anatahan' (Josef Von Sternberg, 1953)," *Notebook* February 23, 2010, https://mubi.com/notebook/posts/tuesday-morning-foreign-region-dvd-report-the-saga-of-anatahan-josef-von-sternberg-1953.
53. Mizuno, "*The Saga of Anatahan* and Japan," 9.
54. Ibid., 18–9.

55. Japan-based film critic Mark Schilling cites two other adaptations of the Anatahan incident by Japanese directors: Toshio Shimura's *Onna Shinju-o no Fukushu* (Revenge of the Pearl Queen, 1956) and Makoto Shinozaki's *Tokyo-jima* (Tokyo Island, 2010). See his review of *Tokyo-jima, The Japan Times* 27 August 2010.
56. Mizuno, "*The Saga of Anatahan* and Japan," 20.
57. Ibid., 19.
58. Baxter, *Von Sternberg,* 255.
59. Von Sternberg, *Fun in a Chinese Laundry,* 285.
60. Ibid., 290.
61. Mizuno, "*The Saga of Anatahan* and Japan," 11.
62. Ibid.
63. Baxter, *Von Sternberg,* 254.
64. Josef von Sternberg, qtd. in Mizuno, "*The Saga of Anatahan* and Japan," 18.
65. Mizuno, "*The Saga of Anatahan* and Japan," 19.
66. Directed by Akira Kurosawa (1950; New York: Janus/Criterion, 2009).
67. According to Keyes Beech, there was a full-fledged "Japan kick" in Hollywood during the 1950s (29).
68. Directed by Dorrell and Stuart McGowan (Santa Monica, CA: RKO, 1951; Narbeth, PA: Alpha Video, 2004), DVD.
69. Directed by George Sherman (1952; Universal City, CA: Universal), Film.
70. Directed by Samuel Fuller (1955; Los Angeles: Twentieth Century Fox, 2009), DVD.
71. Directed by Edward Bernds (1956; Los Angeles: Allied Artists), Film.
72. Directed by Joshua Logan (1957; Beverly Hills: MGM, 2005), DVD.
73. Directed by Arthur Lubin (Universal City, CA: Universal, 1957; Toronto: Inter-Global, 1986), VHS.
74. Directed by Frank Tashlin (1958; Hollywood: Paramount, 2011), DVD.
75. Directed by George P. Breakston and Kenneth G. Crane (Beverly Hills: Lopert Pictures [owned by United Artists], 1959; Japan: Atlas Enterprises, n.d.), DVD.
76. We might also consider *Brother* (directed by Takeshi Kitano [Minatoku, Japan: Office Kitano, 2000], DVD), which is set in the United States and made by a Japanese director; however, it is not exclusively in English and includes Japanese actors.
77. Carl Plantinga, "The Scene of Empathy and the Human Face on Film," in *Passionate Views: Film, Cognition, and Emotion,* ed. Carl Plantinga and Greg M. Smith (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 239.
78. Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden, "General Introduction: What Is Transnational Cinema?," in *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader,* ed. Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (London: Routledge, 2006), 4.
79. Ibid.
80. Kenny, "Tuesday Morning Foreign Region DVD Report."
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82. Will Higbee and Song Hwee Lim, "Concepts of Transnational Cinema: Towards a Critical Transnationalism in Film Studies," *Transnational Cinemas* 1, no. 1 (2010): 18.
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5

# America's Travelogue Romance with Italy, 1953–1969

**Ian Jarvie**

## Genres and Cycles

How do genres renew themselves? By means of cycles: clusters of films that introduce a new twist of some kind to the genre template. How do cycles get going? They are responses to stimuli that can be external to the movies (such as cultural, economic, and political developments) and/or internal to the industry (signs of waning audience interest). The travelogue element was a renewing cycle in the romantic comedy in the 1950s and 1960s. By analyzing a small subgroup of films set and shot in Italy, we can see how location, stars, music, and cultural contrasts were deployed to vary the romance theme and to sell the location, Italy, as friendly and welcoming to visitors. Their initial freshness does not last, and toward the end of the cycle the locations have become clichés and the overseas adventure an ordeal. The template has been enriched, but the cycle comes to an end.

Cycles are an undertheorized aspect of genre filmmaking. For the romantic comedy—a genre with fuzzy boundaries—a cycle of films helped renew the genre in the 1950s and 1960s with stories set in highly photogenic parts of Europe. These movies were first identified and discussed by Robert R. Shandley

in his book *Runaway Romances: Hollywood's Postwar Tour of Europe.* He coined the name "European travelogue romances" to describe these films and took *Roman Holiday* (Paramount, 1953) as a template.[1] Its setting is Rome, and its protagonists are a princess on a goodwill tour and a resident American journalist barely scraping a living. The film clearly draws on tabloid rumors of the secret love life of Princess Margaret of Britain and is judiciously silent on why an American journalist comes to be in Rome getting by on his wits.[2] Their meeting is an excuse for the American to give the sheltered princess a guided tour of some of the sights of Rome and to remind the viewer that the film is showing them the real thing, that it was filmed at those locations. The stars and the film crew were themselves visitors—that is, tourists—for the duration of the shoot, and Shandley reports how studio records on the film show quite clearly that some of the crew were unsure that Italian movie infrastructure was capable of meeting Hollywood production standards, not unlike how potential American tourists needed reassurance that they could be comfortable in Europe. By the end of the cycle to be discussed, both American film crews and American tourists would be at ease with Italy.

The travelogue romance showcased major European tourist destinations. However, while Shandley is focused broadly on "Europe" as an idea and destination, a narrower focus on a specific locale such as Italy can yield a clear political and economic framework for explaining the surge of such films. For this chapter, I will analyze seven travelogue romance films set in Italy made between 1957 and 1969. The films I have chosen supplement those covered by Shandley. My analysis shows shifting attitudes toward mass tourism in general and Italy in particular. The films are *The Seven Hills of Rome* (MGM, 1957), *Ten Thousand Bedrooms* (MGM, 1957), *It Started in Naples* (Paramount, 1960), *Come September* (Universal, 1961), *Rome Adventure* (Warner Bros., 1962), *Gidget Goes to Rome* (Columbia, 1963), and *If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium* (United Artists, 1969). These films coincide with specific conditions in the American film industry as well as with sociopolitical and economic conditions in Italy that are of concern to U.S. foreign policy. When those conditions altered, the surge of films came to an end, bequeathing traces of their themes to the genre thus renewed.

## Italy's Attraction for the American Film Industry

The driving question, as I see it, is timing. Why between the early 1950s and the early 1960s did this cycle of tourist poster films flourish and then fade away? There are factors endogenous to the movie industry, and there are also factors exogenous to it. Endogenous factors to the industry were that in the postwar period of currency restrictions American movie companies accumulated box office receipts in Europe that they were not allowed to convert into dollars.[3] Spending them in Europe was an alternative. Meanwhile, U.S. actors and other personnel who went abroad for at least eighteen months were not taxed on their overseas earnings. This made runaway production attractive to both firms and individuals. Production costs were lower in Europe than in the United States, and overseas locations offered fresh and attractive backgrounds and sometimes foreign star attractions (Marisa Allasio, Sophia Loren, Gina Lollobrigida, Rossano Brazzi).

Factors exogenous to the film industry were changes in Italy and in American foreign and economic policy toward Italy. By the 1950s, American foreign policy had shifted from preoccupation with war and its aftermath[4] to preoccupation with European economic recovery. Progress in this recovery could be

Double vision: A group of American actors abroad play American tourists abroad posing on the Spanish Steps in an MGM publicity still.

showcased by displaying Europe's restored capacity to attract and host visitors. Not only is the place a spectacle to behold, but its struggles against damage and deprivation, political uncertainty, and lack of infrastructure were over. Movies featuring Americans in Italy could offer reassurance. Tourism has the same economic effect as exports: it earns U.S. dollars for the host country.

The cycle of Italian travelogue romances I examine here, then, helped promote U.S. tourism in Italy, thus assisting economic recovery. Along with promoting the tourist attractions of Italy, the films were also meant to reassure potential American visitors that they will get along with Italy and the Italians—they may even benefit in personal and cultural ways from cross-cultural encounters. Many Americans had family ties to Italy, whose cuisine, vino, ethnicity, religion, and delight in song were familiar to domestic movie audiences. Italy was not yet depicted as a center of modern design, although the germs are there in that Lambrettas and Vespas feature in several of the films, and a fashion show is prominent in both *The Seven Hills of Rome* and *Gidget Goes to Rome.* The obvious narrative for exploring cultural interactions is romance, and since the settings are meant to be attractive, the mood needs to be light, even comic, if differences are to be touched upon but not labored. The recent war and current poverty are glossed, and the Cold War is mostly a structuring absence.

Italy's postwar recovery was carefully fostered by the United States,[5] and its different stages served Hollywood as a ready source of story material from *A Bell for Adano* (1945), shot on the studio backlot, to *Rome Adventure* (1963), shot on location. By the 1950s the focus of stories could shift from America and Americans helping a war-torn country recover (and repel communism) to the newly prospering country being able to help Americans and the United States. American moviemakers working in Italy on entertainments for American audiences became part of the process of projecting soft power into postwar Europe. Armies are hard power, economic aid is medium hard, and cultural tentacles are soft power. Two connected soft power industries were civil aviation and popular music. The U.S. government cleared the ground for American airlines to dominate postwar passenger aviation by a combination of subsidies, legal agreements, and exploiting monopoly advantage. Among the most desirable routes were those to Europe. Although civil aviation was always a tool for business travel, the biggest potential expansion area was leisure travel—tourism. In the 1950s as the

jet age dawned, the possibility of mass tourism emerged.

The other soft power industry was popular music. Most of the films in this cycle use popular music as a point of contact between American and Italian culture. The link with the movies was long-standing. Beginning with the talkies, American popular music was closely linked to the movie industry through crossover stars, composers, and record labels.[6] Mario Lanza, Dean Martin, and Bobby Darin were hit parade singers who feature in these stories of Italy. Both American and Italian songs and songwriters are used. Popular music is a bridge between cultures, a subject of mutual appeal and communication to Americans and Italians, long before the advent of casual clothing, blue jeans, and rock and roll. The songs are mostly of romantic love, as are most of these films.

On location in Italy, American casts and crews were themselves tourists and tax exiles who would eventually return to the United States, affected by their overseas experience or not as the case may be. How did Italy strike visiting American filmmakers, and how did they go about making imaginative sense of it? How are ordinary Americans supposed to act toward Italy and the Italians? What responses will they get, and what does this tell us about how American popular filmmakers envisaged their audiences and their expected pleasures and satisfactions? Answers: ordinary Americans are reassured that, like American moviemakers, they will quickly make sense of Italy and find plenty of points of contact in music, food, and romance. Audience expectations need little adjustment, given goodwill and good nature. Despite differences, Italians are highly competent and in some ways familiar.

This is not to suggest that Hollywood functioned as a direct arm of U.S. foreign policy in the same ways that the civil aviation industry did (Van Vleck shows that there was direct involvement by elements of the federal government in securing American dominance for passenger airlines).[7] While Hollywood received extensive help from diplomats in smoothing the way for visas, work permits, and filming permissions without which their films could not be made, the link between this movie cycle and U.S. foreign policy is functional, not causal. The Hollywood studios considered themselves autonomous, yet their promotion of Italy as a tourist destination served government purposes, imagining Italy as a space in which Americans are afforded cultural and economic prestige.[8] This is somewhat exaggerated. In *Roman Holiday*, for example, Americans resident

in Rome are wary of the Italian authorities; ten years later in *Gidget Goes to Rome,* American diplomats are inaccurately shown as almost of proconsul status. Similarly, the male heroes of *Ten Thousand Bedrooms* and *Come September* are wealthy and are depicted as owning considerable property in Italy. Italy is "open for business," as it were.[9]

Shandley perhaps overstates when he writes that in travelogue romances, "Europe and Europeans are not real. They are only in place for the temporary convenience and pleasure of the American tourist."[10] In the films about Italy to be discussed here, difference and interdependence between locals and visitors are explored on the supposition that both are equally real. Otherwise, they would not interact. Some but not all of the protagonists in these films are greatly affected by Europe, and they stay or go back home different (and sometimes better) for their trip. Italy is sufficiently modern to be comfortable for tourists and sufficiently similar by culture, religion, and outlook to be intelligible. Americans are wealthier, but Italy offers a better way of living. It is a real alternative. Sex and sexual attraction are approached with candor there, even though the Italian social structure is depicted as revolving around the bonded extended family. American romantic couples are safe and welcome in this milieu, able to absorb lessons that could greatly benefit them and perhaps tempt them to settle in Italy.

## Music Builds Bridges

Two films in the cycle give us glimpses into Italian poverty: *The Seven Hills of Rome* and *It Started in Naples.* The poor are not, however, shown as desperate and miserable. Rather, they are cheerful and welcoming and quite at home with American visitors. In the credits of *The Seven Hills of Rome* (MGM, 1957) one sees mainly Italian names, even as producers. The director, however, is the MGM veteran Roy Rowland. Mario Lanza, once a shining asset to MGM, at the time living in Italy, makes his screen comeback as Mark Revere. His character is in Europe in pursuit of a flighty and inconstant American girlfriend and fails to notice the devoted Italian girl right under his nose.

Mark's quest to rebuild his singing career in Italy and thus to enrich and launch his cousin is embedded in standard and self-conscious tourist fodder. When Mark arrives at Stazione Termini he fails to secure a cab, ending up instead in a horse-drawn carriage. He offers a lift to Rafaella (Marisa Allasio), whom he has met on the train. Cue a sunrise trot around some of the main monuments

of Rome. His cousin Pepe (Renato Rascel) puts up both Mark and Rafaella in the apartment for which he cannot afford the rent. Yet through credit and barter he rustles up enough food and wine for an all-night party. At dawn a helicopter pilot takes the main characters for an aerial tour of Rome, ending by putting them down in St. Peter's Square. During the tour the pilot indicates points of interest, including a reflexive allusion to *Roman Holiday*, where "Audrey Hepburn fell asleep on Gregory Peck's shoulder." When Mark is trying to get a job in a nightclub he is told that no one knows his name in Italy. As he exits, the singer who works there launches into an awful rendition of "Be My Love." Its status as Mario Lanza's signature tune is an opportunity for a nudging double take. Mark comes out on his apartment balcony one day to find the local teenagers dancing to jive music. He promptly introduces them to his imitations of three Italian American singers and their hits—Perry Como ("Temptation"), Frankie Laine ("Jezebel"), and Dean Martin ("Memories Are Made of This")—and caps it with one of Satchmo (Louis Armstrong) doing "The Saints Go Marching In." Italians and Americans inhabit overlapping musical universes; characters and audience share the nudging in-jokes.

The film has lots of numbers and features a musical star of some stature, yet it is rarely included in musical reference books. The one memorable new song, "Arrivederci Roma," written by costar Renato Rascel, is sung in the middle of the film with a female urchin as Mark helps her gather a crowd. (The film's Italian title was *Arrivederci Roma*.) The song "Seven Hills of Rome" is sung only at the end. We have throughout been given to understand that Italy is a land of song, even of connoisseurs of singing. Mark looks set to stay in Rome and "go native."

Back-to-back with this attempt to revive the career of one of its musical stars, MGM shot in Rome a movie marking the arrival of a new movie star, Dean Martin. Formerly half of the team of Martin and Lewis, *Ten Thousand Bedrooms* launched Martin's solo film career. Given Lanza's reference to him in *The Seven Hills of Rome,* an indication that his singing persona was already established, the film stresses Martin's easygoing sex appeal. He plays Ray Hunter, a mogul *en route* to Rome and Athens to add more hotels to his chain. He is an experienced pilot, remarking that he has flown into Rome many times and so is able to guide us over the main monuments. The allusion is to war experience. *It Started in Naples* (1960) and *Come September* (1962) also allude to the wartime careers in Italy of their wealthy protagonists.

Ray announces, “Next stop Rome. Land of the Caesars, Michelangelo, and Lollobrigida” (with appreciative murmurs from his staff). Met at the airport by Maria Martelli (Eva Bartok), assistant to the hotel-owning countess, in some banter in the car she tells Ray that he is a modern conqueror “In a different way.” Ray replies, “A conqueror, me. You better spell that out.” She tells him that he has besieged the owner of the hotel where she works and is here to collect the spoils. There are several references to the shortage of jobs and of money in Italy, although poverty is not depicted. There is even a bold reference to the Cold War when the impoverished Polish count (Paul Henreid) asks Ray, “Do you think Poland will be liberated in our lifetime? I have 10,000 acres near Krakow.”

Rather than a guided tour of Rome’s beauty spots—the film having established that Ray is familiar with Rome—the sights are carefully assembled in background. So, when a flat tire interrupts their journey, Ray and Maria take an espresso right next to the ruins of the Forum—allowing a discussion of Italian American differences over coffee making. When Ray asks why we don’t have coffee like this in America, Maria responds that Americans are too impatient; they want instant coffee. Ray concedes and asks if Italians aren’t sometimes impatient too. Maria responds that Italians are impatient about different things. Incidental shots—of Nina Martelli (Anna Maria Alberghetti) riding her motor scooter through the Roman streets, of news vendors in picturesque locales crying news of the Hunter-Martelli engagement—work in the attractions of the Roman landscape. Ray’s assistant Mike (Dewey Martin), also in love with Nina, chases her down the Spanish Steps and tosses a coin into the Trevi Fountain. The sumptuous interiors of the hotel and of Signor Martelli’s apartment frame silly goings-on and romantic maneuvers that at times resemble classic farce. The penultimate scene, where Signor Martelli realizes that he has five suitors for four daughters, is played entirely in that style. There are also running jokes, again as befits farce: Ray never carries money and so ends up causing some kind of scene or comment. This happens three times.

Music has a catalytic role. Maria’s father (Walter Slezak) first appears playing the piano, whereupon he and his youngest daughter, Nina, start a duet. Ray interrupts to tell them that he knows the song and that it goes a little differently. Nina announces that her father wrote the song, and the father admits to knowing that there has been an American version, but he has not received royalties.

After listening to Ray's version the father concedes that both versions have their points. Musical idiom is thus shared even if one side gets short-changed. The light treatment articulates the easygoing equality of the Italian and the American visitor, the "conqueror," who will be told that he cannot marry the youngest daughter before he arranges the marriages of the elder three. Dean Martin has an impossible acting job, having to lose his heart to two women in quick succession in one day (the eldest and the youngest daughters) yet somehow not know until the last minute that he is engaged to the wrong one. He even has to sing the same song, "You I Love," to both women and yet not seem to be the casual seducer that such a "limited musical repertoire" (Maria) suggests. The film also had a limited musical repertoire, as the song "Only Trust Your Heart" is reused in the soundtrack music and then is the theme in the diegetic music of a balalaika band that plays at Ray and Nina's engagement party. 1950's musical trends are alluded to when the sisters Diana and Anna, whose nightclub act features an insipid "No One But You," are glimpsed at home singing and dancing "Rock Around the Clock," to the exasperation of their father. Italians are *au courant* with American musical trends. Bill Haley is shadowing Dean Martin.

These two MGM musical comedies depict Italy as sunny and welcoming to Americans. Whether the protagonist is poor (but talented) or rich, Italians cluster around and compete for his favor. His intentions are friendly and benign (Mark shares his success, Ray plans few changes to the old hotel), and the country and people delight him. Even the poor look well fed. The American role in liberating Italy and its more recent generosity in rebuilding the country with the Marshall Plan (officially known as the European Recovery Plan) are alluded to. Italians take the same delight in the beauties of their land and its peoples as do the American visitors. Yet it is all an American construct. Shot in Italy but conceived in Hollywood, the viewpoint is strictly tourist. At the end of *Ten Thousand Bedrooms* there is a joint wedding of four Italian sisters and four American bachelors somehow matched up in no time at all. That this is a happy ending situates the film as very much of its time.

## Romantic Attraction to (and in) Hollywood's Italy

Four films from the early 1960s round off the story of Hollywood's cycle of movies showcasing Italy as a tourist destination, each of them giving a part to music; they differ mainly in how they integrate Italy into the plot. They also dis-

play the beginnings of disillusion with mass tourism that was bound to succeed its initial novelty and success. *It Started in Naples* (1960) indeed starts there but focuses mostly on Capri. Music is integral, since one protagonist, Lucia (Sophia Loren), is a cabaret singer (and hat vendor). A worldly wise urchin Nando plays a central role; both the rich American visitor Michael (Clark Gable) and Lucia are conveniently single. This film postpones sightseeing until rather late in the movie, and it consists mainly of a speedboat ride and a visit to the Blue Grotto. There was Italian input to the movie: all the music, including the songs; the dominating presence of Loren; and some of the writing. Lucia is introduced in a Queen of Aragon costume celebrating history, and later, on Capri, a procession carrying a Madonna statue is background for an important dialogue exchange about cultural differences and marriage. Loren is given the chance of sending up sob stories in the style of Anna Magnani. Such knowing reflexivity plays to an experienced, perhaps jaded, audience. The VistaVision photography by the Hollywood veteran Robert Surtees ensures that the regard of the film will be that of the visitor, not of the local. The plot is a conversion narrative: Capri is seen by our American protagonist as poor, dirty (unsafe water), louche, and set in antimodern ways. It will nevertheless work its magic aided by Michael's affection for his nephew, his romantic attraction to Lucia, and his final capitulation to the charms of driving up the hill and down again. He goes so far as to board the Rome train to catch the "jet" back to America, but somehow the raw contempt for Italy of the Americans in his compartment alerts him to the attractions of the Italian way of life. Reunited with Nando and Lucia, he looks set to stay in Capri until she tells him to go, as he says in earlier dialogue.

A remarkable conceit of the film is how so many key characters, including the little boy and his aunt, speak passable English and seem knowledgeable about America and "rock and roll." In the courtroom scene near the end both the Italian lawyer and the American address the court in English without apparent problems. Insofar as Loren and Capri stand for Italy, they are quite absurdly perfect, although several actors chosen for minor roles border on the grotesque. That the American should fall in love with Italy is sufficiently justified, hardly so that a young Italian woman should fall in love with the aging American lawyer. Gable looks more than his age (fifty-seven) and has difficulty finding the right tone, especially when both Loren and DeSica play the comedy quite broad. Melville Shavelson's long experience directing Bob Hope does not outfit him well for

The attractions of Italy: Earthy authenticity and Sophia Loren in *It Started in Naples* (1960, Capri Productions & Paramount Pictures).

mocking Italian stereotypes.

Both *Rome Adventure* and *Gidget Goes to Rome* invest much screen time in the travelogue element, although neither manages to suggest that the beauties of Italy precipitate the plot's resolution. The romantic maneuvers are between Americans, with Italy and Italians in supporting roles. *Come September* lacks a travelogue sequence, even though much of the film seems to have been shot around *Lago di Albano* and Portofino. The plot is stuck in that oddly prudish American sexual limbo of the 1950s. In the comedies that Rock Hudson made with Doris Day from 1959 to 1964 he is laying siege to her virginity. In *Come September* he is trying to bed his Italian mistress Lisa (Gina Lollobrigida) while zealously guarding the virginity of the four young American women in his villa. Lisa is on the verge of marrying someone else until Robert charms her back. But when she sees the double standard he applies to the American girls and to her, she forces the issue.[11] Released in 1961, *Come September* takes for granted the presence of tourists in Italy, indeed the shortage of hotel rooms. The same glut of visitors is acknowledged in *Gidget Goes to Rome,* where the hotel is full, and in *Rome Adventure,* where it is an excuse for the unmarried couple to share a room. By the 1960s disillusion with tourism had set in, and parody becomes possible as the locations get clogged with visitors and the locals are depicted as skittish and predatory. *It Started in Naples* (1960) articulates the disillusion: the protagonist narrator remarks that when he was there with the Fifth Army the

locals tried to take advantage of their liberators. Midway through the film he says of a religious procession on Capri that the fishermen thanked the Madonna for "the good catch, the fine weather, and the great good fortune that they had not been born tourists."

*Come September* opens with a Rolls-Royce being unloaded from an airplane and then driven through all kinds of picturesque Milan backgrounds and parked ready for use by its owner, Robert Talbot (Rock Hudson), multimillionaire businessman, back in Italy after ten months and eager to take up with his neglected mistress, Lisa. Meanwhile at his villa, the major domo Maurice (Walter Slezak again) is quietly running it as Hotel La Dolce Vista. Alerted to Robert's unexpected arrival, Maurice has the signs hastily dismantled but is stumped by the presence of the American guests. At first Robert is not suspicious, even when one guest, Sandy (Sandra Dee), a psychology major, puts him on the couch to talk through his anger, supposedly left over from the war. Finally twigging what is going on, Robert demands eviction of the guests. Hence, when four American boys arrive they are told that the hotel is closed. They proceed to camp right outside the gates so they can pursue the girl guests. Tony (Bobby Darin) sets his sights on Sandy. There is much joshing throughout the film about the age difference between these young men and Robert. They try to tire him out with a strenuous day of touring, music, dancing, and drinking. (Rock Hudson was in his midthirties at the time of the shoot, and Bobby Darin was in his midtwenties.)

The role of music is muted. Bobby Darin composed and performed the title song and "Multiplication," which are easy to construe as full of double entendres but are produced as just jaunty little numbers.

After the usual misunderstandings, the focus shifts to Lisa and Robert. At the Stazione Termini she grabs a baby and pretends it is Robert's, using social pressure to get him to leave the train and come to her. In the final scene they are married and back at the villa, which is again a hotel, this time with guests who can hardly be evicted, since they are nuns. These twists and turns betray the hands of practiced sitcom writers, all of them veterans of the Hudson/Day comedy series. The viewpoint of the film is entirely American. Apart from Gina Lollobrigida caricaturing an Italian bombshell, the film could be set at a hotel anywhere. Although Lisa is the millionaire's mistress, she becomes surprisingly squeamish about being alone with her lover in the presence of the American "hotel guests" and their chaperone. What were conditions in Italy when Lisa and

Robert began their affair such that she was prepared to accept its terms—twelve months of support, one month of sexual access? No answer is given in the movie.

*Gidget Goes to Rome* is hard to sit through (perhaps rivaled by *If It's Tuesday, This Must be Belgium*). The third of the Gidget franchise, it has lost both of its previous Gidget actresses. The director, however, is the same: Paul Wendkos. Cindy Carol, who is supposed to be seventeen years old when in character, is charmless and forgettable. Her supposed effect on those around her is without plausibility. Transplanting these economically privileged California surfers to Rome was a witless idea. The romantic misunderstandings essential to teenage movies here involve a mature married man with children (Paolo) and a mature young woman whose friendliness is misconstrued as romantic interest. Thus, both the heroine Gidget and her boyfriend Moondoggie, played by James Darren (much too old for the role), have to suffer humiliations in order to be brought back to reality. Italy was real enough, but their construal of it was complete fantasy.

The Spanish Steps, the Trevi Fountain, the Coliseum, and numerous picturesque streets, riversides, fountains, and museums frame the action. Three notable scenes are those where Gidget daydreams of herself first as a Christian martyr and second as Cleopatra swooning in the arms of Moondoggie in Roman armor, then being in a nightclub in some ruins in which the jazz orchestra is dressed in togas, and finally being at a mysterious "decadent" party with some attempt to pastiche the orgy/party scene in Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*. Flat and unfunny, these scenes show that Wendkos/Gidget's cinematic imagination of Italy is indebted to Hollywood movies. A running joke is that Gidget gets in trouble with the authorities: for jumping into the Trevi Fountain, for wandering into a closed area of the museum and touching the statues, and for running off wearing an item of haute couture. In each case it is resolved not at the police station but at the "American Embassy," where exasperated U.S. officials seem to have the power to set everything right. This most frivolous of films offers the most candid affirmation of the idea that Americans in Italy have a kind of extraterritorial status. Such was very far from the truth. Gidget in all three cases resists arrest and would, of course, have a considerably harder time from the Italian authorities than the writers and director allow.

Music plays a small role, consisting only of diegetic dance music and of one song that Moondoggie sings by the riverside along with some strolling musicians. There are no "surf" numbers, and the kids never organize a party. Their

aim in Rome is to absorb culture and atmosphere and, unofficially, moon over Roman male and female beauty. This latter is punctured early in the film when Gidget points out that Rossano Brazzi lives in Hollywood and then ogles two males who "could have posed for Michelangelo," only to hear, when they walk nearer, that they are talking in broad New York accents about baseball. Fashionable Italian and American youths are indistinguishable, yet signals and cues are different in Italy, and Italian lives are not oriented around the visiting Americans and their desires. Going back to the familiar proves to be the right choice. Paolo muses to his wife about Gidget: "I suspect she really grew up in Rome."

Of all the films discussed here, *Rome Adventure* is the best integrated. It shows the diversity of the Italian landscape, includes religious sentiment, refuses to mock the heroine's romantic idealism, and uses music tellingly. It has extensive travelogue sequences, exceptionally photographed; it uses Italy as a background against which both emotional awakening and moral awakening can take place; and it matches its landscape and buildings with the beauty of its four protagonists: Troy Donohue (Don), Suzanne Pleshette (Prudence), Rossano Brazzi (Roberto), and Angie Dickinson (Lyda). Delmer Daves, who wrote and directed, already had made two Donohue vehicles and a previous runaway production, *Kings Go Forth* (United Artists, 1958). His final film, *The Battle of the Villa Fiorita* (Warner Bros., 1965), also placed its action in gorgeous Italian surroundings: *Lago Garda*. Equipped, the trailer avers, with a full Hollywood technical crew, he presents Italy mouthwateringly.[12] Although fifty-seven years old, Daves treated the romantic stirrings of his young protagonists in sensitive *mise-en-scène*. His screenplay adapts a 1932 novel about Americans in Paris, and his cinematographer is the Hollywood veteran Charles Lawton. The film was a much more ambitious shoot than *Roman Holiday*, but it seems to have been accomplished without serious setbacks. Italy was well able to accommodate film-making tourists just as well as the other kind.

Prudence Bell, the heroine, is called on the carpet at Briarcroft College for Women for sharing a best seller, *Lovers Must Learn*,[13] with a senior whom she felt was not well informed about intimate relations between men and women. In quitting she informs the board that she is leaving for Italy, where they know about love. However, she will not find the answers there. Her parents hope that on the boat she will make friends with an eligible American, but instead she

strikes up an acquaintance with an Italian, Roberto (Rossano Brazzi). When the ship docks Roberto immediately takes the two Americans on a tour of some Roman sites photographed on suspiciously quiet streets, the shadows suggesting that it is not long after sunrise. Roberto also arranges their accommodations and takes Prudence on a walk in the moonlight, when they experiment with kissing to see if the bells of true love ring. They do not. Meanwhile another guest, Don, has a painful farewell with Lyda, who is dumping him. Prudence walks solo around several well-known Roman sites and ends up in a horse-drawn carriage at St. Peter's Square, telling us in voice-over (from a letter home) that she is falling in love with Rome.

Before long Prudence falls in love with Don. Taking a job at the American Bookshop,[14] she goes around with Don and learns to drink Straga. Two musical interludes cement their romance, first a rendition of "Al Di La" by Emilio Pericoli. This song had won the San Remo annual song contest in 1961 and was a hit of the time. Pericoli sings it with much greater intensity and bell-like clarity than the original versions by Luciano Tajoli and Betty Curtis. That the song works for the film owes much to the simplicity and skill of Daves's staging and shooting, as is clear from a glance at YouTube clips of Pericoli singing other songs, mostly for TV. Daves shoots the song entirely from stage left and slightly above eye level. He moves between close shots and medium shots as needed to capture the singer's simple gestures. After Don has translated the words of the song, Daves cuts from Pericoli to a close-up of the clasped hands of Prudence and Don. Strong romantic sentiments are affirmed by the music, whereupon up pops Al Hirt, the American jazz trumpeter, in propria persona, who invites the couple to hear him play jazz. Hirt plays a jazz version of "Al Di La." There is perhaps some irony here: transmuting an untranslatable Italian song into America's very own musical idiom. Music bridges the cultural gap. From this point on the song is woven in and out of Max Steiner's incidental music. Pericoli's version even comes over the loudspeaker on a cable car ride.

During the August holidays Prudence and Don take a guided bus tour to Ostia Antiqua, Pisa, Ovieto, and *Lago Maggiore*.[15] From there they set off on Don's Vespa for the Dolomites (Trentino) and Verona. In Verona, Prudence finds herself lying about still being on the bus trip in order to conceal that she is traveling alone with Don. They return to Rome after she says that the encounter

has spoiled things because it reminded her of how their trip would look to her parents. (Her churchgoing Catholicism has been signaled in an earlier scene.) They are so abashed that they sneak into the back entrance of the Pensione.

Romantic complications ensue. Troy Donohue, like Dean Martin, has to act confused, bemused, and tongue-tied in the face of female determination. A tormented Prudence tries again to start an affair with Roberto. He, however, is wise to her as a one-man woman and turns her down. Italy is not for her after all. Prudence resolves to return to America, "home." A round of farewells ensues. Don, having discovered Lyda's duplicity, is next seen waving at the dock in New York, having flown there ahead of Prudence to meet and embrace her. Her Italian adventure has reaffirmed Prudence's puritan values, bringing her back to where she began.

The dialogue of *Rome Adventure* is sometimes sweet and simple, sometimes sappy, and also sometimes banal—especially that given to Lyda. Don tells Prudence that she has renewed his faith in life; he also says that church sculptures remind him that good art lasts forever. Roberto is given lines that tell Prudence that women like her function to tame men's wildness and make them contribute to social life. It thus remains quite unclear what lovers must learn or what Prudence needed Italy for. She could have met Don anywhere and discovered that she is a one-man woman anywhere too. The tension she feels comes from her romantic desire to be swept away into true love and her conventional and prudish upbringing that sweats over sharing a hotel room because of what people would think—not Italian people but her American parents. So, the film uses Italy not as a talisman or a magic place for spiritual or romantic insight but instead as a gorgeous backdrop. Prudence has been very happy in Italy, and she has also been humiliated there, both times because of Americans. She has cut and run back to the conventional and safe where, luckily, Don has joined her. But her problems, conventionality and prudishness, remain. Italy, meanwhile, is a beautiful setting of which its inhabitants are very proud, but it is not exactly the scene for louche romantic relations. Roberto is a devoted son who wants genuineness in a woman. Tour operators and hoteliers assume that the couple are married since they travel together. In a curious scene in the Dolomites, the owner of a pensione is furious at his own mistake when the couple indicate they are singles. Italy is not a catalyst for Prudence.

## What Changed?

Thus ends the cycle. It seems that the function of these films for American foreign policy is complete. Italy has become full of tourists, and Americans are sufficiently inured to its glories that they come and go with their problems intact. The representation of Italy has been partial, to say the least. In none of these films is Italy the birthplace of fascism, the enemy that changed sides only when the Allied armies were fighting up the peninsula, the West European country with the largest Communist Party in the late 1940s and 1950s, the economic basket case that became a Marshall Plan miracle. Fernandel's *The Little World of Don Camillo* is politically more truthful. A line is drawn under the cycle by an outlier film, *If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium.*

Shandley speculates that the travelogue romance came to an end because audiences and filmmakers got "tired." Certainly the novelty wore off. The travelogue elements become taken-for-granted background of many movies. Think of the James Bond movies, for example, where glamorous locations are commonplace. The main change in exogenous circumstances in the 1960s was that Italy became prosperous and politically reliable, and U.S. policy toward it changed accordingly. Mass tourism, meanwhile, is shown as a victim of its own success. Both *Come September* and *Gidget Goes to Rome* use the hotel room shortage to set up their plots. In *It Started in Naples,* Capri is depicted as jam-packed with tourists. By the late 1960s mass tourism is so successful that it has become an ordeal, as depicted in *If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium* (1969). Not a major studio production (Wolper Pictures releasing through United Artists), this film mocks mass tourism. It is hard to stomach, with a cocky and charmless Ian McShane (Charlie) doing a flippant variation on *Alfie* (1966), assembling familiar American character actors, lame jokes, and only one big star, Suzanne Pleshette, who gets to have the sex she denied herself as Prudence Bell in *Rome Adventure*. Here, as Samantha Perkins, she holds Charlie firmly at bay until the very end and then, after consummation, brushes him off (a little weepily) as she heads home. Mass tourism has come with a vengeance: eighteen days in Europe for less than five hundred dollars. Each stop is shot on location—even the hotel interiors are authentic. The level of the humor is indicated early when two members of the tour group contemplate the nature of a bidet. Because this is the Swinging Sixties, Charlie has a female friend with benefits in every port of call. The final half of

the film slows down as they reach Venice and Rome, where a series of adventures, misadventures, and life lessons lie in wait. Suzanne Pleshette gets dowsed in a fountain; someone else gets dowsed in a canal. Charlie morphs from philanderer to sincere lover. But Pleshette's Samantha is an American woman who can have sex and not get bowled over by it. This is an outlook she brings with her, not one she learned in Italy. Italy is not quite what it seems. A wily Italian shoemaker (Vittorio De Sica) "trusts" the American to pay but may order his "bespoke" shoes from a catalog. All of the Americans have absorbed their life lessons and go back better people for their encounter with Europe. That a group portrait is taken on the Spanish Steps and that the younger couple breaks up in the Coliseum seems fitting enough. Even the most unpromising and hasty encounter with all-too-much Europe has an impact.

The Italy that figures in the American imagination displayed by these films has the following features: interesting ruins, buildings, and beautiful landscapes, always bathed in sunshine, and the charming people, nice to look at and mostly friendly toward Americans, with whom some of them have family connections. There are picturesque churches as well as churchmen and churchwomen. The accommodations at hotels, apartments, and restaurants are quite acceptable to Americans (no Turkish toilets and no shortage of bathtubs). Italians are suitable romantic partners for Americans, although sometimes their morality is hard to fathom. Italy is a land of song and of the open, candid expression of emotion, especially romantic. Italy is modern, having railways, airports, deepwater ports, modern cars, and motorcycles. What is wrong with this picture? Well, if it is true, its normalcy is recent. At the liberation Italy was desperately poor and backward, plagued by fascist remnants and rampant communism. Its condition was plain to see in the classic neorealist films. This was a land that desperately needed the Marshall Plan and whose hearts and minds needed winning over in 1948.[16] The occupation was mainly American, and although Italy was autonomous after 1949, a large American military presence continued until 1954, when the Trieste issue was settled. Yet only a handful of years later it is held up as a tourist destination. Italy gained a slot in the American cinematic imagination, and it now had a familiar look.

Quite aside from all this, unresolved tensions surround the plots. Sometimes Italy is acknowledged as an intensely Roman Catholic country where devotion is taken for granted. At the same time, it is depicted as sensual and in some

ways more emotionally liberated than America. (Both depictions may be true, of course, but it would be nice if they were acknowledged together.) Sensuality is not cultivated for libidinal release but instead as a way for couples to find each other, to refind each other, and to come to terms with where they belong. Some of the travelogue romances of Italy resolve into transatlantic couples. The vicissitudes of such unions after the fact would be material for a different kind of comedy.

## Conclusion: Americans Move Past Travelogue Romances

What of the American self-representation in these travelogue romances? The protagonists are good, honest businessmen and excited tourists. They include a singer with an Italian cousin, a hotel tycoon with a very enlightened attitude toward the efficiency of his new employees, a big businessman, a group of American students, a librarian in search of what "Lovers Must Learn" in the land where they know about love, an American architecture student, a rich painter, a group of students from California, and a group of assorted and bargain-hunting tourists. Most of the protagonists have no money worries, however humble their jobs. Hence, they visit ruins and resorts, constantly eat and drink out, and enjoy a very comfortable standard of living. The exceptions are *Seven Hills of Rome*, where the hero is broke, and *If It's Tuesday, This Must be Belgium,* where the tour is cut-rate.

The background enabling conditions for the cycle were ending. Factors endogenous to the industry were changing. By the 1960s, European countries were prosperous enough to allow remittance of American movie box office earnings. U.S. tax loopholes had been closed. The exogenous factor of mass tourism was an accomplished fact. Italy, firmly within the NATO alliance, was undergoing its economic miracle and becoming less and less of a bargain destination. New cycles of romantic comedy were developing that were more reflective of the social changes of the Swinging Sixties. Abroad needed to be reimagined as a place that had become Americanized rather than the other way around.

The travelogue cycle of movies examined here may have been among the last of its kind, for the U.S. movie industry was undergoing drastic restructuring that made reliance on genres a less effective business model. Studios no longer owned theaters and so lost the imperative for high-volume output. Audiences lured by

television abandoned the weekly movie habit. Marketing smaller numbers of movies that were more individually differentiated and carefully targeted potential audiences relied on different means of product differentiation. Something like genres and cycles can still be discerned (think of how Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, and Quentin Tarantino all renewed the gangster genre). Their operations, however, are much more untidy and difficult to generalize over.

A final point about audiences. Political and economic conditions were changing, and the U.S. movie industry was changing with them. And so was the audience for American films, domestic and overseas. Once mass tourism became part of the American way of life, it lost its romantic exoticism as well as its sufficiency to draw people to the box office. Much greater sophistication about the wider world and its mores supervened during the 1960s so that films such as those we have been discussing were no longer viable. (They have not been best sellers on DVD.) And of course, the music industry changed its style and content quite drastically. So effective is the extension of American soft power through tourism and music that one can almost see the once exotic locales of the rest of the world become part of their backyard. Instead of culture clash and culture impact, they are just backgrounds against which Americans act out—not the less real for all that.

## Notes

1. Robert R. Shandley, *Runaway Romances: Hollywood's Postwar Tour of Europe* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009).
2. Politics are muted in the film. We are never told what brought an American journalist to Rome or why he has fallen on hard times. Did he take his military discharge there? Did he once find lots of journalistic work around the 1948 fight to keep the communists out of government or in the subsequent push to "sell" the Marshall Plan? Is journalism a cover for something else (his photographer Irving uses a miniature "spy" camera)?
3. Ian Jarvie, *Hollywood's Overseas Campaign: The North Atlantic Movie Trade, 1920–1950* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
4. David W. Ellwood, *Italy 1943–1945* (Leicester, UK: Leicester University Press, 1985).
5. David W. Ellwood, *The Shock of America: Europe and the Challenge of the Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
6. Simon Frith, Will Straw, and John Street, *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 42–43.
7. Jennifer Van Vleck, *Empire of the Air: Aviation and the American Ascendency* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
8. For the political, economic, and cultural history of this affirmation of soft power in Italy, one relies on historians of the caliber of Richard Pells, David Ellwood,

Victoria De Grazia, and Jenifer Van Vleck who have trawled in the primary sources. All parties take for granted the transition from the projection of power by direct military means to a softer approach using financial, diplomatic, and cultural approaches.

9. DeGrazia provides a wonderful antidote to this claim in her chapter 9, on the introduction of the supermarket into Italy. See Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe.* (London: Belknap, 2005).
10. Shandley, *Runaway Romances*, 69.
11. Hudson and Lollobrigida were paired a second time under another double entendre titled *Strange Bedfellows* (Universal, 1965), filmed on the Universal backlot. Lollobrigida's third kick at the travelogue romance can was *Buona Sera, Mrs. Campbell* (United Artists, 1968) as supposedly an unmarried mother (courtesy of an American GI). Filmed at Ariccia and Cinecittà, it deserves a whole essay to do justice to its blend of cynical knowingness and mushy sentimentality.
12. The *Monthly Film Bulletin*, presumably basing itself on a press release, sprinkles information over its dismissal: "Its narrative is slow and loose, studded with romantic clichés and plainly improvised on the spot in places as writer-director-producer Delmer Daves's 97-man unit trundled round a thousand miles of Northern Italy. But whatever ill impression he gives of his fellow-countrymen abroad, at least his special ten-ton, 29-foot camera crane does justice to Italy's inextinguishable beauty." "The Battle of the Villa Fiorita," *Monthly Film Bulletin* 29, no. 341 (June 1962): 82.
13. This was the title for the United Kingdom release. The trailer includes a shot, missing from the final cut, of all the people on the transatlantic liner that Prudence takes sitting around the pool reading *Lovers Must Learn*.
14. The proprietress of the bookshop explains that the first time her bottom was pinched in Italy she knew that this was the place for her. So here she is many years later, still going on holiday alone and still getting her bottom pinched. Such dialogue is presumably code for a sexually liberated life, something for which Prudence is not suited.
15. For some inexplicable reason, when the guide and passengers say goodbye at the lake's edge Prudence shakes the hand of "Signor Pericoli," who is with a woman and children—a trace, perhaps, of a deleted subplot.
16. David W. Ellwood, "The Impact of the Marshall Plan on Italy: The Impact of Italy on the Marshall Plan," in *Cultural Transmissions and Receptions: American Mass Culture in Europe,* ed. Rob Kroes, Robert W. Rydell, and Doeko F. H. Bosscher, 100–124. Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1993.

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6

# Prestige Film Aesthetics and Europeanized Hollywood in the 1950s

**Chris Cagle**

In one early scene in Stanley Kramer's *On the Beach* (1959), Captain Dwight Towers (Gregory Peck) helps Moira (Ava Gardner) back into a boat after capsizing. As a telephoto shot captures his hand pushed on her right buttock to hoist her up, the film cuts back to the characters on the beach, who observe the scene through a spyglass. "It's like looking at a French movie," Julian (Fred Astaire) says. The scene and the comment are complex in their function. They serve as an in-joke between filmmakers and those audience members familiar with the presumably salacious content of French films, whether through hearsay, art-cinema marketing, or actual experience of the films. They reveal the defensive mentality of an American film industry concerned about the higher cultural credentials of the European cinema and the art film in particular. Finally, they thematize self-consciously the film's own hybrid cultural position. Like certain other films of the time, *On the Beach* adopts some of the style, content, and overall sensibility of the international art film within the structures of classical form and storytelling.

This moment of cinematic voyeurism is worth comparing to one in another independent production, *Bonjour Tristesse* (Otto Preminger), released

a year earlier. Teenager Cecile (Jean Seberg) looks out the window of the beach house to see her father Raymond (David Niven) and his fiancée Anne (Deborah Kerr) sunbathing on the rocks of the French Riviera beach. The iconography is similar to contemporary depictions of the Riviera as the locus of sexual libertinism, notably in *And God Created Woman* (Roger Vadim), released in 1957. While Raymond and Anne's intimacy is more chaste than lascivious, Cecile's gaze signifies her jealousy of Anne's affections, and Cecile's subsequent sexual coming-of-age is a consequence of her Electra complex (hinted at but never specified because of the Production Code). The scene is in pointed opposition to Anne's later witnessing of Roland's infidelity, which remains offscreen (with no point-of-view shot). Throughout, *Bonjour Tristesse* is a film about looking, one that invokes erotic spectacle but also recuperates erotic spectacle with moralism and ironic commentary on the characters. Whereas *On the Beach* tries to bracket the "French movie" as an exploitation-film "other" to its prestige-film seriousness, *Bonjour Tristesse* aims to be both sexploitation French movie and Hollywood prestige film.

Each in its way, *On the Beach* and *Bonjour Tristesse* exemplify how the mature prestige film in the late classical period came to embody a Europeanized Hollywood. *Bonjour Tristesse* was the result of Hollywood's desire to be "like looking at a French movie," and while *On the Beach* adapted an Australian novel and was set mostly in Melbourne, it too largely showed the stylistic impact of the European art film. Each film therefore exemplifies the postwar transnational text, combining Europeanized aesthetics with cosmopolitan themes. Each film adapted non-American source novels and had shooting locations in international locales. Additionally, a European cinematographer shot each film and brought to the production a distinctive visual style keyed to its cosmopolitan aspirations. On the levels of both theme and aesthetics, the films represented a hybrid cultural position. This cross-pollination took place because the larger industrial fact of Hollywood's international production led filmmakers to new filmmaking styles that could be considered "Europeanized," since they adopt stylistic elements of European art and cinema within the classical Hollywood framework.

It is easy to see 1950s Hollywood primarily as a period of domestic disruption of the film industry and, accordingly, to focus on the aesthetics of cinematic spectacle that result from Hollywood's competition with television and other leisure preferences. However, the aesthetic cross-pollination between Europe and

Hollywood was far greater than often appreciated and took place in sometimes surprising bodies of films. The prestige films, whether melodramas or social problem films, typically have the reputation of being staid, but they could be the site of aesthetic innovation and transnational borrowing. Rather than see the postwar decades as a period of insularity before the influence of the French New Wave and art cinema auteurism, a fuller historical picture would see how Hollywood and European cinemas were cross-pollinating well before the Hollywood Renaissance. Recent scholars have demonstrated both the transnational orientation of America cinema and the mutual imbrication of Hollywood and European film industry.[1] It is equally important to treat the transnational cultural flow not as a footnote to late classical Hollywood history but instead as a central part of the story.

## 1950s Cinema, Foreign and Domestic

The historiography on 1950s Hollywood is frequently a picture of domestic crisis. Industrially, the film industry faced the drastic drop-off in cinema attendance driven by postwar changes in demography and, subsequently, by the competition with television.[2] Alongside the industrial account, film histories stress an ideological-political account of 1950s cinema as reflections of the domestic experience of the Cold War. This twin orientation has been particularly notable in key areas of inquiry: the anticommunist blacklist, genre study, and the technologies of spectacle. For instance, Peter Lev attributes the (in his view) stagnant aesthetics of early 1950s Hollywood genre filmmaking to the hidebound nature of the studios and the overwhelming conservatism of Cold War domestic ideology.[3] With some exceptions, the overwhelming historiographic tendency is to see the 1950s as an inward-looking decade for Hollywood.

However, some scholars have made useful connections between Hollywood and a broader international context, particularly Europe. There have been two significant tendencies in scholarship to understand postwar Hollywood as intimately connected to European cinema. The first is a textual approach, as film criticism analyzes films with foreign policy themes as well as films with elements of international allegory. In the postwar decades, U.S. foreign policy took the interventionist form of Pax Americana, which combined military presence, economic aid, and soft power in an integrated approach to maintaining American power across a number of spheres of influence: Western and Southern Europe

foremost but also in Asia, Latin America, and Africa.[4] Throughout the postwar years, Hollywood made a number of features such as *The Big Lift* (George Seaton, 1950) and *One, Two, Three* (Billy Wilder, 1961) that thematized the U.S. experience as a world power in postwar Europe.[5] In her reading of this type of "foreign policy" narrative, Dina Smith has argued that the Marshall Plan had a defining effect on postwar U.S. understandings of its relation to Europe. "After the war," she argues, "not only did the U.S. influence Western Europe militarily, politically, economically, and culturally but it also secured once inaccessible, provincial European markets for Americans." She adds that "This 'Americanization' of Western Europe had its price, however, most notably renewed anxiety among American critics over the inferior quality of mass-produced U.S. culture."[6] This combination of power and anxiety drove at least some of the cinematic representations of Europe in postwar Hollywood. Accordingly, Smith reads films such as *Sabrina* as allegories for the new U.S. internationalism in a period of American economic and political power. In short, readings of this period point discursively to both an overconfidence in Pax Americana and an undercurrent of American insecurity about its role as a soft power in Europe.

In the second approach, an important exception to the focus on domestic contextual history has been the account of runaway productions—that is, Hollywood films produced and shot in part abroad. Thomas Guback's 1981 study of the international film trade remains an important history of the runaway production, driven by protectionist capital controls in Europe:

> American producers, in using their blocked earnings, came to realize the advantages of shooting films in Europe. There were authentic locales available (the Riviera, for instance, being impossible to duplicate), labor costs were often less (film crews and armies of extras could be hired cheaply), and absence of daily supervision by company management (made difficult by distance) provided a little more liberty.[7]

Accordingly, Guback maintains that the distinction between American films shot on location and true foreign films is hard to draw.[8] Contemporary industrial histories of the period present a similar narrative of runaway productions.[9] Runaway productions and Hollywood financing of European productions were

the means by which Hollywood responded to postwar film policy abroad. The developments brought an internationalizing pull on a film industry that had domestic challenges and still commanded a large domestic audience.

A conceptual split often divides the economic realities of a global film trade and the aesthetic and interpretive understanding of Hollywood as domestically focused. While Mark Betz's study of European art cinema has made the case for French, Italian, and other national cinemas as always-already polyglot transnational cultural formations, scholars still hesitate to see the transnational influence as working the other way and to understand Hollywood in the 1950s as a transnational cinema rather than a national one.[10] There are good reasons for this hesitance. On a literal level, Hollywood resisted polyglotism, sometimes preferring instead direct sound recording over dubbing and English language over alternatives. Power dynamics in the international film market were asymmetrical, and Hollywood and the United States held much more power than European film industries.

Despite this divide, it is worth reframing Hollywood's cosmopolitanism as the interplay between textual models of context and industrial models of interchange. To take one example, recent scholarship on the theatrical success of European art cinema in the postwar U.S. context presents the case for an industrial arrangement that drew on discursive ideas of an intendant humanist spectatorship in European films in the 1940s and 1950s.[11] It would be too simplistic to see a causal link between runaway productions and Europeanized themes or aesthetics, since many films shot abroad, especially genre films, do not self-consciously embrace cosmopolitanism. Nonetheless, being attuned to the economics and aesthetics of runaway production can lend a picture of Hollywood in which the cosmopolitan played a central role. Contrary to the ideal of domestic containment, at least many Americans were oriented to the international stage in their national self-understanding.

## *Bonjour Tristesse:* Runaway Production and Cosmopolitanism

*Bonjour Tristesse* is a useful case study, both buttressing the case for Hollywood exceptionalism and suggesting that Hollywood's aesthetic was drastically altered in its contact with a new vibrant postwar European cinema. Moreover, the role of Otto Preminger as producer-director demonstrates that the "Europeanized

Hollywood" of the 1950s was new and different from the transnational talent flows of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Adapted from Françoise Sagan's coming-of-age novel, *Bonjour Tristesse* was from the start a text received in a discourse of cosmopolitanism. Sagan became a literary sensation in France upon the book's publication, in large part because of her biography (herself just eighteen years old at the time) and because of the novel's dispassionate account of the heroine's loss of virginity and lack of moral reckoning. Thematically, literary critic Faye Hammill reads the novel as part of a larger discourse of literary sophistication in the postwar years. The narrative is the first-person account of Cécile, a seventeen-year-old woman who lives with her widower father, Raymond. Over the course of a summer vacation in the south of France, Cécile finds her close bond with Raymond and her own spoiled behavior challenged by the arrival of Anne, who becomes romantically involved with Raymond. Anne threatens to domesticate Raymond and come between him and his daughter. Moreover, as a mother figure, Anne starts enforcing discipline on Cecile. Ultimately, Cecile's rebellion breaks up Anne and Raymond's romance and leads to Anne's car accident. The narrative, Hammill notes, triangulates various stances of sophistication: "Anne's sophistication is an evolved, mature, worldliness; Raymond's is a form of degeneracy."[12] This discourse was reinforced in the American context, in which the novel tapped into what film scholar Alisia Chase argues was a broader "American cultural mythos that French women were more wanton."[13]

The film adaptation emerged in the context of an American film industry responding to European cinema's success in exploiting sexually libertine content. The impact of *And God Created Woman* on the American film market is hard to overstate. Vadim's film grossed $4 million in the United States, and it alone was responsible for pushing receipts of French films in the United States from $3.17 million in 1957 to $8.35 million in 1958.[14] The exhibition market fueled the inroads of erotic content into American cinemas. The Paramount decision, combined with declining attendance, had led exhibitors to look to art cinema. As one example, Peter Lev notes that five cinemas in Minneapolis played *And God Created Woman* on its release, while two others showed Brigitte Bardot films.[15] Furthermore, there were U.S. independent producers' attacks on the Production Code, notably with Preminger's own *The Moon Is Blue*, released through United Artists without a seal in 1954. Preminger therefore had two overriding reasons to

find *Bonjour Tristesse* attractive as a property. First, he had an incentive to repeat his success as a producer from previous times bucking the Production Code Administration (PCA). Even though the PCA approved the completed *Bonjour Tristesse*, the source novel contained material that challenged traditional sexual mores, particularly as construed by American censors: adultery, a teenager's loss of virginity, and suggestions of an Electra complex. Second, one strategy to capture or replicate the market niche of French imports was to tap into French source material, particularly that identified with French youth culture.

Fitting with its status as an adaptation of a French novel, the film was produced as a runaway production. The shooting was divided between Paris, the Cote d'Azur, and the Shepperton studios near London. The use of British actors and a significant portion of British crew qualified the film as a British production, whereas other actors, talent, and crew were French.[16] The production arrangements followed from Preminger's prior experience with a runaway production, *Saint Joan* (1957), shot in the United Kingdom with much of the same major crew (editor, production design, etc.). *Bonjour Tristesse* featured location shooting highlighting Paris (a nightclub scene that frames that flashback narrative) and the Riviera, where most of the action takes place. Compositionally, the film emphasizes the location quality of the Riviera locale by consistent framing of the sea in the background, either with high-angle shots or rule-of-thirds framing. The vacation home on the shore provides narrative motivation for the shots of the sea. The flashback takes place as identifiably, even stereotypically icons of Riviera life: a casino, a café-packed street, *calanques*, and a fishing village. Art direction and costume design abet this iconography with saturated primary colors.

Much of the touristic quality speaks to Hollywood's typical depiction of the non-U.S. location as a romanticized projection. However, the visuals also register the impact of European cinema on the film's aesthetic. The distinctive look of the film owes much to its cinematographer, Georges Périnal, who started his career in France, worked in Britain and Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s, and then worked mostly in the British film industry in the 1950s, with occasional films elsewhere in Europe. His work on Marc Allegret's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1955) revealed his adaptability to the black-and-white style of prestige cinema of France in the 1950s. In this style, faster film stock allows for a combination of sharp definition, high-key lighting, high-contrast tonality, and unobtrusive

lighting setups. *Bonjour Tristesse* furthers this look, with a darker, more medium-key style that nonetheless maintains clear tonality. In general, this cinematographic practice differs from Hollywood's most common approaches to black-and-white cinematography in the 1950s, with its emphasis on high-key brightness (*The Last Hurrah* [John Ford, 1958]), low-key darkness (as in *Marty* [Delbert Mann, 1955]), and baroque chiaroscuro (*Sweet Smell of Success* [Alexander Mackendrick, 1957]). While there is some commonality in black-and-white cinematography in Hollywood and Western Europe in the 1950s, both lighting practice and house style gave European cinema a different look.

The color cinematography shows a European look as well. Other than with the frame device, *Bonjour Tristesse* was filmed on Eastmancolor stock (and processed by Technicolor), and the cinematography resembles the color palette of *And God Created Woman*. Colors are vibrant and saturated, but they are more muted than common in Technicolor and more saturated than many Eastmancolor films in Hollywood. *Picnic* (Joshua Logan, 1955) forms a good point of comparison, with James Wong Howe's palette surprisingly muted and heavy with browns and yellows. In *Bonjour Tristesse*, Périnal emphasizes reds and oranges in contrast to blues wherever possible, as in an early evening scene at their vacation home. Preminger's choice to alternate between black and white and color is also significant. Thematically it divides the past of possibility and the present of regret and sadness (the "*tristesse*" of the title) and does so in an aesthetically intrusive manner. While the cinematography shows a tonality more in common with French films of the 1950s than with Hollywood, the directorial choice in shifting to color and back comprises the most art cinema–oriented quality of *Bonjour Tristesse*.

The result of the film's visual style is a film perched halfway between the spectacle family melodramas such as *Picnic* and European art cinema. Critics have noted the hybrid aesthetic, and in turn the film's in-between quality generated many of the critical reactions, often dismissals. As biographer Foster Hirsch asks of the film, "Can a viewer drawn to the color and the bejewelled settings overlook the fact that Preminger's three leads are not remotely French? Yes, since in all other ways David Niven and Deborah Kerr are ideally cast, while Seberg is a case unto herself."[17] Preminger complained that American critics were unfair to the film. "You know, it was a very big success in France, and in America, the

critics said it wasn't French enough, which is funny."[18] The dilemma that the film faced by invoking cosmopolitanism within the constraints of the Hollywood feature film reflected the shifting expectations of internationalism. By contrast, a relatively cosmopolitan Hollywood film from the 1930s such as *Design for Living* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1933) entered no discursive expectation of linguistic or cultural verisimilitude in its French and British settings.

As such, *Bonjour Tristesse* holds particular significance for what it reveals about the prestige film in the 1950s. In the 1930s and much of the 1940s, prestige films were a category of production pitched above normal A and B pictures. Prestige films could be genre films (Alfred Hitchcock's films for Selznick are a good example) or pitched as dramas in distinction to genre film (for instance, *Arrowsmith* [John Ford, 1931]). Either way, the prestige film is a metagenre that matched film aesthetics, budget levels, production values, and distribution strategies. One difficulty in defining the prestige film is that frequently Hollywood films conformed to some aspects but not all. Throughout the 1940s and especially after 1945, studios and independent producers increasingly favored films with appeal toward spectators' and critics' sense of aesthetic distinction over those with overt marketing and outward markers of expense and quality. In the 1950s, the industry's postwar adjustment led studios to increase production values and to rely more on prestige-style exhibition strategies such as roadshowing (distributors renting theaters directly for special screenings). The match between production values and budget or between genre and aesthetics became destabilized. *Bonjour Tristesse* therefore negotiated the industrial need for showmanship and the cultural expectation of aesthetic distinction.

Preminger's role would suggest the importance of the auteur in fostering the transnational aesthetic dialogue between European cinema and Hollywood. Indeed, by biographical accounts, the director was particularly at ease shooting runaway productions.[19] Moreover, his auteur reputation was a good fit with projects and genres marked as European. Nonetheless, to ascribe *Bonjour Tristesse*'s cosmopolitanism to a cosmopolitan auteur may be to reverse the direction of causality. After all, there is a difference between the 1940s era of émigré directors, of which Preminger was a prominent example, and Preminger's experience in the 1950s. In the former, directors (and other film artists) were absorbed into a stable and factory-like studio system that exploited the background and aesthetic

voices of the émigré as a visible stylistic flourish. Preminger's detached directorial style exemplifies this type of flourish, as did the stylized direction of Max Ophuls, Jean Negulesco, and Anatole Litvak.[20] In most of these cases, directorial style comprises what David Bordwell calls the "bounds of difference" within the classical narrational system, a range of authorial voice in excess of the storytelling demands of the narrative.[21] Yet, visually these films relied on the studio house styles. In contrast, the devolving studio system in favor of the independent producer and unit-package system put Preminger in the role of producer-director auteur, and his name set up expectations for the "non-Hollywood" nature of his films. These expectations could play against the films' success as in the case of *Bonjour Tristesse*, which critics assumed to be a promotional gambit for shock value and judged accordingly.[22] If Preminger was perfectly suited as an outsider-insider in Hollywood, an émigré who has managed to maintain a stylized approach throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the prestige film drastically changed the cinematic form of the director's Europeanness.

## *On the Beach:* Contradictions of the Prestige Picture

With some important differences, *On the Beach* exemplifies a similar type of 1950s prestige film. By the time Stanley Kramer produced and directed *On the Beach*, he had well established himself as a maker of social problem films, prestige films, and films with general literary and thematic seriousness. *On the Beach* fits all three categories. Based on an Australian novel by Nevil Shute, the narrative is set in Melbourne after a nuclear war. Australia, seemingly alone, has avoided the nuclear winter of the Northern Hemisphere, and the characters have to assess the possibility of maintaining life as radioactivity drifts southward. The theme is a protest against arms escalation and a meditation on morality and science. Australia, as a British Commonwealth member, had through much of its history geared its foreign policy toward the United Kingdom rather than the United States. The experience of World War II and the subsequent Cold War and consumer boom, however, helped reorient the country's foreign policy and popular culture much more toward the United States. While Australia was never central to U.S. foreign policy, the postwar years saw a couple of significant developments. First, domestically, Australia's 1949 election of Robert Menzies of the Liberal Party marked an instatement of an anticommunist political consensus.[23] Following form this, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States formed the

ANZUS alliance in 1951 as part of a wave of Pax Americana strategic alliances.[24]

The source novel of *On the Beach* encapsulates an Australian vantage on the Cold War arms race, but the film inverts this national voice: by filming a Hollywood film set in Australia, Kramer exposes the contradictions of Pax Amercana. On the one hand, U.S. military protection was done in the name of Europe, Oceana, and other regions, but on the other hand, other Western capitalist countries had an apprehension about the nuclear arms race. The national other becomes a means to position the American spectator as a cosmopolitan citizen, and in the film the First World U.S. ally in the Cold War figures the American citizenry—indeed, the "people of the world"—homologically as distinct from their government. Even the last words of the film, printed on a rally banner, suggest communion across the human race: "There still is time, brother."

United Artists echoed the film's cosmopolitan theme in its marketing strategy. The film premiered simultaneously in eighteen major world cities on all six populated continents. The marketers even scored the coup of a Moscow premiere. These premieres then figured prominently in the advertising campaign, both to exhibitors and the general public. The trade promotional ads, for instance, tout that "never before in the history of the industry" had such an international premiere taken place. The pressbook clearly articulates the reasoning behind this strategy:

> Having fixed firmly on the thesis that the Stanley Kramer production, by its profound nature, would profit best by a campaign that stressed the world-wide significance of Nevil Shute's best-selling novel, United Artist's box-officers set to the task of conceiving a promotional drive in tune with the film's lofty provocative theme. Latching onto the slogan that this is *the first motion picture for everyone all over the world*, they proceeded to endow the whole campaign with a tone of importance on an international scale. . . . This long-range re-selling on an intercontinental scope, therefore, must be calculated to provide the most effective ticket-selling penetration in today's selective movie market.[25]

Meanwhile, United Artists commissioned film posters from artists deemed representative of their nation and their national artistic traditions; the German art-

ist presented a George Grosz–style mannerism, for instance, while the Swedish poster was done in an expressive modernist style. The advertising address differed by implied audience as well; the domestic advertisement maintained an ambiguity designed to appeal to audiences interested in entertainment values as well as those interested in cultural importance, but the pressbook materials surround the title with a list of international cities. Whereas the film itself imagined communion primarily along lines of the Anglophone world, the marketing campaign interpreted the theme as a statement of cosmopolitanism, particularly when it wanted to play up the prestige credentials of the film.

This cosmopolitanism dovetailed with a discursive formation on the reception side. *On the Beach*'s Europeanization was possible, even likely, because for ten years or so, the space of reception was open to valuing European films—what soon became known as art cinema—as a pole to understand certain prestige products from Hollywood. Prestige films were an important driver of this development, and critics measured social problem pictures in particular against Italian neorealism pictures and British prestige dramas.[26] By the mid-1950s, these sorts of distinctions had coalesced into a full-fledged middlebrow taste formation that valued Hollywood films with seemingly un-Hollywood traits. *Newsweek*, for instance, praised the "unglamorous" star turns of Ava Gardner and Fred Astaire in *On the Beach*.[27]

The receptive context in the United States contrasts with the importance, positive and negative, that the film plays in the discursive construction of Australian national cinema. Notably, the coproduction came at a time of relative economic weakness for an autonomous Australian national cinema. Australia's film distribution was dominated by overseas, largely American companies, and from the 1940s these foreign companies could take 70 percent of their profits from the country.[28] In this context, film policy aided runaway productions such as *On the Beach.* At the time, Australian reviews were largely positive, and as Australian critic Adrian Danks notes, "many local critics of the time perceived inevitable holes and absences in the representation of the city but were generally positive about the perceptiveness and relative subtleties of the film's treatment of Melbourne life."[29] More recently, the film has met more skepticism on the ground that it is inauthentic in representing Australian identity and the source novel.[30] Danks tries to reconcile these two, seeing Melbourne of the film to be

both a representation and a misrepresentation of the actual city; in *On the Beach*, Melbourne "evoke[s] the architectural and municipal memory of an older Europe and America." So while for Australians the film signaled a shift in outside depictions of Australianness (cosmopolitan and industrialized rather than a stereotyped Bush lifestyle), for the American spectator, Australia stood in for a universalized, globalized Western culture.

*On the Beach* incorporates European style in a way different from its 1920s and 1930s predecessors and departs from classicism in a way different from its 1960s and 1970s forebears. Shadows fall unexpectedly and with the most minimal of motivation. For instance, a shot of Ava Gardner and Gregory Peck keeps Gardner's face in obscurity, despite the lack of generic convention. Whereas classical cinema stressed centrality, the rule of thirds, or the compositional "T" of the frame, *On the Beach* repeatedly exploits the side of the frame, even pushing actors or action past the edges, pushing against classical rules.[31] Its depth compositions abstract space into distinct planes. Whereas classical composition allowed canted angles sparingly and only for psychologically motivated reasons, *On the Beach* uses them frequently for purely expressive ends.[32] Finally, the film even violates continuity rules by transgressing the 180-degree rule. To see how distinctively, one need only compare *On the Beach*'s compositions to the studious centrality of the Kramer-esque *Lilies of the Field* (Ralph Nelson, 1963). *On the Beach* represented a new sensibility in late classical film style, in which a more aggressively auteur style battled with the literary sensibility of the mass-market middle-class novel.[33]

Much of the film's distinctive style can be traced to the director of photography, Giuseppe Rotunno. Just as scholars have traced the impact of émigrés as a conduit for importing of European, especially modernist, aesthetics into Hollywood's classical style, so too can we see in Rotunno's work with *On the Beach*, his first Hollywood film, the formal signature style of his Italian work. If anything, as a contracted hire to an independent production rather than a studio employee, he had greater room than the studio-era émigrés to push against orthodoxy. In fact, there is not much distinction between the cinematographic aesthetic of Rotunno's work on Visconti's *White Nights* (*Le Notti Bianche*, 1957) and *On the Beach*. Whereas *White Nights* used creative lighting and sheets of muslin cloth to create the fog effects, *On the Beach* employed filters sprayed to

give the dirty effect suggesting radioactivity. More significant, both films straddled a realist and expressionist aesthetic, with sharp, finely grained, and finely variegated images showing sculptural lighting effects.

One sequence in the film shows how unorthodox Rotunno's cinematography could be. Narratively, the scenes are fairly prosaic. In the first scene, Dwight Towers brings Moira by the ship, after which Moira and Julian talk about the possible dangers of fallout radiation. In the next scene, a group of sailors listen to radio transmissions while Towers and the admiral discuss the Morse code signals they are picking up. Neither scene motivates effects or genre lighting, and indeed in the context of the film there is no formal shift or signaling of narrative significance through visual means. All the same, the cinematographic choices are unusual. Rotunno lights Peck and Gardner in particular with simply fill light and without any three-dimensional modeling. The practice goes against glamour-lighting conventions of 1950s Hollywood, and while it is realistically motivated (it is an outdoor scene, and the sun is on the characters' backs), it lacks any aesthetic marker of realism, instead leaning toward fine grayscale gradation and careful tonal contrast. The next scene takes these qualities even further. In the background, Commander Towers and the admiral are similarly lit with a relatively flat setup, but they are the most conventionally lit part of the composition. In the foreground, the three sailors each have their own lighting, rendered in different gray tones on the film stock, so that each profile is a flat bas-relief standing out from one another. The shot is an encapsulation of Rotunno's approach: pushing formalism to limits of Hollywood prestige style and sometimes beyond and innovating visual strategy scene to scene, based not on genre or narrative cuing but instead on the internal visual logic of the composition.

Rotunno's individual style found its expression only in an industrial context that allowed, encouraged even, the importation of his style into a prestige Hollywood film. After all, the terms on which the cinematographer came to the Kramer/United Artists production were different from the absorption of European talent in the studio years. A generational gap had emerged between, for instance, an émigré such as Rudolph Maté, known in the 1940s for "arty" modernist cinematography and capable of bending the rules, and Rotunno, who managed to break the rules outright. First, changes in the global film market abetted the internationalism of the film. The film was a runaway production,

shot on location in Australia with only a couple of scenes shot by the second-unit crew in Los Angeles. Runaway films were not always signaled as location shoots, but often location shooting did open up representation of foreign nations in a more culturally particular way. In the case of *On the Beach*, the film continues to be a touchstone in Australian self-imagining, even if more recently as a foil for national cinema proponents.[34] Furthermore, Rotunno came to the production because of the postwar internationalization of film production; it was Ava Gardner's work in Twentieth Century Fox's runaway production *The Naked Maja*.

*Bonjour Tristesse* represented the tensions in the "spectacle" prestige film of the 1950s, marked by high production values, color and widescreen, and elements of exploitation in the narrative. *On the Beach*, on the other hand, sought to fit the more modern, middlebrow form of midbudget prestige films pioneered in the 1940s, often shot on black-and-white film. With a negative cost of over $3 million, *On the Beach* was far from the bare-bones $400,000 cost of *Marty*, but Kramer's reputation and niche in the industry had come as an independent producer who used topical, social problem, and downbeat material to parlay modest budgets into bigger successes. *Home of the Brave* and *Champion* were made for within $500,000, and *The Defiant Ones* had negative costs under $900,000, significantly below a major studio A production, much less the multimillion-dollar prestige spectacle films.[35] As a producer-director auteur, Kramer came from the opposite angle as Preminger: rather than infuse the big-budget spectacle melodrama with cultural capital, Kramer pushed the low- to midbudget "serious" prestige film toward bigger budgets and more exploitation.

Giuseppe Rotunno's work in *On the Beach* was distinctive, but Kramer brought him into the production precisely to match the prestige picture and "mature" drama aspirations. As with *Bonjour Tristesse*, the film alternates a worldly knowingness about its subject matter with a self-consciousness of its inspiration from European art cinema. Many of *On the Beach*'s "Europeanized" tropes, such as the *in media res* beginning and the fondness for a "literary" visual metaphor, were presaged by Kramer's *The Defiant Ones* (1958), whose cinematographer, Sam Leavitt, was American. Moreover, Kramer himself may have been distinctive as a director and producer, but in many respects he shared entrepreneurial and aesthetic strategies with other producers and directors of the mature prestige film. *On the Beach* therefore presents seeming contradictions. European talent was a

constitutive but not necessary part of the mature prestige film's style. Moreover, Stanley Kramer's films (and *On the Beach* in particular) were idiosyncratic yet representative of a wider mature prestige film.

## Conclusion: The Prestige Film in Pax Americana Hollywood

In his theoretical taxonomy of the concepts of international cinema, Dudley Andrew identifies the postwar era as one of "federation," in contrast to either a purely national mode of cinema production or a cosmopolitan or global one. After World War II, nation-states did not lose their political or cultural force, Andrew argues, but they were supplemented with pan-national international institutions, the United Nations key among them. As he notes, "Played out in the sphere of cinema, the federation model fosters both equality and difference in artistic expression."[36] Andrew is primarily diagnosing film festival culture as the major film culture of this federated period. Furthermore, the stakes for the federated period in national cinema were certainly asymmetrical: the United States had a much stronger film industry than European countries, and by most measures U.S. film culture could be insular in comparison to the experience of national cinemas abroad facing Hollywood's popularity. However, even commercial cinema—competing both in markets and in nationalist film policy—participated in transnational cultural flows that were pitched somewhere between the national and the global.

Hollywood was engaging with once again thriving European film industries, to compete with them, to poach talent, and to work around film policy restrictions. Hollywood had sought these objectives (especially the first two) in the interwar years of the 1920s and 1930s, but the change in the industrial context and the broader relation of the United States to the rest of the world under Pax Americana changed the dynamic. Internationalism in 1950s Hollywood no longer worked solely or even predominantly on a melting pot model or as assimilation into a stable studio factory system. Instead it was syncretic, grafting onto a late classical production system and aesthetic mode the stylistic sensibility and cosmopolitan thematics of European cinema. Moreover, it did so because Americans, especially those in the middle classes, understood national identity in relation to an international stage dominated by U.S. military and soft power. For this reason, the prestige film—the very genre pitched to the same middle

classes who read "serious" hardbound books and popular news magazines—saw the most striking developments in the Europeanized Hollywood of the 1950s. The particular form of Europeanization would vary among the prestige films, and both *Bonjour Tristesse* and *On the Beach* are unique in their stylistic mix. From another perspective, however, the very move of the prestige film to adopt such stylistic distinctiveness, away from any sense of house style, is perhaps the biggest change that Europe's influence made on a rapidly changing industry.

## Notes

1. See, for instance, Jennifer Fay, *Theaters of Occupation: Hollywood and the Reeducation of Postwar Germany* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Mark Betz, *Beyond the Subtitle: Remapping European Art Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).
2. Douglas Gomery, "The Movies and TV: A Revisionist History," in *Media in America: A Wilson Quarterly Reader*, ed. Douglas Gomery, 147–55, revised ed. (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998).
3. Peter Lev, *The Fifties: Transforming the Screen, 1950–1959*, History of the American Cinema, Vol. 7 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 62. See also Murray Pomerance, ed., *American Cinema of the 1950s: Themes and Variations* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), which summarizes major trends of Hollywood in a largely domestic light.
4. For a post–Vietnam War account of Pax Americana, see Ronald Steel, *Pax Americana* (New York: Viking, 1977); see also James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectation: The United States, 1945–1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 129–30.
5. See Ralph Stern, "*The Big Lift* (1950): Image and Identity in Blockaded Berlin," *Cinema Journal* 46, no. 2 (2007): 66–90; G. Schmundt-Thomas, "American G.I.s and the Conquest of the German Fraulein," *Journal of Popular Film & Television* 19, no. 4 (1992): 187–98; Stanley Corkin, "Cowboys and Free Markets: Post–World War II Westerns and U.S. Hegemony," *Cinema Journal* 39, no. 3 (2000): 66–91.
6. Dina Smith, "Global Cinderella: *Sabrina* (1954), Hollywood, and Postwar Internationalism," *Cinema Journal* 41, no. 4 (2002): 28.
7. Thomas Guback, *The International Film Industry: Western Europe and America since 1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), 72.
8. Ibid, 74.
9. Drew Casper, *Postwar Hollywood, 1946–1962* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 50–52.
10. Betz, *Beyond the Subtitle*.
11. Barbara Wilinsky, *Sure Seaters: The Emergence of Art House Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Karl Schoonover, "The Comfort of Carnage: Neorealism and America's World Understanding," in *Convergence Media History*, ed. Janet Staiger and Sabine Hake, 127–38 (New York: Routledge, 2009).
12. Faye Hammill, *Sophistication: A Literary and Cultural History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 174.

13. Alisia G. Chase, "One Very Chic Hell: Revisiting the Issue of Virginity in *Bonjour Tristesse*," in *Virgin Territory: Representing Sexual Inexperience in Film*, ed. Tamar Jeffers McDonald (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 84.
14. Guback, *The International Film Industry,* 86.
15. Lev, *The Fifties,* 211; Michael Conant, *Antitrust in the Motion Picture Industry: Economic and Legal Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960).
16. Production details from Chris Fujiwara, *The World and Its Double: The Life and Work of Otto Preminger* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2008), 212.
17. Foster Hirsch, *Otto Preminger: The Man Who Would Be King* (New York: Knopf, 2007), 274.
18. Gerald Pratley, *The Cinema of Otto Preminger* (London: A. Zwemmer, 1971), 122.
19. Hirsch, *Otto Preminger,* 268.
20. One canonical account of this style is Robin Wood, "Letter from an Unknown Woman," in *Personal Views: Explorations in Film,* 143–66 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006).
21. David Bordwell, "The Bounds of Difference," in *Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960*, ed. David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, 70–84 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).
22. Fujiwara, *The World and Its Double,* 216.
23. Frank Cain and Frank Farrell, "Menzies' War on the Communist Party, 1949–1951," in *Australia's First Cold War, 1945–1953,* ed. Ann Curthoys and John Merritt, 109–36 (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1984).
24. Steven W. Hook and John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy since World War II*, 15th ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2000), 86.
25. Pressbook, *On the Beach*, United Artists, Stanley Kramer Collection, Charles E. Young Library Special Collections, University of California, Los Angeles.
26. Chris Cagle, "Two Modes of Prestige Film," *Screen* 38, no. 3 (2007): 291–311.
27. "On the Beach," *Newsweek*, December 21, 1959, 95.
28. Graham Shirley and Brian Adams, *Australian Cinema: The First Eighty Years* (New York: St. Martin's, 1985), 186.
29. Adrian Danks, "Don't Rain on Ava Gardner's Parade," in *Twin Peaks: Australian and New Zealand Feature Films*, ed. Deb Verhoeven (Melbourne: Damned Publishing, 1999), 179.
30. Shirley and Adams, *Australian Cinema*, 208.
31. David Bordwell, *Classsical Hollywood Cinema*, 51, notes the prescription against edge framing.
32. "Such slanted images must be used with discretion, or they may detract from the story-telling. They should be reserved for sequences when weird, violent, unstable, impressionistic or other novel effects are required." Joseph V. Mascelli, *The Five C's of Cinematography: Motion Picture Filming Techniques* (Los Angeles: Silman-James, 1965), 47.
33. For more on the middle-class novel, see Gordon Hutner, *What America Read: Taste, Class, and the Novel, 1920–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).
34. Deane Williams, "*On the Beach*," *Senses of Cinema*, no. 52 (September 2009), http://sensesofcinema.com/2009/key-moments-in-australian-cinema-issue-70-march-2014/on-the-beach-stanley-kramer-1959-usa/.

35. Sources for figures are *Marty, Variety,* April 27, 1955, 7 (qtd. in Conant, *Antitrust in the Motion Picture Industry*); *Home of the Brave* and *Champion, Business Week*, May 6, 1950, 98 (qtd. in Conant); *Defiant Ones* and *On the Beach,* budget sheet, Stanley Kramer Collection, Charles E. Young Library Special Collections, University of California, Los Angeles, Box 161.
36. Dudley Andrew, "Time Zones and Jet Lag: The Flows and Spaces of World Cinema," in *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*, ed. Nataša Durovicová and Kathleen E. Newman (New York: Routledge, 2009), 71.

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7

# "Our Love Is Here to Stay"

## Transatlantic Relations in 1950s Hollywood Musicals about Paris

**Anna Cooper**

Although 1950s Hollywood abounded with films set in Paris, very few of them were filmed on location in the French capital. While there are exceptions, numerous Hollywood films about Paris, largely musicals, were made in studio backlots, including *An American in Paris* (Vincente Minnelli, 1951), *Lovely to Look At* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1952), *April in Paris* (David Butler, 1952), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Howard Hawks, 1953), *The French Line* (Lloyd Bacon, 1953), *Anything Goes* (Robert Lewis, 1956), *Les Girls* (George Cukor, 1957), and *Silk Stockings* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1957). These Paris-set films may serve as a counterexample to the ways that America's cinematic connections with Europe in this period are typically discussed in scholarship, which has tended to privilege industry-related topics around Hollywood's transactions with indigenous European film industries, regarding both production and distribution practices. Runaway production in particular has received considerable focus as a production trend both arising out of various industrial conditions and itself giving rise to the Europe-set Hollywood film text (Shandley calls such films "allegories" of the imperialist-tinged conditions of runaway production).[1] Because "Paris" films are largely studio made, they have been more or less absent from this debate, and indeed, where discussed it is often the exceptional films that are runaway

productions, such as *Funny Face* (Stanley Donen, 1957), *Love in the Afternoon* (Billy Wilder, 1957), and *Gigi* (Vincente Minnelli, 1958),[2] that have received the most critical attention and acclaim.

Paris has long occupied a rich place in the American imaginary of Europe. As American tourism rose in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Paris quickly became what Christopher Endy calls the "hub city for American tourism in Europe."[3] It was the first place where most Americans landed after the steamship voyage across the Atlantic, thereby forming a gateway to the rest of Europe. Moreover, American culture has long been captivated by French arts and crafts, both "high" and "low": impressionist paintings and other forms of modern art,[4] Parisian fashion, and French performance dance traditions including both ballet and cancan have all long been objects of American fascination. Although American travel to France was disrupted by World War I, it resumed at full force in the 1920s, and many of the source materials for the 1950s Paris musicals originated in this decade, arising from the American expatriate literary movement that saw writers such as F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway use Paris as a hub. Also in the 1920s and into the 1930s, Paris became a relatively frequent setting for American stage musicals, notably by Cole Porter, that often centered on American tourists or expatriates living in the French capital.[5] One major shared characteristic of these works, many of which were adapted over and over again for film between 1925 and 1960, is that they feature Americans traveling abroad to Paris. Paris has long served as the archetypal tourist site for Americans—the place at the other end of the Atlantic voyage. So, as America's economic and cultural power in Europe was rising in the postwar period, with military occupation closely followed by Americanization via the Marshall Plan and other capitalist-imperialist policies and practices, it is no surprise that Paris should reemerge as a major locus of the Hollywood imaginary of Europe.

The majority of these Paris-set films are musicals, which is no accident. The musical has long been particularly synthetic (even as Hollywood genres go), with elaborate studio sets carefully designed to evoke other times and places in ways that value spectacle over realism. As Jane Feuer argues, the Hollywood musical singularly strives to create dreamlike spaces that are dualistically set against more quotidian worlds—explicit spaces of escape, whether to an interior dreamscape or a faraway reality.[6] It should be no surprise that this kind of internal logic

would be rife with geopolitical significance, as this chapter will explore. I argue that these films afford us a rich opportunity to explore America's views of Europe in the postwar period—potentially even richer than in the case of films that are at least theoretically constrained by conditions in the on-location historical world. What I find is that these Hollywood films are deeply permeated with an imperialist aesthetic that converts Europe from subject to object of a colonial gaze, transposing Orientalist tropes to a new framework of American hegemony over Europe. Edward Said famously argued that Orientalism has little to do with any "real" Orient and instead was constituted of a "created consistency, [a] regular constellation of ideas" that arose from an unevenly distributed epistemic power between East and West.[7] The nineteenth-century British and French novel, as a central popular art form in a society experiencing a period of global dominance, became a locus for Europe's Orientalist imaginary.[8] The midcentury Hollywood film is similarly positioned as the most important popular art form of a society whose imperial star was reaching a zenith in the 1950s. While I would certainly not argue that on-location shooting is somehow unproblematically "authentic," the studio-made Paris musicals are particularly dreamlike, abstracted images of a key European locale in the American imperialist imagination. One might say that these films are littered with the ideological baggage of postwar American imperialism, enabling us to examine this imperialist imaginary in particularly rich detail. This chapter will explore two such films as key examples: *An American in Paris* and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.

Debates about the broader American economic and political presence in postwar Europe have long hinged on the tension between invasion/oppression on the one hand and some form of freely undertaken consumer desire on the other. The Marshall Plan, the major American strategy for the rebuilding of Europe around the values of free trade and a consumer economy that was implemented from 1948 onward, is at the center of these debates. Indisputably, it brought about enormous changes to European society: changes to the nature of work, patterns of consumption and leisure, and the structures of politics, for example.[9] These changes, collectively referred to in Europe under the term "Americanization," clearly cemented American influence in the western half of the continent.[10] Although some scholars have challenged the Marshall Plan's apparent benevolence by highlighting the ways in which its programs came with

more forceful stipulations attached,[11] the Marshall Plan was for the most part received enthusiastically by West European countries. This has led scholars such as Geir Lundestad to retheorize the traditional notion of empire to accommodate the concepts of choice, desire, and seduction—a benevolent "empire by invitation" based on voluntary economic engagement rather than force.[12] However, Victoria de Grazia's book *Irresistible Empire* develops a far more critical position of America's spreading of consumerist desire, calling America's twentieth-century rise to power "the rise of a great imperium with the outlook of a great emporium."[13] De Grazia argues that America's ulterior political aim in promoting consumerism abroad has been to deliver to the world a "Pax Americana" through the supposedly peaceful means of the global mass marketing and selling of American products. The "overturning" of Europe's old world order occurred in two intervals, corresponding to the wakes of each of the two world wars, when Europe was most in need.[14] According to de Grazia, America thus opportunistically cultivated consumer desire in Europe as an antidote to wartime poverty in order to place itself at the center of a consumerist empire.[15]

One feature that all the Paris musicals listed above share is that they are about Americans traveling to or living in Paris. There are many reasons why tourism might serve as an apt metaphor for the tensions and repressions surrounding imperialism. Tourism, so the sociological literature tells us, is frequently overlaid with power relations, as traveling to and gazing upon a location imply a degree of control over it.[16] Tourism, in MacCannell's reading, is inextricably linked to imperialist impulses of expansion and appropriation toward other cultures, benevolently expanding outward under the mantle of free economic engagement. So, it seems especially significant that American tourism in Europe enjoyed a rapid and sustained boom in the postwar period. Christopher Endy has documented how American tourism in France was deeply connected to questions of national identity and international relations; tourism was seen by the postwar U.S. government as an economic tool in the rebuilding of Western Europe.[17] Tourist dollars, it was hoped, would stabilize European currencies and the trade balance of payments, which European demand for American manufactured goods threatened to throw off balance and hence undermine Europe's miraculous economic recovery.[18] Tourism in Europe was seen by the United States as a nearly cost-free way to provide this, and thus the U.S. government worked closely

with travel service providers such as airlines, cruise lines, and hotel chains.[19] European tourism became a patriotic activity in America, symbolic of American success in gaining economic and political influence over Europe. American tourism in postwar Europe was thus laden with ideological significance surrounding American national identity and the developing American dominance in geopolitical affairs.

The Paris musicals serve as a rich illustration of these dynamics, positioning American tourism and Americans' buying power in Europe as key symbols in America's understanding of its own national identity and rising international power. Americans' explorations of Parisian space as tourists and expatriates function to endow America with what Said calls a "flexible positional superiority." They transmute classic Orientalist tropes to the relationship between America and France, placing the American "in a whole series of possible relationships with [France] without ever losing him the relative upper hand."[20] In the Paris musicals, this positional superiority is frequently focused through fashion and beauty consumerism, which drove the economic relationship between France and America in the postwar period and served as a symbol of that relationship. Paris had long been conceived in America as the global fashion capital, with the great French fashion houses functioning to set trends in the American mass market. While the connection between colonialism and white women's adornment is a very old and rich one (silk, cotton, jewels, and perfume, for example, were important colonial products in the British and French Empires, not to mention the various more specific Orientalist trends in fashion over the centuries such as *chinoiserie*), the Paris films think through these connections in complicated new ways that are historically and geographically specific. Through these films' depictions of the adornment of American women's bodies via the Parisian fashion market and, more broadly, the complex positionings of American and French women in Americanized European spaces, women's bodies are newly politicized through the lens of American-style consumer capitalism.

In each of the case study films discussed in this chapter, women's bodies and beauty culture are harnessed to America's postwar imperialist project in Europe, functioning as prizes for conquest as well as positioning women's subjectivity within an American imperialist framework. In each case, this reimagining of women's place in the dynamics between America and Europe is set against the

backdrop of a dreamlike, spectacularized, often surreal Parisian cityscape that makes Paris more a space within the American imaginary than an actual city with independent life. In *An American in Paris*, the elaborate backlot–produced sets make Paris into a playground for an American ex-GI, hearkening back to the *fin de siècle*—the other great historical moment in America-Paris relations—and positioning both French art and the French ballerina's body as objects of American conquest. The Paris of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, mostly visually absent from the film, functions as a space for American women to symbolically seize the colonial assets of the old European aristocracy in a slippery satire of American capitalist imperialism.

## *An American in Paris*

*An American in Paris* (Vincente Minnelli, 1951) opens with a series of stock footage shots of Paris landmarks, with the American Jerry Mulligan (Gene Kelly) narrating in voice-over that he stayed on there after being discharged from the U.S. Army in 1945. He is a painter, he explains, and Paris is the center of the art world. As we focus in on his Left Bank neighborhood and then finally his street and his building, there is a smooth transition into an elaborately painted studio set that itself resembles the cityscape pictures Jerry creates: richly textured and brightly colored, a shimmering homage to the famous dinginess of Paris's buildings. The camera sweeps up the building as he describes the amorous couple downstairs from him and finally his own comically tiny attic apartment. The entire opening sequence is in interior point of view (POV). The Paris of the film is the Paris in Jerry's head—the sparkling city seemingly made to order for an American expatriate painter, with little in the way of independent life.

Jerry's paintings are rather oddly conservative in style when you consider how the art world of the early 1950s was in the throes of abstract expressionism (a style that is itself lampooned later in the film, with a full-bearded French street painter creating bright, abstract works). Jerry's paintings, like the studio sets of the city, hark back to the impressionism of *fin de siècle* Paris, a major temporal reference point for many Hollywood films about Paris, as Vanessa R. Schwartz shows in her book *It's So French!*[21] The film's first full number, "By Strauss," a soaring waltz that fondly recalls turn-of-the-century Vienna in both its musical style and its lyrics, functions to spread this nostalgic vision across the continent ("The waltzes of Mittel Europa / They charm you and warm you within / While

The elaborately painted studio set of Jerry's Parisian residence, which resembles the cityscapes of his own paintings, in *An American in Paris* (MGM, 1951).

each day discloses / What Broadway composes / Is emptiness pounding on tin"). This is a nostalgic vision of a Europe frozen in time, before both world wars, before the continent's simultaneous destruction and modernization. The retrograde nature of the politics of nostalgia has long been identified as colonialist in nature, though this has most often been discussed (at least in film studies) in relation to the British costume drama of the 1980s and 1990s.[22] MacCannell also identifies nostalgia—for the "authenticity" of another time, another place—as an imagined antidote to modernity that paradoxically functions as modernity's vanguard, justifying neocolonialist expansion to "untouched" spaces via tourism.[23] In *An American in Paris*, nostalgia is mobilized for a neocolonialist ideology with a distinctively postwar American flavor: old Europe is eulogized as a means for justifying American neocolonialist expansion in the present. American tourism in Europe is both a mechanism for and a symbol of this expansion—tourism functioned at once to transfer American dollars and American culture to Europe as well as to reposition Europe and its antiquities in the American imaginary as ripe for the cultural picking.

If the nostalgia of this and other similar films has not previously been read as symbolic of imperialist ideology, it is important to note that, as Said's work shows, there are two ways to otherize a culture: patronize it or put it on a pedestal. Although on the whole far more attention has been paid in the past three decades of scholarship to the possibilities of patronization and negative stereotyping, Said insists on envy and longing as the other primary structure of feeling at work in Orientalism. The Orient is viewed as a much older civilization containing unimaginable beauty (in landscapes, cityscapes, women); he argues that this view is an echo of the Orient's mighty cultural and political presence in Europe's past.[24] The West, says Said, has often longed to appropriate the Orient's cultural richness and great antiquity for itself through both literally conquering it and representing it in art and literature.[25] A similar dynamic is at work in *An American in Paris*, but it is transposed so that Europe becomes the object of Orientalist envy and America becomes the subject: Europe, with Paris as its imagined capital, is positioned as the locale for older forms of high culture—here primarily the visual arts and ballet but also architecture—that are desired by Americans and are seen as the cultural origin of American society. Envy and longing thus underpin a symbolic transposition of Europe into perhaps the primary Orientalized Other to America's new status as colonial metropole.

Beyond this, symbolic conquest is a central trope of *An American in Paris*. When Jerry returns to his little Left Bank street after meeting the rich art collector Milo Roberts (Nina Foch), he sits atop the seat back of her fancy green convertible and waves victoriously as French street children gather around, cheering and screaming. As he alights, they beg him for American bubblegum. The scene blatantly reenacts images of the liberation of Paris from six years before—a re-created moment of triumph for this ex-GI that he gets to relive again and again by living in Paris. In the song-and-dance number that follows, "I Got Rhythm," he teaches the children English and also teaches them jazz, the quintessential American art form that has here been recruited for American-style colonial capitalism, as he charms and woos the children to be fans of American culture. In the dance sequence, he play-acts a train, a soldier, a cowboy, and an airplane: all important symbols of American expansionism. As Richard Dyer shows, the standard performance style of the white man in Hollywood musicals—its expansive and playful taking up of space in reconstructed world

locations—is already imbued with a "colonial structure of feeling."[26] That is, the aesthetic of playfulness and fun so central to the Hollywood musical is a mode of representation structured around racial and colonial domination from which people of color are systematically excluded—effacing their invention of crucial aesthetic influences on the musical, like tap dancing and jazz. This playful aesthetic functions not only to naturalize Jerry's symbolic ownership of this Parisian street but also simultaneously to naturalize his appropriation of Black art forms and their redeployment for capitalist/imperialist purposes.

Conquest is also a running theme of the romance between Jerry and Lise (Leslie Caron), as he pursues her relentlessly despite her repeated requests that he leave her alone. If the same romantic pursuit happened today, it might be called harassment or even stalking; he steals her phone number and turns up at her workplace uninvited, despite her repeated fierce pleas for him to go away and stop bothering her. Yet apparently we are meant to take Jerry's persistence as evidence of his plucky American spirit ("Discouragement stimulates me," he explains) as well as his charm, as Lise finally gives in and almost immediately decides that she is in love with him. (Conversely, his positioning as an object of pursuit by Milo is treated as self-evidently unnatural.) It is not hard to read this state of affairs as imbued with geopolitical significance, a kind of geographic mapping of traditional gender roles: Jerry/America/postwar consumer capitalism is conquering Lise/France/tradition through seduction, through winning her over with his charm. The decorative, beautiful French woman's body is thus recruited into an imperialist imaginary more or less without her consent, with his desire for her taking on a classic Orientalizing significance.[27]

The film's dialectic between classical music and jazz similarly takes on geopolitical significance here, as a dualism between old European art forms and new American ones finds a synthesis, à la Rick Altman's theory of the musical.[28] Lise, a ballerina, represents old European art traditions and precapitalist collectivism, as she is prepared to marry the aging dandy Henri Baurel (Georges Guétary) out of a sense of loyalty. Her clothing, which is high-necked, long-sleeved, and tightly corseted, also signifies her Old World ways, as does her stately and disciplined comportment as a dancer. Jerry, on the other hand, represents jazz and American-style capitalist individualism, as he strives to "make it big" by selling his paintings and brings jazz to the streets of the capital of the Old World. The

extended fantasy sequence in which Adam Cook (Oscar Levant) plays George Gershwin's jazzy "Concerto in F" to a packed house further demonstrates how the film is structured as a marriage of classical and jazz. It is also evident in the paired dance sequences between Jerry and Lise, each of which achieves a gorgeously compelling synthesis between her highly controlled athleticism and his tapping, swinging, looser version (a dynamic that was to be repeated later with Cyd Charisse in *Brigadoon* [Vincente Minnelli, 1954], another musical about an American traveling in Europe). There is a complicated class-inflected significance here as well, as *An American in Paris* uses ballet and painting to position itself for a highbrow American audience—announcing itself as art suitable for the newly minted suburban middle class—and simultaneously works to topple the supposedly stiff, old-fashioned snobbery of these art traditions through an injection of a brassy, lowbrow jazz spirit.

These dynamics are exemplified perhaps best of all by the final dreamlike ballet sequence, which once again harks back to the *fin de siècle* relationship between America and France, overlaying it with contemporary geopolitical significance. The sequence begins as Jerry literally inserts himself into his own drawing of the gates of Les Jardins des Tuileries, which then slowly comes to life with various late nineteenth-century figures—soldiers with cloaks and spiked helmets, ballerinas clad in floor-length gowns—as Jerry dances around them, looking lost and overwhelmed. He has a lengthy interaction with an Orientalized brown-skinned man in a turban, in which he looks like a lost ingenu, unsure of what to make of this otherized figure in this tableau of nineteenth-century European imperialism. After an interlude *pas de deux* with Lise that appears to be styled after the work of Degas, the staid Old World soldiers return, this time to be visually marginalized by several tap-dancing men in striped suits and porkpie hats and carrying canes, symbolic of America at the start of the Jazz Age. Whereas before Jerry looked bewildered and overwhelmed, he and the other American men here are now visually dominating the Old World ones, enacting the beginnings of American cultural influence on Europe.

Following another *pas de deux*, we enter into the 1896 Toulouse-Lautrec lithograph titled Chocolat dansant dans un bar (Black Man Dancing in a Bar), with Jerry taking the place of the black dancer—a move that simultaneously seems to acknowledge African Americans' contributions to American culture

Jerry and the other dancers in porkpie hats show Americans visually dominating a dream-like Parisian cityscape in *An American in Paris* (MGM, 1951).

and to efface them, once again appropriating jazz culture for imperialist capitalism—as well as to proclaim America's growing cultural influence over Europe. Throughout the ballet sequence, then, we see European high culture and American low culture slowly synthesizing into a single whole, with American cultural influence growing. The sequence thus simultaneously appropriates and disavows European high culture, all the while proclaiming American superiority and influence.

It is appropriate that this dream sequence functions to resolve the conflict between Jerry and Lise, proving that this conflict was never really just about their own private lives. As he returns from his reverie Lise comes back to him, and they live happily ever after: a synthesis of America and France/Europe, low art and high, and a symbolic conquest of modern American capitalism over antiquated European civilization. As Jerry earlier sang, their love—so the film wants to proclaim—is here to stay.

## *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*

Although much discussed in the literature on star studies[29] and feminist and queer film studies,[30] *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* is rarely considered as a film about

Paris. In a way this is not surprising, because the French capital is almost entirely visually absent from the film; only the final third of the film's action takes place there, and most of it is indoors. There is little visual spectacle around the depiction of the Parisian cityscape, as there are in so many location-shot films about other areas of Europe in this period. Yet in these features, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* also follows a fascinating pattern: at least three other musical films from the early 1950s—*April in Paris*, *Anything Goes*, and *The French Line* (plus another that doesn't quite fit the pattern but shares many characteristics, *Lovely to Look At*)—all take place primarily on a transatlantic ocean liner headed for Paris, with an extended final sequence taking place in the French capital. The final sequences of these films are never filmed on location; they are studio-shot and heavily figurative, using the Eiffel Tower and other well-known landmarks to signify "Paris" in a few brief shots before heading into interior sets of vaguely European-looking hotels, shops, and the like. Yet I would argue that these are just as important as the more eye-catching runaway productions in looking at how Hollywood cinema represented European space—and that it is significant that so many such films were made about Paris in particular. Indeed, Paris is such a robustly represented locale in Hollywood cinema in general that it is often treated, both in films and by scholars, as though there were something obvious about it—about what is there and what it means to audiences—as though a kind of shorthand for an already-existing set of meanings. For example, in *Growing Up with Audrey Hepburn*, Rachel Moseley discusses Paris on a number of occasions as a city long associated with Hepburn, consistently describing it in unreconstructed terms such as "the city of lovers"[31] or "*the* romantic and modern city of the moment."[32] Similarly, Charlotte Herzog's article about fashion sequences in Hollywood briefly discusses Paris as the most important location for this but, once again, does not give it much thought.[33] So, I want to step back from this supposed obviousness and interrogate it. *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* will serve as a telling example.

Examining the geopolitics of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* reveals that the Paris of the film is situated within a complex transatlantic colonial capitalist framework. Much of the action on the ocean liner centers on Lorelei's (Marilyn Monroe) relationship with Lord Francis Beekman (Charles Coburn), an aging British aristocrat who owns a South African diamond mine. Lorelei is quite explicitly

interested in his colonial assets, specifically in the form of his wife's fabulous jewels. Whether through capitalist gold-digging or simple innocent allure (which turns out to be an important question, to be discussed below), the American woman eventually charms the old European aristocrat out of these assets. Reading this allegorically, we might draw on Kristin Ross's work, which interrogates how France in the 1950s was complexly positioned as simultaneously a devolving colonial power and a newly opened market for American consumer goods via the Marshall Plan.[34] *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* brings this complex positioning to life, as the American capitalist women attempt to become the new owners of a quintessential colonial product, thus transferring France and England from conqueror to conquered, from subject to object.

The tension between new American capitalism and old European aristocracy is played for comedy throughout the film. In the context of a transatlantic ocean liner full of European "old money," Lorelei and Dorothy stand out as exemplary of the legendary class mobility of American society. Marked as separate by her funny linguistic errors ("If you've nothing more to say, pray, scat") and her synthetic blond hair, Lorelei oscillates between following and scorning the upper-class manners that prevail on the boat as she journeys into a Europe frozen in time, generating comic mayhem in the process.

Turim claims that the satire of the film does not touch its positioning of colonial capitalism as unquestioned and natural.[35] I disagree somewhat. I see Monroe's profoundly unstable performance in this film, discussed at length by Dyer,[36] as boiling down to whether her acquisition of Lady Beekman's tiara—that is, the Beekmans' colonial assets—is morally and legally legitimate. Although she is ultimately vindicated by the legal system—and although we know that she did not steal the tiara because we saw her very nicely ask Piggy for it—still, whether her relationship with Piggy is one of charming sincerity and innocence or is based on a cynical gold-digging desire to get his diamonds is very much open to debate. On the one hand, Monroe's character seems to be written as the archetypal gold-digging "dumb blond." Dyer points this out in *Stars*, drawing attention to how she expertly manipulates men.[37] The figure of the "dumb blond" is already rife with contradictions, for this figure is supposed to be simultaneously stupid and calculating, lazy and ambitious, clueless and manipulative. Monroe's performance of the role, however, seems to add several more layers of complexity to

these characteristics, for as Dyer shows in *Heavenly Bodies*, her star image is centered around innocence, infantilism, irrationality, and guilelessness, particularly regarding sex.[38] Her tone of voice throughout the scene in which she asks Piggy for the tiara is a tender falsetto, and her performance suggests either complete sincerity or an extremely good simulation of complete sincerity. It is as though it has never occurred to her that there is any moral difference between the two. Her performance is "contradictory to the point of incoherence."[39] So, I think there is some room to read the film against the grain and posit that it at least opens up the possibility of a reading in which the film is a satire of American imperialist capitalism, where two brazen American women enact American imperialism comedically upon a stodgy European aristocracy. In a way, this is even more interesting than an unproblematic buttressing of American expansionism would be, because a thing can only be effectively satirized if it is familiar to its audience. That Hollywood's imperialist views of Europe might be successfully lampooned is indicative of its pervasiveness, of its familiarity to American audiences. In any case, though, whether satirically or seriously, the film seems to be allegorically enacting an American conquest of Europe.

The significance of Monroe and Russell's curvy, decorative bodies within this allegorical reading of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* cannot be overstated. Their beauty functions as a symbol of American consumer capitalism—a shop window for the American way of life, as Mulvey puts it.[40] Monroe's extreme blondeness, in particular, stands out against the film's portrayal of French people as racially otherized. In the only scene in the film in which Paris is shown to have any street life, the number "When Love Goes Wrong," the Parisians by and large have dark hair and skin and wear peasant or Oriental clothing (several are wearing fezzes), while Monroe and Russell's gleaming whiteness, flawless makeup, and perfectly tailored clothing eroticize them as objects of consumer capitalist desire in a racist framework of domination. When the women sing "When love goes wrong, nothing goes right," this may be read as a comment on the superiority of the American empire, based as it (supposedly) is on persuasiveness, charm, or "love" rather than force. The Parisian cityscape of this number is poor, dingy, and populated by people coded as "ethnic"—the result of "love" having gone wrong for the French in the course of the two world wars and the loss of their empire. Paris is in this film a city whose time has past. It is now relegated to the colonial

periphery within a new American framework, ripe for capitalist domination by the women's curvy bodies, as they begin to climb their way to the top in showbiz there.

Fiona Handyside argues that *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* repurposes the usual gender dynamics of the male gaze, recruiting the gaze instead for an American nationalist ideology. She argues that during the transatlantic cruise the women undermine the male gaze, taking ownership of it for themselves. They seem conscious on some level that their to-be-looked-at-ness amounts to an accrual of power. The men of the film have a tendency to "collapse on top of one another" when confronted with these two marvelous beauties, a fact that the women repeatedly use to their own advantage.[41] Moreover, they are shown to gaze upon the male body in ways analogous to how women are usually gazed upon, as projections of the looker's desire.[42] Dorothy's number "Is There Anyone Here for Love?" displays the bodies of beefcake male athletes as abstracted objects of sensuality, while Lorelei fantasizes that a man's head is an enormous diamond. When the boat arrives in Paris, Handyside argues, this sense that the gaze in this film is owned by the women, not the men, begins to serve a new purpose, one that is political. As the two women travel through Paris in taxicabs, we get numerous POV shots of the landmarks they see. The film's inversion of the gaze amounts to its realignment "along nationalized rather than gendered lines."[43] Once the women have been established as "powerful sexual . . . free agents," their visual consumption of the tourist sites of Paris marks them analogously as economic free agents, "symbolic of capitalist modernity."[44] Using Urry's argument that tourism is a form of visual consumption, Handyside argues that the two women, enacting a "tourist gaze" upon the French capital, are thereby marked as representatives of a more powerful nation, America.[45] Their gaze becomes "inflected by national difference rather than gender difference,"[46] as their scopic power is transferred to their nationally inflected position as Americans in a foreign country that they gaze upon and hence control.

Handyside's analysis is very insightful indeed and provides useful concepts for the present discussion, yet I'd also like to gently press against her claim that national identity replaces gender identity in terms of its significance. On the contrary, gendered gazing remains tightly bound up with the dominating power of these American women. Let's look closer at the crucial sequence in which the

A backlot–made street scene set in Paris, viewed in POV by Dorothy and Lorelei in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Twentith Century Fox, 1953).

women arrive in Paris and take a brief tour in a taxicab. After the boat docks, the next three shots are stock-like footage of, respectively, the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, and the Opéra. Each is shown only for a couple of seconds—just long enough to identify them—and none is marked as the POV of any particular person. This is the kind of brief montage that, in classical Hollywood film language, might be used to establish any new location. At this point we cut to the two women in the back of a taxicab. At first they are looking straight ahead, not out the window, but then something catches first Dorothy's eye and then Lorelei's, and there is an ensuing POV sequence of crosscutting between brief scenes of Paris streets (a sidewalk café, the exterior of a nightclub, both clearly shot in a backlot), alternated with shots of the women looking amused and delighted. The entire Paris arrival sequence so far has lasted about twenty-five seconds. This is the sum total of anything approaching a spectacular view of Paris in this film, but it is extremely brief and condensed.

Unlike so many other films about American tourists in Europe, such as those set in Italy (see Ian Jarvie's contribution to this volume), which often linger extensively on POV and panoramic shots to spectacularize European landscapes,

A studio-constructed version of the Balenciaga storefront in Paris, superimposed by a mannequin display in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Twentieth Century Fox, 1953).

in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* this sequence functions as a kind of shorthand. It is hardly more than a set of establishing shots before the action can move forward, as the images signify "Paris" with startling efficiency—a kind of automated Other, signifying generic foreignness or abroadness. This, if nothing else, ought to prove that an analogy with Orientalism is appropriate: how rapidly and emblematically such establishing shots signify otherness to an American audience, as though this world metropolis can be reduced to a few tourist landmarks.

Yet at the same time, if we continue with the opening of the Paris sequence in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, it becomes apparent that this imperial gaze does not move away from gender politics but instead is inextricable from patriarchy. In the second part of the sequence, we cut back to the women for a final time. Dorothy now asks the French taxi driver to take them shopping for clothes. He speaks only French, yet he smiles knowingly. We then see a luscious montage of the most famous Paris fashion houses: Schiaparelli, Dior, Lelong, Guerlain, and Balenciaga. The beautiful goods they display are superimposed over shots of their sparkling exteriors, beckoning us into these lustrous centers of fashion. The fashion-oriented second half of this arrival sequence is accompanied by soaring

down-tempo rubato string music that highlights fashion and beauty consumerism as an emotional focal point for the women. Although we do not see the women on their shopping trip, we finally cut back to the interior of the taxi, with Dorothy and Lorelei surrounded by brightly colored packages, smiling contentedly, having just spent a good deal of money (as Dorothy declares). Shopping, not sightseeing, is the attraction that got them out wandering Paris before they have even set foot in their hotel. Handyside's claim that the "national gaze," as exemplified by Dorothy and Lorelei, is "freed up" to "belong to either gender" is clearly not the case.[47] Rather, their interaction with Paris is profoundly gendered. As noted in the introduction, Paris is strongly coded as a place for American women to go shopping—as the place whose fashion industry has historically produced the allure of the modern American woman. Paris is treated as the central and most important locus of the consumer gaze, the space where feminine fantasies can be fulfilled *par excellence*.

It seems especially significant, then, that the early 1950s saw the rise of an alliance between *haute couture* and Hollywood. Scholars have often sourced Audrey Hepburn as the origin of this trend, given her association with Givenchy as she rose to stardom beginning in 1954 with *Sabrina*. In fact, however, the majority of these musicals set on an ocean liner bound for Paris, which were made in 1952 and 1953, feature models and showgirls traveling to Paris to buy clothes, preceding *Sabrina* by a couple of years. Some are centrally focused on the fashion industry, while others merely include a buying sequence or two. The rise of high fashion in Hollywood cinema of the 1950s is a broader trend in which Hepburn certainly came to play a central role, yet the trend precedes her and cannot be attributed only to her influence. Rather, starting at least as early as 1952 there were resonant geopolitical symbolisms in American women buying and bringing home Parisian couture, appropriating the apogee of women's beauty production for American women.

These developments in 1950s American cinema give the impression of a shifting relationship of metropole to periphery. When American women freely move through and gaze upon Paris, consuming the fruits of the city's labor through their superior buying power, this creates an implicit claim about America's newfound status as imperial metropole. The buying trip turns Paris, once the seat of a global empire, into an Oriental bazaar for Americans. American

women's beauty was a marker of political/economic power in the United States of the 1950s. Paris becomes the space where American consumer capitalism is converted to world hegemony via the desired body of the dolled-up white American woman. Women here are both objects and subjects: their bodies are recruited into an imperialist symbolism even as their interior desires for consumer goods are used to justify colonialist expansion; their status as visual and narrative objects of conquest is made to coexist incoherently (in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* this is for comic effect) alongside their accrued power to enact a nationalist gaze on other cultures. The Paris musical is at the very epicenter of this jostling, chaotic relationship between American imperialist capitalism and American patriarchy.

## Notes

1. Robert R. Shandley, *Runaway Romances: Hollywood's Postwar Tour of Europe* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), xxiii.
2. There are also a handful of films made on location in Paris in the early 1960s, including *Paris Blues*, *In the French Style*, and *Paris When It Sizzles.*
3. Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 35.
4. Postwar Hollywood cinema's fascination with impressionism and other French painting traditions would merit study in its own right but will have to be put aside for present purposes. Examples include *Moulin Rouge* (John Huston, 1952) and *Lust for Life* (Vincente Minnelli, 1956).
5. Porter's Paris-set musicals include *Paris* (1928), *Fifty Million Frenchmen* (1929), *Anything Goes* (1934), *Du Barry Was a Lady* (1939), and finally *Can-Can* (1953), several of which were made into films at various points (sometimes more than once).
6. Jane Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical*, 2nd ed. (London: MacMillan, 1993), 73–75.
7. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), 26.
8. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), xxv.
9. Arnold Sywottek, "The Americanization of Everyday Life? Early Trends in Consumer and Leisure-Time Behavior." In *America and the Shaping of German Society, 1945–1955*, ed. Michael Ermarth (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 133; Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture (*London: MIT Press, 1996).
10. Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (London: University of California Press, 1993); Ralph Willett, *The Americanization of Germany, 1945–1949* (London: Routledge, 1989).
11. V. G. Kiernan, *America: The New Imperialism; From White Settlement to World Hegemony* (London: Zed, 1978); Lloyd C. Gardner, *Imperial America: American Foreign Policy since 1898* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976).
12. Geir Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945–1952," *Journal of Peace Research* 23, no. 3 (1986): 263–77.

13. Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through 20th-Century Europe* (London: Belknap, 2005), 3.
14. Ibid., 4–5.
15. Other scholars, such as Emily S. Rosenberg, broadly agree but argue that there was a material change from the prewar to the postwar periods: that American "cultural relations [with other countries were] a totally private endeavor" before 1938 and that only after World War II did these cultural relations become a matter of organized, unilateral government policy. See Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890–1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 220.
16. Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, 3rd ed (London: University of California Press, 1999); John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2nd ed. (London: Sage, 2002).
17. Endy, *Cold War Holidays*, 43.
18. Ibid., 54.
19. Ibid., 6.
20. Said, *Orientalism*, 8.
21. Vanessa R. Schwartz, *It's So French! Hollywood, Paris, and the Making of Cosmopolitan Film Culture* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
22. Andrew Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema: Costume Drama since 1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
23. Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, 3rd ed. (London: University of California Press, 1999).
24. Said, *Orientalism*, 58–62.
25. Ibid., 167.
26. Richard Dyer, "The Colour of Entertainment," in *Musicals: Hollywood and Beyond*, ed. Bill Marshall and Robynn Stillwell (Exeter, UK: Intellect, 2000), 27.
27. Said, *Orientalism,* 188.
28. 28. Rick Altman, *The American Film Musical* (London: British Film Institute, 1989).
29. Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (London: Macmillan, 1986); Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: British Film Institute, 1998).
30. Maureen Turim, "Gentlemen Consume Blondes," in *Movies and Methods*, Vol. 2, ed. Bill Nichols, (London: University of California Press, 1985), 369–78; Laura Mulvey, "*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*: Anita Loos/Howard Hawks/Marilyn Monroe," in *Howard Hawks: American Artist*, ed. Jim Hillier and Peter Wollen, 214–29 (London: British Film Institute, 1996); Lucie Arbuthnot and Gail Seneca, "Pre-Text and Text in Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism* (1990): 112–25; Alexander Doty, *Flaming Classics: Queering the Film Canon* (New York: Routledge, 2000).
31. Rachel Moseley, *Growing Up with Audrey Hepburn: Text, Audience, Resonance* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2002), 156.
32. Ibid., 136 (emphasis in original).
33. Charlotte Herzog, "'Powder Puff' Promotion: The Fashion Show-in-the-Film," in *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body*, ed. Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (London: Routledge, 1990), 134–59.
34. Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*.
35. Turim, "Gentlemen Consume Blondes," 375.

36. Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies*, 375.
37. Dyer, *Stars*, 147.
38. Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies*, 31.
39. Dyer, *Stars*, 146.
40. Mulvey, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, 214.
41. Fiona Handyside, "Beyond Hollywood, into Europe: The Tourist Gaze in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Hawks, 1953) and *Funny Face* (Donen, 1957)," *Studies in European Cinema* 1, no. 2 (2004): 83.
42. Ibid., 83.
43. Ibid., 80.
44. Ibid., 81.
45. Ibid., 80.
46. Ibid., 83.
47. Ibid.

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8

# In the Foucauldian Mirror

## Budd Boetticher's Mexico and the United States in the 1950s

**Saverio Giovacchini**

"[J]e recommence à porter mes yeux vers moi-même
et à me reconstituer là où je suis."

[I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself
and to reconstitute myself there where I am.]

Michel Foucault

## The Foucauldian Mirror

In the introduction to his essay "Des espaces autres," Michel Foucault ambitiously sketched a hypothesis for the entire genealogy of human topography. In three slim pages constituting what remains one of his most mind-blowing interpretive tours de force, the French activist and philosopher argued that the Middle Ages had defined space vertically and hierarchically from the terrestrial space ("lieu terrestre") all the way to the heavenly one ("lieu supracéleste"). In opposition to this older spatial hierarchization, Galileo Galilei defined space as open and infinite: the nonhierarchical, horizontal space of the discovery and the voyage. From the onset of the twentieth century onward, Foucault noted, we have tended to define spaces as neither vertical and hierarchical nor purely horizontal, open, and unknown ("infini, et infiniment ouvert"). Rather, we now see space as prominently determined by connections and relations of proximity ("define par les relations de voisinage"). After this flamboyant begin-

ning, Foucault rather radically narrowed the focus of his essay and professed to be interested only in those spaces that have some specific connection to the place we normally inhabit, without, however, losing their alterity from it. These spaces are

> certains d'entre qui ont la curieuse propriété d'être en rapport avec tous les autres emplacements, mais sur un mode tel qu'ils suspendent, neutralisent ou inversent l'ensemble des rapports qui se trouvent, par eux, désignés, reflétés ou réfléchis. Ces espaces, en quelque sorte, . . . sont en liaison avec tous les autres, qui contredisent pourtant tous les autres emplacements[1] [certain ones that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invent the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect. These spaces, as it were, are linked with all the others, which however contradicts all the other sites].[2]

Foucault identified two major groupings of these connected and yet other spaces: the *utopia*, which is unreal insofar as it presents society in its perfected, nonexisting form ("c'est la société elle-même perfectionnée"), and the *heterotopias*. The latter are real spaces ("réels," "effectifs"), but since they function in some sort of opposition to the rules governing the normative and "normal" spaces, they come to constitute kinds of countersites ("contre-emplacements"). In the heterotopias, the dominant rules are "represented, contested, and inverted" ("représentés, contestés et inversés"). Examples of these spaces of inversion are the cemetery (the city of the dead within the primary city of the living), the boarding school where the rules of the adult world are both explicated and upended, the asylum (the city of the "abnormal"), and, of course, the movie theater.

Although Eurocentric, Foucault's sweeping theoretical gesture directly speaks to many of the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries concerns and specifically addresses our renewed attention to globalization processes and the increased connection between peoples and nations. Film scholars, in particular Miriam Hansen in her seminal *Babel and Babylon*, have also fruitfully used the Foucauldian indication of the movie theater as heterotopia.[3] Adrián Pérez Melgosa has used the concept of utopia to describe cabaret scenes in "Good

Neighbor Musicals" made in the 1930s and 1940s.[4] Yet other aspects of Foucault's provocative essay may be gainfully used. In particular, I am interested in the concept that Foucault posits in between the two spaces of the utopia and the heterotopia but is not identifiable with either, what he calls the "*hybridized experience of the mirror*" ("une sorte d'expérience mixte . . . qui serait le miroir").[5] The conceptualization of the space of the mirror follows the philosopher's interpretation of all modern spaces. Just like these, the mirror is a physical space, extant, connected to ours, and wrapped up in questions of proximity. The space of the mirror is thus as real as the frame of the object. It contributes to defining our space, and it exists together with us. But at the same time, this space is also utopian and unreal. Different from the existing heterotopias of the movie theater and the nickelodeon, the space of mirror is also a pure nonextant image, made possible by projection and gaze. It reflects the viewer's gaze and shows her in a place, the mirrored space, in which she really is not. And this scopic and virtual space becomes powerfully revealing. By reflecting the viewer's gaze back to her own eyes, it unveils her to herself in the context of her own world:

> À partir de ce regard qui en quelque sorte se porte sur moi, du fond de cet espace virtuel qui est de l'autre côté de la glace, je reviens vers moi et je recommence à porter mes yeux vers moi-même et à me reconstituer là où je suis [Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am].[6]

This chapter starts from, and riffs upon, Foucault's insight. My theoretical argument is that the cinema I shall be dealing with, specifically the Hollywood bullfighting films made by Oscar "Budd" Boetticher Jr. in and about Mexico during the 1950s, may be interpreted and studied as a sort of Foucauldian mirror.

Like the material frame of Foucault's mirror, the material structure that sustained these movies was real, tangible, and historical. In the first part of this chapter, I shall briefly examine the history of Hollywood's south-of-the-border investments. This material structure is exactly what makes the space of the mirror—the image it contains—possible. The portrait of Mexico emerging from

these films was also modern and antiutopian, as it revealed Mexico not as the fanciful, stereotypical, antithesis of the United States but rather in direct proximity, real and symbolical, with it.

Like the image in Foucault's mirror, these pictures were also both utopian and revealing. One would have an easy job in dismantling the pretense of authenticity of these upper-class melodramas, although most of them were shot on real locations and some of them on the soundstages of Estudios Churubusco in Mexico City that Hollywood and the Mexican film industry built in 1943. Yet these images were also exposing the American, if not the Mexican, reality: together, these shots of Mexico City nightclubs, arenas, and bullfighters contributed to reconstituting the United States ("je reviens vers moi et je recommence à porter mes yeux vers moi-même et à me reconstituer là où je suis") before the eyes of their viewers, mostly American. My reading of the Mexican, and quasi-Mexican, films of this important—if slightly underestimated—American filmmaker suggests that while built on a real, structural connection between the two contiguous and related film industries, these films often used Mexico to uncover before the American spectator what America was not and what it could be.[7]

## The Building of the Mirror: World War II Collaboration

The 1940 film *Arizona*, directed and produced by Wesley Ruggles (the director of the epic 1931 western *Cimarron*), illustrates the typical portrayal of Mexico in Hollywood films of the 1930s. Like *Cimarron*—which focused on the settling of the Indian Territory of Oklahoma in the early 1890s—*Arizona* dealt with the "civilizing" of the farthest corners of the American nation from the point of view of her Anglo-Saxon farmers, a much-celebrated breed in New Deal America. The fairly expansive narrative of the film focuses on Phoebe Titus (Jean Arthur), a tough businesswoman who runs a freight operation she later converts into a cattle ranch, all while sporting a "masculine gait" and a readiness "to meet the tough hombres on a frontier settlement on their own tough terms."[8] When Phoebe settles in Tucson, Arizona—a ramshackle community of shacks and mud houses inhabited by ragged Native Americans and Mexicans—her romance with and eventual marriage to white settler Peter Muncie (William Holden) links the taming of an unruly woman to the taming of the frontier. Like Tucson, Phoebe

is badly in need of the civilizing contact of a white male, and the plot links together the capacity of the land and the lady to bear fruit. Meanwhile, the film describes Mexicans as irrelevant and Native Americans as a continuous threat to the whites' mission. The Apache chief Mano is a half-naked, half-literate devil, eager to plot the destruction of the white settlers.

The absence of Mexico and Mexicans is quite striking in the film, given that its story occurs in proximity to the border. *Arizona* was shot close to Tucson, on the soundstages of the Old Tucson Studios. Then and now, these ateliers are close to U.S. 19, which connects Tucson with the border city of Nogales, the only highway in the United States that measures distance in kilometers rather than miles as a concession to the many Mexicans who travel it daily. Yet any Mexican contiguity is effaced in *Arizona*'s images of white settlers fighting against a hostile and savage environment. The Foucauldian mirror that this film constitutes shows an America unperturbed by the spatial contiguity with Mexico and its people.

The disappearance of Mexico that occurs in *Arizona* was far from exceptional in 1930s Hollywood cinema. According to film historian Carl J. Mora, Hollywood's portraits of Latin America were then both rare and, when existing, "offensive."[9] Interestingly, in the war years Hollywood became more and more invested in a respectful representation of Mexico and its people. In a series of seminal articles, historian Seth Fein has reoriented our interpretation of the wartime building of what I would term a new kind of Foucauldian mirror. Previously characterized as a moment of national and nationalistic rebirth for the Mexican film industry, the period that followed the release of *Arizona* was also a moment of intense collaboration between Hollywood and the Mexican film industry, which the nationalist tone of the kind of cinema produced by both the United States and Mexico obscured.

On the Mexican side even in its heyday, the Hollywood–Mexico City cooperation was couched in what Fein calls a "pseudonationalist discourse."[10] Mexican films stressed national Mexican themes while being deeply embedded in a very intense transnational collaboration with the Hollywood studios. As for the United States, Hollywood went to war and produced films that were often bombastic in their celebration of American virtues and skimpy in their praise of the Allies' efforts.[11] Yet Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy found

a way to influence Hollywood films. With Executive Order 8840 issued on July 30, 1941, Roosevelt established the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA), created in August 1940, as part of the Executive Office of the President. In 1940 he had named Nelson Rockefeller to head the OCIAA. Earlier in 1941, Rockefeller had made a case for Hollywood producing more respectful pictures about the region and using local resources and sets rather than shooting Mexico on a Hollywood soundstage. Rockefeller argued that Hollywood needed to do a better job with Latin American subjects, shoot some of its films *in loco*, and help the production of Allies-friendly Mexican films via financing and exportation of know-how.[12] Prompted by Washington, in March 1941 Hollywood created the Motion Pictures Society for the Americas with the aim to coordinate Hollywood efforts with those of the OCIAA and especially with its motion picture division, headed by influential businessman and film producer John Hay "Jock" Whitney.[13] At first, Hollywood was not impressed by Rockefeller's ideas. Unnamed Hollywood producers told *Variety* that they "rated productions away from Hollywood as unsound" and that there was not much that the OCIAA could do to coerce them into obedience.[14] In June 1941, the Mexican government was still wary of Hollywood's well-tested modus operandi of shooting pictures filled with racist stereotypes, only to edit them for distribution in Latin America. That month, *Daily Variety* reported that a new law established that American pictures needed to apply for distribution in Mexico in the same format as they had been distributed in the United States.[15]

After July 1941 and the president's *imprimatur*, the OCIAA had more power to enforce its vision. The office strongly encouraged Hollywood to invest in the Mexican film industry, as its personnel thought that Mexican films were essential for selling U.S. foreign policy and vision to Latin American countries. The period that followed the entry of the United States into World War II ushered in the heyday of what is generally known as the golden age of Mexican cinema, spurred on by several of Mexico City's studios that profited from Yankee financing and Hollywood aid and expertise in marketing and producing pictures. In April 1942 the Banco Nacional de México, with the approval of Mexican president Àvila Camacho, finally created the Banco Cinematografico to provide financing for the national film industry. The Mexican Interior Ministry formed the Comité Coordinator y de Fomento de la Industria Cinematográfica

Mexicana. Rather than nationalist, however, this restructuring needs to be seen in the context of U.S.-Mexican transnational collaboration. Uneven relations of power still ruled the financial exchange. Both the Banco Cinematografico and the Comité "streamlined the Mexican industry's collaboration with the OCIAA . . . [and] integrated national production within a Hollywood-led international system."[16]

Good relations with Mexico City's film industry were in America's interest. U.S. ambassador to Mexico George Messersmith understood that Washington could not achieve what Mexican cinema could: "Spanish language pictures produced in Mexico would have a much more acceptable reception in other American republics than those produced in the US."[17] Mexico's film studios grew during World War II and, in fact, produced many pro-Allied films, though couched, like the historical melodrama *¡Mexicanos al grito de Guerra!* (1943), in nationalist terms.[18] At the end of the conflict movie production was the third-largest Mexican industry, employing thirty-two thousand workers in four large studios capitalized at forty million dollars.[19] In 1946, British critic H. H. Wollenberg noted that "[a]n important film industry has developed in Mexico City, where two large modern sound studios—the Clasa (10 stages) and the Azteca (18 stages)—are now in full operation."[20]

Successful though it was, this collaboration was to evaporate rather rapidly after the war, when Hollywood reclaimed control of the first-run theaters and the Mexican market for A-quality films. In the 1950s some attempts were made to right the course, but Hollywood investments in local production dwindled, and its distribution hegemony grew. By 1960 *Variety* deemed that the Hollywood production romance with Mexico was over. American capital was out of Estudios Churubusco, and the Mexican government was planning to buy a private theater chain, the Gabriel Alarcon chain, to set it up as an exclusive venue for beleaguered local A-class productions.[21]

Throughout World War II, however, relations were tight, and it was not just Mexico that profited. Washington's foreign policy got a favorable airing, and Hollywood consolidated its inroad into the Mexican film industry. Nor should we pay exclusive attention to the institutional aspect of this collaboration. The Mexican experience did change American films and filmmakers. In the first half of the decade, American studios opened affiliated facilities in Mexico

City. During the war the president and vice president of RKO, N. Peter Rathvon and Phil Reisman, respectively, the latter also a member of the OCIAA, bought into the newly opened soundstages in the city's neighborhood of Churubusco that had been built by American industrialist Harry Wright in collaboration with local entrepreneur Emilio Azcárraga Vidaurreta in 1943.[22] Overall, the U.S.-Mexican collaboration involved capital and personnel and changed lives and perceptions. Catherine Benamou has aptly investigated important elements of Orson Welles's "Pan-American odyssey" during the war, but the director of *Citizen Kane* was not the only filmmaker to cross, and often recross, the border.[23] To give only a few examples of the many possible ones, Mexican director of photography Gabriel Figueroa, who had trained in Hollywood in the 1930s with Gregg Toland, was back in Mexico filming *The Fugitive* (1947). The Mexican-born and Hollywood-trained star Dolores del Rio went back to working in Mexico City after 1943.[24] Hollywood cinematographer Alex Philips and director Norman Forster went to Mexico and settled there.[25]

American filmmakers such as Herbert Kline and Alexander Hammid (born in Linz as Alexandr Hackenschmied) traveled south of the border to film stories of Mexican heroism including the semidocumentary *Forgotten Village* (1941) along with John Steinbeck, who wrote the commentary for that film. *Forgotten Village* anticipated postwar neorealism and found a partial echo in one of the main products of the Mexican golden age, *Río Escondido* (1947).[26] Kline stayed on and codirected *Cinco fueron escogidos* (1943, Five Were Chosen) with Augustín Delgado from a story by Hollywood screenwriter Budd Schulberg. The film was shot in Mexico in two versions, one in Spanish and the other in English with two partly different casts. The cast for the English version, including Howard Da Silva, was recruited mostly from the personnel of New York's progressive theater ensemble, the Group Theater.[27] Mexico remained at the center of Kline's concerns even after the end of the war. In the early 1950s, the progressive filmmaker directed his own (and Aben Kandel's) screen adaptation of Jack London's tale of transnational revolution set in the El Paso–Ciudad Juarez borderland. *The Fighter* (1952) starred Group Theater alumni Lee J. Cobb and Richard Conte.

Prompted by the government, Hollywood studios did shift the filming of Spanish-themed stories to Mexico. It was already the case for *Blood and Sand* (1941), which saw the collaboration between Rouben Mamoulian and Oscar "Budd" Boetticher Jr., the protagonist of our story.[28] In the aftermath of the film,

Twentieth Century Fox vice president of productions Darryl Zanuck explored possibilities for further productions with his man in Mexico City, Gus Mohme.[29] At the end of the war when John Ford wanted to shoot Dudley Nichols's adaptation of Graham Green's novel *The Labyrinthine Ways* (aka *The Power and the Glory*, 1940), about governmental persecution of the Catholic Church in the 1930s, there was no longer any doubt that the film was to be shot on location. The resulting movie, *The Fugitive* (released in 1947), was shot at RKO's Estudios Churubusco in Mexico City. After the credits, an offscreen voice announces that the film "was entirely made in our neighboring Republic Mexico, at the kind invitation of the Mexican government and of the Mexican motion picture industry." Produced by Ford's and Merian C. Cooper's company Argosy Films and starring Henry Fonda, Dolores del Rio, and del Rio's collaborator, Mexican actor Pedro Armendariz, *The Fugitive* saw important directorial contributions by prominent Mexican filmmaker Emilio Fernández (who is credited as associate producer). The film did a great job at mixing Hollywood's own profit-seeking goals with good neighborism, a defense of religious freedom, and a style redolent of Fernàndez aesthetics.[30]

## Boetticher's Bullfighters in the Foucauldian Mirror

One of the people who went to Mexico in this period was Budd Boetticher, though at first his traveling had little to do with cinema. Born in 1916 in Evansville near Chicago and adopted by the family of an affluent hardware manufacturer, he had been a star athlete at Ohio University, where he excelled in boxing and football. In 1939 the young man traveled to Mexico to convalesce from a knee operation that had effectively ended his sporting career.

By his own account, Boetticher's Mexican stay matured him. In his autobiography *When in Disgrace*, the director described Mexico as the specular image of the United States. Mexico City is akin to Los Angeles, and upon arriving, the young man is smoothly driving his American car, a La Salle convertible, to the Regis, his hotel in the center of the city.[31] If similar to Los Angeles, Mexico City is also freer, more interesting. In fact, like the Foucauldian mirror, the city reveals to the young man exactly what his own culture is missing. Boetticher starts dating Ruth D'Laurage, an older woman and sex entrepreneur only two years younger than his mother. Ruth is smart and sophisticated and shows Budd around Mexico City, introducing him to famous *toreadors*. In his 1989 memoir,

Boetticher makes clear that Ruth was more his teacher than his lover. She is as in charge in the bedroom as she is in her business and, like Boetticher's matadors in his future movies, much more experienced and accepting of the ways of the world than the young *gringo*. The night they meet, the two sleep together. Budd has already lost his virginity, but with Ruth he leaves "his boyishness" and "any insecurity" behind.[32] When Boetticher and his companion, Tom, marvel at the gay men who are in her employment, Ruth chides them as if they were two country bumpkins, noting that "there's nothing 'wrong' with any of my help," they just happen to be gay and in love with each other.[33]

Boetticher stayed on in Mexico, allegedly to learn bullfighting, until 1940 when, mostly thanks to his college friend Hall Roach Jr., he found employment as a consultant for Rouben Mamoulian's bullfight film, *Blood and Sand* (1941), a remake of Rudolph Valentino's 1922 star vehicle. The story by Vicente Blasco Ibáñez famously took place in Spain. Mamoulian, however, did the shooting of key sequences in Mexico City, where the film had its premiere. *Variety*, which was usually discreet about nepotistic hiring, reported that Boetticher had been hired as "technical advisor" because he was "an American bull-fighter." Boetticher perhaps thought better of taking his chances with real bulls in the arena and under the scrutiny of film cameras, and he had the studio hire one of his friends, *torero* Fermín Espinosa "Armillita," as a stand-in for Tyrone Power.[34]

Back in the States, Budd capitalized on his Mexican experience and did some work in the lower tiers of the Hollywood factory. A 1944 clipping describes him as gifted but curiously devoid of ambition. Upon finding a job at Columbia, Boetticher was happy to remain an assistant director and "to get the actors to the set on time, to do the book keeping, [and] to keep the beauties calm." It was producer Irving Briskin, who was in charge of Columbia's B-picture unit, who asked him to direct his first quickie, which Budd did after asking to observe a man he deemed the master of the genre, Lew Landers, direct his B film *U-Boat Prisoner* (1944). The article notes that the young man's enthusiasm was still for Mexico's bulls and bullfighting. He was happy to don his gold-braided pants, sword, and cloak and demonstrate his bullfighting skills on an empty soundstage. The reporter concluded by noting that Budd, while likeable and effective, "is no genius."[35]

Boetticher's first prestige film was *The Bullfighter and the Lady* (1951), largely

based on his experience as an American-born aspiring matador in Mexico. By then, Boetticher had a somewhat sketchy résumé as director of B movies. He was an unassuming and popular young man, and many established Hollywoodians took an interest in his first big movie. Republic star in residence John Wayne produced *The Bullfighter and the Lady* for the studio, and Wayne's own Pygmalion, John Ford, pared the film down to 87 minutes when Republic deemed the director's cut too long.[36] Thanks to UCLA film archives, Boetticher's cut, which at 124 minutes is one-third longer than the version released in 1951, is now available. In this version, the film is stunning. In 1951 it was not possible to show the mauling and killing of the bulls, but in the final sequence Boetticher used slow motion and filmed from the bull's imaginary point of view to create baroque and emphatic shots that captured the violence and pathos of the last moments of the *corrida*.[37] Furthermore, the film exhibited what a reviewer termed a "fondness for the Mexican scene" that set the film apart from Hollywood production.[38] Shot entirely south of the border in Estudios Churubusco of Mexico City, the film showed that Hollywood studios were back in Mexico after the chilling that had followed the end of World War II.[39] Mexican banks were now willing to finance Hollywood productions, and the Mexican government was "enticing American production Southward."[40] In 1951 Miguel Aleman Jr., the son of Mexico's president, set up Cinematografica Tele Voz in Mexico City, a company that explicitly tried to resurrect World War II collaboration between Hollywood producers and Mexico City's studios.[41]

*The Bullfighter and the Lady* shows who is gaining—at least symbolically—from the exchange. The story of Broadway producer John Regan (Robert Stack), who decides to abandon his New York career and become a *torero*, the film is about the comparison between the lifestyle of the United States and that of Mexico. It is a surprisingly invidious comparison out of which comes the recognition of the superiority of the latter. Regan is traveling to Mexico accompanied by his business partner Barney Flood (John Hubbard) and his wife Lisbeth (Virginia Grey), a former Broadway comedienne. Boetticher introduces them with some irony, bordering on visual cruelty. The three gringos are at a *corrida* observing the bloody dance of bulls and toreros from their seats. The shot emphasizes their position as spectators rather than participants high above the arena, accompanied by a Mexican admirer of Lisbeth's, and safe from its commerce of

Far from the action: American tourists at the bullfight arena in *The Bullfighter and the Lady* (John Wayne Productions, 1951).

blood—their distance emphasized by the binoculars that Boetticher also uses to frame the shot.

Later on in an upscale lounge, John sends several expensive bottles to the table of Mexican bullfighter Manolo Estrada (Gilbert Roland).[42] The gesture references economic inequalities between the two countries and the stereotype of Americans sending goods to the poor southern cousins. Here, however, this type of exchange does not work: the bullfighter politely thanks John but sends the bottles back to the table of the Americans. It will take more than cash to buy Mexico's respect.

The plot of *The Bullfighter and the Lady* is about John trying to graduate from his status as outsider by becoming a torero himself. The film is also the story of clumsy Americans trying to break into a cultural milieu that is perceived as nobler and more sophisticated than their own. Thus, *The Bullfighter and the Lady* also becomes a commentary on American culture and society and the description of a journey toward deeper human understanding as well as liberation from the ever-present (in Hollywood) mediation of commercial culture.

Specularity reigns here, but the Mexican image is not just a reflection of the United States. In fact, it constitutes its liberated version. Much in the personae of John and Manolo is symmetrical, though curiously different in important

The binocular-shaped iris emphasizes the American tourists' distance from the life-and-death moment unfolding in the arena in *The Bullfighter and the Lady* (John Wayne Productions, 1951).

details. They are both entertainers and public figures, but while the American struggles with a creeping sense of dissatisfaction and inauthenticity, the Mexican makes his living by actions that have direct life-and-death consequences. Symptomatically, Manolo and John are both sportsmen, both skilled in the use of deadly weapons. But while Manolo tests his ability with sword and cape against raging thousand-pound bulls, John's sport is about shooting simulations of real animals. He is a champion skeet shooter, the clay disks functioning as a mediated "representation" of a real, and rather inoffensive, life. John's profession is all about the *representation* of the real, while Manolo's lies in bloody contact with the reality and the possibility of death.

Authenticity, however, cannot be bought; it can only be earned through a spiritual journey of liberation from the inauthentic. These American tourists manifest a desire for tasting the real life, breaking away from the traps and continuous mediation that characterize their lives up North. Like in Boetticher's autobiography, in the film much of this quest is sexualized. The effort to "become Mexican" almost separates Lisbeth from Barney, as she seems interested in experiencing the company of young matadors. For John, the awakening is also about contemplating the variable of homosexual relationships. In Boetticher's

autobiography *When in Disgrace*, Ruth freed the young man of his constraints and taboos. Later in Boetticher's recounting, Mexico had the same effect on the crew of Mamoulian's *Blood and Sand*. During their journey home, character actor Laird Cregar came out as gay to the entire crew after hearing jokes and innuendos about himself. His public coming out at the end of their stay in Mexico City educates everybody:

> "[P]erhaps *all* of you, have been circulating the rumor that I *am . . . queer.*" I was standing next to Ty and I heard him suck in his breath. Believe me, nobody moved. "Well," he finally continued, "I want to assure you, here and now . . . that I *AM!"* Then he burst out laughing, turned and strode into his dressing room. I like to think that I was the first to applaud, but I'm not really sure. Maybe it was spontaneous, but it was real. I know every one of us felt like the lowest form of animal life. Remember, this was 1941. We all told "fag" jokes then.[43]

In *The Bullfighter and the Lady*, John is, to use James Gilbert's expression, a "man in the middle," redefining his own gender identity in the middle of the "masculinity crisis" of 1950s America.[44] He is attracted to Anita de la Vega (Joy Page), but obviously he is also sentimentally involved with Manolo Estrada. Boetticher, who also authored the original story of the film, openly references the deepening and broadening of John's own understanding of masculinity and sexuality. the film hints at a possibly gay *torero*, Antonio (whom John erroneously thinks is Anita's lover until she tells him that she and Manolo are not lovers, nor will they "ever" be: "It was easier to let them think that way"). John also has his conversation with Manolo about Antonio and Anita while both men stand, comfortably naked, in a Mexico City bathhouse. It was one of the scenes in the film where men revealed their feelings to each other. "All that chi-chi crap" between men, Boetticher later recalled, made John Ford uncomfortable.[45]

The same theme of Mexico and Latin America as locus of American palingenesis and liberation is part of other more conventional movies by Boetticher, such as the B western *Cimarron Kid* (1952), where World War II hero-turned-actor Audie Murphy plays the title character (aka Bill Doolin) and dreams of escaping his troubles by going south of the border with his girlfriend Carrie

(Beverly Tyler). Anticipating the moral nuances of Boetticher's Ranown Cycle westerns, *The Cimarron Kid* is told from the outlaws' point of view and has the notably interracial gang chased by cruel lawmen.[46] In contrast to the harshness of U.S. law, Mexico and Latin America represent safety and spiritual regeneration. Rose (Yvette Duguay), the Mexican girlfriend of one of the outlaws, Bitter Creek Dalton (James Best), who is herself a full-time member of the crew, prays to the Virgin of Guadalupe on behalf of the group's safety. The "kid" intends to follow the advice of another bandit who muses that if he can make it alive out of one last heist, he will go south and give himself another chance: "Argentina. No fooling, I am going to buy me a cattle ranch there. There is a new world for a man like me. Nobody to know I was ever an outlaw. No fear somebody will take a potshot at me just to make his reputation."[47]

In *Wings of the Hawk* (1953), lensed in 3D by Clifford Stine, Van Heflin is "Irish" Gallagher, an American miner-entrepreneur digging for gold in Mexico who decides to fight on the side of the Mexican Revolution after experiencing the corruption of Porfirio Diaz's *federales* and falling in love with the beautiful Mexican guerrilla leader Rachel (Julia Adams). At the end of the film, Gallagher sacrifices his gold mine in order to save Rachel and allow the rebels to take Ciudad Juarez. *Wings of the Hawk* is in some aspects a very generic "hemispheric romance"—to use Adrián Pérez Melgosa's expression—structured around the love story between Irish and Rachel and fraught with stock characters such as the evil colonel Ruiz (George Dolenz) and the jilted lover of Rachel, Arturo (Rodolfo Acosta), who turns informer. Yet contrary to most of Cold War Hollywood's "hemispheric romances" analyzed by Melgosa, where "the cure for [the American male's] condition invariably is found in the arms of an American woman from the U.S.," Gallagher finds real—and, for all we know, enduring—love with his Mexican lover.[48] Boetticher infuses the story with sincere admiration for Mexico and its people, which stands in direct contrast with the "derogatory stereotype" of Mexicans that was typical of the contemporary western genre.[49] Boetticher neither mythicizes Mexican characters as saints nor marks them as primitive fools.[50] Instead, *Wings of the Hawk* presents a wide spectrum of Mexicanness. The film's portrait of Mexico includes the sophisticated evil of Colonel Ruiz, the integrity of Rachel and of many of the *insurrectos,* and, in between, the *realpolitik* of the Mexican military leader, Orozco, who justifies his love for

tequila and guerrillas by stating that "it takes all kinds to win the revolution, my friend: the thieves, the saints and the bandits! Not all good not all bad, but all for Mexico." Finally, *Wings of the Hawk* bends generic conventions to go back to one of Boetticher's familiar themes, the conversion of the *gringo*, by telling the story of Gallagher's palingenesis from profit seeking and gold mines to human understanding and love.

Although differently gendered, almost the same story as *The Bullfighter and the Lady* or *Wings of the Hawk* is at the center of *The Magnificent Matador*, a film that few saw during its release in May 1955 or have seen since. Like *The Bullfighter and the Lady*, *The Magnificent Matador* was shot entirely in Mexico at Estudios Churubusco and in the streets of Mexico City.[51] It was independently produced by Edward Alperson with financing from Mexican banks and a release contract from Twentieth Century Fox, which advertised it as showing the "grandeur of Mexico . . . its vast plains, its towering mountains, its thundering herds of giant fighting bulls."[52] Karen Harrison (Maureen O'Hara), a spoiled heiress living in Mexico City, is Boetticher's recurring character of the American outsider. Like John Regan did in *The Bullfighter and the Lady*, Karen has an American couple in tow, Mona and Jody Wilton (Lola Albright and William Ching). She also has a gringo paramour, Mark Russell (Richard Denning), whose mannerisms and evil ways Boetticher contrasts with the authenticity and sincerity of the aging bullfighter Luis Santos (Anthony Quinn), with whom Karen falls in love. Once again, *The Magnificent Matador* depicts Mexico in specular continuity with, rather than in opposition to, the United States. Boetticher and his director of photography, Lucien Ballard, the future collaborator of Sam Peckinpah, shoot Mexico City away from any social melodrama, emphasizing the city's postwar modernity; ample boulevards, modern highways, and fashionable apartment buildings; and material connections to the more traditional culture of bullfighting (the *plaza de toros*). Symptomatically, they ignore the poverty and squalor of Mexico City's slums and the street urchins filmed by Luis Buñuel in his great fresco of Mexican urban poverty, *Los Olvidados* (1950). The absence of Mexican poverty turns Mexico City into a setting that does not differ much from the classic urban scenery of 1950s Hollywood romantic melodramas. Yet, Boetticher's Mexico City is not Los Angeles either. As similar as it is to the United States, Mexican culture and especially bullfighting, its metonymic partner, represent

a jolt of reality and unmediated truth that blows the veneer of the Americans' inauthentic life-world. Again, Boetticher referenced bullfighting in comparison with other "sports" (the tennis and hotel pool swimming that American tourists practice in the film) and defines it as the "authentic" activity in opposition to tired, mediated ones. Embracing Mexico (she tellingly switches her drinking preferences from whiskey to tequila), Karen gets to tap into her real self, which Boetticher here identified in strongly religious terms.

*The Magnificent Matador* begins with the American tourists visiting the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe. They are touched by the visit but in a very superficial way, though afterward Mark jokes that he "got religion." Karen is definitely one of them, another American outsider lounging at the border of the Mexican pool of life. In contrast, Luis arrives at the shrine to pay his heartfelt respects to the Virgin. His ways are contrasted as authentic and unmediated in comparison to the Americans' snobbery. Luis is at the shrine on a life-and-death mission, not tourism: he kneels to pray to the Virgin to spare his and his son Rafael's lives in the coming *corrida*. At the end of the film, regenerated through contact with Mexico, Luis, and the bloody ritual of the *corrida*, Karen is finally able to kneel down with sincerity before the effigy and pray ("God, for the first time in my life, I am praying"), asking the Virgin to spare the lives of Luis and his son.

Boetticher's specular notion of Mexico and the meaning of bullfighting becomes even clearer if we compare his films to the other great bullfighting film of the same year: *The Brave Bulls* by Robert Rossen (1951).[53] Noting that both Boetticher and Rossen were at work again on the Churubusco lot, *Variety* remarked that maybe Hollywood people were back shooting in Mexico like they had done during the war, creating a "fiesta brava atmosphere," perhaps even a "trend."[54] Later on the magazine itself revealed the problematic times in which Rossen shot his film. *Variety* recounted that at *The Brave Bulls* release Columbia feared sabotage and boycott as Rossen, a former member of the Communist Party, was facing the possibility of a subpoena before the House Un-American Activities Committee.[55] As he was shooting the film in Mexico in 1950, in fact, the director was making up his mind about standing his ground and refusing to name names, a decision that he reversed in 1953 when he accepted giving a somewhat negotiated testimony before the committee.[56]

The comparison between Rossen's *The Brave Bulls* and Boetticher's *The Bullfighter and the Lady* were common in 1951, as both films came out at the same time and both also showed the renewed interest of Hollywood for shooting in Mexico. Reviewers usually preferred *The Brave Bulls* to *The Bullfighter and the Lady,* and Bosley Crowther of the *New York Times* compared Rossen to Ernest Hemingway (the unavoidable reference of any bullfighting story in the United States) and dismissed Boetticher as a dime novelist à la Burt Standish (Gilbert Patten).[57] *The Brave Bulls* was a good film, though Crowther's harshness, generally accepted at the time, may be debatable. *The Brave Bulls,* not unlike Rossen's *Body and Soul* (1947), is an indictment of the entertainment business under capitalism. Luis Bello (Mel Ferrer) is a tired middle-age torero who would prefer to retire but is egged on by his desire for money and a greedy agent, Raoul (Anthony Quinn). Tellingly, the film that Rossen shot from the adaptation by another future black listee, John Bright, of the original novel by Tom Lea, has no American character.

As opposed to Boetticher's film, *The Brave Bulls* makes no distinction between outsiders and insiders. Between Mexico and the United States there is no specular relation, nor is there one between their metonymies: the Broadway-Hollywood entertainment complex and Mexican bullfighting. Both are, in fact, one and the same. In *The Brave Bulls*, bullfighting, like Hollywood, is a capitalist moneymaking machine that means to grind out a product—money—for the owners of the means of production (the bulls and the arenas) and grind down those who have only their lives to offer: the bullfighters and the bulls themselves. *The Brave Bulls* shows toreros as Marxian working-class people possessing and selling their very bodies in return for the possibility to live. These men share small apartments and borrow money to make ends meet, risking their lives for the pesos they need to feed themselves and their families. As opposed to Boetticher's *ranchero* and bull breeder Don David (Thomas Gomez) in *The Magnificent Matador*, who is a blood brother to the torero Luis and raises bulls for the pleasure of the *corrida* rather than for profit, the breeders of Rossen's films are in cahoots with the managers of the *plazas de toros*. They sell them bulls that are missing tails or ears, and they do not care about the ceremony. The purpose of the bulls is to fight and die for other people's profits, just like the toreros. "We'll live forever and we'll both get rich," Luis shouts at his younger brother Pepe (Eugene Iglesias) at the conclusion of the final *corrida*, the customary end

of every bullfighting movie. They and we know, however, that it is just a pipe dream. Luis and Pepe will both die either in poverty or in the bullring, for the benefits and profits of someone else.

In the capitalist continuity that Rossen saw as extending across the U.S.-Mexican border, matadors have nothing to teach us. Like the fighters of Rossen's *Body and Soul* (1947), they are either accomplices or victims of the system. Like the titles suggests, only the bulls are authentically "brave." For Boetticher, on the contrary, Mexico was not the United States, and like the image in the Foucauldian mirror, it could be used to show the United States what it was lacking in humanity and spiritual liberation. In the matador films, which the director shot in Mexico City using material structures partly financed by the American film industry, Boetticher placed the theme of Mexican and American contiguity, symmetry, and difference at the center of his cinema, where it remained throughout the rest of the director's career.

## Conclusion

Although a thorough analysis of Boetticher's cinema would exceed the scope of this chapter, the theme of the mirror was central to the six films directed by Boetticher that constitute the critically acclaimed Ranown Cycle (so named because all films are interpreted by Randolph Scott and, for the most part, are produced by Scott and Harry Joe Brown).[58] With the partial exception of *Westbound* (1959), which is set in the Colorado Territory during the American Civil War, all of these westerns take place on the southern frontier between Mexico and the United States.

One of them, *Buchanan Rides Alone* (1958), explicitly referenced the image of the mirror. In *Buchanan*, Boetticher tells the story of the averted lynching of a Mexican youth, Juan de la Vega (Manuel Roja), at the hands of a corrupted American justice system. Juan is saved by the titular character, Buchanan (Randolph Scott), an American-born veteran of the Mexican Revolution ("ain't murder when you kill in the Revolution"). The film is set right on the Mexican frontier border with the United States, where the director represented an American town dominated by a corrupt elite, Agry Town, that directly faces its mirror image, a Mexican community containing its symmetrical, and virtuous, opposites.

After the Ranown Cycle Boetticher shot one more film in Hollywood, the gangster picture *The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond* (1960). He then left town

Mirrorlike contiguity in *Buchanan Rides Alone* (Columbia Pictures, 1958).

to go back one more time to Mexico to shoot one more bullfighter film, a documentary on the life of his friend, *torero* Carlos Arruza. The film was never finished, though an incomplete version was released in 1972 (*Arruza*). With a sparse commentary, *Arruza* showed the great matador fighting bulls either on foot or from one his purebred horses. The outcome is always the same: Arruza repeatedly downs the beast and achieves glory. Only an automobile accident finally defeats the unquestioned hero of this hagiography.

Like it had shaped Boeticher's life, the image of the Mexican bullfighter risking his life in his quest for integrity, authenticity, and beauty haunted the many final duels of Boetticher's western films. In an interview about Boetticher's work, director Taylor Hackford draws the connection, already noted by Jim Kitses, between the characters Randolph Scott played in Boetticher's late 1950s westerns and the Mexican bullfighters of *The Bullfighter and the Lady* and *The Magnificent Matador*.[59] *Buchanan Rides Alone* directly linked the two main clusters of Boetticher's films via the presence of Mexican actor Manuel Roja, who had played the young matador in *The Magnificent Matador* and plays the young and righteous Juan de la Vega (same last name as the heroine of *The Bullfighter and the Lady*!)—the Mexican youth sentenced to death by an American kangaroo court—in the later film.

In this way, Boetticher's bullfighting films allow us to complicate the general picture of Hollywood portrayal of the world outside of the United States.

American cinema of the 1950s has usually received a largely deserved bad press for its representation of the world, and Mexico is no exception. The western genre in particular has been seen by many scholars as representing U.S. national identity and its largely imperialistic mission. Among others, Richard Slotkin and Stanley Corkin have cogently written about the Western's racialized narratives of expansion and civilization as aptly reproducing the new American postwar ideology of expansionism and containment.[60] The representation of Mexico and Mexicans has followed this trajectory, and Chon Noriega has convincingly shown the connection between Hollywood's skewed representation, or blatant omission, of the southern border and its people and the silencing of the "repressed history" of the bloody genesis of American borders.[61]

These are unquestionably important scholarly insights confirmed by cogent and recent analyses such as Camilla Fojas's work on the stereotyping of Mexican characters in important films such as *Duel in the Sun* by King Vidor (1947) or John Ford's *Rio Grande (1950)*.[62] At the beginning of Howard Hawks's *Red River,* Ted Dunson (John Wayne) unceremoniously dispatches with his gun the Mexican who dares to question his dubious claims of land ownership. And yet, we now see the 1950s as a much less monolithic decade than we once did.[63] In our understanding of Hollywood's relation with the world, World War II and postwar Hollywood's global expansion, while surely aimed at maximizing profits and minimizing or annihilating any loss due to competition, also strengthened foreign film industries from Cinecittà to Mexico City.[64] It also pushed filmmakers out of the United States to work in Cinecittà or Estudios Churubusco and wound up de-provincializing quite a few of them, including directors such as Boetticher, producers such as Joe Levine, and actors such as Clint Eastwood.[65]

While definitely a minority report, Boetticher's movies clearly spoke against denigration of U.S. southern cousins. They represented a different kind of Hollywood film and a less simplified moral didacticism that allowed that the United States and its "way of life" were neither the teacher nor the most advanced student in the classroom. As minoritarian as these films were, I would venture that Boetticher's work was, in fact, influential. The sophisticated notion of morality that Boetticher's films contained was pushed further by the revolution in the western genre that was to occur in the 1960s at the hands of a new generation of American and European filmmakers.[66] Since André Bazin's seminal

1957 essay, Boetticher had fared well among European cinephiles, some of whom graduated to make their own films. The moral ambiguity of Boetticher's Mexican general Orozco was thrust to the limit in the western films authored by Sergio Leone.[67] While redemption and regeneration were hardly at stake in the spaghetti westerns, at least in Boetticher's explicit terms, perhaps more important, the American southern border was front and center in the hundreds of westerns produced in Europe between 1964 and 1973.[68] And many of the political spaghetti westerns—*Quien Sabe?* (Damiano Damiani, 1966) and *Compañeros* (Sergio Corbucci, 1970) come to mind—that were produced after 1965 made definitively clear that between Mexico and the United States, morally the former had the upper hand. As he was helming the beginning of the spaghetti western revolution, Sergio Leone reportedly confessed to an aging Boetticher, "Budd, I take a-everything from you."[69] He may have just been speaking the truth.

## Notes

Many thanks to Ingalisa Schrobsdorff and David Sartorius for their insightful reading of this chapter

1. Michel Foucault, "Des espaces autres (1967), Hétérotopies" (conférence au Cercle d'études architecturales, March 14, 1967), *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* 5 (October 1984): 46–49.
2. Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 24.
3. Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 107–9. A provocative array of analyses that use the political implications of the concept of heterotopia is in "Special Forum: Revolutions and Heterotopias," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 4, no. 2 (2012). See also the opening essay to the forum by Micol Seigel, Leslie Jo Frazier, and David Sartorius, "The Spatial Politics of Radical Change," http://escholarship.org/uc/item/3ts0f9xh#page-1.
4. Adrián Pérez Melgosa, *Cinema and Inter-American Relations: Tracking Transnational Affect* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 52–53.
5. "et je crois qu'entre les utopies et ces emplacements absolument autres, ces hétérotopies, il y aurait sans doute une sorte d'expérience mixte, mitoyenne, qui serait le miroir." Miskowiec translates the passage as "I believe that between utopias and these quite other sites, these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the mirror." See Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 24.
6. Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 24.
7. There is no monograph in English on Boetticher. On this director, see the early and very influential essay by Jim Kitses, "Budd Boetticher: The Rules of the Game," in *Horizons West: Anthony Mann, Budd Boetticher, and Sam Peckinpah; Studies in Authorship within the Western* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), 89–130. Boetticher was, however, one of the *auteurs* whom French critics focused on. See André Bazin's review of *7 Men from Now* ("Un Western exemplaire")

in *Cahier du Cinéma* 74 (August–September 1957), available in English in James Hillier, ed., *Cahiers du Cinéma: The 1950s, Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1985), 169–72. See also Antonie De Baecque, *La cinéphilie: Invention d'un regard, histoire d'une culture* (Paris: Fayard, 2003).

8. *New York Journal-American*, February 7, 1941, n.p.; *Arizona* Clipping, New York Public Library, Billy Rose Collection.
9. Carlos J. Mora, *Mexican Cinema* (London: McFarland, 2005), 56.
10. Seth Fein, "From Collaboration to Containment: Hollywood and the International Political Economy of Mexican Cinema after the Second World War," in *Mexico's Cinema: A Century of Film and Filmmakers*, ed. Joanne Herschfield and David R. Maciel (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1999), 127.
11. The classic book on this topic is Gregory D. Black and Clayton R., *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits, and Propaganda Shaped World War Two Movies* (New York: Free Press, 1987). On the representation of the Allies during the war, see Robert K. Chester, "World War II and U.S. Cinema: Race, Nation, and Remembrance in Postwar Film, 1945–1978" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 2011).
12. *Variety*, January 15, 1941, 13.
13. Seth Fein, "Myths of Cultural Imperialism and Nationalism in Golden Age Mexican Cinema," in *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico since 1940*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph, Anne Rubenstein, and Eric Zolv (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 165.
14. *Variety*, January 22, 1941, 7.
15. *Daily Variety*, June 10, 1941, 2.
16. Fein, "Myths of Cultural Imperialism and Nationalism in Golden Age Mexican Cinema," 169.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., 172–86.
19. Fein, "From Collaboration to Containment," 128.
20. H. H. Wollenberg, "Round the World's Studios," *Penguin Film Review* 1 (1946): 53.
21. *Variety*, August 19, 1960, 13; Emil Zubryn, "Government Shadow Growing on Mexican Film Scene," *Daily Variety*, October 25, 1960, 44, 206.
22. "Nuevos Estudios," *Tiempo* [Mexico City], March 1, 1943, 45; H. H. Wollenberg, "Round the World's Studios," *Penguin Film Review* 1 (1946): 52–56. The move was not disinterested and prompted Àvila Camacho's government to limit RKO's share of the studio to 49 percent. Nonetheless, as Dolores Tierney has recently written, it is fair to say that "Hollywood played a huge role in strengthening the Mexican industry in the 1940s." See Dolores Tierney, "Emilio Fernández in Hollywood: Mexico's Postwar Interamerican Cinema, *La Perla*/*The Pearl* (1946) and *The Fugitive* (1948)," *Studies in Hispanic Cinemas* 7, no. 2 (2010): 83.
23. Catherine Benamou, *It's All True: Orson Welles's Pan-American Odyssey* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
24. Ana Lopez, "From Hollywood and Back: Dolores del Rio a (Trans)national Star," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 17 (1998): 5–33.
25. Tierney, "Emilio Fernández in Hollywood," 82.
26. See Joseph R. Millichap, *Steinbeck and Film* (New York: Ungar 1983), 50. On neorealism's origins, see Robert Sklar's and my own introduction to our edited volume

*Global Neorealism* (Jacksonville: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), and Fein, "From Collaboration to Containment," 127.

27. *Variety,* July 21 1943, 10.
28. *Daily Variety*, October 25, 1940, 4; Budd Boetticher, *When in Disgrace* (Santa Barbara, CA: 1989), 41.
29. *Variety*, May 26 1941, 6.
30. For a balanced analysis of Fernàndez contribution to *The Fugitive* (more than associate producer but less than codirector) and a nuanced interpretation of Hollywood's role in Mexican cinema in the immediate postwar, see Tierney, "Emilio Fernández in Hollywood," 92, .
31. Boetticher, *When in Disgrace*, 9.
32. Ibid., 18.
33. Ibid., 15.
34. *Variety*, November 6, 1940, 3; *Variety*, November 7, 1940, 2; *Variety*, December 30, 1940, 2; *Variety*, February 20, 1941, 2.
35. Undated 1944 clipping in Budd Boetticher, Clipping File, New York Public Library, Billy Rose Collection.
36. A copy of the original 87-minute release is at the Library of Congress, Moving Image Research Center.
37. *New York Times*, April 19, 1951, 49.
38. Unidentified clipping, May 2, 1951, n.p., *The Bullfighter and the Lady* Clipping File, New York Public Library, Billy Rose Collection.
39. *Variety,* April 26 1950, 9.
40. Ibid., 24.
41. *Variety,* September 13, 1951, 3.
42. Roland's character and the encounter were modeled after Boetticher's first meeting with matador Lorenzo Garza. See Boetticher's interview "Struggling for Quality" in Ronald L. Davis, *Just Making Movies: Company Directors on the Studio System* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005), 207.
43. Boetticher, *When in Disgrace*, 43.
44. James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 16–17.
45. The copy of the film I used is the UCLA restored director's cut that is available on Amazon.com. According to Boetticher, Ford cut out what he thought was "'chi-chi crap.' That was the relationship between the great bullfighter and his protégé. Ford figured that two men couldn't love one another unless the relationship was homosexual. Well, that's a lot of baloney. I think strong men don't have to worry about their virility." Boetticher, qtd. in Davis, *Just Making Movies*, 210.
46. Black actor and civil rights activist Frank Silvera played one of the bandits. A Mexican woman, Rose Cimarron (Yvette Duguay), is also part of the cohort.
47. Commercial DVD copy of the film.
48. Melgosa, *Cinema and Inter-American Relations*, 93; see also 76–105. Notably, Boetticher films a similar narrative choice in *Cimarron Kid*. Mexican Rose and the Yankee bandit "Bitter Creek" Dalton are separated only by his murder at the hands of sadistic white vigilantes, one of whom steals the Guadalupe icon from Dalton's inanimate body because "it will look good on my little girl."

49. Camilla Fojas, *Border Bandits: Hollywood and the Southern Frontier* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 19.
50. On Hollywood narrative devices of mythification, marking, and omission, see James A. Snead, *White Screen, Black Images: Hollywood from the Dark Side* (New York: Routledge, 1994).
51. See credit at the end of the film. One of the few copies of the film is available both in Betamax and as a digital copy at the Library of Congress in the J. Fred MacDonald and Associates collection. I want to thank Ms. Rosemary Hanes for her help and kindness.
52. *Variety*, April 22, 1955, 2; advertisement, *Variety,* June 6, 1955, 6.
53. A 16mm copy of the film is available at the Library of Congress, Moving Image Research Center.
54. *Variety,* February 21, 1950, 8.
55. *Variety*, April 18, 1951, 20.
56. Alan Casty, *Robert Rossen: The Life and Politics of a Blacklisted Idealist* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2013), 143–52.
57. *New York Times*, April 27, 1951, 19.
58. On the Ranown Cycle, see the seminal interpretation by Jim Kitses in his *Horizons West*. The cycle comprises *7 Men from Now* (1956), which was produced by John Wayne's production company Batjac from the script by Burt Kennedy; *The Tall T* (1957), from Burt Kennedy's screen adaptation of Elmore Leonard's story; *Decision at Sundown* (1957), from the script by Charles Lang Jr.; *Buchanan Rides Alone* (1958), from a script credited to Charles Lang Jr.;*Westbound* (1959), produced by Henry Blanke at Warner from the script by Berne Giler; *Ride Lonesome* (1959), scripted for Ranown by Burt Kennedy; and *Comanche Station* (1960), also scripted for Ranown by Burt Kennedy.
59. Hackford interview in documentary material in Budd Boetticher, *7 Men From Now,* DVD (Paramount, 2005); Kitses, *Horizons West*, 92.
60. See Richard Slotkin, *Gunfigter Nation* (New York: Athenaeum, 1992), esp. part 4; Stanley Corkin, *The Cowboy as Cold Warrior: The Western and US History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).
61. Chon A.Noriega, ed., *Chicanos and Film: Representation and Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), xiv–xvii.
62. Fojas, *Border Bandits*, 27–83.
63. A good example of this historiographic trend is Gilbert, *Men in the Middle*.
64. I find the best and recent summary of this debate in the introduction of Tierney, "Emilio Fernández in Hollywood," 81–84.
65. On Levine as a cosmopolitan producer, see Saverio Giovacchini, "Postwar Hollywood, 1947–1967," in *Producing*, ed. Jon Lewis, 63–85 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015).
66. Boetticher was notably the author of the story for one film widely considered a prominent American *spaghetti* western, Don Siegel's *Two Mules for Sister Sara* (1969), with Clint Eastwood. See Christopher Frayling, *Sergio Leone: Something to Do with Death* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2000), 182.
67. The radical amorality of Leone's heroes apparently worried Boetticher. See Frayling, *Leone*, 181–82.
68. See Austin Fisher, *Radical Frontiers in the Spaghetti Western* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011).

69. Sergio Leone, cited by Lee Server, "Blood Sand and Bullets," *Daily News*, December 23, 2001, 14.

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9

# From the Pampas to the Jockey Club

## Familiar Exoticism in Hollywood's Argentina

**Fernando Gabriel Pagnoni Berns, Mariana Zárate, and Patricia Haydee Vazquez**

The 1927 film *The Gaucho* (F. Richard Jones) was a fantasy vehicle for Douglas Fairbanks, who starred as the gaucho, an outlaw who fights the usurpation made by the film's main villain. Since the figure of the gaucho is associated with Argentina, it can be inferred that the action takes place in that country, even if not made explicit in the film. The film offered the typical exotic fantasy that silent cinema loved so much, to the point that little Argentinean national authenticity is left.[1] Rather, *The Gaucho* favors a vision of generic South American identity that is synonymous with masculine adventure and the exotic landscape, devoid of cultural specificity.

Years later, Robert Davis (Fred Astaire) visits Argentina in *You Were Never Lovelier* (William Seiter, 1942), but instead of imaging Argentina as a rugged exotic locale, now Argentina—in the form of Buenos Aires—is a bustling modern city that blends Latin American culture, Europeanness, and U.S. popular culture. When Astaire as Davis dances to impress a potential employer (Adolphe Menjou), his dance blends Broadway-style tap with tango and ends on a Brazilian note, helping to envision Argentina as a space of cosmopolitan

cultural exchange as the white dancer seeks commercial success and love in the nightclubs of Buenos Aires.

The shift for Argentina in Hollywood's imaginary between 1927 and 1942 indicates a number of historical challenges (and opportunities) faced by Hollywood cinema and its relationship with South America. As evidenced by the conscription of the gaucho into Hollywood's repertoire as simply an exotic Latin American cowboy who can add some flavor to swashbuckling adventures, historically Hollywood has not been interested in a nuanced engagement with South America, using it simply as a space of imperial adventurism. But at the dawn of World War II, many film productions were drawn into the ideological frame of the Good Neighbor policy. Threatened by European fascism, the United States "renewed the enterprise known as Pan-Americanism, a congeries of economic, political, and cultural objectives that first peaked in the late nineteenth century and was based on the premise that the Americas were bound by geography and common interests."[2] Implemented by the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, the Good Neighbor policy "emphasized nonintervention, initiated economic and cultural programs, and set the stage for a military alliance during World War II."[3] The usage of the terms "good" and "neighbor" presupposes an attitude of friendship between the United States and Latin America. Roosevelt's inaugural address of March 4,1933, thus stated that "In the field of world policy, I would dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor—the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others."[4] The policy included South America, and this diplomatic liaison was considered a novelty that could help in smoothing relations with some Latin American countries,[5] especially since Argentina was not that eager to support the United States in the war, while the latter claimed that the Latin country harbored fascists by the thousands.[6]

This new era of mutual respect and understanding includes cultural artifacts that can help strengthen the liaisons between the United States and Latin America. In this respect, one of the main efforts was to convince the Hollywood studios to be more informed in their depiction of Latin America and its people on film as a way to ensure mutual understanding. With this in mind, Hollywood produced a series of films whose action transpired in Latin American countries such as Brazil and Argentina as a form of warm welcoming. The plot was almost

always the same: some American traveled to a Latin America country, where among domestic dances, foods, and local color he or she will find love with some English-speaking Latino. Also included was the casting of Latin American actors and the addition of scenes of famous sites such as Rio de Janeiro and other parts of Latin America.

These other parts were mostly in Argentina. In fact, the Good Neighbor policy in film practically was reduced to Brazil and Argentina. For Hollywood, Brazil was all about exoticism, color, and sensuality, but Argentina offered a more complex cultural space for the negotiation of Hollywood exoticism with the cross-cultural imperatives of the Good Neighbor policy. Not only did Argentina have a very strong national film industry—only surpassed within Latin America by Mexico,[7] which provided a strong infrastructure for international film production—but Argentina itself provided a seemingly more cosmopolitan backdrop thanks mostly to the country's unique sense of national identity.

In Argentina, Hollywood found a Latin American country that has historically represented itself as all-white, especially since Argentina worked actively to be seen and acknowledged as a Latin American mirror to European culture.[8] In this sense, the foundational Argentinean text was Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's *Facundo, o Civilización y Barbarie* (Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism, 1845), which established the central dichotomy of Argentinean nationhood: the native races were considered "savages," and only European culture and values were considered civilized.[9] From this foundation, Argentinean nationalism has historically perceived itself as a reflection of Europe and spurred the reproduction of European modernism in the country.

Hollywood's interest in Argentina as site for American stories, then, stems from what Amy Kaminsky refers to as a "familiar exoticism" in which the United States can recognize itself amid the pleasures of a foreign climate.[10] Argentina's obsession with European modernism allows Hollywood to depict an exotic country aligned with its typical representations of South America but blended with the familiarity of whiteness and Europeanness, avoiding an exotic image that discourages audiences because of its foreign illegibility. If Brazil was the completely exotic landscape (representing the joyful exoticism of South America), Argentina constructed itself as a mirror to white Europe, allowing for comfortable interactions sustained in a constant shift between exoticism and recognition. Argentina

provided an ideal site for Hollywood's "familiar exoticism" in Latin America because of Argentina's peculiar affinities with cosmopolitan Europe, which allowed Hollywood to imagine Argentina, and specifically its cosmopolitan capital Buenos Aires, as a kaleidoscope of European nations.

That Argentina represents itself as a melting pot of European identities, moreover, helps Hollywood keep its images of the country detached of signs of concrete authenticity, imagining it as a familiar, cosmopolitan playground into which U.S. Americans are invited, particularly through the images of horse racing, casinos, and boisterous urban nightclubs. These images, however, work in tandem with the images of the gaucho and the pampas—both signifiers of Argentina's rural traditional culture—to add prominent figures of exotic Argentineanness. While the figure of the gaucho and the imagery of the pampas—as signs that mean "Argentina"—will offer a sense of national exoticism, the cosmopolitanism of the modern city of Buenos Aires will provide familiarity to American audiences.

This chapter, then, tracks the shifting place of Argentina in Hollywood's construction of South America, showing how the use of Argentinean icons such as the gaucho to signify a vague sense of exotic South Americanness transformed into the construction of a cosmopolitan, European, and mostly white vision of Buenos Aires that affirmed a broad sense of Pan-Americanism under the Good Neighbor policy. Exploring the construction of Argentina as both vaguely exotic and safely familiar, we demonstrate why Argentina worked so perfectly for Hollywood's imperial adventure in Latin America under the auspices of Pan-American cooperation.

## Argentina as a European Nation and a Site of Hollywood Storytelling

The space here is too brief to explain with detail the complexities of nationhood in Argentina. However, we will briefly delineate some issues that could help to understand the difficulties that the United States and Hollywood (or any other country, for that matter) have when trying to represent the characteristics of Argentina.

Argentina's identification with Europe is not capricious, momentary, or superficial. Since its inception, this South American country was transnationally linked to European culture, being a colony of the Spanish Empire, with

independence only arriving with the May Revolution of 1810.[11] After independence from Europe, however, "the Argentine elites were becoming aware of the unfolding similarities between Western European societies and their own, with the growing cities and the emergence of new social classes,"[12] so they heavily promoted and intensified the process of mirroring European social structures. Meanwhile, and unlike other South American countries such as Brazil and Chile, indigenous races were almost entirely exterminated because they were considered a "nuisance to be gotten rid of."[13] Otherwise, such populations were incorporated into roles of servitude within the bourgeois class.

The indigenous voice was also heavily silenced through a process of whitening that included European immigration. Argentina was thinly populated until the huge European mass migrations between 1880 and 1930,[14] which saw the arrival of almost five million Europeans mostly from Spain, Germany, Poland, and Italy. Even if many of the immigrants were actually peasants, European immigration was necessary to convert the city of Buenos Aires into the "Paris of South America,"[15] producing an effect of de-territorialization.

Still, this scenario does not explain completely Argentina's tendency to see itself as a European country. After all, colonization and immigration on such a large scale was a situation shared with other countries, such as Brazil. The genesis of Argentina's identification with Europe is also cultural. Spurred by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's 1845 book *Facundo, o Civilización y Barbarie*—in which Sarmiento develops his ideas about Europe as a model to imitate and articulates a cultural program advocating the complete Europeanization and whitening of America—Argentinean national identity would be highly influenced by the valorization of European culture at the expense and persecution of native gauchos and black people. Thus, as Amy Kaminsky argues in *Argentina: Stories for a Nation*, many of the social discourses that had built Argentina's identity were born of cultural identification with Europe, and from this identification emerges the dichotomy between civilization and barbarism that has run through national symbolic constructions since the early times in which Domingo Faustino Sarmiento wrote his book. With a history so tied to European hegemonic power, Eurocentrism is inevitable. "In Argentina the force of Eurocentrism has been so compelling that, among the elites, it has long elicited a claim of European identity."[16] Moreover, during its economic growth in the last years of

the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth century, the country used European architecture as its model—after the economic boom from 1884 to 1889, fashionable stores, cafés, restaurants, and banks soon dotted the elegant downtown, adding to the glamour and glitter of Buenos Aires and earning its reputation as the Paris of South America. The influence is still visible in the current city structure, where European architecture, boutiques, and cafés continue to dominate the public sphere. Even Argentine national cinema was "Europeanized"[17] in its aesthetics and topics.

The Europeanized culture and appearance of Argentina, then, helps explain why of all the South American countries Hollywood repeatedly chose Argentina as a good place to tell its stories of cross-cultural engagement, especially in the years of the Good Neighbour policy.

Kaminsky argues that foreign interest in Argentina is based not on the appeal of the wholly exotic but instead on the presence of something that is recognizably of its own.[18] In the modernist look of Buenos Aires and in its white population, U.S. audiences were able to recognize themselves thanks to the history of racial purification in Argentina. In fact, "Argentina means the Silver Land; it is Latin America's whitest country, radically different from Brazil or Cuba, former destinations of the black slave trade. . . . Argentina also differs from Bolivia, Colombia, and Mexico, where mestizos and Latinos—mixtures of Spaniards and Indians—make up the majority."[19] As a result of this racial history, Kaminsky argues, "white Argentina has managed to project itself and then see itself reflected back as the most European of Latin American nations. Unlike Mexico, for example, where after the revolution the elite strove to create a mestizo culture into which its native population could be incorporated, Argentina expunges the indigenous."[20] In this way, Argentina could become an international space of adventure that is comfortingly white for U.S. audiences (helping to disavow the racial anxieties of miscegenation at the heart of many romantic South American adventures).

Still, Argentina retains enough South Americanness to be exotic enough to grant Hollywood stars and starlets a voyage to the pampas. However, this state of South Americanness produces a new shift: Argentina is pushed aside in favor of a Pan-American vision that indiscriminately converges South America as a whole, converting the country into a multivalent sign. This happens because

Argentina itself is a mosaic of nationalities, which allows for a set of images that represent both the exoticism of South Americanness *and* white identification, all without the problems associated with careful research on the country that will be represented onscreen. And actually Argentina can support this approach, since the country sells itself as polycultural, stressing unity within diversity, and as a mosaic of identities.[21]

This mosaic of nationalities will be taken up by Hollywood and thereby promote a sort of "condensation" understood as it does in the dream work: different meanings and/or images (sometimes opposite) form a single compressed sign.[22] This process is visible in Fred Astaire's dance in *You Were Never Lovelier*, in which different cultures collapse in a single form. In the dream condensation logic is lost, but rhetoric remains; in the case of Argentina as seen by Hollywood, this produces a rhetoric of South Americanness that rewrites the abstractions of nationhood from concreteness to indeterminacy and generalization.

This is where the gaucho comes in. Native figures such as the gaucho were converted into symbols of national identity's own vulnerability.[23] Products of miscegenation (son of an Indian mother and Spanish father), they were perfect to illustrate Argentine nationhood transnationally while, at the same time, representing a de-powered subject easily configured into a figure that granted domestic color, both in real Argentina and in Hollywood's films. To Hollywood, Argentina is a country that, due to its whiteness and Europeanness, is easily recognizable to American audiences while remaining South American enough to be "colorful," with the figure of the gaucho working as a sort of anchor that keeps the narration of straying too far from recognition.

## *The Gaucho:* Fairbanks in Fantasy Land

The 1927 silent film *The Gaucho* illustrates Hollywood's interest in Argentina prior to the years of the Good Neighbor policy or, more accurately, Hollywood's interest in condensing a few key images of Argentina into a vague, placeless notion of South America. *The Gaucho* is the first film with a story that takes place in Argentina (at least, the first among the surviving films of the silent era) and tells the story of the gaucho (played by Douglas Fairbanks), a bandit persecuted by law who restores order to a city after defeating the main villain, Ruiz (Gustav von Seyffertitz). Seemingly unsure of its commitment to being set in Argentina, the film oscillates between displaying elements that work as signs of

Argentina while, at the same time, avoiding any explicitness of territorialization with concrete references to a specific country. Favoring de-territorialization, defined as the complex movement by which something escapes or departs from a given territory,[24] the film overall presents a fantasy land that stands for some vague but exotic and polyvalent ideal of the Latino world rather than any real country. The figure of the gaucho is what connects this "Neverland" with Argentina and seems to be enough to give some vague geographical location.

The film begins with a title card that both identifies Argentina as the place of action and yet helps to keep the place of the action ambiguous: "To this day, the gauchos, those fast-disappearing picturesque cowboys of the South American plains, tell this story round their campfires." Even if gauchos had existed in other South American countries such as Brazil and Uruguay, the term is "basically only associated with Argentina,"[25] so the mention of this figure, both in the film's title and in the opening credits, helps to situate the action geographically. However, the initial statement avoids being concrete and chooses to replace Argentina for a more unspecified place in "South America."

A bar in the film displays the name "Cantina de los Andes," which helps to situate the action properly in the Andes (the mountain range separating Argentina from its neighbor, Chile), and within the cantina some citizens drink mate, the national drink of Argentina. But despite these references, the space of the Andes only serves to obfuscate the specificity of the setting. The Andes are more a boundary, a threshold, than a concrete space. It is a "zone mediating between cultures, races, or nations,"[26] which blurs and merges differences. The clothes of many characters in this space, moreover, refer to Latino culture—scarves, shawls, and ponchos—but these costumes are geographically unspecified enough to keep the action as just exotic. After all, these clothes are used in South America but also in Central America, especially in Mexico, and the main female character is played by a Mexican actress (Lupe Velez), helping keep the film recognizable for the Mexican film market.

In this way, the action takes place not in a real space but instead in a fantasyland called "the city of the miracle" that sits within the Andes. Heavily mirroring "El Dorado," the mythical city made of gold that so many adventurers tried to discover, *The Gaucho* tells of what happens when a little girl sees the Virgin Mary in the mountains. Years after this Marian apparition, this unspecified

country is dominated by a huge church where gold is daily deposited by fervent adorers. The gold is offered so frequently that the legend of the golden city spreads beyond the town's borders and attracts the main villain, usurper Ruiz, as well as the ambitious gaucho. The myth of "El Dorado" lacks proper nationhood, with its exact location being rumored to exist throughout all of Latin America (including one iteration that placed it in the Andean altiplano),[27] making the myth the perfect vehicle for superficial Latino exoticism.

In brief, the filmic representation of Argentina in the film is oscillating and contradictory: it replaces authenticity with a fictional version of the fictional city "El Dorado" while preferring to situate the action in "South America" rather than in Argentina. On the other hand, signs of Argentinity are displayed frequently: mate, boleadoras,[28] a brief mention of the pampas, and to some extent clothes are used as anchors to signify Argentina. These signifiers, however, are stripped of their historical contexts, condensing within them a variety of different nationalities (Argentinean, Chilean, Mexican, etc.).

## Buenos Aires, Capital of the World

As *The Gaucho* suggests, in silent cinema Argentina functioned as a general sign of exotic Latin Americanness, a set of national markers that could be drafted into a vague notion of "south of the border" for Hollywood storytelling. However, as Hollywood, thanks in part to the dictates of the Good Neighbor policy, increasingly engaged with Latin America as a space of international cooperation and cross-cultural exchange, this usage of the gaucho and the pampas merged with a vision of Buenos Aires as a cosmopolitan, global, sophisticated community populated with white citizens and places that were (North) American enough to be recognizable. Mining the cultural specifics of Argentina for key images and settings that would be both exotic and familiar—in particular the tradition of equestrianism in Argentina and its reputation for exciting nightclubs—Hollywood began to transform its usage of Argentina in the 1940s.

Equestrianism, for example, became a stock image of Argentina that draws on the exoticism of the gaucho on the pampas but channels that exoticism into very European sports and traditions such as polo. This slippage is seen in Brown's historical account of Argentina, in which he writes that "Though less well known, Argentina's polo players dominate the world's professional circuit. No doubt this tradition of horsemanship derives directly from the famous gauchos (cowboys)

of the Pampas. Ten of the world's top 12 polo players are Argentine born and bred, and the country's horse ranches also turn out the finest Thoroughbred polo ponies."[29] In this statement it is possible to read a direct relationship between the savage pampas filled with colorful gauchos and the cosmopolitan city. This link can be denominated "the equestrian imaginary" of Argentina.

Many of Hollywood's 1940s films in Argentina offer very few markers of Argentinean nationalism in their imagery but use equestrianism as the anchor to a Europeanized Argentina. A film such as *You Were Never Lovelier* works perfectly as an example of this. Fred Astaire is an American dancer looking for a job in a Buenos Aires where nobody speaks Spanish. Even with the action happening entirely in Argentina, there is no sign of exoticism or South Americanness in sight, other than Spanish names. The whole fable occurs within closed spaces (mansion, office, etc.), and "Buenos Aires" is just a name dropped occasionally by the characters. The only thing connecting the space of *You Were Never Lovelier* with some remote idea of Argentina is the profusion of horses and centaurs framed on walls throughout the film. Those connect with both cultures, that of the *gauchesca* and the legacy of British polo, images that were linked in the equestrian imaginary.[30] Leaving aside the already mentioned "Pan-American" dance performed by Astaire, the representation of Argentina begins and ends in those paintings of equestrian nature. In fact, the whole action could take place in the United States without any tweak of importance in the plot. Clearly, those behind the film thought that placing the action in Buenos Aires was enough to provide some exoticism to an otherwise familiar American story. Since Buenos Aires is a "European" city, it can provide a modern (and white) landscape recognizable to American audiences and suitable to an American adventure that does not ask any representation of otherness. The Argentina of *You Were Never Lovelier* is the "not entirely exotic other."[31]

The equestrian imaginary, embodying both gauchos and the overwhelming presence of the Jockey Club and the hippodrome, will guide the representation of Argentina in Hollywood. Actually, Buenos Aires will be represented in Hollywood through the use of only two recurrent spaces: the hippodrome and the nightclub. Both spaces defy concrete nationhood, since the cafés and nightclubs were places of touristic transit. Meanwhile, it was not by chance that the representation of Argentina was so obsessively fixed in the Argentinean Jockey Club,

an institution that works within Argentina as a sign of "both French acculturation and British standards"[32] and to Hollywood as the perfect excuse to project any nationality it likes.

Another film composed almost solely of closed spaces is one of the all-time classics of American cinema: *Gilda* (1946), directed by Charles Vidor and starring Rita Hayworth, who had worked in three Argentina-related films during her career.[33] Johnny Farrell (Glenn Ford) is a small-time but talented hustler who finds problems on the dark backstreets of Buenos Aires. He is rescued by a mysterious and controlling stranger, Ballin Mundson (George Macready), who ends up being the owner of a club/casino that operates under the radar of the law. There, Johnny gets in touch with an old flame, Gilda (Hayworth), now Ballin's wife.

In *Gilda*, Argentina is configured entirely through the casino, within which almost the whole action takes place. As such, the country is displaced by pure cosmopolitanism, here framed into an illicit climate. The casino is an offshore space, "the quintessential global market"[34] that exists to produce economic incomes and accommodates itself to the tastes of its many international clients. In some way, the casino recalls El Dorado in its rootless nature. There is no significant difference between a casino in Cairo and one in New York or Argentina. Within the casino of *Gilda*, it is possible to hear different languages: Spanish, English, and French. Here, the anchoring with Argentina (besides tango tunes heard as background in some scenes) comes when the clients start to sing in Spanish "Marcha de San Lorenzo," one of the most recognizable national anthems of the country. Even so, the singing takes place as a celebration not of a national holiday (as in Argentina) but as a celebration of the end of the World War II, a global conflict within which Argentina maintained a neutral position. Both *Gilda* and *You Were Never Lovelier* tell their stories without any traces of nonwhite characters—excepting Hayworth, a U.S.-born Latina who often passed as white onscreen—which, keeping in mind Argentina's process of whitening, kept both fables within credibility, at least, in respect to issues of races and identities.

Argentina filtered through Hollywood is a mix of different South American and Central American countries that become flesh in a locus of exoticism able to accommodate the most varied cultures. For example, *They Met in Argentina*

(Leslie Goodwins and Jack Hively, 1941) begins with a festival taking place within the Argentine Jockey Club in which a "Pan-American Goodwill Fund" party to raise money is celebrated. It is within this celebration that South American and North American characters meet and fall in love. The characters in this opening scene celebrate that all the Americas can join in this event. Buenos Aires is a kaleidoscopic landscape, an economy of meanings that fuses together all the Americas. Argentina's nature as a mosaic of cultures invites this representation within Hollywood. It is not by chance that a film whose action takes place in a concrete country chooses not to begin with recognizable elements of it but instead with some blurred evasive/ambiguous "Pan-American" label, especially useful to accommodate the Good Neighbor policy. Furthermore, when Tim Kelly (James Ellison) meets Lolita (Maureen O'Hara, whose character bears a name more related to Spain than South America), he asks her if she is "South American" rather than Argentine. It can be argued that Tim defines himself as "North American," but this label has popularly meant "native of the United States," to the point that a Mexican is hardly defined as North American. So, Tim gives a concrete national identity, while Lolita gives nothing more than an evasive answer.[35] Like *The Gaucho*, those behind the camera chose to leave the place and nationalities of the Latino characters open enough to be read in many different ways within the frame of the Good Neighbor policy. The action may take place within Buenos Aires, but the opening is Pan-American, Lolita is a Spanish name, and she is defined as South American, avoiding concrete territorialization. Furthermore, Lolita's father, Don Enrique (Robert Barrat), is Irish and is proud of his nationhood, adding another (white) layer of foreignness to this representation of Argentina. The film will be anchored more firmly in exoticism once the action moves from the cultural mosaic that is the Jockey Club to the pampas filled with gauchos.

As this suggests, other than casinos or mansions, the urban space that signifies Argentina to Hollywood most is that of the Jockey Club and its hippodrome. Argentina through the lens of Hollywood will remit recurrently to this space. It is easy to see why. First, racehorses were Argentina's national sport until soccer displaced it in the popular interest in the 1960s.[36] Second, the hippodrome was a place in which social classes intermingled: the working class and the European elite (as the owners of the horses) shared the space in an almost

carnivalesque moment. To Hollywood, the hippodrome was the perfect place to enact a variety of comic situations in which rich, Europeans, Latinos, and poor can interact. But even more important, the very exclusive Jockey Club, located in the stylish Barrio Norte of Buenos Aires, served as a powerful symbol of the country's influential European oligarchy.[37] The Jockey Club was a piece of Britain translated to Argentina, a place in which Buenos Aires can realize its dream of modernity and whitening. The place was perfect for concretizing the familiar exoticism of Hollywood: the action takes place in the Argentinean Jockey Club (therefore exoticism), but the place itself was not that different from the other global incarnations of the same institution (therefore familiarity).

Mae West's vehicle *Goin' to Town* (Alexander Hall, 1935) is exemplary in this respect. West stars as Cleo Borden, a saloon hall girl who inherits a fortune and attempts to go legit in high society in the Hamptons. Even if a widow and a *femme fatale*, she is clearly only interested in no-nonsense British aristocrat Paul Edward Carrington (Paul Cavanagh), whom she follows everywhere, including a brief visit to Buenos Aires, Argentina. There, Cleo will visit (what else?) the Jockey Club and its hippodrome, where she will meet a hot-blooded Latino who specializes in parasitic rich ladies. Still, he will be the only Latino character she will find in all of Buenos Aires. During the scene in the Jockey Club, she will meet British, French, and even Russian citizens without any explanation of why so many foreign people are there. The Jockey Club works here as a microcosm of the entire globe. Even Mexico made an appearance: the most popular horse is called Montezuma, a name strongly related with Mexican culture rather than that of Argentina. With the use of this name, Mexico displaces Argentina in the area of South Americanness, probably because of a lack of serious study about Latin America. Argentina as such is only represented by the Jockey Club, where Cleo meets citizens of the entire world. The Jockey Club and the hippodrome work not as an Argentine space but instead as a globalized place circumstantially located in Argentina.

With Europe as an inaccessible market during World War II in the early 1940s, Hollywood oriented its production, especially musicals, to Latin America. *Down Argentine Way* (Irving Cummings, 1940) is a "lighthearted travelogue: a round of nightclubs in New York and Buenos Aires, barbecues complete with singing and dancing gauchos in the Argentine countryside, and the serious

business of international horse racing."[38] The film introduced the Brazilian Carmen Miranda to the international big screen and launched the career of Betty Grable as a musical star. The film, like most of its kind, is a musical mix of different Latin styles that deviate markedly from the most representative music of Argentina, such as tango and folklore.

Grable plays Glenda Crawford, an American girl on vacation following a rich country racehorse owner, Ricardo Quintana (Don Ameche), with whom she has fallen in love and whose relationship is complicated because of an old feud between their families. The film was presented as part of the Good Neighbor policy but was poorly received in Argentina, where the presence of the Brazilian Miranda was considered offensive not because Argentina held a grudge against her but instead because the main Latin star of the film was Brazilian rather than Argentine.[39]

In fact, Carmen Miranda as the main attraction of the nightclubs visited by the characters of Ameche and Grable was not so rare in the real Argentina. Musical bands from all of Latin America visited the nocturnal life of Argentina. Since the nightlife of Argentina replicates that of Europe, exotic international acts for Argentine audiences were common. Miranda easily could work in an Argentinean nightclub during the 1940s. The problem is that Miranda actually opens the film in an extradiegetic way: before the opening credits, she is showcased in her colorful costume, singing in English and Portuguese (no Spanish). Only after she ends her musical number does the film properly open. In this way, Miranda becomes the visible face of South Americanness for a film whose action takes place in Argentina. Furthermore, "Carmen sings a rumba in Portuguese, and another actor uses castanets. The problem was that the film was set in Argentina, where there are neither rumbas nor castanets."[40] Helping in this condensation of nationalities (Brazil for Argentina), the film showcased three other musical numbers taking place in nightclubs, but two of them are performed again by Miranda, while the remaining one is a dance performed by the African American duo the Nicholas Brothers. The duo is an exotic spectacle for both the Argentine audiences within the film and for any real spectator in the United States. Thus, both Argentine and (North) American audiences can enjoy and share the same exoticism, deepening the linking between both as white spectators. Again, all of these shows can easily have been showcased in the Argentina

of the 1940s, but they displace authentic Argentine dances such as tango. While tango is strongly associated with Argentina, the shows performed by Miranda imagine Latin America as an undifferentiated whole: in this film, there seems to be no important differences between Latin American countries, and Argentina as a "mosaic of cultures" was perfect to illustrate this Hollywood idea. The film is an undisguised parade of luxurious hotels, restaurants, cafés, and shows.

In this respect, the presence of Miranda is interesting for underlining the differences between Brazil and Argentina as landscapes of Hollywood. The colonizing presence of Hollywood within Brazil was not that necessary, because the Mecca of cinema already had the exotic presence of Miranda as a colonized figure within the United States. Miranda became an international star while serving the purposes of the Good Neighbor policy. Miranda was a colonized figure herself, "sweet, sexually available, and compliant," the total (North) Americanization of South America.[41] Miranda did not exactly represent Brazil; instead, she represented a generic "other" Latina ethnicity. "Carmen Miranda played characters of no distinct ethnicity—often assumed to be from the country in which the film takes place."[42] Argentina, in turn, did not have a transnational figure to display as the main paradigm of Pan-Americanism. In this scenario, Hollywood was obliged to colonize Argentina in a series of adventures whose action takes place in South American lands. Meanwhile, Argentina's self-representation as the ultimate melting pot of (mostly white) identities and the most European country of South America supports the Hollywood process of Pan-Americanization.

## Hollywood, the Pampas, and the Gaucho

Argentina's popular imagination is strongly divided between civilization (the city) and savagery (the pampas). Hollywood relies on this division in almost all the films using Argentina as background. The plot is almost always the same: some foreign Americans came to Argentina to do something (almost always related to horses), and then they will travel from the pampas to the city or vice versa. While the city is cosmopolitan in nature, the pampas will be linked to the figure of the gaucho.

The figure of the gaucho emerged in the course of the eighteenth century and, as already mentioned, was supposed to be the children of Spanish fathers and indigenous mothers. They were characterized as virtuoso riders and

managed all the livestock activity within the haciendas. Although gauchos almost disappeared as such in the early twentieth century, the gaucho retains an important role in the nationalist sentiment of Argentina and Uruguay. He was an important actor in the wars of independence and sparked the development of an original literature, the *gauchesca*. One of the themes of this literature was the denunciation of social injustice, which was predominant in *El Gaucho Martin Fierro* (1872) and *El Regreso de Martin Fierro* (1879), both by José Hernández. The gaucho is "assimilated into national myth as the quintessential Argentinean" because of "his connection to the pampas and the grounding myth of his fierce loyalty, his honorability, and his simplicity of life."[43] It is this myth that Hollywood will take to the screens, especially because it is recognizable for U.S. audiences: the gaucho can be represented as equal to the American cowboy.

This is made explicit in *Saludos, Amigos* (Wilfred Jackson, Jack Kinney, Hamilton Luske, and Bill Roberts, 1942), an anthology film made with four stories taking place in different South American countries. In 1941, convinced by the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (led by Nelson Rockefeller), representatives of the Walt Disney Company toured Latin America in search of ideas for creating new characters bearing the Pan-Americanism ideals of the Good Neighbor policy.[44] Thus was born *Saludos, Amigos*, a mix of animation and live action showcasing four stories starring Donald Duck, Goofy, and Ze Carioca (Joe Carioca), all set in South America and ranging from the Andes to the Argentine pampas, Peru, and Rio de Janeiro. The Argentine segment starts with several images of the city of Buenos Aires (Plaza de Mayo, Congreso, Teatro Colón) and then moves quickly toward the pampas, where the voice-over emphasizes the hospitality of Argentina.[45] The native cultural and regional practices, such as mate drinking, the asado (a kind of barbecue), and national dances, are showcased. The narrator insistently remarks that all of these issues are very similar to those of American cowboys. Following this line of thought, American cowboy Goofy is brought to the Argentine pampas to learn the gaucho style precisely because of the similarities shared between both figures. Both figures live in open spaces and are solitary and highly autonomous. Also, both are prone to violent ways. Meat is eaten using bare hands, and the animals are tamed with violence. Here Kaminsky's thesis about foreign countries choosing Argentina not because of the exoticism but instead because of the similarities is

sustained. It is worth noting that unlike with the other Latin countries, Disney did not create a specifically Argentine character but simply moved the American cowboy Goofy to the pampas to do his comic acts before returning him to his own country. The American Goofy displaces the Argentine gaucho. In this way, the idea that Argentina as the most European and white South America country is foregrounded with both its advantages and disadvantages. The former is concretized in the addressing of Argentina as a country with recognizable features for transnational audiences. The disadvantages, in turn, appear when trying to capture some "local flavor" in a European/South American country. That is why the segment from Brazil has its own host (Joe Carioca), while Argentina must rely on Goofy as cowboy/gaucho.

Even if the figure of the gaucho in this film tries to be a serious illustration of the character, Molina Campos, famous painter of the gaucho lifestyle and adviser for the film, resigned when Disney's producers rejected his suggestions to make the gauchos more authentic, with the company preferring to highlight the characteristics shared with the cowboy.[46]

*They Met in Argentina* and the musical *Under the Pampas Moon* (James Tinling, 1935) both made extensive use of the pampas and the gaucho. As mentioned above, in the former Tim Kelly came to Argentina to buy Lucero, one of the best horses in the world. There he falls in love with Lolita, the daughter of Lucero's proprietor, Don Enrique. In the latter, two American scammers came to Argentina to steal Chico, one of the best horses in the world. One of the scammers, Yvonne LaMarr (Ketti Gallian), falls in love with the gaucho César (Warner Baxter). The plots are very similar, and neither film made any meaningful usage of the gaucho. Like cowboys, they are simply rough-looking but good-hearted men. In *They Met in Argentina* the similarity between gauchos and cowboys is highlighted once again: Tim's best friend, Duke Ferrell (Buddy Ebsen), participates as comic relief. As such, he intermingles more with the secondary cast of gauchos serving Don Enrique than with the main action. In this scenario, it is striking that he dresses as a cowboy throughout the film, having cowboys and gauchos mirror each other as secondary comic characters.

In *Under the Pampas Moon* the gaucho is the main character, but the film does not depart from the shallow version of this character that Hollywood has made: a simple-minded, apolitical persona. The most important aspect to point

out is that César, the gaucho, travels to Buenos Aires to make the inevitable parade through European-looking hotels and cafés where beautiful women sing in French, highlighting one more time the representation of Buenos Aires as the city of cities.

Interestingly, with the exception of *Saludos, Amigos*, the scenes within the pampas also showcase "national" dances that avoid any vernacular element of recognition. All of them are highly undefined dances that can be read as "Latino" (more for the costumes than for anything else) while avoiding any concrete nationality. The grotesque dance performed by the gauchos and the *chinas* (their vernacular female companions) in *They Met in Argentina* is so grotesquely emptied of any recognizable, readable element of nationhood that it could be labeled as "exotic" by any audience. Similarly, the costumes of the chinas were striking and colorful but closer to flamenco costumes than Argentine dresses. Again, such dances offer a palimpsest situation in which different nationalities converge in one sign that can be read as exotic but also as recognizable.

## Conclusion

As Amy Kaminsky argues, the social and political meaning of the gaucho is drained away in these films, their vestiges apparent only in the cliché of the loyal servant dressed in traditional gaucho gear.[47] Seen by Hollywood, gauchos are exotic characters who have sufficient recognizable features (especially those that refer to American cowboys). Most important, they are often the only anchor to Argentineness that some films have, favoring instead a rather vague South Americanness.

This anchoring is necessary, as the city of Buenos Aires is projected as a cosmopolitan condensation in which the Argentine is subsumed into Latinhood, displacing the truly national (hence the lack of tangos in the films). That is why almost all the films with action taking place in Argentina use the two spaces as balance: the pampas are subsumed to the all-white city, both subsumed in turn to the Pan-American dream of the Good Neighbor policy. The city represents a complete global travelogue condensed into a single place that, in real life, presented itself as polycultural, while the pampas and gauchos give local color but all of them outlined with recognizable American features.

Buenos Aires, as mentioned, is strongly associated with the white imaginary. It is a cosmopolitan city rich in bars, cafés, restaurants, hotels, theaters, avenues,

markets, decoration, architecture, etc., that have little to envy compared to European countries. As such, Argentina is perfect to use as a landscape in which Hollywood adventures take place without presenting anything *that* radically different. So American audiences can engage in the experience of seeing something recognizable within an exotic frame that is not disruptive to the flow of the story.

As was observed, these trends are prefigured in *The Gaucho*, the first film to displace or exchange Argentinity by Latinhood. Even if the films take place in Argentina, they preferred to use a Latin or Pan-American locus rather than specific spatial references. Because Argentina itself favored de-territorialization and whitening while emphasizing an exotic national figure (the gaucho) who was easily assimilated to a recognizable figure (the cowboy), this South American country was the perfect vehicle for the Pan-American paradigm of the Good Neighbor policy. Argentina, seen by Hollywood, becomes the perfect space to economize meanings: the country itself invites a mix of nationalities in an exotic but recognizable condensation.

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30. Christopher Gaffney, *Temples of the Earthbound Gods: Stadiums in the Cultural Landscapes of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 151.
31. Kaminsky, *Argentina*, 209.
32. Chris McConville, "Horseracing: Local Traditions and Global Connections," in *The Cambridge Companion to Horseracing,* ed. Rebecca Cassidy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 193.
33. *Under the Pampas Moon* (James Tinling, 1935), in which Hayworth still appears in the opening credits as Margarita Cansino; *Gilda;* and *You Were Never Lovelier*.
34. Susan Strange, "Finance in Politics: An Epilogue to Mad Money," in *Political Space: Frontiers of Change and Governance in a Globalizing World*, ed. Yale H. Ferguson and R. J. Barry Jones (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 221.
35. With respect to this issue, it is an interesting scene in *Gilda*. In it, Gilda defines the United States as America until a character reminds her that Argentina is America as well.
36. Joseph Arbena, *Latin American Sport: An Annotated Bibliography, 1988–1998* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1999), 139.
37. Brown, *A Brief History of Argentina*, 158.

38. Kaminsky, *Argentina*, 206.
39. John Howard Reid, *Hollywood Movie Musicals* (n.p.: Lulu.com, 2006), 38.
40. Antonio Pedro Tota, *The Seduction of Brazil: The Americanization of Brazil during World War II*, trans. Lorena Ellis (Austin: University ff Texas Press, 2009), 38.
41. Ibid., xvii.
42. Amanda Ellis, *Captivating a Country with Her Curves: Examining the Importance of Carmen Miranda's Iconography in Creating National Identities* (Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest, 2008), 17.
43. Kaminsky, *Argentina*, 31.
44. Martin Baker, *Comics: Ideology, Power, and the Critics* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1998), 294.
45. This issue is also highlighted in *Down Argentine Way* in the scene in which Glenda Crawford and her aunt step into the country and are joyfully greeted by what seems to be stylized English citizens.
46. Wayne Bernhardson, *Moon Buenos Aires* (Berkeley, CA: Avalon, 2011), 220.
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# 10

# John Wayne's Africa

## European Colonialism versus U.S. Global Leadership in *Legend of the Lost* (1957)

**Russell Meeuf**

As Joe January, John Wayne's character in *Legend of the Lost*, leads Paul Bonnard (Rossano Brazzi) and local prostitute Dita (Sophia Loren) through the vast deserts of the Sahara, the burgeoning love triangle of the three characters produces tensions not only among the travelers but also between the very different ways that the two men relate to Dita and the idea of Africa in general. In one scene, the three take a well-needed break along the banks of an oasis after getting caught in a brutal desert sandstorm. Exploiting the internationally popular sex appeal of the young Loren at the time, Dita bathes herself in the nude in plain view of the two men, with only a conveniently placed donkey blocking the camera's view of Loren's naked body. The idealistic and religious European Bonnard looks on but with embarrassment at the sexualized display, awkwardly breaking his gaze by looking to the ground before looking back up at Dita or attempting to distract himself and January by drawing a map of their route in the sand. For the rough and practical American January, however, there is no embarrassment or awkwardness, only a sustained and appreciative gaze at Dita's body followed up by a suggestive offer to help her bathe, which Dita at first scoffs at in offense. But when January compares the sight of her to a mirage, she sneaks a small and grateful smile at his attention.

Within the film's highly sexist and problematic logic, the two men's relationship to Dita suggests a broader allegory of European versus U.S. visions of Africa and the developing world. Bonnard's relationship with Dita is marked by a deep sense of piety and humanitarian obligation, even as he is drawn to her sexually. He idealistically wants to save Dita, to uplift her soul and rescue her from the life of depravity that she lived before the journey, even if such lofty goals are rooted in an erotic desire. But for January there is no missionary zeal or moral obligation to hinder his attraction to Dita and her body. January's practical and honest embrace of life's base pleasures—be they alcohol or sex—eschews the paternalism and repression of Bonnard's perspective, openly and unashamedly enjoying Dita's naked body. Bonnard's European perspective is at once idealistic and condescending, offering optimistic humanitarian values but a strong sense of superiority, while January's American perspective is crude and masculinist but oddly libertarian, seeking pleasure and profit in Africa and expecting the locals to do the same. Since the scene is constructed to elicit the audience's gaze at Loren's sexualized body, it is clear that January's perspective is privileged here, affirming the patriarchal and imperialistic pleasures of the American male abroad.

That the film explores European and American models of relating to Africa should not be surprising given its background. A U.S.-Italian coproduction, the film was produced partly by Wayne's own company, Batjac, and partly by Dear Films Productions, the Italian production company of Robert Haggiag, a Libyan-born American film producer who operated out of Rome and specialized in U.S.–Italian coproductions that qualified for Italian state film subsidies such as *The Barefoot Contessa* (1954). Shot partly at the massive Italian studio Cinecitta and partly on location in Libya, *Legend of the Lost* is a prime example of Hollywood's internationalization in this period, in which it sought out international coproductions, exploited foreign subsidies, and used international shooting locations. Sophia Loren at the time was a rising international star with immense popularity in several markets around the world, and Rossano Brazzi was an established Italian star who was one of Europe's most popular leading men in the 1950s. Clearly a vehicle to exploit the international star power of Wayne, Loren, and Brazzi, the film situates the biggest American star in the world and a leading European star in the open and highly contested spaces of Africa while they battle for the affection and the worldview of a local woman (played across

ethnicity by Loren). A film explicitly designed for international audiences thus dramatizes the conflicts between Europe and the United States concerning the ideological terrain of Africa.

The film tells the story of Paul Bonnard, a wealthy Frenchman who arrives in Timbuktu seeking a local guide to lead him into the desert. A corrupt local official introduces him to Joe January, an American guide, but not before Bonnard becomes entangled with Dita, a local thief implied to also be a prostitute. Although Dita at first pickpockets Bonnard, they later form a close bond as he shares his optimistic and faith-based views on the world with her. So when Bonnard and January refuse to let Dita come along on their trek, she follows them into the desert anyway and eventually joins them on their journey. As they traverse the desert, Bonnard finally confides in January that they are seeking an ancient lost holy city rumored to be filled with gold and jewels, a treasure that Bonnard's father supposedly discovered before disappearing into the desert. Bonnard plans to find the treasure and use it for humanitarian goals such as fighting hunger and creating peace, the dream of his father. January, of course, is highly skeptical of Bonnard's quest but happily leads him since he is getting paid, all the while developing an attraction to Dita, whom he had known in Timbuktu as an immoral companion to his own drunkenness and debauchery.

Just as it seems as though their quest will fail, the three stumble into the ruins of an ancient city, but in contrast to the holy city Bonnard sought, instead they found the ruins of an old Roman city along with the body of Bonnard's father and clues, suggesting that instead of a grand humanitarian mission, Bonnard's father planned to use the treasure to live lavishly in Paris with his illicit lover. Distraught over his loss of faith in his father, Bonnard goes slowly insane, finding the treasure and then attempting to kill January and Dita before stealing all the equipment and vanishing into the desert. January and Dita chase him down, but Bonnard stabs January in the back, only to have Dita shoot and kill Bonnard. In the end, January and Dita are rescued by the nomadic Touregs of the Sahara but only after they forgive Bonnard's dead body, since his initial optimism and faith will allow them to pursue a new and moral life together.

The film's tale of European and American conflict over Africa and the support of the locals was highly appropriate at the historical moment of the late 1950s. In the buildup to the massive waves of decolonization that would occur

in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s in Africa, the early and mid-1950s were years of debate and tensions concerning European colonialism and the role the United States would play in the decolonization process. In the years after World War II, the United States became a powerful and outspoken proponent of decolonization, frustrating its European allies by emphasizing self-determination and independence for colonized populations (and entrance into global trade). But despite the very rapid decolonization that would occur in a few short years, it wasn't at all clear in the mid-1950s when that process would start, how quickly it would progress, or if U.S. and European interests would fully align in how it would unfold. The French, for example, were in the midst of a bitter battle in Algeria to maintain colonial authority throughout the mid to late 1950s and into the 1960s, not necessarily preparing to divest themselves of their imperial agenda. In some regions, decolonization was not even an assured outcome in the mid-1950s as European colonizers attempted to redefine and retool the colonial mission to include more local self-determination and autonomy.[1] Thus, the international production of a film such as *Legend of the Lost* in 1956 and 1957 exploring the relationship between European and American visions of Africa (a film shot in Libya, itself a former Italian colony recently run by the French and the British that had earned independence in 1951) takes on special historical significance in terms of the cultural representation of the tensions of African decolonization.

Moreover, this was not the first or last time that John Wayne would take on a role in which he functions as a representative of the United States and American visions of global capitalism and economic development. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, Wayne frequently played an American abroad, often one explicitly representing the United States or American interests. Not including Wayne's numerous war films (in which he played another kind of American representing U.S. interests abroad), he played an American boxer seeking his Irish roots in *The Quiet Man* (1952), a former U.S. sailor who helps ferry a small Chinese village away from the brutal communists to Hong Kong in *Blood Alley* (1955), the African guide Joe January in *Legend of the Lost* (1957), the first U.S. consul to Japan in *The Barbarian and the Geisha* (1958), an American big-game trapper in Africa in *Hatari!* (1962), and an American Wild West show producer who travels to Europe in *Circus World* (1963). All of these films except *Blood Alley* were shot

overseas. So, while most of these films (except *The Quiet Man*) were considered commercial and artistic failures, there was nevertheless a continued assumption that such roles were part of Wayne's persona and a good way to exploit international productions.

Given Wayne's tendency to represent the United States abroad and given the film's insistent comparisons between January's and Bonnard's styles of masculinity and attitudes toward Africa, I examine *Legend of the Lost* as a film that explores the shifting policies and attitudes toward Africa at a tenuous historical moment on the verge of the breakdown of Europe's rule over the continent. In a way, the film offers a loose allegory of U.S. and European conceptions of decolonization, dramatizing a set of ideas about how the West can relate to and intervene in the space of Africa. This is not to say, of course, that the film is a straightforward affirmation of U.S. or European foreign policy in this period or a film that explicitly seeks to comment on the decolonization process. Rather, the film should be seen as one part of a larger political and cultural discourse in which the shifting ideas and tensions concerning colonialism and global capitalism are managed. The film's attitudes toward colonialism and the role of the United States in Africa, in other words, are only made legible through interaction with the historical contexts and discourses surrounding Africa and global politics in the mid-1950s. Using the dynamics between Wayne, Brazzi, and Loren to examine different models of international relations, then, the film dramatizes the tensions of colonialism's last hurrah, ultimately valorizing the individualist and capitalist practicality of Wayne's Joe January and celebrating U.S. global leadership while still maintaining a certain nostalgia for the racist idealism of European colonial zeal.

## The Imperial Imaginary: Africa as a Space for Euro-American Adventure

This is not to argue, of course, that the film's celebration of U.S. models of global capitalism in contrast to European paternalism is in any way anti-imperialist. To the contrary, from its initial scenes of vast desert landscapes and kitschy "exotic" local cultures, *Legend of the Lost* continually deploys the tired and clichéd tropes of the imperial adventure film. So, while the film explores the nuanced differences between Joe January and Paul Bonnard as models of First World

participation in the Third World, ultimately these differences reveal a shared sense of imperial responsibility and racial superiority.

In this way, the film reveals the overall shared sense of purpose in Africa between the United States and Africa's European colonizers in the 1950s, despite U.S. arguments in favor of decolonization. For the United States, Africa was a major front in the Cold War and the international battle against communism, recognizing that the conditions of underdevelopment, poverty, and colonial exploitation in Africa made African populations susceptible to the kinds of discontent and class warfare that could benefit advocates of communism and socialism. U.S. policies advocated strongly for decolonization, self-government, modernization, and entrance into systems of global trade, hoping that economic prosperity and consumption of goods from overseas would stave off the threat of communism and generally support its international efforts to promote democracy. But this general support of decolonization did not necessarily mean that U.S. and European interests were always at odds. Recognizing that hasty decolonization could destabilize Africa and breed the kind of intense political and social turmoil that could benefit communist agitators (and recognizing as well that the European powers had immense economic investments in their colonies, which they wished to maintain even after a transition to local control), the United States often supported continued European involvement in Africa or a very slow decolonization process that wouldn't result in full independence until the mid to late 1970s.[2]

Indeed, as John Kent indicates in his study of the United States and decolonization in black Africa, the assumptions and arguments of U.S. policy makers in the 1950s relied on the same racist beliefs about black African "tribalism" and lack of development as the European colonizers. As the United States attempted to balance a push toward decolonization and self-government with friendly relations with its European allies (who were equally as necessary in waging the Cold War), U.S. foreign policy makers at times made similar arguments as their European counterparts about the inability of "backwards" and "primitive" African populations to effectively govern themselves and create viable governments and economies.[3] Participating in the same condescending and Eurocentric view of Africa that had sustained the colonial system for so long, U.S. officials in the mid-1950s worried that the African people needed to modernize and educate

themselves before they were truly ready for independence. But the political pressures to support self-government and advocate for democracy began to override such worries as the United States continued to support decolonization.[4]

Produced and distributed in the midst of these tensions over African decolonization, *Legend of the Lost* participates in these racist attitudes concerning Africa and puts responsibility for the continent on either its U.S. or European representatives. Showing the same anxiety about native African leadership or primitivism, the film uses the space of Africa to showcase U.S. versus European worldviews while occluding the possibilities of native autonomy. Indeed, the bulk of the film captures in wide screen the vast and open landscape of the Sahara as the three travelers cross the desert, constructing it as a "virginal" and "exotic" land meaningful only in that it provides a space for Euro-American, masculinist adventurism or philanthropy. And typical of the imperial adventure film, Wayne's Joe January proves to be more knowledgeable about the Sahara than even the locals, legitimating his dominance of the landscape and naturalizing his leadership despite his status as an outsider. The prefect of Timbuktu describes January as the most experienced guide in the region, and it is January's tough survival skills that keep the trio alive throughout the film, displaying Wayne's skill, knowledge, and ability to endure the elements, as in most other Wayne films. In one scene, in fact, January tells Bonnard that because of his close connection to the harsh land, the Sahara "is mine. It's all I have," constructing January as a natural guardian and guide over the territory.

*Legend of the Lost*'s iconography, in fact, at times resembles the western genre and its construction of the U.S. frontier, linking the film to that genre's much-discussed colonial assumptions. Focusing on the heroic exploration of treacherous, open space by a rugged white adventurer on horseback (actually, donkeyback), *Legend of the Lost* often references the genre that Wayne was so associated with. Even the nomadic Touregs of the desert are shot in the same ways that Native Americans are in the western, as dangerous and primitive wanderers who suddenly and mysteriously appear on the horizons of the frontier, threatening the freedom of movement of the hero. In the same ways that the western naturalizes the occupation of "unused" land in the U.S. frontier, *Legend of the Lost* celebrates the adventures of Euro-American wanderers mastering space in the service of "civilization" in contrast to the "primitive" nomadism of the native inhabitants.

Moreover, in contrast to the open spaces of the Sahara, Timbuktu in the film is represented as a clichéd Orientalist city characterized by bizarre rituals, thievery, and dangerous sexuality. Clearly shot on a set at Cinecitta when compared to the spectacular cinematography shot on location in Libya, the scenes in Timbuktu construct Africa as stereotypically primitive and dangerous, a flat and typical colonial setting seen commonly in mainstream cinema's imperialist construction of Africa and the Middle East. The film opens with a funeral procession down the streets of Timbuktu overseen by the local prefect that features dancers flailing wildly, loud drumming, and a harem of mourners veiled in black, an overwrought and almost campy representation of the "exotic." The prefect is drawn away from the procession by the arrival of Bonnard, who is promptly pickpocketed by Dita (who at first is quick to take advantage of the wealthy stranger). The prefect then takes Bonnard in search of Joe January, looking without success in several bars and brothels featuring sexualized dancers and young women for sale, not only indicating January's debauchery but also revealing Timbuktu to be a city marked by dangerous non-Western sexual temptations. In short, the Timbuktu of the film represents the cities and towns of Africa as treacherous and filled with vice, offering titillating yet depraved pleasures for adventurous Euro-American males.

Dita as a representative of the local culture also suggests the titillating exoticism of Africa, but her character also collapses together different cultural stereotypes that privilege a sexualized yet paternal Euro-American gaze and sense of responsibility. As played by Loren, Dita is both sexual and childlike, a world-weary prostitute who has seen the worst kinds of debauchery and yet also a simple innocent young woman in need of protection from the elements of the desert and in need of a moral guide who has faith in her ability to start a new life. In this way her character naturalizes and legitimizes the intervention of Western masculinities in the affairs of the non-Western world. Especially given Loren's reputation as a hypersexual screen goddess, Dita is represented as naturally sexual, a non-Western woman who exudes sexual charisma without trying and often without embarrassment. Her sexuality is therefore alluring to the Western male (and having a European actress play the role softens anxieties about miscegenation), but her sexuality is also a source of tension, as it must be regulated and policed by bringing it in line with hegemonic structures such as marriage and

family. Thus, the film suggests that without the intervention of the Western male, someone like Dita would succumb to the excesses of her exotic culture (the same excesses and exoticism, of course, that would initially attract the Euro-American male to Dita in the first place). In typical fashion of the imperial adventure film, *Legend of the Lost* titillates the Western male imagination with clichéd images of female sexuality while simultaneously positioning the Western male as a necessary and paternal protector of femininity and morality.[5]

In most ways, then, the goals and attitudes of the film's U.S. and European representatives are mutually supportive, as both participate in a host of problematic assumptions about Africa and the inability of its people to self-govern, seeing African populations much like the film sees Dita: childlike innocents in need of protection and guidance.

## Imperial Negotiations: U.S. versus European Models of Global Leadership

While *Legend of the Lost* never wavers in its insistence on the necessity of Western intervention in the space of Africa, much of the tension between Bonnard and January indicates a much deeper ambivalence about different models of international involvement in Africa. After all, if Dita functions as a representative of the local cultures who needs protection and guidance, then much of the film centers on her choice between Bonnard and January and the different systems of involvement that the two men represent. Bonnard's idealistic humanitarianism and January's rugged libertarianism, then, dramatize and sensationalize the complex negotiation of power and decolonization in 1950s Africa.

The film therefore addresses the tensions between U.S. foreign policy and European colonialism, tensions that began before World War II but intensified with the rise of U.S. global power after the war. As Melani McAlister points out, "In the years before World War II, US state policy and US businesses converged to promote the economic influence of US-based corporations as an alternative to conquest."[6] Rather than engaging in the kinds of colonialism practiced throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century by European powers based on military occupation and the establishment of colonial governments, the United States after World War II for the most part expanded its international interests in the service of U.S. corporations and the export of U.S. goods. Focusing on the development of global capitalism as a system

and the international consumption of U.S. goods, U.S. foreign policy advocated openly for an end to colonialism and for the establishment of independent nations, which would presumably enter more freely into international trade when colonial restrictions privileging trade with the colonizing nation were lifted. This would then allow for an "open" market (i.e., one in which U.S. goods could dominate), one of the fundamental policies of economic globalization that is still hotly contested today.

The most prevalent example of this disconnect between American support of local autonomy and the imperialistic influence of European colonizers in this period is the Suez Crisis of 1956. When Gamal Abdel Nasser's Egypt nationalized the canal in 1956, Egypt faced a possible invasion from the combined forces of Israel, Britain, and France, which argued that the canal was essential to international trade routes and should remain in the control of European powers who would keep goods flowing. The United States, however, disappointed its allies. President Dwight D. Eisenhower intervened in support of Nasser, averting a possible military invasion and keeping the Suez in control of Egypt. U.S. policy, then, constructed itself as a major supporter of anticolonialism in the region while affirming Egyptian participation in a system of international trade, casting itself as the liberator and European colonialism as an outmoded and unnecessary system.

McAlister notes how Hollywood participated in these anticolonial discourses, pointing to Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* (1956) as a film that intersects with the public discourses of U.S. anticolonialism to loosely allegorize U.S. opposition to both the perceived domination of communism and the old European colonial system. Recognizing that the film is not a direct comment on the Suez Crisis or an explicit affirmation of U.S. foreign policy, McAlister argues instead that the meanings and pleasures of a film such as *The Ten Commandments* or other Hollywood epics depended on their interactions with and juxtapositions with a host of complex cultural and political dramas such as the Suez Crisis. Only when understood as one part of this broad historical context does the film resonate in terms of U.S. anticolonialism.

Similarly, *Legend of the Lost* functions as one of many sites where issues of U.S. and European models of global power were represented and contested in the mid-1950s. But given the film's status as a European coproduction, *Legend*

*of the Lost* explores a more nuanced and complex set of associations concerning the role of Europe in the Third World than evinced in McAlister's reading of *The Ten Commandments*. Rather than constructing European colonialism as a monolithic form of exploitation and racism, the film at first acknowledges the perceived humanitarian mission of "uplift," even with its condescension and superiority. While Bonnard's mission in the Sahara is quite explicitly exploitive and functions as a metaphor for Europe's relationship to Africa—he is going into the desert to remove and extract an ancient treasure left there by native inhabitants—he does so not for his own wealth but instead to fulfill his father's dream of serving humanity. Bonnard wants to use the money to create "a refuge for the needy, a haven for the sick of soul and body, a monument to humanity rising out of the jungle." His idealism and his desires to help the needy set his vision of European involvement in Africa apart from superficial constructions of colonialism as exploitive and oppressive, even as his image of the monument rising out of the jungle condescendingly invokes ideas about Western humanitarianism towering over the immoral and needy Third World "jungle."

In the early scenes of the film, then, Bonnard's humanitarianism is juxtaposed with the corrupt colonial officials whose greed and exploitive behavior signify the oppressive excesses of the traditional colonial system. In the first scenes we see the French prefect of Timbuktu halt and delay a local funeral procession so he can attempt to squeeze some money out of the newly arrived Bonnard. And in his dealings with January, it is clear that the prefect piles frivolous infractions one after another on the American to keep him in debt to the city so the prefect can glean a cut of January's earnings. In typical Hollywood fashion, the film uses body type to indicate flawed character—the prefect's portly and slovenly appearance marks him as immoral and untrustworthy, a caricature of the corrupt colonial official seeking only personal gain and exhibiting the worst of the colonial system. The righteous and sensitive Bonnard, then, dramatizes an alternative to the racist and corrupt system of colonialism as exploitation.[7]

Moreover, in contrast to Bonnard's optimistic appraisal of humanity and his desires to help others, Joe January is somewhat immoral and selfish, seeking only his own pleasure. He has made a life for himself in Timbuktu bouncing from bar to bar and brothel to brothel, often finding himself in jail. While he is likable and heroic in his skills in the desert, in the early scenes of the film his

cynical and practical wantonness stands in stark contrast to the grand idealism of Bonnard.

These differences between the men are on display when the travelers come across a band of Touregs in the desert. The Touregs have made camp next to an oasis that January, Bonnard, and Dita were planning on using, so the three travelers were forced to wait hidden behind a sand dune until the dangerous Touregs leave. But it becomes clear that one of the Touregs is ill, and per their traditions they will wait there until the sick man dies. January, not wanting to interfere in their culture and not wanting to risk his life, is content to wait them out, but Bonnard immediately gets a small bag of medical equipment and rushes in to help. The Touregs threaten Bonnard with guns but ultimately allow him to tend to the sick man and save his life, while Dita watches on in awe and January expresses his admiration at Bonnard's courage. Enshrining the inherent goodness of Western medicine and science over the traditions of the Touregs, the scene celebrates the humanitarian instinct of Bonnard in contrast to the cynical and selfish individualism of January.

This construction of Bonnard's European humanitarianism reflects the complex manifestations of European colonialism in the 1950s. Colonialism as practiced by European powers is often thought of as uniform and monolithic in its domination and exploitation of colonized lands and populations, but as Cooper points out, European colonialism was a "moving target" of sorts, shifting and changing its approach and attitudes regarding its colonies.[8] In the 1950s, then, the discourses of modernization and development that were dominating debates about international relations and the global fight against poverty and communism were integrated into the colonial mission. In what Cooper refers to as "modernizing imperialism," colonizers such as Great Britain and France "were trying to relegitimize colonial rule, to increase African political participation in a controlled way, and to give Africans a stake in expanding production within the imperial economy" in the 1950s.[9] There were, of course, clear limits to such processes. Expanding colonial autonomy and development could never override European economic interests, so, for example, the Belgian government made vast improvements in social services and health care in the copper mining regions of the Congo but forbade trade unions and political organization among its colonial citizens in order to protect their interests in the mining operations.[10]

Nevertheless, the culture of colonialism changed in the years after World War II as more and more impetus was put on economic development, humanitarian projects, and local political autonomy. As Cooper puts it, the 1950s saw "a new world where [colonial] legitimacy was measured in terms of progress toward self-government and economic development."[11]

Through Bonnard's idealism and hopes of helping populations around the world, we can see reflected the 1950s attempts of colonial powers to redefine the colonial mission as essential to promote the welfare and prosperity of African peoples. Of course, the redefinition of European colonialism was a sort of last-ditch effort to retain power and influence. With the looming threat of complete decolonization on the horizon, the changing focus of the colonial mission only made more complex the buildup to decolonization, although in the mid-1950s before the outcome and pace of decolonization was entirely clear, the project of modernizing imperialism was still up for debate. *Legend of the Lost*, then, allows for some debate and also allows for Bonnard to represent a heroic and humanitarian model of European investment in Africa, but as the film progresses Bonnard and his worldview come unraveled.

When Bonnard learns that his father had abandoned his idealism and dreams of helping the impoverished in the Third World, instead seeking personal gain and pleasure with his lover, the political allegory of the film shifts. Throughout the film Bonnard's faith rested in his father and his aspirations, but when they come across the dead body of the senior Bonnard, it becomes clear that Bonnard's father had ultimately murdered his lover—who was planning on leaving him for her desert guide—along with the guide who brought her to the lost city. The younger Bonnard then turns to drink but continues to obsess over the treasure, reproducing his father's saga by running off with the gold and jewels and stabbing January in the back when January catches up with Bonnard in the desert. Unable to bear the weight of his father's true character, Bonnard's own optimism is destroyed, and he relives the sins of the father.

The intergenerational conflict in the film's resolution suggests that even present-day advocates of modernizing imperialism cannot overcome the dark and oppressive history of colonialism's past. By structuring Bonnard's breakdown as a recognition of the true nature of the previous generation's relationship with Africa—that Bonnard's father, despite the humanitarian rhetoric, sought to extract

January (John Wayne) and Dita (Sophia Loren) exploring the crumbling but grand Roman city in *Legend of the Lost* (Batjac/Dear Films Productions, 1957).

precious resources from the expanses of Africa to spend on a lavish prosperity back in Europe—*Legend of the Lost* indicates the continuing legacy of past practices of colonial exploitation on the present generation. Bonnard's own breakdown and attempts to repeat his father's exploitation reveal that there is a fine line between humanitarian involvement and personal, selfish gain, a line that Bonnard is driven to cross.

The lingering history of imperial domination, after all, is spectacularly present when they find the lost city: it was not a legendary and mythical holy city that served as a beacon of hope and prosperity but simply an old Roman metropolis lost to the desert.[12] As January and Dita wander through the Roman columns and vast coliseum reading the old Latin carved into the stone, they (and we) are reminded of the long history of conquest and domination in the region. The confrontation between January and Bonnard within this grand but crumbling city therefore suggests not only the lingering presence of colonialism but also its inevitable decline as an outmoded system.

Moreover, as the three learned from the letters and effects found on the dead bodies, Bonnard's father would have brought his lover and treasure to Paris from the Sahara, a subtle but important reference to French colonialism that references continued French involvement in the region. In the mid-1950s while France was fighting for control of Algeria against the independence movement there, the French government also started the process of granting more autonomy to its different colonies. But with the outcome in Algeria unclear, the French quietly worked to retain influence in the Sahara, especially as more and

more geological research pointed to expansive oil resources under the sands of the desert (and as the French realized the possibilities of the Sahara as a space to test nuclear bombs). The Sahara had always been more politically stable than other French holdings; thus, the French in the mid-1950s sought to establish the Common Organization of Saharan Regions (OCRS), which could oversee Saharan territory from Algeria, Mauritania, French Sudan, Niger, and Chad. Operating under the logic of modernizing imperialism, the French argued that oil revenues in the region would fund the modernization and development of Saharan people, but it was also clear that such a territorial reorganization would benefit French economic interests and keep the French government highly involved in the region. At first the OCRS only included the Algerian Sahara, but in 1959 both Niger and Chad joined the organization, only to have the OCRS fall apart upon Algerian independence in 1962.[13]

The OCRS represented an inconsistency in the U.S. anticolonial stance in Africa, since two successive U.S. administrations chose to ignore the OCRS and its neocolonial mission. Berny Sèbe details the complex reasons for U.S. nonreaction (including the possibilities of U.S. oil revenues and the hope that political stability in the Sahara would be good for Africa), but the incident reveals the complex negotiations between the continued dominance of European colonialism and U.S. anticolonialism, suggesting a delicate balance between the imperialistic ideologies of "development" and the practices of European colonial exploitation.

*Legend of the Lost*'s colonial allegory is tied to this history of French neocolonialism. Although Bonnard is never explicitly discussed as French (and Brazzi plays the character as ambiguously "European"), his name and the fact that his father wanted to take his lover to Paris draw connections between his humanitarian mission that turns into violent and exploitive theft and the historical context of French involvement in the oil-rich Sahara. Functioning as one part of a larger discourse constructing ideas about U.S. and European involvement in Africa, the film raises questions about the intentions of French and European investment in the Sahara. The film dramatizes the dangers of genuinely well-meaning humanitarian missions that slide into exploitation because of the weight of the past, exploring a possible critique of French involvement in the Sahara even as U.S. foreign policy remained conspicuously quiet. As January

notes after Bonnard turns on them in the lost city, he has seen these kinds of "do-gooders" before who end up doing more good for themselves, calling out the hypocrisy of humanitarian missions in Africa and lumping Bonnard in with the long history of European "uplift" in Africa that served selfish goals such as religious conversion missions and attempts at forced modernization. By the end of the film, Bonnard is no better than the corrupt French officials of Timbuktu.

Of course, given the way the film problematically constructs Dita as the representative of local cultures, it is ultimately her romantic rejection of Bonnard that solidifies the film's rejection of a kind of modernizing imperialism. Having lost faith in his father and his humanitarian mission, Bonnard abruptly decides that his romance with Dita will fulfill him instead, sneaking to her in the night as January sleeps. Hoping to make love, he is rebuffed by her. She cites his earlier optimism and faith in her ability to become a moral person as reasons to avoid a tawdry affair. Bonnard then pleads with her, offering her the treasure and claiming that they could use the wealth to buy respectability for her, a prospect too close to prostitution for Dita, who hopes to start a new and enlightened life for herself.

Dita's rejection of Bonnard, then, signifies a kind of local responsibility in the face of crumbling European leadership and domination, although one that still affirms the values of Western modernity and uplift. Having internalized the lessons of the optimistic European do-gooder, Dita is now able to toss aside Bonnard and his slide into exploitation while still embracing the values he once stood for. Much like the United States embraced the problematic condescension and paternalism of European colonialism—seeing African populations as childlike and in need of economic, political, and moral guidance—while still advocating for self-government and the end of European rule, Dita affirms the need for Western guidance while pushing aside Bonnard and the ghosts of European colonialism that haunt him.

Rather than truly taking responsibility for herself, Dita's rejection of Bonnard instead becomes an acceptance of Joe January and his individualistic and at times cynical worldview. Dita is never autonomous; she simply finds her way from one model of leadership and social relations to another. So, just as Bonnard's once admirable humanitarianism slips into exploitation, madness, and eventually violence, January's simple and at times crude individualism

becomes more and more appealing as the film progresses, by the end offering the only sane option for Dita (and the audience) to identify with. In typical John Wayne fashion, January's perspective of the world is highly practical and based in rugged individualism. When Bonnard requests that no liquor be taken on the trek, January tells him, "I'll live my way, you live yours." When Bonnard stays up all night convincing Dita that she can change her life, January says that he is confusing her, preferring that people stay out of the affairs of others. And throughout the journey, January's practicality and expertise at survival give his individualist worldview a sense of authority and legitimacy—as I mentioned above, the American Wayne is more skilled in the desert than even the locals, legitimizing his presence and involvement in Africa.

January's model of participation in Africa, of course, becomes an affirmation of U.S. global leadership on the continent. Rather than the overintellectual and condescending humanitarianism of Bonnard, who is knowledgeable about the desert but has only read about it in books, Joe January has practical on-the-ground experience and has spent years in Africa working as an entrepreneur in the Sahara rather than dreaming about uplifting Third World people while living in luxury in Europe. In contrast to the lofty goals of Bonnard, January sees Africa as a space of commerce, somewhere he can make money on his skills. While January's individualism seems cynical and cold in contrast to Bonnard's inspirational sense of duty and obligation, as Bonnard falls apart January's practicality becomes more sympathetic, even admirable, as his masculine knowledge and skills keep himself and Dita alive in the desert.

January, then, becomes a substitute in the film's allegory for the United States and its self-proclaimed role as global leader. After all, Joe January is played by Wayne—perhaps one of the most famous Americans around the world in this period—and the film references January's patriotism and Americanism. When we first meet January, he is in the Timbuktu jail demanding free room and board, given his debt to the city. His most recent infraction, it turns out, was making "bombs" on the Fourth of July, a date that held no significance for the French prefect. January's rugged Americanism therefore provides a model of U.S. involvement in Africa that is supposedly egalitarian and individualistic—January is not there to offer anyone welfare, just to make a living—and that dramatizes the ideologies of a U.S.-inspired global leadership. Instead of grand ideologies

of Western paternalism, the United States instead promoted a model of local and national autonomy and self-determination but one based on international commerce and trade, thus a system in which foreign outsiders or foreign corporations were encouraged to participate in local and national economies.

Of course, by juxtaposing January's practical entrepreneurship with Bonnard's fall from grace, the political allegory of the film attempts to obscure the systems of inequality and dominance built into a U.S.–led system of global capitalism, in the end celebrating the down-to-earth and individualist notion of Africa as a space freed from the constraints of colonialism and ready for commerce and equal competition. But clearly Wayne as Joe January stands taller than most in the Sahara and benefits from the privileges of the Euro-American male produced by imperialism, indicating the ways that U.S. visions of anticolonialism still rely on many of the same ideologies and inequalities of Eurocentrism. After all, in the final scenes of the film as January lies wounded in the desert, he and Dita forgive Bonnard's lifeless body, crediting his optimism for giving them both a new appreciation for humanity and their own morals. So, after Bonnard and the systems of paternalism and exploitation that he came to represent are finally put to rest, January can already express nostalgia for Bonnard's idealistic aspirations as a way of avoiding the obviousness of his own dominance in Africa and his relationship with Dita.

On the verge of massive African decolonization, then, John Wayne in *Legend of the Lost* typifies the ideal global capitalist masculinity, a model of manhood and leadership that becomes dramatically more appropriate for relations with Africa than the shifting face of European colonialism. As the public discourses surrounding Africa and its relationship to both Europe and the United States balanced European economic interests with U.S. pressures to decolonize along with the persistent stereotype that African populations were too primitive, tribal, or undeveloped to lead themselves, Wayne as an icon of modern masculinity in the film manages these cultural and political tensions, articulating not only the "natural" and practical role of a U.S.–inspired capitalism in Africa but also the benefits and pleasures of a skilled entrepreneurial (and American) masculinity in ushering Africa into the global economy.

## Conclusion: Africa as a Space for Capitalism

In a few short years after the release of *Legend of the Lost*, the debates surrounding the future of European colonialism in Africa would give way to a massive wave of decolonization in the early 1960s. This process would enshrine the trajectory envisioned in *Legend of the Lost* in which a humanitarian but condescending European colonialism gives way to the economic freedom and individualism of a U.S.-inspired global capitalism. Imagining Africa as a space of unfettered economic possibility for U.S. and European corporate interests, films such as *Legend of the Lost* participated in the burgeoning discourses of global capitalism and internationalization that would come to dominate U.S. visions of its global power.

Unsurprisingly, this was a vision of Africa that the Hollywood studios embraced in this period as well. In attempts to develop and exploit more film markets around the world in the 1950s, the Motion Picture Export Association (MPEA)—the association tasked with managing the major studios' international relations—turned to developing nations and Africa in the years after *Legend of the Lost* was made. Hollywood had its eye on Africa, as decolonization meant that emerging African nations were no longer guided by the "imperial preference" import guidelines of European colonizers (where, for example, British films were prioritized over U.S. films in British-controlled colonies). Late in the decade, the MPEA became more active in exploiting these markets; in 1959 an MPEA delegate was sent to tour West Africa, and in 1960 MPEA president Eric Johnston himself "toured the African market to survey exhibition facilities and to contact African government officials" about the elimination of trade restrictions.[14] According to the MPEA, this tactic was working: "The motion picture box office is jingling merrily in Ghana," with Johnston reporting that "There is only one way to describe the movie situation in this new nation of 6,500,000 persons. . . . The people love the movies. Attendance is increasing all the time. New theaters are constantly under construction to accommodate the crowds."[15]

The vision of U.S. global leadership and economic freedom in Africa dramatized in *Legend of the Lost*, then, closely mirrored Hollywood's own plans for Africa as a space for profit and new markets, a space in which Hollywood and other European industries could compete for new audiences outside the restrictions of British, French, or other European colonialism. Using the masculinist pleasures of John Wayne in a rugged desert to affirm a vision of Western entrepreneurship

in Africa, films such as *Legend of the Lost* helped imagine emerging forms of U.S. global power and the transformation of Africa into a new frontier for capitalist exploitation.

## Notes

1. Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
2. John Kent, "The United States and the Decolonization of Black Africa, 1945–63," in *The United States and Decolonization: Power and Freedom*, ed. David Ryan and Victor Pungong, 168–89 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).
3. Ibid., 170–71.
4. Ibid., 172–76.
5. For a detailed analysis of the tropes of the imperial adventure film and the ways Western cinema perpetuates the ideologies of imperialism, see Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London: Routledge, 1994).
6. Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945–2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 30.
7. Of course, this distinction between a callous and oppressive colonialism and a more sensitive desire to help native inhabitants is certainly not a new narrative trope, often critiquing a superficial notion of "bad" colonialism while still indicating the need for Western supervision. See, for example, the discussion of *Simba* (1955) as another film that explores different visions of white relations with black Africa while still villainizing out of control black bodies in Richard Dyer, *White* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
8. Cooper, Africa since 1940, 62.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 63.
11. Ibid., 66.
12. Interestingly, Wayne in the film refers to the Roman city in the desert as Timgad, which was the name of the Roman ruins in Libya that were used for location shooting, ruins that were very far away from the Sahara desert. This kind of loose approach to geography is characteristic of a Eurocentric mind-set—all the cities in Africa are essentially interchangeable exotic locales—but also ties the diegetic Roman city with the history of imperialism in Libya, which had recently earned its independence.
13. Berny Sebe, "In the Shadow of the Algerian War: The United States and the Common Organisation of Saharan Regions (OCRS), 1957–62," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwelath History* 38, no. 2 (2010): 303–22.
14. Thomas H. Guback, *The International Film Industry: Western Europe and America since 1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), 98–99.
15. Motion Picture Export Association, Press Release, April 11, 1951, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

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# Index

Acosta, Rodolfo, 195
Adams, Julia, 195
Aeneid, The, 26
Africa, 6, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 23, 24, 34, 70, 76, 77, 81, 82, 83, 140, 168, 170, 233, 234–41, 243, 244–52
African American culture, 167, 168, 222
Alberghetti, Anna Maria, 122
Albright, Lola, 196
Aleman, Miguel Jr., 191
*Alfie* (1966), 131
Algeria, 236, 246–47
Allasio, Marisa, 117, 120
Alperson, Edward, 196
Ambler, Charles, 6
Ameche, Don, 222
Americanization, 3, 15, 133, 140, 160, 161, 163, 223
*An American in Paris* (1951), 11, 116, 159, 161, 164–69
*Anatahan* (1953), 11, 13, 14–15, 89–108
*And God Created Woman* (1957), 138, 142, 144
Andrew, Dudley, 152
*Anything Goes* (1956), 159, 170
ANZUS alliance, 147
*April in Paris* (1952), 159, 170
*Arabian Nights, The* (1704), 27
Argentina, 17, 195, 209–227
Argosy Films, 189
Arizona (1940), 184–85
Armendariz, Pedro, 189
Armstrong, Louis, 121
*Arrowsmith* (1931), 145
*Arruza* (1972), 200
Arthur, Jean, 1, 184
Asia/Asians, 13, 14, 26, 48, 49–54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 102, 103, 140
Asian Americans, 14, 49–51, 56, 57
Astaire, Fred, 17, 137, 148, 209–210, 215
Australia, 28, 32, 138, 146–47, 148–49, 151
auteurs/auteurism, 99, 139, 145–46, 149, 151

*Back at the Front* (1952), 105
backlots, 15, 16, 78, 118, 159, 164, 174
Bacon, Lloyd, 159
Bady, Aaron, 76, 82
Ballard, Lucien, 196
Banco Cinematografico, 186–87
banlieu, 82–83
*Barbarian and the Geisha, The* (1958), 91, 105, 236
Bardot, Brigitte, 142
*Barefoot Contessa, The* (1954), 234
Barrat, Robert, 220
Bartok, Eva, 122
Batjac Productions, 234
*Battle of the Villa Fiorita, The* (1965), 128
Bau, Gordon, 53
Baxter, John, 98, 103
Bazin, André, 201
beaches, 57, 59, 137, 138
Belgium, 49, 244
*Bell for Adano, A* (1945), 118
Benamou, Catherine, 188
Best, James, 195
Betz, Mark, 141
*Big Lift, The* (1950), 140
Biggers, Earl Derr, 47, 48, 50, 55, 57–61
*Black Camel, The* (1929 novel), 48
*Black Camel, The* (1931 film), 48, 57–59
blackness (race), 29, 34–35, 36, 37, 39–40, 52, 213, 214, 238
*Blood Alley* (1955), 236
*Blood and Sand* (1941), 188, 190, 194
Böcklin, Arnold, 28
*Body and Soul* (1947), 198, 199
Boetticher, Budd, 189–191, 193–98
*Bonjour Tristesse* (1958), 16, 137–38, 141–46
Bordwell, David, 146

Borges, Jorge Luis, 92–93, 95
Bow, Clara, 6
Brando, Marlon, 90
Brands, H. W., 55
*Brave Bulls, The* (1951), 197–199
Brazil, 209, 210, 211, 213, 214, 216, 222, 223, 225
Brazzi, Rossano, 17, 117, 128, 129, 233, 234, 237, 247
Breen Office, 28
*Brigadoon* (1954), 168
Bright, John, 198
Briskin, Irving, 190
*Broken Blossoms* (1919), 50
Brown, Harry Joe, 199
*Buchanan Rides Alone* (1958), 199–200
Buenos Aires, 209, 210, 212, 213, 214, 217–223, 224, 226
*Bullfighter and the Lady, The* (1951), 17, 190–94
Buñuel, Luis, 196
Butler, David, 159

Campos, Molina, 225
capitalism, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 15, 34, 107, 147, 160, 163, 164, 166, 167–68, 170, 171, 172–73, 177, 198, 199, 236, 237, 241, 250, 251–52
Capri, 124, 126, 131
Caribbean, 13, 34
Carol, Cindy, 127
Caron, Leslie, 167
casinos, 143, 212, 219, 220
*Cat People* (1942), 35
*Champion* (1949), 151
Charisse, Cyd, 168
Charlie Chan (character), 14, 48, 50, 54, 57–62; *Charlie Chan on Broadway* (1937), 61; *Charlie Chan Carries On* (1930 novel), 48; *Charlie Chan Carries On* (1931), 48; *Charlie Chan in Egypt* (1935), 48; *Charlie Chan in Honolulu* (1938), 59; *Charlie Chan in London* (1934), 48, 60; *Charlie Chan at Monte Carlo* (1937), 48, 62; *Charlie Chan in Paris* (1935), 48, 60; *Charlie Chan in Rio* (1941), 61; *Charlie Chan in Shanghai* (1935), 48
China, 14, 50, 52, 53, 54, 57, 59, 60, 93, 95, 98, 101, 226
chinas (Argentine), 226
Chinatown (various cities), 51, 52, 53, 54, 59, 61
Chinese Exclusion Act, 49, 59
Ching, William, 196
*chinoiserie*, 58, 163
Chowdhry, Prem, 8
Chrisman, Eugene, 74
Christie, Agatha, 49
*Cimarron* (1931), 184
*Cimarron Kid, The* (1952), 184
*Cinco fueron escogidos* (1943), 188
Cinecitta, 201, 234, 240
Cinematografica Tele Voz, 191
*Circus World* (1963), 236
*Citizen Kane* (1941), 188
Cobb, Lee J., 188
Cold War, 3, 6–7, 41, 118, 122, 139, 146–47, 195, 238
colonialism/imperialism, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17–18, 23–24, 25, 26, 27, 30, 32–33, 34–35, 39, 40, 41, 159, 160, 162, 163–64, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 175, 176, 177, 210, 234, 241–42; in Africa, 6, 236, 237–39, 242–252; British, 6, 55, 60, 251; European, 4, 7, 10, 15, 17, 24, 27, 29, 30, 40, 54, 161, 164, 234, 237, 238–39, 241–43, 244, 245, 247, 248, 250, 251; French, 8, 163, 244, 236, 246; and narrative, 27, 28, 29, 33, 40, 77, 82, 101, 161, 167; U.S., 11, 23, 25, 26, 33, 54–57, 60, 163, 164, 165, 166, 172–73, 201, 212; U.S. anticolonialism, 32, 242, 247, 250
Columbia (film studio), 190, 197
*Come September* (1961), 116, 120, 121, 125–27, 131
Comité Coordinator y de Fomento de la Industria Cinematográfica Mexicana, 186–87
Common Organization of Saharan Regions (OCRS), 247
communism, 54, 131, 132, 197, 236, 238; U.S. anticommunism, 118, 139, 146, 238, 242, 244
Como, Perry, 121

*Compañeros* (1970), 202
connaissance (Foucauldian), 77
consumerism, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 15, 146, 161–62, 163, 167, 171, 172, 176, 177
Conte, Richard, 188
Cooper, Anna, 7
Cooper, Frederick, 244–45
Cooper, Gary, 98
Cooper, Merian C., 189
coproductions, international, 17, 148, 234, 242
*Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean* (1858), 28
Corbucci, Sergio, 202
Corkin, Stanley, 201
Cosgrove, Denis, 26
cosmopolitanism, 7, 17, 25, 138, 141–42, 145, 147, 148, 149, 152, 209, 211, 212, 217, 218, 219, 223, 226
Cregar, Laird, 194
Crowther, Bosley, 198
Cukor, George, 159
Cummings, Irving, 221
Curtis, Betty, 129

D'Laurage, Ruth, 189–90, 194
Da Silva, Howard, 188
Danks, Adrian, 148–49
Darin, Bobby, 119, 126
Darren, James, 127
*Daughter of the Dragon* (1931), 50
Daves, Delmer, 128
Day, Doris, 125
de Grazia, Victoria, 9–10, 162
Dear Films Productions, 234
decolonization, 17, 235–240, 241–42, 245, 250, 251
Dee, Sandra, 126
*Defiant Ones, The* (1958), 151
del Rio, Dolores, 188–89
Delgado, Augustín, 188
Denning, Richard, 196
desert, 13, 51, 233, 235, 237, 239, 240, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 249, 250, 251
DeSica, Vittorio, 132
*Design for Living* (1933), 145
Diaz, Porfirio, 195
Dickinson, Angie, 128
Dietrich, Marlene, 1–2, 96–97, 101, 107
distribution (film), 3, 6, 145, 148, 159, 186, 187
*Divine Comedy, The* (1320), 27
Dolenz, George, 195
Donald Duck, 224
Donen, Stanley, 160
Donne, John, 26
Donohue, Troy, 128, 130
*Doomed to Die* (1940), 52
*Down Argentine Way* (1940), 17, 221–22
*Dracula* (1931), 33
Dracula, 71
*Duel in the Sun* (1947), 201
Dyer, Richard, 166–67, 171–72

Eastwood, Clint, 105, 201
Ebsen, Buddy, 225
Egypt, 48, 51, 59, 242
El Dorado (mythical city), 216–17, 219
Ellison, James, 220
Endy, Christopher, 160, 162
*Escapade in Japan* (1957), 105
Espinosa, Fermín, a.k.a. "Armillita," 190
Estudios Churubusco, 184, 187, 189, 191, 196, 201
Eurocentrism, 8, 213, 250
Europe/Europeans, 8, 33, 40, 41, 49, 52, 81, 100, 115, 117, 131, 150, 151–52, 202, 223, 233, 234, 246, 247, 248, 249; European cinema, 137, 139, 141, 142, 143, 144, 146, 148, 151, 159, 201; European colonialism (*see* under colonialism/imperialism); European culture in Argentina, 17, 209, 211–15, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222, 223, 225, 226; Europe–U.S. relations, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 15, 25, 102, 103, 117, 133, 139, 140, 141, 144, 143, 147, 152, 159, 160, 166, 210, 211, 234, 235–36, 237, 241, 250, 251; Hollywood films set or made in, 1–2, 15, 115, 116, 118, 120, 159–177; U.S. tourism in, 7, 16, 116, 118, 120, 131, 132, 143, 160,
Europeanization (of Hollywood), 11, 16, 138, 141, 148–49, 151, 153
exile, 12, 14, 69, 70, 71–72, 74–75, 78, 79, 80, 82, 108, 119

Ezra, Elizabeth, 96, 106

Fairbanks, Douglas, 209, 215
Fanon, Frantz, 33, 34
fascism, 131, 132, 210
fashion, 6, 118, 160, 163, 170, 175–76
*Fatal Hour, The* (1940), 52
Fay, Jennifer, 6
Fellini, Federico, 127
Fernandel, 131
Fernández, Emilio, 189
Ferrer, Mel, 198
Feuer, Jane, 160
*Fighter, The* (1952), 188
Figueroa, Gabriel, 188
Fitzgerald, F. Scott, 160
Foch, Nina, 166
*Fog Island* (1945), 23
Fojas, Camilla, 201
Fonda, Henry, 189
Ford, Glenn, 219
Ford, John, 144, 145, 189, 191, 194, 201
*Foreign Affair, A* (1948), 1–2
*Forgotten Village* (1941), 188
Forster, Norman, 188
Foucauldian mirror, 17, 183–84, 189, 199–200
Foucault, Michel, 12, 72–73, 81, 92–94, 96, 181–83, 184
France/French society and people, 4, 7, 8, 35, 60, 78, 83, 137, 138, 139, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 159–164, 166, 167, 168, 169, 171, 172, 219, 221, 226, 235, 236, 242, 243, 244, 246, 247, 249, 251
*Frankenstein* (1931), 33, 53
*French Line, The* (1953), 159, 170
French New Wave, 139
Fu Manchu, 50, 53; *The Mask of Fu Manchu* (1932), 50, 53; *The Mysterious Fu Manchu* (1929), 50; *The Return of Fu Manchu* (1930), 50
*Fugitive, The* (1947), 188
Fujiki, Hideaki, 6
Fujiwara, Chris, 36
*Funny Face* (1957), 160

Gable, Clark, 74, 124
Gabriel Alarcon theater chain, 187
Gallian, Ketti, 225
Gardner, Ava, 137, 148, 149, 150, 151
*Gaucho Martin Fierro, El* (1872), 224
gaucho, 209–10, 212, 213, 215–17, 220, 221, 223–27
*Gaucho, The* (1927), 209, 215–16, 217–18, 220
*Geisha Boy, The* (1958), 105
*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), 16, 159, 161, 164, 169–77
Germany, 1, 101, 213
Gershwin, George, 168
*Gidget Goes to Rome* (1963), 15, 116, 118, 120, 125, 127–28
*Gigi* (1958), 160
*Gilda* (1946), 17, 219
*Goin' to Town* (1935), 221
Gomez, Thomas, 198
*Good Earth, The* (1937), 50
Good Neighbor Policy, 185, 189, 210, 211, 212, 215, 217, 220, 222, 223, 224, 226, 227
Goofy, 224, 225
Grable, Betty, 222
Green, Graham, 189
Grey, Virginia, 191
Group Theater, The, 188
Guback, Thomas, 5, 140–41
Guétary, Georges, 167

Hackford, Taylor, 200
Haggiag, Robert, 234
Haiti, 13, 34, 35, 36, 41
Halberstam, Jack, 69
Haley, Bill, 123
Hall, Alexander, 221
Hamilton, Neil, 75
Hammid, Alexander, 188
Hammill, Faye, 142
Handyside, Fiona, 173, 176
Hanke, Ken, 51–52, 53
Hansen, Miriam, 182
*Hatari!* (1962), 236
*Hatchet Man, The* (1932), 53
Hawaii, 13, 14, 47–48, 54–62
Hawks, Howard, 159, 201
Hayworth, Rita, 17, 219
Heflin, Van, 195

Hemingway, Ernest, 160, 198
Henreid, Paul, 122
Hepburn, Audrey, 121, 170, 176
Hercule Poirot (character), 48–49
Hernández, José, 224
Herzog, Charlotte, 170
heterotopia, 12–13, 17, 72–73, 78, 81–82, 91–94, 182–83
Higbee, Will, 107
hippodrome, 218, 220–21
Hirsch, Foster, 144
Hirt, Al, 129
Hitchcock, Alfred, 145
Holden, William, 184
Hollywood Renaissance, 139
Hollywood studio system, 5, 17, 119, 133, 145, 146, 149, 150, 151, 152, 185, 187, 188, 191, 210, 251
*Home of the Brave* (1949), 151
Honolulu, 47, 48, 51, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62
Hope, Bob, 124
horror (genre), 11, 13, 23–25, 18, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 40, 41, 53, 102
*Horror Island* (1941), 23
*House of Bamboo* (1955), 105
House Un-American Activities Committee, 197
*House without a Key, The* (1925 novel), 47, 48, 55, 61
*House without a Key, The* (1926 film), 48
Howe, James Wong, 144
Huang, Yunte, 60
Hubbard, John, 191
Hudson, Rock, 125, 126–27
humanitarianism, 7, 17, 234, 235, 241, 243, 244–46, 247–48, 249, 251
Huston, John, 91

*I Walked with a Zombie* (1943), 13, 23, 24, 34, 35–39, 40
Ibáñez, Vicente Blasco, 190
*If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium* (1969), 116, 127, 131, 133
immigration to U.S., 50, 57, 59, 73, 82
imperialism. *See* colonialism/imperialism
indigenous peoples, 71, 73, 213, 214, 223
*Iron Maze* (1991), 105
*Island of Dr. Moreau, The* (1896), 28
*Island of Lost Souls, The* (1932), 13, 28–33
islands, 13–14, 23–41, 47, 51, 57, 61, 89, 97
*Isle of the Dead* (1880 painting), 28
*Isle of the Dead* (1945), 23
isolationism, U.S. 1, 25, 48, 50, 57, 62
*It Started in Naples* (1960), 116, 120, 121, 124–25, 131
Italy, 10, 11, 15, 17, 115–34, 148, 174, 213, 234, 236

Jackson, Wilfred, 224
Jacobs, Lea, 23
Jaikumar, Priya, 8
James Bond (character), 131
Jane (Tarzan character), 69, 71, 72, 75, 76, 77–79, 80, 81
*Jane Eyre* (1847 novel), 36
Japan/Japanese people and culture, 6, 13, 14–15, 41, 49, 50, 51, 53–54, 56, 61, 89–92, 94–95, 96, 97, 98, 99–104, 105, 107, 236
Jarvie, Ian, 3, 5
Jockey Club, 218–19, 220–21
Johnson, Peter, 94
Johnston, Eric, 251
jungle, 12, 14, 28, 29, 30, 32, 37, 69, 71–72, 73, 74–82, 96, 97, 103, 243

kamaaina, 57, 58
Kaminsky, Amy, 211, 213, 214, 224, 226
Kandel, Aben, 188
Kaplan, E. Ann, 8
Karloff, Boris, 52, 53
Kawakita, Nagamasa, 98, 100, 101, 102
Kelly, Gene, 164
Kent, John, 238
Kerr, Deborah, 138, 144
King Kalakaua, 55, 56
*King Kong* (1933), 23
*King of the Zombies* (1941), 23
*Kings Go Forth* (1958), 128
Kinney, Jack, 224
Kitagawa, Fuyuhiko, 101
Kitses, Jim, 200
Klein, Christina, 7
Kline, Herbert, 188

Kramer, Stanley, 137, 146, 147, 149, 150, 151–52
Kurosawa, Akira, 105

*La Dolce Vita* (1960), 127
*Labyrinthine Ways, The* (aka *The Power and the Glory*, 1940 novel), 189
*Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1955), 143
Laine, Frankie, 121
Landers, Lew, 190
Lanza, Mario, 119, 120, 121
*Last Hurrah, The* (1958), 144
Latin America, 16, 17, 44, 140, 185, 186, 194, 209–212, 214, 217, 221, 222, 223, 224
Laughton, Charles, 28
Lawton, Charles, 128
Lea, Tom, 198
Leavitt, Sam, 151
Lefebvre, Henri, 71, 81
*Legend of the Lost* (1957), 233–41, 242–52
Leone, Sergio, 202
LeRoy, Mervyn, 159
*Les Girls* (1957), 159
*Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006), 105
Lev, Peter, 139, 142
Levant, Oscar, 168
Levine, Joe, 201
Lewis, Robert, 159
Lewton, Val, 35
libertarianism, 17, 234, 241
*Lilies of the Field* (1963), 149
Lim, Song Hwee, 96, 107
*Little World of Don Camillo, The* (1952), 131
Litvak, Anatole, 146
Livingston, Ira, 69
Logan, Joshua, 144
Lollobrigida, Gina, 117, 122, 125, 126
London, 48, 50, 51, 53, 59, 60
Loren, Sophia, 17, 117, 124, 233–35, 237, 240, 246
Lorre, Peter, 14, 51–52, 53, 256
Los Angeles, 151, 189, 196
*Love in the Afternoon* (1957), 160
*Lovely to Look At* (1952), 159, 170
Lubitsch, Ernst, 145
Lugosi, Bela, 33, 34, 71
Luke, Keye, 52
Lund, John, 2
Lundestad, Geir, 162
Luske, Hamilton, 224

*M* (1931), 52
MacCannell, Dean, 162, 165
Mackendrick, Alexander, 144
Macready, George 219
*Magic Island, The* (1929), 41
Magnani, Anna, 124
*Magnificent Matador, The* (1955), 196–97, 198, 200
malihinis, 57, 58
Maltby, Richard, 6
Mamoulian, Rouben, , 159, 188, 190
Mann, Delbert, 144
*Manster, The* (1959), 105
Marshall Plan, The, 15, 90, 123, 131, 132, 140, 160, 161–62, 171
Marshall, Rob, 90
Martin, Dean, 119, 121, 123, 130
Martin, Dewey, 122
*Marty* (1955), 144, 151
Maruyama, Michio, 96
masculinity, 2, 7, 17, 32, 33, 70, 194, 209, 234, 237, 239, 240, 249, 250
Maté, Rudolph, 150
Maury, Matthew Fontaine, 25
McAlister, Melani, 6–7, 241
McArthur, Colin, 7
McShane, Ian, 131
Meeuf, Russell, 7–8
Melgosa, Adrián Pérez, 182, 195
melodrama, 139, 144, 151, 184, 187, 196
*Memoirs of a Geisha* (2005), 90
Menjou, Adolphe, 209
Menzies, Robert, 146
Messersmith, George, 187
*¡Mexicanos al grito de Guerra!* (1943), 187
Mexico City, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 194, 196, 199, 201
Mexico, 12–13, 16–17, 184–202, 211, 214, 216, 221
MGM, 70, 71, 73, 74, 81, 82, 120, 121, 123
Middle East, 6, 240

migration, 9, 12, 14, 50, 57, 59, 70, 73, 74, 82, 83, 213
mining, 6, 170, 195–96, 244
Minnelli, Vincente, 159, 160 164, 168
Miranda, Carmen, 17, 222–23
miscegenation, 13, 24, 28, 214, 215, 240
*Mishima* (1985), 105
Mizuno, Sachiko, 98, 100, 101, 102
*Moby Dick* (1851 novel), 25
Modern Screen (publication), 74
modernism, 24, 211
modernizing imperialism, 244, 245, 247, 248
Mohme, Gus, 189
Monroe, Marilyn, 170, 171–72
Monte Carlo, 48, 59, 62
*Moon Is Blue, The* (1954), 142
*Morocco* (1930), 90, 98
Morocco, 89, 98
Moseley, Rachel, 170
*Most Dangerous Game, The* (1932), 23
Motion Picture Export Association (MPEA), 251
Mr. Moto (character), 14, 48, 50–52, 53–54, 62; *Mr. Moto in Danger Island* (1939), 51; *Mr. Moto's Gamble* (1938), 51; *Mr. Moto's Last Warning* (1939), 51; *Mr. Moto Takes a Chance* (1938), 51; *Mr. Moto Takes a Vacation* (1939), 51; *Mysterious Mr. Moto* (1938), 51; *Thank You, Mr. Moto* (1937), 51; *Think Fast, Mr. Moto* (1937), 219–20, 225
Mr. Wong (character), 14, 48, 50, 52–54, 62; *Mr. Wong in Chinatown* (1939), 52; *Mr. Wong, Detective* (1938), 52, 53; *The Mystery of Mr. Wong* (1939), 52
Mulvey, Laura, 172
*Mummy, The* (1932), 53
*Murder in Mesopotamia* (1936 novel), 49
*Murder on the Orient Express* (1934 novel), 49
Murphy, Audie, 194
music (in films), 37, 52, 59, 70, 96, 115, 118, 119, 120–23, 124, 126, 127, 128, 129, 134, 164, 167, 176, 222
musical (film genre), 7, 16, 159–160, 161, 162, 163, 166–67, 168, 170, 176, 177, 183, 221–22, 225
*Mysterious Island, The* (1929), 23

*Naked Maja, The* (1958), 151
Nasser, Gamal Abdel, 242
NATO, 133
*Navy Wife* (1956), 105
Negishi, Akemi, 15, 99, 101
Negulesco, Jean, 146
Nelson, Ralph, 149
neorealism, 132, 148, 188
New York, 3, 61, 69, 70–71, 76–77, 101, 128, 130, 188, 191, 219, 221
Nicholas Brothers, The, 222
Nichols, Dudley, 189
Niven, David, 138, 144,
nostalgia, 55, 165–66, 237, 250

O'Hara, Maureen, 196, 220
O'Sullivan, Maureen, 69
Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, 186, 224
Old Tucson Studios, 185
*Olvidados, Los* (1950), 196
*On the Beach* (1959), 16, 137, 138, 146–52, 153
on-location shooting, 16, 57, 118, 119, 131, 140, 151, 159, 161, 170, 189, 234, 240
*One, Two, Three* (1961), 140
Ophuls, Max, 146
Opium Wars (1839–60), 60
Orientalism, 7, 10, 161, 163, 166, 167, 168, 172, 175, 176, 240
Osawa, Yoshio, 100, 101

Pacific (ocean/region), 13, 14, 25–26, 54, 57, 62
Page, Joy, 194
*Painted Veil, The* (1934) 50
pampas, 212, 214, 217–18, 220, 223–26
Paramount, 142
Paris, 16, 48, 59, 60, 83, 128, 143, 159–177, 191, 235, 246, 247
parkour, 83
pan-Americanism, 210, 212, 223, 224
Pax Americana, 2, 139–40, 147, 152, 162
Pearl Harbor, 25, 54, 61
Peck, Gregory, 121, 137, 149

Peckinpah, Sam, 196
Pericoli, Emilio, 129
Périnal, Georges, 143, 144
Peterson, Jennifer, 8
*Phantom of Chinatown* (1940), 52
Philippines/Filipinos, 25, 49, 56
Philips, Alex, 188
Pickford, Mary, 6
*Picnic* (1955), 144
Plantinga, Carl, 106
Pleshette, Suzanne, 128, 131, 132
Poiger, Uta G., 6
Poland, 122, 213
Ponzanesi, Sandra, 8
Porter, Cole, 160
postcolonialism, 8, 24, 108
Power, Tyrone, 190
Preminger, Otto, 137, 141, 142–43, 144–46, 151
President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 242
Princess Margaret of Britain, 116
Production Code, 24, 138, 142–43

*Quien Sabe?* (1966), 202
*Quiet Man, The* (1952), 236, 237
Quinn, Anthony, 196, 198
Quota Acts (1921 and 1924), 49, 50, 54, 73

racism, 13, 16–17, 25, 35, 39, 49, 56–57, 73, 76, 172, 186, 211, 213, 216, 219, 237, 238–39, 243
Ranown Cycle, 195, 199
Rascel, Renato, 121
*Rashômon* (1950), 105
Rathvon, N. Peter, 188
Rawitsch, Elizabeth, 8
reception (film), 3, 6, 11, 96, 100, 102, 104, 108, 148, 187
*Red River* (1948), 201
*Regreso de Martin Fierro, El* (1879), 224
Reisman, Phil, 188
Richardson, Michael, 95
*Río Escondido* (1947), 188
*Rio Grande* (1950), 201
*Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond, The* (1960), 199
Riviera, French, 138, 140, 143
RKO, 35, 188, 189
Roberts, Bill, 224
*Robinson Crusoe* (1719 novel), 26
Robinson, Edward G., 53
Rockefeller, Nelson, 186, 224
Roja, Manuel, 199, 200
Roland, Gilbert, 192
*Roman Holiday* (1953), 15, 116, 119, 121, 128
romantic comedy, 11, 15, 115, 133
*Rome Adventure* (1962), 116, 118, 125–26, 128–30, 131
Rome, 3, 116, 118, 120–22, 124, 127–28, 129, 130, 132, 234
Rony, Fatimah Tobing, 8
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 17, 185–86, 210
Ross, Kristin, 171
Rossen, Robert, 197–99
Rotunno, Giuseppe, 149–51
Rowden, Terry, 96, 106
Rowland, Roy, 120
Ruggles, Wesley, 184
runaway production, 3, 5, 7, 15, 16, 117, 128, 140–41, 143, 145, 148, 150–51, 159, 170
Russell, Jane, 72

*Sabrina* (1954), 140, 176
Sagan, Françoise, 142
Sahara, 17, 233, 235, 239, 240, 243, 246–47, 249, 250
Said, Edward, 4, 10, 161, 163, 166
*Saint Joan* (1957), 143
*Saludos, Amigos* (1942), 224, 226
San Francisco, 14, 50, 51, 52, 54
Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino, 211, 213
*Sayonara* (1957), 105
*Scarlet Clue, The* (1945), 61
Schedel, Hartmann, 40
Schrader, Paul, 105
Schulberg, Budd, 188
Schwartz, Vanessa R., 7, 164
science fiction, 41
Scorsese, Martin, 134
Scott, Randolph, 199, 200
Seabrook, W. B., 41
Seale, Clive, 75
Seaton, George, 140

Seberg, Jean, 138, 144
Selznick, David O., 145
*Seven Hills of Rome, The* (1957), 116, 118, 120–21, 133
sex and sexuality, 1–2, 15, 16, 24, 29, 30, 32, 33, 39, 97, 101, 102, 106, 120, 121, 125, 127, 131–32, 138, 142, 143, 172, 189, 193, 194, 233–34, 240–41
Seyffertitz, Gustav von, 215
Shandley, Robert R., 7, 115–16, 120, 131, 159
*Shanghai Express* (1932), 50, 90, 98
*Shanghai Gesture, The* (1941), 90
Shanghai, 48, 50, 51, 59, 90, 98
Shavelson, Melville, 124
Sheffield, John, 69
Sherlock Holmes, 49
Sherzer, Dina, 8
Shohat, Ella, 8
Shute, Nevil, 146, 147
*Silk Stockings* (1957), 159
Sir Lancelot, 36
Slezak, Walter, 122, 126
Slotkin, Richard, 201
Smith, Dina, 140
soft power, U.S., 118–19, 134, 139, 140, 152
South America, 17, 209–10, 211, 212–13, 214–16, 217, 218, 219, 220–22, 223, 224–25, 226
spaghetti westerns, 202
Spain, 190, 213, 220
Spanish-American War, 55
Stack, Robert, 191
Stam, Robert, 8
Standish, Burt, 198
Steiner, Max, 129
Stine, Clifford, 195
Stokes, Melvyn, 6
Studlar, Gaylyn, 8
*Suez Crisis* (1956), 6, 242
Surtees, Robert, 124
*Sweet Smell of Success* (1957), 144

Tajoli, Luciano, 129
Tarantino, Quentin, 134
Tarzan, 11, 12, 14, 69–83; *Tarzan the Ape Man* (1932), 70, 74, 75 , 81; *Tarzan's New York Adventure* (1942), 69, 70, 76
*Teahouse of the August Moon, The* (1956), 90, 105
*Tempest, The* (1611), 26
*Ten Commandments, The* (1956), 6, 242–43
*Ten Thousand Bedrooms* (1957), 116, 120, 121–23
*They Met in Argentina* (1941), 17, 225–26
Third World, 103, 238, 243, 245, 249
Tierney, Gene, 101
Timbuktu, 235, 239, 240, 243, 248, 249
Tinling, James, 225
Todorov, Tzvetan, 39
*Tokyo File 212* (1951), 105
Toland, Gregg, 188
Touregs, 235, 239, 244
tourism, 15, 116, 118–19, 124, 125, 131, 133, 134, 160, 162–63, 165, 173, 197
Tourneur, Jacques, 35
traceurs, 83
transnationalism, 54, 62, 90, 96, 102, 106, 107–8
travelogue, 41, 115, 125, 128, 221, 226
*Treasure Island* (1881–82 novel), 28, 33
tropics, 13, 14, 23, 29, 35, 40, 58, 97
Trumpbour, John, 5
Turim, Maureen, 171
Twentieth Century Fox, 51, 52, 151, 189, 196
Tyler, Beverly, 195

*U-Boat Prisoner* (1944), 190
*Under the Pampas Moon* (1935), 225–26
United Artists, 142, 147, 150
United Kingdom/British people and culture, 4, 6, 8, 49, 52, 55, 58, 60, 70, 83, 143, 145, 146, 148, 161, 163, 170, 218, 221, 236, 242, 244, 251
United Nations, 152
Uruguay, 216, 224
*Utopia* (1516), 26
utopia, 12, 26, 182–84

Vadim, Roger, 138, 142
Valentino, Rudolph, 190
Van Dyke, W. S., 72, 73
Vasey, Ruth, 3, 5

Velez, Lupe, 216
Verne, Jules, 23
Vials, Chris, 34, 36
Vidaurreta, Emilio Azcárraga, 188
Vidor, Charles, 219
Vidor, King, 201
Vienna, 101, 164
Visconti, Luchino, 149
Vleck, Van, 119
von Sternberg, Josef, 11, 13, 14–15, 89, 90–108
voodoo, 34, 35, 37, 39, 41

Wagnleitner, Rheinhold, 3
Waller, Marguerite, 8
Walt Disney Company, 224, 225
Wang, Yiman, 52
Wayne, John, 7, 17, 191, 192, 193, 201, 233–39, 246, 249–50, 251
Weaver-Hightower, Rebecca, 29
Weissmuller, Johnny, 14, 69–70, 72, 73–74, 79, 81
Welles, Orson, 188
Wells, H. G., 28
Wendkos, Paul, 127
West, Mae, 221
*Westbound* (1959), 199
western (film genre), 6, 11, 12, 16, 90, 184, 194–95, 199, 200–202, 239
*When in Disgrace* (1996 book), 189
*White Nights* (*Le Notti Bianche,* 1957), 149
*White Zombie* (1932), 23, 34
whiteness (race), 5, 12, 13, 14, 16, 29, 34, 37, 39, 52, 56, 77, 81, 163, 166–67, 172, 177, 184–85, 210, 211–12, 213, 214–15, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 225, 226–27, 239
Whitney, John Hay "Jock," 186
Wilder, Billy, 1, 140, 160, 168
Wiley, Hugh, 53
*Wings of the Hawk* (1953), 195–96
Wollenberg, H. H., 187
Wong, Eugene Franklin, 50
Wood, Robin, 39
World War I, 24, 50, 81, 160, 162
World War II, 9, 15, 17, 41, 53, 54, 61, 89, 96, 103, 146, 152, 162, 186–87, 191, 194, 201, 210, 219, 221, 236, 241, 245
Wright, Harry, 188

yellow menace, 49
yellowface, 52, 53
Yoshida, Hiroaki, 105
*You Were Never Lovelier* (1942), 17, 209, 215, 218, 219

Zangwill, Israel, 56
Zanuck, Darryl, 189
Ze Carioca (Joe Carioca), 224, 225
Zeitlin, Ida, 74
zombies, 14, 34, 35–39