

MM

DOCUMENTING **AMY**

TONY GARNETT
TROLLS
GENDER AND
TRANSGENDER
SURVEILLANCE
MOVIES



VINYL, PUNKS AND KERRANG!



EMC

MediaMagazine

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Making the Most of MediaMag

MEDIAMAGAZINE MM



06

An Afternoon with Tony Garnett

Unlike the film industry, UK television drama does not usually make a big fuss of its directors and producers, and few big household TV 'names' have survived more than a decade or two. Tony Garnett is one who has, and his impact on TV drama and drama-documentary is immense and very well documented. His autobiography, *The Day the Music Died*, is a brilliant read which explores both the impact of his own personal life-story on his work, and the history of broadcasting and the BBC over the last 50 years.

- Use this article, Tony's website (<http://tonygarnett.info>), and online research to find out more about the challenges he has faced in his career and how he has found ways of remaining true to his strong political ideals.
- Choose one or more of the dramas referred to in the article to present a 2-minute introduction to Tony's work for a Year 11 GCSE Media group. In your presentation, try and mention some of the following:
 - The importance of stories
 - Trojan Horse drama
 - The limitations of *The News*
 - Changes in the BBC.



44

Sympathy for the Devil: *The Man in the High Castle*

First screened in January 2015, *The Man in the High Castle* shares its subject matter with a recent BBC drama series: *SS-GB* (BBC1, 2017). At first glance there are many similarities between the two series, but also some notable differences. Here's a research task you can conduct online even if you have not followed either series.

- Using the links below, create a comparison chart showing the similarities and differences between each series.
 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/mediapacks/ss-gb>
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Man_in_the_High_Castle_%28TV_series%29
- Compare the trailers for each programme (there are plenty of clips on YouTube).
- In your group, discuss the following:
 - How does the media language of each show represent the alternate reality of a world ruled by the Nazis?
 - How does each show use genre and narrative conventions to create its alternative reality?
 - What do you think are the social and cultural issues which have created the conditions for these two series to be successful with audiences?
- Make notes for an essay or presentation which answers the following question:

Discuss the extent to which these two long-form TV dramas successfully target their audiences.



Trolling

Online trolling is, as this article implies, notoriously difficult to regulate. Social media owners who have neglected to address the problem have been accused by MPs of 'commercial prostitution'. The links below highlight concerns about trolling, and strategies used to try to eliminate it.

- <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/14/social-media-firms-accused-commercial-prostitution/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/mar/14/face-off-mps-and-social-media-giants-online-hate-speech-facebook-twitter>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnrampton/2015/04/09/10-tips-to-dealing-with-trolls/#1771c93954f4>
- In your group, choose one social media platform you use regularly (e.g. Facebook, Google/YouTube, Twitter, etc) and give it a talking to!
 - Create a five-point-plan strategy designed to confront, reduce, or penalise hate posts and trolling.
 - For each of your five points, provide one or more examples of inappropriate or unacceptable online behaviour on your platform, and why it is potentially dangerous.
 - For each point, explain why your proposed strategy will create a safer online environment.
 - Prepare a presentation of your strategy, addressed to the CEOs of the platform you have been researching. Be clear, persuasive and moderate – this is not an opportunity to do any trolling yourselves!
 - Compare the class presentations. Do different platforms throw up different problems? How realistic or achievable are your proposals?



Documenting Amy: Archiving a Life – Amy and Janis

Technology often has a powerful impact on the research, representation and form of a documentary. You could explore this through a comparison of *Amy* with another contemporary doc on a similar theme: *Janis: Little Girl Blue* (Amy J Berg, Dogwoof, 2015).

Although this film about the legendary US blues singer Janis Joplin was made very recently, Janis herself actually lived in a pre-digital age, and died in 1970 at the age of 27. Try some online research to get the feel for this extraordinary artist. *Janis: Little Girl Blue* is now available on DVD from Dogwoof, and trailers and other Janis clips are archived on YouTube.

Unlike *Amy*, the film's director could not rely on a vast digital archive of clips, fan images and social media to help build an authentic representation of its subject. With a partner, make a list of the sorts of problems you think she would have faced in researching and shaping the film.

- Compare a sequence from both *Amy* and *Janis: Little Girl Blue* to see what differences you notice in the way each film represents its subject. Use the following headings to help you:
 - The use of technologies.
 - The background and life experiences of the singers.
 - The look and visual style of the documentaries.
 - The sources of evidence and testimonies used in each documentary.
- Present your comparisons back to the class to see how your comparisons are similar and different.



Vinyl Revitalisation

Are you, have you ever been, or do you know a vinyl fan, user, collector, or investor? Try a little qualitative audience research to investigate some of the points made in the article.

- In your group, design a series of simple questions you could ask of a vinyl fan to explore the many different appeals and ways of using vinyl. You'll want to frame questions around some of the following:
 - How, where, and with what technology is vinyl used?
 - What uses and gratifications does vinyl offer that other formats do not?
 - Which music genres and artists lend themselves to vinyl rather than streaming or downloading?
 - What difference might age, gender, life-style, musical history make to the way people use vinyl?
- Try out your questions on a dedicated vinyl user, making sure within the group that you have covered a range of different age-groups and genders. Record the responses in note-form, or even as an audio-recording.
- Share your research responses with the rest of the group and see if you can draw out any interesting issues. Using your group's research, compose a letter to Christopher Budd, giving him your views on his *MediaMag* article and updating him on your own findings.

If you are already a dedicated vinyl fan, you'll find lots of interesting material about the challenges facing vinyl production, and the technological differences between digital and analogue recording in this very long article: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/jan/07/-sp-vinyls-difficult-comeback>

AN AFTERNOON WITH

TONY GARNETT



Below we have cherry-picked some outstanding moments from Tony's moving and inspirational talk. The cross-heads are ours; everything else is in the words of the man himself. Tony's talk was introduced by a montage of clips from across his long career. He opened by exploring the common links between the extracts.

What Do Tony's Films Have in Common?

Well first, they're personal, in the sense that you learn something about me while you're watching them.

Second, they're mainly about ordinary working people, like my own family, not toffs. I always wanted to put on the screen ordinary citizens in all their dignity and complexity, faults and all. I wanted to reflect people back to themselves.

Three, each film tells the truth. Not *the* truth – presumably only God, should he or she exist, knows *the* truth. It told *my* truth. Whatever other truth could I possibly know?

Four, each film is political, but not in a narrow 'party' sense. Politics is how we choose or are forced to live together. Everything you've seen was true at the time. It was also highly controversial, in fact there were moves to stop me producing at all. I was telling the public lies, apparently. And moreover it was 'political propaganda', whereas the *Nine O' Clock News* told the truth; it was 'fact'. Perhaps unwisely, I infuriated them by claiming that the most accomplished fiction on BBC television was in fact the *Nine O' Clock News*.

On Fact and Fiction

For a fact to have meaning, it must be contextualised. 'Man': that's not news. 'Man dead': so what? That's hardly news. 'Russian male in mystery death, believed poisoned': that's news. You'll notice that this headline has already begun a narrative. We want to know more about this man. Why was he poisoned? Who did it? What's

The legendary TV and film producer and director Tony Garnett has been a powerful influence on British TV Drama since the 1960s when, in collaboration with Ken Loach, his radical social-realist drama-documentaries such as *Cathy Come Home* and *Up The Junction* prompted public outrage and social and legal change. Tony's fifty-year career ranges from films such as *Kes* to *Handgun*, and iconic TV dramas from *The Price of Coal* to *This Life* and *The Cops*. Way back in 2002, we interviewed him for Issue 1 of *MediaMag*; fifteen years on, in January 2017 we welcomed him to our *MediaMag* Student Conference to give us an overview of what he's learned from his influential career.

You're living through a revolution: a digital revolution. It's only just begun, and it's overturning what we mean by The News.

the story? So that's exactly what my colleagues and I have been doing in all our films: telling stories. We research them first; that is, we find out the facts, we go out into the world and observe, we film on locations inhabited by our protagonists. So how does one separate fact from fiction? How do we measure the 'spin' on these incidents? This spin may be unconscious, because our basic religious and cultural and political beliefs are so deeply embedded that we judge events according to them without even acknowledging to ourselves that this amounts to a bias. It applies to *Al Jazeera*, to *Russia Today*, just as much as it applies to the BBC. But we all think it's the other person who's prejudiced, who pre-judges; we think *we're* judging events objectively, factually – whatever that means.

What's News?

Imagine you're the editor of the news. Stories are pouring in every 24 hours, and you have half an hour to tell them. Some are from agencies, some from your own correspondents, some have an arresting film attached, some are full of dry but

important statistics. Maybe there's even fascinating gossip about a film, or a pop-star, or a scandal. You must choose which of these stories to use, and in what order, and with what spin. That's politics. You know what you think; but you also know that you must get ratings. So that harrowing clip of that little refugee boy being saved from the sea must be included, even though it tells nothing about why he's there. Also, can you resist that story about the film star? It's an excuse to show a revealing clip of her in her underwear, a nice upbeat story. But is it news? And what are your own views? You can't help bringing yourself, including your conscious and unconscious prejudices, to the job. What's news to you may not be news to me. So you tend to go with what you think are the interests of your audience, thus relying on your own prejudices, which you call news sense. [...]

Imagine the TV news, say, in the 18th century. Instead of the stock market, we'd be told that profits from the slave trade were up 15% this year, and new slaveships were being commissioned, creating a hundred new jobs. Good for the economy. But the Africans who were enslaved and whipped into forced labour might have had



Kes

John Bradley in Kes (1969) Credit: AF archive/Alamy Stock Photo

As you make sense of stuff by telling your stories, just make sure they're true; that is, check the facts against primary sources whenever they're available. Double-check those. Be honest with yourselves with what you believe, and why. Then you will be honest with your audiences.

a different view. What's good news for some is an enraging insult for others.

So when you watch or listen to the news, BBC, Channel 4, ITV, Sky, Al Jazeera, anything on the internet or in Google, be sceptical. It won't be *The News*, it will be somebody's idea of the news. Ask why. Who's behind it? Is there another way of looking at it?

For instance: a voiceover tells you about railway workers walking out of talks and voting to continue with their strike. Why is that played over film of disgruntled passengers? Why isn't the voiceover explaining that the management remained intransigent? Both versions could be tugging at our emotions, inviting you to take sides. So news is not objective, it's not fact, it's not The Truth. Those who tell the stories on the news are making it up, just like I've always done. Because we can't do anything else; because we humans live through stories. I'm not a neurologist, so I don't know whether it's hard-wired. I'm not a cultural anthropologist, so I don't know whether it's truly universal. But we make sense of the world, we make sense of ourselves, and of ourselves in the world, though narrative. After all, even the great religions are meta-narratives. *HiStory* – interestingly enough not *HERstory* – it's all in narrative. History is a story. But events from the past have been welded into different narratives, with different contemporary meanings. Our family history is important to us because it's the context within which we understand who we are. Tell me a story, we say at bedtime when we're three. Without realising it, we say the same thing again and again, for the rest of our lives.

On Fake News

You're living through a revolution: a digital revolution. It's only just begun, and it's overturning what we mean by The News. The BBC editors, within their narrow limits, at least try to offer checked facts. They try within their limits to be honest. But with the help of Twitter, and some of our other

platforms, some may indulge in what is called 'post-truth'. They spread stories which they know to be untrue; they make up facts blatantly; they spread lies. So during the Brexit debates, both sides just stand up storming. No evidence. Politicians have always been slippery, putting glosses on facts, flirting with them, but recently this practice has become even more brazen and shameful. Whether you like President Trump's policies or not, it's clear from his speeches and tweets that he wants you to believe as fact whatever he chooses to invent at the time. Check the facts, a journalist will tell you.

They are the 'facts' of whatever Trump decides on – and the internet is full of Trumps. Your generation will have to be alert to these opportunist uses of the news, or rather, prejudices that dress themselves up in the clothing of news. And you can start with yourselves. As you make sense of stuff by telling your stories, just make sure they're true; that is, check the facts against primary sources whenever they're available. Double-check those. Be honest with yourselves with what you believe, and why. Then you will be honest with your audiences. If the editor of the news is not an omniscient God, neither are you.

Getting the Story Told in a Changing World

If you choose to go back into the archive, or even hear about any of my films, you might wonder how I got any of them made, let alone shown. The answer is: with difficulty. I could show you the scars, I could talk about the ones I couldn't get made. But the deeper reason is that the BBC and other TV companies were different then. The world was different then. Our cultural climate depends on the political and economic climate, particularly in TV, because it's expensive, and closely monitored by the state.

In the 60s and 70s, BBC management allowed at least some degree of freedom. The national debate was wider, artists were listened to, stuff was made just because it was quality. Freedom was limited, but we took full advantage of it. Now there's just one idea. The market is no longer just a useful device, to be used where appropriate; it is a religious injunction. So the BBC, like everyone else, has been marketised. Films are merely a commodities. Plus the BBC contracted a disease known as 'managementitis'. It's characterised by suffocating supervision, the intrusion of uncreative

Tony Garnett's recently published book about his life



managers into the creative process, and a reluctance to take creative risks. So the artist does not have freedom any more. Yet despite this, creative work still appears. Creative people are determined, and resilient. Picture the BBC as a piece of brutalist concrete architecture. Then look closely. There are cracks in the concrete slabs, and tiny flowers are pushing up through them, looking for the sun. This happens wherever creativity is disciplined and made to serve another purpose.

Trojan Horse Drama

By the time we made *The Cops*, I knew that I had no creative freedom any more, that my work would be closely supervised. I wanted to make a drama exposing the truth about people's lives on a sink estate, and social workers taking us from house to house telling the stories. But I knew that a drama series about social workers on a sink estate would not be commissioned. No way, not upbeat enough. What was I to do? So I sold them a cop show. They love cop shows, they can't get enough of them. But I still told the stories I wanted to tell. The cops went from house to house instead, and we found a story in each house. The management got their show, and I got mine. My show was smuggled inside the show they had commissioned. I christened it Trojan Horse drama. The freedom I'd hitherto had was now gone, so I needed another device.

So never be deterred. If you're canny, you can still engineer some creative freedom. And remember: you have lots of advantages. Digital technology has democratised filmmaking. When I was young it was so expensive to rent a camera, to hire a viewing room, to buy some film stock; only big companies could afford to, which meant they wanted you to make *their* films, not *your* films. Now you guys can get a digital camera quite cheaply, point and shoot, you can edit on your laptop and put it on your server. Anyone can do it. I know you're taking full advantage of it. So rejoice in your freedom.

On Creativity

If any of you have the urge to write, to make sense of the world and your experiences, write a

Picture the BBC as a piece of brutalist concrete architecture. Then look closely. There are cracks in the concrete slabs, and tiny flowers are pushing up through them, looking for the sun. This happens wherever creativity is disciplined and made to serve another purpose.

diary. Make notes of things that strike you, and how you feel, and then you'll be all right. Which brings me, finally, to creativity. What our society has done is separate creativity from craft, and then elevate it so that only a few are thought to be creative. Their job is to be creative for the rest of us.

But everyone's creative. You watch any toddlers at play. Give them an empty cardboard box, and in five minutes they've created an imaginary world of great complexity, and they're following a narrative. Their imaginations are limitless. Just, in fact, what novelists and painters and filmmakers get praised and rewarded for. But as the toddler grows up this rich imagination is channelled and disciplined and even discouraged, until he or she think that they lack creativity. It's then called maturity.

So what do creative people do? They rediscover the imaginative child in themselves, they give you room to breathe, and link it to techniques and professional discipline. They play 'as if'. So please, everyone here, acknowledge your creativity, nurture it, protect it from ridicule. Keep faith in it. It's what makes you a human. Each one of us has a unique sensibility; there's never been anyone like you in the history of the world, and there never will be. Use that sensibility to experience life. Don't neglect it and try and experience life the way others want you to. And if you can dare to, weave a narrative around this unique experience for the pleasure and enrichment of everyone. Above all, don't be afraid to dare to be creative. There'll be times, maybe at 2.30 in the morning, when you're all alone, you lose heart and self-belief, especially if the world is discouraging. I know, I've been there, many times; all creative people have. We must have the courage of our convictions. Believe in yourself. Please, create a creative environment for yourselves on the inside, and a creative environment for your brothers and sisters on the outside.

Good luck.

 from the MM vaults

Of Cops and Docs, *MediaMag* 1

Follow It Up

Tony's blog at <http://tonygarnett.info/category/tony-garnett/blog/>



Public domain / © Gage Skidmore of Donald Trump

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Sam Vydulinska investigates
the uncomfortable emergence
of internet trolling,
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.....

~~Controlling~~ The Masses?

Today, we have the capacity to say whatever we want to whoever we want at any time. So what is it that we end up saying? If you've ever spent time browsing the internet, you will have encountered some behaviour that you wouldn't expect to find in person. A stranger calling you ugly in a photo on social media? Someone showering you in derogatory expletives after you commented on a news article? Or, perhaps most insultingly, someone tricking you into following a hyperlink to the music video of Rick Astley's 'Never Gonna Give You Up' (also known as a 'rickroll')? The umbrella term for this kind of behaviour – which can be benign, malicious, funny, rude, an obvious joke, or a downright disgusting insult, is trolling.

Trolling is a remarkably broad term. It covers harmless jokes, targeted personal attacks, and political arguments. There are certain aspects of all of these acts which are universal. Most notably, the goal of an act of trolling is to incite a negative reaction, and this is achieved in a manner that would be difficult to accomplish in person, as it requires a certain level of deceit or protection from retaliation. Generally speaking, this act is done for the purposes of entertainment; but it can also be used as a tool to reduce intellectual authority around a subject during debate.

It is difficult to pin down the exact definition of a troll, but the victim of the troll generally ends up upset, annoyed or provoked. Pertinently, the fact that they are angry or sad is used to the troll's benefit – whether they seek to simply laugh at these emotional responses, or profit from them. This brand of behaviour didn't necessarily originate on the internet – at one time prank calls were the favoured antisocial pastime. However, trolling certainly seems to have evolved in the internet age, assuming a more refined and sometimes sinister form. These days, it is trivially easy to leave an instigating comment right where an audience of thousands will be provoked by it. Perhaps more importantly, this process is relatively detached – and entirely anonymous.

(Not) Only Joking

But what if a troll is more than a simple joke? Virtual trolling has caused real consequences in an ever-increasing list of incidents. Sadly, a frighteningly large number of anonymous voices seem happy to urge people to suicide or force victims of horrific crimes to quit Twitter following constant abuse. Other examples of abhorrent behaviour performed under the guise of trolling include doxing and swatting. Doxing is when

someone's personal information is released to the public without consent, which can lead to harassment and truly threatening behaviour such as stalking and identity theft. To swat someone is to make an anonymous call to their local police department with bogus claims of real danger, such as a shooting or hostage situation. The result is usually an armed response team showing up on the unsuspecting victim's doorstep, ready for a hostile encounter. Clearly, this is a particularly dangerous practice; and unfortunately it is becoming increasingly common. It is also clearly an illegal offence. The criminality of general online abuse is much more difficult to define, although in the UK, an increasing number of arrests over negative comments online are made each year – and new, tougher legislation is on the way.

Political Trolling

Another function of trolling is as a tool of political confrontation. Examples include posts which attack certain viewpoints in a particularly vulgar or incredulous manner, or posts which are in favour of an opposing viewpoint but presented in a problematic fashion. The goal of such trolls is to incite anti-intellectual debate, producing a spread of misinformation and hearsay that reduces the authority of a political platform. A simple example would be a comment littered with poorly researched claims pertaining to the inferiority of the female gender, posted to a community oriented towards women.

Not only are the core ideals of the victim community attacked, which serves to gradually erode one's 'faith in humanity', but often such a post is guaranteed to elicit responses. Arguing with a troll is a bit like gambling at a casino – the troll always wins. Even if you keep a level head throughout the entire conversation, and overwhelm the troll with undeniable evidence, the fact remains that you defended your worldview from this seemingly ridiculous attack – and in doing so, gave some semblance of legitimacy to what should otherwise have none.

Conversely, if you decide *not* to engage, and choose *not* to challenge the troll's outlandish notions, the post is left unchallenged, and thus it could be construed as a legitimate opinion. The 'conversation' that such a post induces is likely to be derailed by personal attacks and nonsensical arguments between parties that have no intention of considering the opposite view – or even of presenting a reasonable version of their own. When you do manage to make a coherent point, the troll, who has no interest in thoughtful debate, can just dismiss your argument for whatever made-up reason they like. The more frustrated and angry the replies

they incite, the stronger their position; because they are not actually trying to promote their position at all. All they need to do is prove that your position is a joke, championed by angry debaters. There is a clear similarity between this kind of argument and a generic trolling comment: both cases seek to incite a negative reaction, often from an indefensible position, in order to gain entertainment value or authority over the victim.

Trump as Troll

This method of political bullying has been employed heartbreakingly successfully by Donald Trump, 45th president of the United States. Throughout his presidential campaign, this man was invulnerable. He not only survived scandals which would have destroyed other politicians, but seemed to gain from them. This is because he manufactured a narrative in which the establishment was 'out to get him'. In consequence, any negativity thrown in his direction – and there was a lot – became his own ammunition. He provoked his opponents, encouraging a frustrated debate. On one side, people would identify all the things wrong with Trump and desperately try and convince the people that they were not making it all up. On the other side, Trump shrugged, refusing to engage in a fight over truth – only in one over legitimacy – his own.

This tactic is eerily similar to that of a troll arguing on the internet, who refuses to consider incoming arguments on the grounds that whoever made them is wrong for any reason, real or fabricated. The result is that every time anyone tried to denounce Trump for any of the things he said or did – clearly an irresistible temptation – they only gave him the opportunity to strengthen his position. Here's an example: Trump never felt the need to release his tax returns, arguing that anyone who demanded to see them was simply out to get him, and thus there was no legitimate reason to actually release them. Conveniently, the fact that every presidential candidate since 1976 has released their tax returns was never the mentioned in his argument. When pressed on this, Trump would just claim 'the only ones who care about my tax returns are reporters' – again deflecting the debate to focus on how the poor





President-elect was victimised by the media.

On top of this, Trump has mocked a disabled reporter in a manner that most wouldn't even consider even if operating anonymously online. He has doxxed a senator by releasing his phone number on live TV, and he tweets argumentatively with, seemingly, anyone. Considering his status as the new President of the United States, it should be no surprise that positive reinforcement for trolling is becoming easier to find. It certainly seems that trolling, in all its various forms, is only becoming more popular and acceptable. These days, there are entire online communities that are dedicated to trolling.

I have been involved with online communities that have crumbled against the onslaught of online negativity and the metaphorical lobotomisation that accompanies 'troll culture'. Inevitably, replacement communities will always appear – but over time they feel lesser in some way; as if the integrity of the internet as a whole is dwindling. It is difficult to say whether the proliferation of trolling is a cause or symptom of this phenomenon – and there are certainly other factors such as the rise of social media and their increasing domination of the internet as a whole. It certainly feels as though internet culture is spiralling in a worrisome direction. Perhaps President Obama feels the same way; he stated in his farewell address: 'If you're tired of arguing with strangers on the internet, try talking with one of them in real life.'

Sam Vydulinska studied Physics at university before deciding he much preferred writing about games and digital culture.

Follow It Up

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<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/nov/06/troll-armies-social-media-trump-russian>



Leanne Madge raises some interesting questions about the representation of transgender characters on television.

Gender dysphoria is a condition where a person experiences discomfort or distress because there's a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity. It's sometimes known as gender identity disorder (GID), gender incongruence or transgenderism.

THE TRANSGENDER

In 2015, former men's Olympic Decathlon gold medallist, Caitlyn Jenner, 'came out' as having transitioned to a woman on the cover of *Vanity Fair*, and threw a spotlight on transgender issues. Jenner's transformation from Olympic hero to transgender woman challenged perceptions of gender identity and moved a historically taboo subject to the top of our cultural agenda.

In the last five years an apparent 'trans-revolution' has begun, marked most visibly by a surge in the number of transgender characters and narratives represented on television. It is interesting to explore whether these representations are helpful or harmful to the furtherance of trans-equality, as well as considering how they have changed over time.

How Not to Represent the Transgender Community: Psycho-trans

In the past, representations of the transgender community have inextricably linked gender dysphoria and mental health conditions, coining a new term: 'psycho-trans'. For example, *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* has, on several occasions, offered insensitive, defamatory and sensationalistic representations of transgender individuals. In one episode, aired in 2012, police officers arrest a number of transgender people, describing them as 'weirdos' and 'whack-jobs'. Later, Joslyn, one of the transgender women they arrest, has a psychotic episode in police custody where she violently attacks



Tiger Aspect Productions for BBC.

Genderqueer refers to a person who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions but identifies with neither, both, or a combination of male and female genders.

Cis-gender describes people who are happy to identify with the gender into which they were born – ie the opposite of transgender.

REVOLUTION

Rebecca Root plays Judy in the BBC series *Boy Meets Girl*

the officers in the room, and stabs herself repeatedly in the stomach, killing herself. Her unpredictable, dangerous behaviour is both alarming and horrific, and is clearly a symptom of drug use or poor mental health. However, this representation does nothing to explore Joslyn's identity, suggesting that her non-binary gender is a symptom of her psychosis. Later in the episode, during her post-mortem, she is repeatedly described as a 'male Caucasian', and male pronouns are used to describe her no less than eleven times in a scene lasting little over a minute. This episode makes no attempt to define Joslyn's character as a transgender *woman*. Instead, her presentation of gender is represented as nothing more than a man's insanity.

No Laughing Matter

Another damaging representational trope used in television texts casts trans characters as the butt of jokes. In the long running sitcom *Friends*, the character of Helena Handbasket (AKA Charles Bing – Chandler's father) is described on different occasions as a drag queen, genderqueer and transgender. These representations often centre on her position as a cabaret artist in a Las Vegas club (tastefully named Viva Las Gaygas), presenting her as a sideshow entertainer. The question of Helena's gender identity is further trivialised by Chandler's reactions to her. In one episode, 'The One with Chandler's Dad', Monica and Chandler visit Helena to invite her to their wedding. They sit in the audience at Viva Las Gaygas, the lights dim and the camera pulls out expectantly to a long shot of the stage. A medium close-up is used to emphasise the caricature-like nature of Helena's appearance and costume as she turns to face the camera, before the scene cuts to a two-shot of Monica and Chandler at the table looking aghast. Chandler ironically declares, 'And *there's* daddy.'

Chandler's shame about his father is a recurring theme as he frequently reveals embarrassing moments from his childhood that relate to his father's gender non-conformity. However, many of these confuse the issue of sexuality and gender. In one episode, Chandler's parents inform him of their impending divorce; his mother declares: 'Now Chandler dear, just because your father and I are getting a divorce, it doesn't mean we don't love you. It just means he would rather sleep with the house-boy than with me.' Charles's sexuality seems to be woven together with his gender identity when in reality, gender and sexuality are two very separate concepts. In *Friends*, the gag that Chandler was 'damaged' by his father's identity and behaviour is a fundamental feature of his character, and implies that because of his non-binary gender, Charles Bing was a failure as a father.

These comedic representations trivialise the struggle that transgender people often face in coming out and gaining acceptance from friends and family. They emphasise the 'otherness' with which cisgender people often perceive them.

Changing Representations

More recent representations of transgender characters appear to have moved beyond this, perhaps in the wake of the 'trans-revolution'.

The BBC recently introduced two genderqueer characters to *EastEnders*. In one storyline Les Coker (a heterosexual, married, male funeral director) unveils his alter-ego, Christine, to his



Caitlyn Jenner front covers in NY newsagent

wife and grandson. For weeks, the build-up to this 'big reveal' leads the audience to believe that Les is having an affair, creating a palpable sense of animosity towards him. In online forums fans raged: 'He's the new Dirty Den! Lusty Les!'; 'Really disappointed in this. Not a single man on the square is capable of being faithful'; and, 'I'll be so annoyed if Les is having an affair. I've always loved his relationship with Pam.' His secretive behaviour encourages audiences to turn against him immediately before he reveals Christine. The fact that Les wasn't having an affair made the audience more likely to look kindly on his actual revelation and is perhaps indicative of the BBC's intention to challenge stereotypical feelings of discomfort when confronted with non-conforming gender identities.

The scene in which the audience is first introduced to Christine uses close-up shots of painted-pink fingernails, makeup palettes, spritzes of perfume being applied to wrists, and high-heeled, pink shoes. Elements of this scene are filmed in the reflection of a mirror (a recurring motif of trans-media), perhaps symbolising Les's desire for his outward appearance to *reflect* his 'inner woman', and raising the issue of the disconnect that some members of the trans community feel between their appearance and identity. While the sequence challenges hegemonic ideologies about binary genders, it also reinforces the idea that gender identity is

largely reliant on appearance and performance. In this episode, Les spends a great deal of time selecting an outfit, applying makeup, doing his hair; he also speaks in a slightly softer, higher-pitched voice as Christine, suggesting that she is constructed from a set of learnt behaviours, not real at all. This supports Judith Butler's theory on the performative nature of gender; that our gender identities are constructed and therefore *performed* according to where we are, what we are doing and who we are with.

Les Coker's 'coming out' is initially met with revulsion from his wife, and forces a temporary separation. However, over time his family come to accept that Christine is a part of Les's identity; and whilst she remains something of a secret to the wider community, she is embraced and even becomes *necessary* when Les and his wife mourn the loss of their grandson; Christine allows Les *and* Pam to express themselves honestly and come together to heal and grieve.

A Different Perspective: *Boy Meets Girl*

Boy Meets Girl is a ground-breaking BBC television series about a British family in which the 26-year-old son falls in love with a 40-year-old transgender woman (Judy, played by transgender actress Rebecca Root). The representations of transgender characters

in *Boy Meets Girl* are not purely about Judy's status as a transgender woman; they explore her relationships with others from a range of perspectives. For example, one of the key themes of this show is the age-gap between Judy and her partner Leo, as well as her relationship with his family. This representation shows that transgender individuals are more than just that; they are people with complex personalities, aspirations, identities and relationships. Rebecca Root likes the direction things are travelling in:

I think we are moving towards a place where a character's gender identity is more or less irrelevant to the plot [...] I think the trans community has recently become less daunting and more 'real' for so many people in westernised societies – both for the audience and the programme makers. Society is moving on and entertainment (especially televisual entertainment) needs to be seen to be keeping up with the times they wish to depict.

Why It Matters

The representation of gender is a fundamental feature of Media Studies that requires both macro and micro analyses of a range of media texts. Our understanding of gender is often centred on two distinct categories: male and female; and we often apply stereotypes when decoding gendered characters and narratives. But what if gender is less about categories, boxes and labels, and more of a continuum or spectrum? What if we acknowledge that gender is not about binaries (you're either this or you're that), and more about a fluid scale? Analysing the representation of gender in television extracts would consequently become a more complex, interesting, inclusive and purposeful process.

Leanne Madge teaches English, Film and Media Studies at GCSE and A Level at the Gryphon School, Dorset and has just completed an MA at Bournemouth University.

Roger Sloman as Les Coker in role as Christine on *EastEnders*





IS PUNK POSSIBLE IN

2017?

This year marks 40 years since the Sex Pistols released *Anarchy in the UK*, regarded by many to be the greatest and most iconic punk song ever written. But what has happened to that anarchic genre since then? Ed Budds investigates.

Is punk even still possible in 2017? Joe Corre, son of Sex Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren and fashion designer Vivienne Westwood, certainly thinks so. In an attention-seeking, explosively defiant stunt last month, the 48-year-old businessman set sail on the Thames aboard a floating bonfire of vintage punk memorabilia. The rare haul of items, including clothes worn by the Sex Pistols on tour, and now burnt to a crisp, is estimated to have been worth an eye-watering 5 million pounds. The already wealthy Corre, described as spoilt and reckless at the scene by gaping onlookers, claims that his stunt was in protest at 'Punk being castrated by the corporate sector and the state', referring to the way in which punk has become a

nostalgic brand to display on band t-shirts and read about in museums.

Corre appears to have a point. Times have vastly changed since the punk glory days of the late 1970s, when politics and music went hand in hand, destroying anything that got in the way. Music was volatile and exhilarating, a tool for voicing the anger of young people, especially those from the working class. It was the scrapping underdog at the table of the mainstream. Nowadays, speak out and express your political opinions as a band/artist, whether it be through lyrics or in interviews, and you run the high risk of getting into serious trouble with your record label. Bands seem to be terrified of controversy, because speaking your mind is corporately frowned upon if you're an artist in the modern age. You're expected to quietly come up with the music while the



record company handles all publicity. A conveyor belt of press-trained dancing monkeys regurgitating the same monotonous, meaningless songs with nothing to say is the depressing result year after year. The closest we've come to real punk behaviour this year was the brief outcry from several bands who were horrified to discover their music being used for Donald Trump to walk on and off stage to. Not exactly career-defining or life-changing is it?

Of course, there are some who have, in the immortal words of Public Enemy, tried to 'fight the power', but in doing that they risk being completely unmarketable. Ultimately in this era where money in the music business comes from radio play and big festival slots rather than album sales, it's crucial to have the media backing you, rather than being too terrified of what you'll do or say next to promote or book you. So we see a vicious cycle in motion, as even the bands who do have something politically and socially relevant to say get the punk spirit sucked out of them by the corporate machine. Or alternatively, they refuse to compromise and consequently struggle to make themselves heard.

Slaves, a two-piece garage rock duo, have been widely proclaimed as the saviours of punk by many, the start of a revival of raw, energetic, politicised guitar music back in the charts again, just like the Sex Pistols four decades earlier. However even Slaves have been attacked by punk purists as posh boys from Kent with no real message or meaning, just silly songs that can't be taken seriously and wannabe punk clothing. They may sound like the real deal on record, but have they got the substance and mentality to merit the title of a genuinely vital punk band? The jury is still very much out on that.

Elsewhere it's been suggested that Fat White Family are the closest thing to a genuine punk band today. They're an eccentric bunch of defiant, head-shaven renegades, described by many as offering the best live show in the world. They wear their beliefs on their sleeves and very little else during their manic gigs, with lead singer Lias Kaci Saoudi regularly performing fully naked. This has added to the carnage caused by their hardcore fanbase at shows, and the bizarre sound of their indie sludge anthem, makes for a truly memorable experience. They



campaigned radically and admirably against the gentrification of South London, and when offered a major label deal with Sony, The Fat Whites instead chose to self-release their records, stating that mainstream major label music has 'the politics of rampant capitalist fundamentalism'. In a musical landscape where Bob Geldof and Lily Allen are about as political as artists seem to get, Fat White Family are surely the closest to genuine punk around now.

In terms of punk in the music sense, the revival of grime in the last two or three years has marked it potentially as the new punk for this generation. Artists such as Skepta, Wiley, JME and Kano have taken a vastly underground scene to the mainstream and stormed the gates, with Skepta last year

thoroughly deservedly winning the prestigious Mercury Music Prize. No other genre has come close to voicing the concerns and lives of so many young people in Britain for decades, and it has a real punk, anti-establishment rebellious spirit entrenched deep within its music. The struggle with police recently shutting down gigs at clubs, particularly in London, has only fuelled the fire and spirit of artists and fans involved in the ever-growing nationwide scene. Punk is not dead: we just call it grime now.

Ed Budds is a Film Student at Oxford Brookes University.

 **from the MM vaults**

Mark Ramey: God Save the Queen – The Iconography of the Sex Pistols 30 Years On, *MediaMag* 41

Nick Lacey: Anarchy – Subversive Sub-cultures Hit the Mainstream, *MediaMag* 25

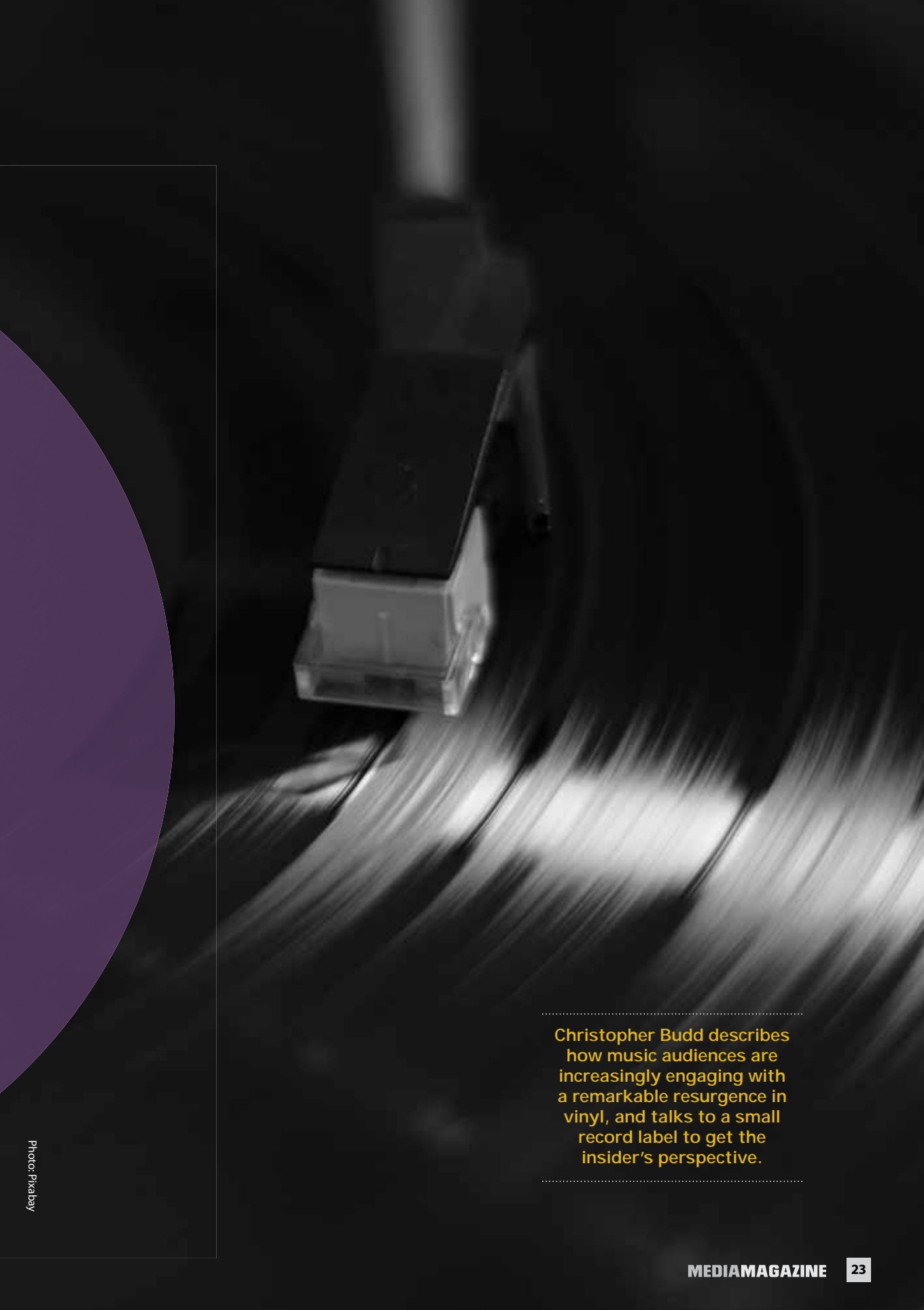
Mike Hobbs: 25 Years of Change in the Music Industry, *MediaMag* 34

THE

VINYLYL

REVITALISATION





Christopher Budd describes how music audiences are increasingly engaging with a remarkable resurgence in vinyl, and talks to a small record label to get the insider's perspective.

Records. They're expensive, cumbersome, and fragile, and they need a dedicated player – which is also expensive, cumbersome, and fragile. They represent a technology that was considered obsolete before you were born. But more than thirty years after the now retro-looking CD began displacing vinyl as the high-street record-buyer's format of choice (with honourable mention to the cassette, which ruled from '83 to '91 and which you could rewind with a pencil), a much-reported resurgence is underway. 2017 will see the 10th Record Store Day: the annual celebration now marked by more than 200 independent record shops with racks of re-presses and fancy special editions. And according to figures from the BPI, the sale of vinyl records in the UK hit a 25-year high in 2016, up 53% on 2015, to reach 3.2 million units – not since the glory years of *Nevermind*, *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*, *Screamadelica*, *Blue Lines* and *Dangerous* has so much new vinyl been purchased.

Searching for the Young Soul Rebels

So who's doing all this buying? Is it you? In a piece for the *Guardian* in December 2015, as the vinyl resurgence gathered steam, Bill Brewster suggested otherwise, pointing out that:

The demographic of the average vinyl buyer is very clear. It's a middle-aged man, possibly bearded (OK, definitely bearded); kids have probably left home, no longer on speaking terms with wife, spare bedroom has become a shrine to his teenage love: the Floyd.

Brewster's comments may have been coloured by his dismay at seeing vinyl for sale in Tesco's, and his disdain for the material on sale – Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Elvis – rather than the music of his own youth: 'ska, Bowie, Bolan, Motown'. A similar piece by Julian Mash in the *Telegraph* in 2015 bemoaned the 'predominantly blokey [... and]



THE
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Born in the USA

As early as March 2015, Billboard magazine was reporting the resurgence of vinyl sales in the United States. Its data on sales demographics makes for interesting reading:

Even though fans 35 and under make up 44 percent of the overall music marketplace, according to The NPD Group, they account for 72 percent of vinyl sales, according to MusicWatch.

heavily nostalgic' make-up of the then-new Official Charts Company Vinyl Top 40, again citing poor old Zep and Floyd.

But things are changing. Contrary to Brewster's observations, in April 2016 ICM published the results of a poll that revealed (without giving away the 'blokeiness' of their choices) that almost half the purchasers of new vinyl are now under the age of 35. 16% are aged 18-24, and 33% – by far the biggest share – are aged 25-34. (The rest of the poll does throw up some interesting ideas – 41% of vinyl buyers have a turntable but don't use it; 7% have no turntable at all. That's quite a lot of vinyl being bought as decoration or hidden under the bed to accrue value.)

YouGov data from August 2016, however, seems to offer a slightly different picture. The website reports that:

When compared to the adult population as a whole, those that have purchased a vinyl album recently are more likely to be aged between 45-54. By contrast, those in the 18-24 aged group are the least likely.

Can Both Sets of Data be True?

The beginning of this year saw the publication of the 2016 BPI Official UK Recorded Music Market Report, and the news that sales of vinyl in the UK had hit that 25-year high. Vanessa Higgins, the CEO of Regent Street and Gold Bar Records, and an independent label member of BPI Council, speaking to Hannah Ellis-Petersen (of the *Guardian*, again), seemed to take both demographics into account:

It's twofold in that older people are going back to vinyl but I also think the younger generation are discovering it in a way they weren't before.

You Spin Me Round

If you're one of the 52% of vinyl buyers who do want to whip the shrink-wrap off and spin your records immediately, you'll need something to play them on. John Lewis reported in May 2015 that sales of record players were a whopping 240% up on the previous year. Your dad's traditional set-up, consisting of a fiddly combination of turntable, amplifier and speakers, is increasingly eschewed in favour of all-in-one units (ironically, somewhat like your grandad's, minus the big horn), which are now coming very reasonable priced.

In fact, before Christmas 2016 (look away now Bill Brewster) Lidl was offering a turntable at under £50 – and Aldi at under £30! While they might not last as many decades as vinyl, and may not give the beefy sound of a big wooden-and-chrome '70s hi-fi, they do represent a simple gateway to the collecting and enjoying of vinyl records.

Streamadelica

So what of that other growth area – streaming? In some cases might it actually be a gateway to the purchase of vinyl? That 2016 ICM poll revealed that half of those in the survey who bought an album on vinyl had previously streamed it online. Vanessa Higgins suggests that people are using streaming the way they used to use radio – to



Photo: Pixabay

discover new music. Streaming itself is, of course, enormous and gathering pace at an astronomical rate, as the BPI report states – the 45 billion audio streams in the UK alone delivered in 2016 represents an increase of 68% on the previous year, and a massive 500% increase on 2013.

Alongside those figures, the scale of the vinyl resurgence can be seen in perspective – even with all its growth, vinyl still represents just 2.6% of the UK music market. If its revitalisation is to continue then it will need to attract buyers of the future. So if you want a nice collection to pass on to your kids, vote with your wallets.

The Record Producer's Perspective

It's all fun and games for us lucky consumers, but what about the people actually creating this vinyl? When *MediaMag* spoke to Ghost Box Records co-founder Jim Jupp in 2005 (issue 14), they were a burn-to-order CD-R label, one of several doing well at the time. Jim recalls today that

Vinyl was still pretty much dead in the water apart from serious collectors and DJs. I guess around then dance music, hip hop and all the other urban genres kept it just about ticking along [...]

We always wanted to do vinyl from day one, but we had to grow our audience to a point where it would make economic sense. Luckily we got to the scale where we could afford to start pressing vinyl roughly when the resurgence in vinyl started to happen.

Our demographic is fairly mature, which counter-intuitively means we still sell quite a lot of CDs. Many of our audience are probably the people who ditched their vinyl collections in the early '90s in favour of CD.

What's the experience of a small label in 2017, with big labels now tying up the presses?



THE

VINYL
REVITALISATION

**Jim Jupp co-founder
of Ghost Box Records**



The lead times for vinyl seem to be getting longer each year. If we want a job done that we haven't pre-warned our pressing brokers about, and we want test pressings, it can take anything up to four months from delivering audio to getting the finished record delivered [...] We've learned to schedule our releases well in advance these days, but it's often seat of the pants stuff.

Does it make financial sense? Jim says that costs tend to be different project by project, and he makes more on vinyl if he sells direct to customers from his own store, but less or the same as on CDs when he distributes to stores. He explains that there's a more noticeable economy of scale when using vinyl compared to CDs, so the unit prices vary a lot more between runs of 500, 1000 or 2000, say.

What does Jim think about Record Store Day (RSD)?

I really would like to be more positive about it, and its heretical of me to say, but I'm starting to have my doubts. It certainly jams up the pressing plants between January and March and makes it harder to get regular releases out in spring. I'd also question the quality of RSD specials; there seem to be a lot of out-takes, versions, novelties and other one-offs that I suspect labels wouldn't otherwise invest the time and money in, but the scarcity value and RSD name seem to override that. It seems that it's a huge benefit to the stores but maybe not so great for labels. But having got that off my chest, it must be a good thing in principle. Customers, artists, the industry and culture as a whole will be much better off with the survival of independent record stores. What we all need the world over, to make it work, is more pressing plants!

Christopher Budd is a musician and music blogger. Follow his blog at <http://christopherbudd.blogspot.co.uk>



from the MM vaults

Chris Budd: Independent music labels: breathing new life into the humble CD, *MediaMag* 14

Chris Budd: Changes in the Music Industry – From Labels to Laptops, *MediaMag* 34

Follow It Up

<http://www.beavismorgan.com/news/bpi-releases-official-uk-recorded-music-market-report-for-2016/>

KERRANG!

can it cut it?

Bauer Media Group's *KERRANG!* is one of the most successful music magazines around. Indeed, it boasts in its press pack that it is 'the biggest selling weekly music magazine in the world' and that it sells 'three times the amount our nearest competitor *NME* does'. However, according to recent National Readership Survey statistics, *KERRANG!* has lost 90% of its print readers in the last 10 years. And since *NME* is now a free magazine, Bauer's comparison is potentially a little misleading.

With a circulation of approximately 24,000 copies sold per issue, *KERRANG!* surely faces an uncertain future as a print title. Competitors in the same genre are also facing turbulent times. The *Guardian* reported earlier this year that 'thirty-year-old *Metal Hammer* magazine and stablemates *Classic Rock* and *Prog* have been given a new lease of life after being saved from closure by Future Publishing, owner of titles including *Guitarist*, *Total Film* and *T3*'. When such well established titles as these are in need of rescue, *KERRANG!* clearly can't afford to rest on its laurels.

As with many other magazine titles, *KERRANG!* predictably has a digital subscription package available. However, on Google's Play Store the reviews of the *KERRANG!* downloadable app for subscribers are not entirely favourable, with three one-star reviews

The iconic music magazine recently celebrated 35 years in print! But how much longer can it survive – and how is it holding on to its readers? Neil Paddison investigates.

displayed prominently at the time of writing. Comments included 'Worst magazine going... the same 5 bands every time,' and contained references to the limitations of the software: 'Device only? I don't want to read magazines on my small phone screen and I don't own a tablet.' Another complained, 'As much as I love *Kerrang!*... [it] can only be read on Android devices with no rhyme or reason as to why.' Whilst the magazine can be read using digital technology, there are clearly some issues which Bauer may need to address.

It is hard to gauge exactly how successful the *KERRANG!* brand is, as Bauer has not always been transparent about the future of its titles. *Cleo* magazine in Australia closed down in April last year after 44 years, yet Bauer denied media reports of imminent closure just three months before this happened. And *KERRANG!* encompasses not just a magazine but a radio and TV station too.

Bauer acquired *KERRANG!* Radio when it bought EMAP in 2008. As reported in the *Birmingham Post*, Bauer turned the loss-making business

into a profitable one within a year, after making staff cutbacks of 25%. But after Bauer went on to buy the loss-making Planet Rock in 2013, it then took the apparently successful *KERRANG!* Radio off the FM airwaves, much to the disappointment of local listeners in and around Birmingham. *KERRANG!* is now an online station and is only available on DAB in London

Bauer Media Group does seem to have an eye on the future: 56.1% of listeners to Bauer Media stations do so via a digital device, compared to the industry average of 45.5%. This is especially relevant this year as Norway is busy switching off its FM transmitters and rolling out DAB radio nationwide. Others countries are likely to follow soon.

KERRANG! also has a digital presence in other ways. Its website has, according to Bauer, 8 million page views per month as well as engaging with its readers via its 745,000 Facebook fans, 583,000 Twitter followers and 78,000 Instagram followers.

Surviving in print is surely going to be a challenge for all magazines and newspapers in the future. But for now *KERRANG!* continues to make a noise in a crowded marketplace. Below, we can explore exactly how a typical cover page addresses the magazine's unique brand identity and the profile of its target audience.



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ANXIETY
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YOU ME AT SIX

MADMOZETS
WHILE SHE SLEEPS
STINKS NECK DEEP
CREEPER **ONE OK ROCK**
MOTIONLESS IN WHITE

LEMMY
TEN ICON, ONE YEAR GOING

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ANXIETY.
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SELF-DOUBT.

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THE YEAR IN
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YOU ME AT SIX

OUT OF THE DARKNESS
COMES A BAND REBORN

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ISSN 1072-0111
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KERRANG! (Dec 31 2016) Cover Page Analysis

The masthead, together with the main cover line (band name 'YOU ME AT SIX') and the photo of the band members, provides the main optical weight on this cover. In terms of visual flow, as we read from top to bottom and from left to right, our attention is first drawn by the recognisable *KERRANG!* masthead.

This magazine's title is a brand name which goes beyond the magazine itself to also represent a radio station, TV Channel and music festival. The name *KERRANG!* is onomatopoeic and connotes the sound of an electric guitar being strummed'. The double 'R' is reminiscent of comic book lettering sound effects, a suggestion anchored by the exclamation mark, which also suggests this title makes a noise and wants to grab attention.

The 'shattered glass' effect on the title font also visually suggests tightly stretched guitar cables, implying music being played at its limits, and several enthusiastic musicians all plugged into the same amp. The lettering also has been textured to look road-worn, suggesting the wear and tear of musical equipment on tour; it also suggests this brand arrives pre-loved by countless readers.

The white, bold, sans serif font conveys the modern, the simple and direct or unpretentious, with tight spacing between the eight characters enabling the masthead to span the width of the page without losing impact. Confidence in the brand's recognisability is conveyed by the fact that four separate elements partially obscure the masthead. Firstly there is a two-shot photo portrait of Twenty One Pilots' band members; Josh Dun is on the left, grimacing with a conventional 'angry' rock star face in contrast to Tryler Joseph with his cool shades and blank expression.

Further to this, a starburst '10' accompanying the strapline 'unseen shots to hug your wall', a white-on-black block of capitalised text 'THE ULTIMATE' and the head of Josh Franceschi, the most prominent member of the band (centred)

in the main cover image, are all positioned in front of the masthead suggesting the contents are bursting out of the magazine.

The main image is a low angle medium long shot of the band You Me at Six. A sense of togetherness is conveyed by the way this image is composed via the close proximity of the band members and the symmetrical framing of the image. A direct mode of address is employed, with all five looking directly at the camera. The band are wearing uniformly dark clothing and have serious expressions. Together with the dark alley setting these elements of mise-en-scène put across connotations of a gang and threat, further reinforced by the hoodie worn by vocalist Franceschi. However, the drama suggested by the image is polysemic. The subheading at the foot of the page 'OUT OF THE DARKNESS COMES A BAND REBORN' anchors an alternative connotation of metaphorically re-entering the spotlight of publicity after a period of absence and creativity. This suggestion of a narrative for a band is a well-established convention of music industry PR. In addition to the main image, the left third of the page also contains images of four other artists. Cropped to appear as though peeping around a door frame, they anchor the suggestion of a preview; a sneak peek at what 2017 has in store. This suggests the exclusive/inside knowledge of *KERRANG!* journalists on offer to readers.

Conventional colour codes are used; alternating between yellow and white helps the reader to distinguish the names of bands listed. The listing of band names is a convention of music festival advertising, and in the entertainment industry the size of lettering generally indicates the importance of the artist. The overall colour scheme of red, yellow, black and white is conventional of magazines and in particular the rock music genre. Primary colours suggest youth through boldness and simplicity. Red and yellow suggest passion/emotion/danger, all likely draws for a teenage audience.

In terms of gender representations, this edition's cover is very much male-



MEDIA GROUP

dominated. A token female artist is sidelined in the bottom left corner, reinforcing the stereotype of a male-dominated industry and genre of music. Inside the magazine a superficial content analysis reveals at most ten percent of the images featured are of female artists as opposed to male. However, of the cartoon, fan art, or photos of fans featured, a much higher proportion are female. That said, the editorial language of the magazine does not come across as sexist and seems even-handed in its references to male and female artists alike. The idea that this is a deliberate strategy is supported by Bauer Media Group's press pack for *KERRANG!*, which claims 'the tone of the magazine is one of respect and support'.

Overall, this edition of *KERRANG!* is typical of the title in promising a packed issue of dynamic features. This is achieved through the inclusion of a large number of images and cover lines, a dynamic colour scheme, and a variety of angles used to position the text.


Neil Paddison is Head of Media Studies at Boston High School.

Follow It Up

KERRANG! official website
<http://7BBwww.kerrang.com>
Bauer Media Group press pack

Set your phasers to
stun for...

Henry
Jenkins



on

FAN DOM!



CURRENTLY A PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, HENRY JENKINS IS A LEADING ACADEMIC ON THE TOPIC OF FANDOM. HE CALLS HIMSELF AN "ACA/FAN" (A HYBRID OF ACADEMIC AND FAN).



HE GREW UP AS A FAN OF SCI-FI AND COMICS, ATTENDING **CONVENTIONS**, WRITING **FANFIC** AND COLLECTING **MERCHANDISE**. AS A GRADUATE STUDENT OF JOHN FISKE, JENKINS BECAME INTERESTED IN **ETHNOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE RESEARCH**.



AARGH!!
FANFIC!

JENKINS' EARLY ESSAY 'STAR TREK REREAD, RERUN, REWRITTEN' (1988) EXPLORED THE POPULAR MEDIA'S REPRESENTATIONS OF FANS, AS WELL AS ACADEMIC COMMENTARY ON THE PHENOMENON OF FANS AND FOUND "THE FAN CONSTITUTES A SCANDALOUS CATEGORY IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CULTURE."



SNAP!

WHAT WAS THAT?

CREDITING MICHEL DE CERTEAU (1984) WITH COINING THE PHRASE, JENKINS GOES ON TO DESCRIBE FANS' READINGS OF TEXTS AS '**POACHING**.' FOR JENKINS, STAR TREK FANS ARE NOT "CULTURAL DUPES, SOCIAL MISFITS OR MINDLESS CONSUMERS" BUT "POACHERS" OF TEXTUAL MEANINGS."



I think K/S is okay as long as they're girls

Fem! Spirk!

BORROWING E P THOMPSON'S (1971) CONCEPT OF A '**MORAL ECONOMY**,' JENKINS THEN SUGGESTS THAT "AN INFORMAL SET OF CONSENSUAL NORMS" LIMITS WHAT FANS WILL DO WITH TEXTS, AS "DESIRE TO REVISE THE PROGRAM MATERIAL IS OFTEN COUNTERBALANCED BY THEIR DESIRE TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THOSE ASPECTS OF THE SHOW THAT FIRST CAPTURED THEIR INTEREST."



So, does K/S fanfic gratify your needs?

well, erm...

JENKINS CITES RESEARCH BY CAMILLE BACON-SMITH (1986) WHO FOUND THAT AN ESTIMATED 90% OF FAN WRITING WAS CREATED BY WOMEN. HE SUGGESTS THAT A "TEXT WRITTEN BY AND FOR MEN ... MAY RESIST FEMINE PLEASURE" HENCE THE NEED TO ADAPT THE CONTENT TO "GRATIFY THEIR DESIRES."



I didn't think it would be this far to the convention!

IN TEXTUAL POACHERS (1992) JENKINS EXPANDS ON THESE IDEAS AND SUGGESTS THAT FANS ARE "**CULTURAL NOMADS**."



How come the fan fiction awards are never on TV?

THE IMBALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN TEXT PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS IS KEY AS "FANS OPERATE FROM A POSITION OF CULTURAL MARGINALITY AND SOCIAL WEAKNESS."



OH, MASTER LUKE!!

FOR JENKINS "THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAN AND PRODUCER ... IS NOT ALWAYS A HAPPY OR COMFORTABLE ONE." HE GIVES THE EXAMPLE OF STAR WARS FANS WHO "CONTINUED TO CIRCULATE EROTIC STORIES ... EVEN THOUGH SUCH STORIES WERE FORCED ... UNDERGROUND BY [GEORGE] LUCAS' OPPOSITION."



Couldn't we just wear ordinary butler uniforms, Mr Lucas?

HE SUGGESTS "FANS' TRANSGRESSION OF **BOURGEOIS** TASTE AND DISRUPTION OF **DOMINANT CULTURAL HIERARCHIES** INSURES THAT THEIR PREFERENCES ARE SEEN AS ABNORMAL AND THREATENING BY THOSE WHO HAVE A VESTED INTEREST IN THE MAINTENANCE OF THESE STANDARDS."



Call yourself a fan? I've watched the one where Chandler doesn't like dogs fifty times!

BUT WHAT SETS **FANS** APART FROM REGULAR **CONSUMERS**? FOR JENKINS FANDOM "ENCOMPASSES AT LEAST FIVE LEVELS OF ACTIVITY." FIRST, "A PARTICULAR **MODE OF RECEPTION**" WHERE "**REPEATED VIEWING**" CAN HELP "TRANSLATE THE RECEPTION PROCESS INTO SOCIAL INTERACTION WITH OTHER FANS."



My next door neighbour is called Joey. Does that count?

SECOND, "A PARTICULAR SET OF CRITICAL AND INTERPRETATIVE PRACTICES" WHICH DRAWS FANS TO "THE CONSTRUCTION OF A **META-TEXT**."



I couldn't afford an official TARDIS replica...

THIRD, THERE IS "A BASE FOR **CONSUMER ACTIVISM**" ... A "RESPONSE TO THE RELATIVE POWERLESSNESS OF THE CONSUMER."



Hello! Yes, this is actual Harry Potter speaking!

FOURTH (MAY IT ALWAYS BE WITH YOU), "PARTICULAR FORMS OF **CULTURAL PRODUCTION**, AESTHETIC TRADITIONS AND PRACTICES" ARE WHAT "CHALLENGES THE MEDIA INDUSTRY'S CLAIMS TO HOLD **COPYRIGHT** ON POPULAR NARRATIVES." IN OTHER WORDS, "FANDOM RECOGNISES NO CLEAR-CUT BOUNDARIES BETWEEN ARTISTS AND CONSUMERS."



Do you like my stume? I'm gonna meet Hyden Walch at Comic Con!

Hyden who?

FINALLY, FANDOM "FUNCTIONS AS AN **ALTERNATIVE SOCIAL COMMUNITY**." ULTIMATELY, JENKINS SAYS "FANDOM DOES NOT PROVE THAT ALL AUDIENCES ARE **ACTIVE**; IT DOES, HOWEVER PROVE THAT NOT ALL AUDIENCES ARE **PASSIVE**."



IN HIS LATER WORKS SUCH AS CONVERGENCE CULTURE (2006) JENKINS HAS STUDIED **CONVERGENCE TECHNOLOGY** AND SUGGESTS THAT IT "ENCOURAGES **PARTICIPATION** AND **COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE**." HOWEVER, HE WARNS THAT "THIS SHIFT IS BEING DRIVEN BY ECONOMIC CALCULATIONS AND NOT SOME BROAD MISSION TO EMPOWER THE PUBLIC."



So will there be Cosplay prizes at next year's Media Magazine conference?

FOR JENKINS, THE KEY TO EMPOWERING CONSUMERS NOW LIES IN **MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION**. WE COULD HARDLY DISAGREE NOW, COULD WE?

WWW.GROOMINGARTISTS.CO.UK

GIRL POWER AND THE HISTORY OF FEMALE EAGLE HUNTERS

Roy Stafford explores the credentials of a critically acclaimed documentary set in Mongolia, and suggests the importance of online research to establish its factual authenticity and cultural assumptions.

When *The Eagle Huntress* opened in selected UK cinemas just before Christmas 2016 it received very good reviews and promised to enthral audiences with 'something different'. The story behind the making of the film, how it has been distributed, and discussions about representations and definitions of documentary make it a good film for a case study. All the material below was gathered through internet searches.

The Story

The film tells the story of Aisholpan, a 13 year-old girl from the nomadic Kazakh community who becomes an 'eagle hunter' in the mountains of Western Mongolia – one of the most remote regions of Central Asia. She captures an eaglet from its nest and trains the bird to obey her calls and return to perch on her arm after catching foxes and other small mammals. The bird (usually a larger female) has a wingspan of up to 2 metres and weighs up to 5 kilos. It

is usually released from horseback – the hunter has an implement to help carry the heavy bird on the arm during long rides. This is quite a feat and the wildlife photography, partly using drones and other devices, captures the visual splendour of the landscape as well as highlighting the hard work, courage, athleticism and great skill shown by the girl.

The story 'emerged' as a 'global narrative' after images of Aisholpan by Asher Svidensky, an Israeli photographer specialising in art and documentary projects, went viral in 2014. Svidensky's project was to document eagle hunters and their traditions in the context of a modernising Mongolia. Otto Bell, a British filmmaker working out of New York, saw the images, and acquired the rights to Aisholpan's story when he flew to Mongolia to meet her family. Bell had previously made short documentary-style films in different international locations for 'blue-chip brands' like IBM and Philips during his time at advertising agency Ogilvy.

"A BLISS-OUT"
Manhattan Magazine, The New York Times

"AN ENCHANTING TALE OF GIRL POWER."
Kenneth Turan, Los Angeles Times

"MOST BEAUTIFULLY SHOT MOVIES I HAVE EVER SEEN."
Andrew Schiller, IndieWire

THE EAGLE HUNTRESS



...NDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

(TORONTO INT'L FILM FESTIVAL)

(TELLURIDE FILM FESTIVAL)

(LONDON FILM FESTIVAL)

(ROME INT'L FILM FESTIVAL)

(KARLOVY INT'L FILM FESTIVAL)

A film by OTTO BELL

SONY CLASSICS PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH 19340 PRODUCTIONS, APTHEMUS RIDING FOUNDATION, IMPACT PARTNERS SHINE GLOBAL and VOYAGE FILMS
BY OTTO BELL & KOSHIKI HARA AND STACEY REISS PRODUCTION "THE EAGLE HUNTRESS" WRITTEN BY PIERRE TAKAL DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY GEMIN NIOLETT
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MORGAN SPURLUCK JEREMY CHULNICK DAVEY RIDLEY MARC H. SIMON DAN COGAN REGINA K. SCULLY BARBARA
PRODUCED BY STACEY REISS SHARON CHANG AND OTTO BELL DIRECTED BY OTTO BELL
DISTRIBUTED BY SONY CLASSICS
WWW.THEEAGLEHUNTRESSMOVIE.COM WWW.SONYCLASSICS.COM

WENNITTED / Gallery Stock Photo

Bell financed the initial shooting of Aisholpan and her family himself, but when his money ran out he turned to Morgan Spurlock, the American director of commercially successful documentaries like *Supersize Me* (US/2004). Spurlock became an 'executive producer', finding more funding but, equally important, pushing Bell towards a more commercial approach, using the concept of 'girl power' to help sell the story. At this point, Daisy Ridley, fresh from the success of *Star Wars VII*, became another enthusiastic executive producer, and added five minutes of narration to the film. Bell was also persuaded to include a pop song and 'Angel By the Wings' was written and performed by Sia for the film. It plays during the closing credits.

Selling the Film and Controversy

In early 2016 the film received many nominations and won several prizes at festivals around the world before its American cinema release in October 2016. It then made the initial shortlist of 15 for an Academy Award in the Documentary section. Aisholpan herself is certainly an inspirational figure (and a bright, lively and intelligent young woman) and audiences have responded enthusiastically. But it could be argued that the 'girl power' message has been pushed too hard and too confusingly.

The publicity for the film initially suggested that Aisholpan was the *only* female eagle hunter (why use the outmoded term 'huntress'?) in the region, and that she was 'the first' for many generations. As a corollary, it also suggested that to succeed she had to fight against a patriarchy which requires women to

The technological difficulties of filming in remote regions mean that such films have often been surrounded by arguments about how events have been filmed or 're-enacted'. But more worrying is the fear that filmmakers may impose their own cultural assumptions onto the material they collect.

pursue only domestic roles. Watch the film carefully though, and there is little evidence of this on screen. Aisholpan's family and the judges at the Eagle Hunt Festival, where she wins a prize, all accept and support her. To represent the opposition, Bell had to include a montage of 'grumpy old men' protesting that it 'wasn't right for women' – but they could have been protesting about anything.

Getting the Facts Right

The film's distributors must have become aware of the dangers in presenting Aisholpan as a 'first'. Another female eagle hunter had already been 'discovered' over the border in Kazakhstan several years earlier. Now in her late twenties, Makpal Abdrazakova has been an eagle hunter since she was 13 and her story has appeared in many media outlets over the last few years. In contemporary global media discourse, few activities are completely 'unknown'; across the world there are groups of people interested in falconry and travel to Central Asia (where Eagle Hunt Festivals are becoming an important part of local tourism in some areas). There is also academic scholarship focusing on Central Asia and, in April 2016, Adrienne Mayor, Research Scholar in Classics and History of Science, Stanford University, published a paper exploring the evidence of female eagle hunters in antiquity (i.e. 2000 years or more ago) in Central Asia – and linked the history to the modern revival of eagle hunting. Re-published in the feminist magazine *Bust*, this paper acted as an



intervention in the discussion of *The Eagle Huntress*. The publicity materials were subsequently edited to make the claims of a 'first' slightly less firmly.

And This Matters Because...?

Why does this matter so much? Arguments about the 'truth' of these statements seem consistent with the discourse of 'post truth' and 'fake news' that developed during the Trump election campaign in the US. The general critical and audience reaction to *The Eagle Huntress* shows little awareness of these questions about female power in Mongolia. Perhaps part of the problem may be the veneration of Western popular cultural concepts such as 'girl power'? There is a long history of attempts by filmmakers to present aspects of local cultures in remote regions, dating way back to Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* in 1924. The technological difficulties of filming in remote regions mean that such films have often been surrounded by arguments about how events have been filmed or 're-enacted'. But more worrying is the fear that filmmakers may impose their own cultural assumptions onto the material they collect.

Otto Bell's film presents itself as a simple narrative about a girl who (with her father) captures and trains an eagle, enters a sporting contest and finally hunts 'for real' in the high mountains in winter. This involved several different periods of filmmaking. It appears that everything went smoothly and our interest is focused on the engaging Aisholpan herself. However, the construction of a 'girl power' discourse may be a substitute for a lack of social conflict in the real story. Bell fails to explain any of the context about the history of Mongolia or the nomadic Kazakhs and their culture, and thus the film's focus on Aisholpan's battle against an unexplained patriarchy is also problematic. Instead, a Western concept of gender roles blots out thousands of years of Mongol civilisation and Chinese imperialism, as well as the 20th-century history of a communist state.

Many critics have now raised concerns about the authenticity



of the film, describing it as 'woefully unspontaneous' and 'engineered storytelling' – issues which may have compromised its anticipated Oscar nomination:

One reviewer has described it as a 'fairytale documentary' – two words that don't usually go together – that feels at times 'more like fiction than fact'.

Another calls it a 'repetitious, half-baked, contrived and crudely staged homily on female empowerment [that] tells us less about Kazakh nomads than *Pocahontas* does about the Algonquins in 17th Century Virginia'. The film took another culture's traditions, he goes on, and translated them 'into the tired platitudes of a second-rate Disney animation'

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-38874266>

So is this kind of film a 'documentary', and what kind of story it is attempting to tell? Why not do your own research and decide for yourself?

.....
Roy Stafford is a freelance film lecturer and writer, and author of *The Media Studies Book* and *The Global Film Book*. Follow his blog *The Case for Global Film* at <http://itpworld.wordpress.com>

Starting Points for Research

www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-38874266

www.svidensky.com/blog/the-eagle-huntress

<http://uk.businessinsider.com/the-eagle-huntress-daisy-ridley-sia-2016-9?r=US&IR=T>

<http://bust.com/feminism/16147-the-untold-history-of-the-eagle-huntress.html>

DOCUMENTING AMY

Mark Ramey analyses
Asif Kapadia's haunting
biographical documentary
about the iconic singer-
songwriter Amy Winehouse.



Ataspix / Alamy Stock Photo

The aesthetics of documenting truth – realism – and emotionally engaging an audience are both essential measures in the assessment of a successful documentary. A documentary we suspect of lying and manipulation may lose our respect; and one that fails to emotionally connect with us loses our interest.

Amy is a tour-de-force of editing – condensing countless hours of material into a powerful and coherent film that ends with just such an emotive montage of photographs and music.

that partially identify us, such as driver licences and passports, and which provide factual evidence of our objective existence. But facts like these are never the whole story. The documentarian must construct the story, giving facts coherence through a narrative interpretation.

So why document singer-songwriter Amy Winehouse? What makes her a good subject for investigation? Some biographical facts will help to contextualise her story; but only by experiencing the text will our own interpretations emerge.

Who Was Amy Winehouse?

Amy Winehouse (1983-2011) was a London-born jazz and pop singer who died of alcohol poisoning at the height of her success, aged 27, in her Camden flat; she had been dogged by problems with bulimia and substance abuse since her teens. Her short career as a world-famous diva began in 2003 with her debut album *Frank*; her last studio album, *Back to Black*, followed in 2006, winning five Grammy awards. By then she was already a high-profile media celebrity, as famous for her drug-fuelled life-style and troubled personal relationships as her singing. Her iconic beehive hair-styling, heavy makeup and tattoos gave her a strong visual identity; but it was ultimately her deeply expressive voice and song-writing talent that helped her reach a global audience. By 2007 she was sufficiently established to perform a live guest slot with the Rolling

Stones at the Isle of Wight Festival and, before her early death, she influenced a generation of other female singers like Adele and Lady GaGa.

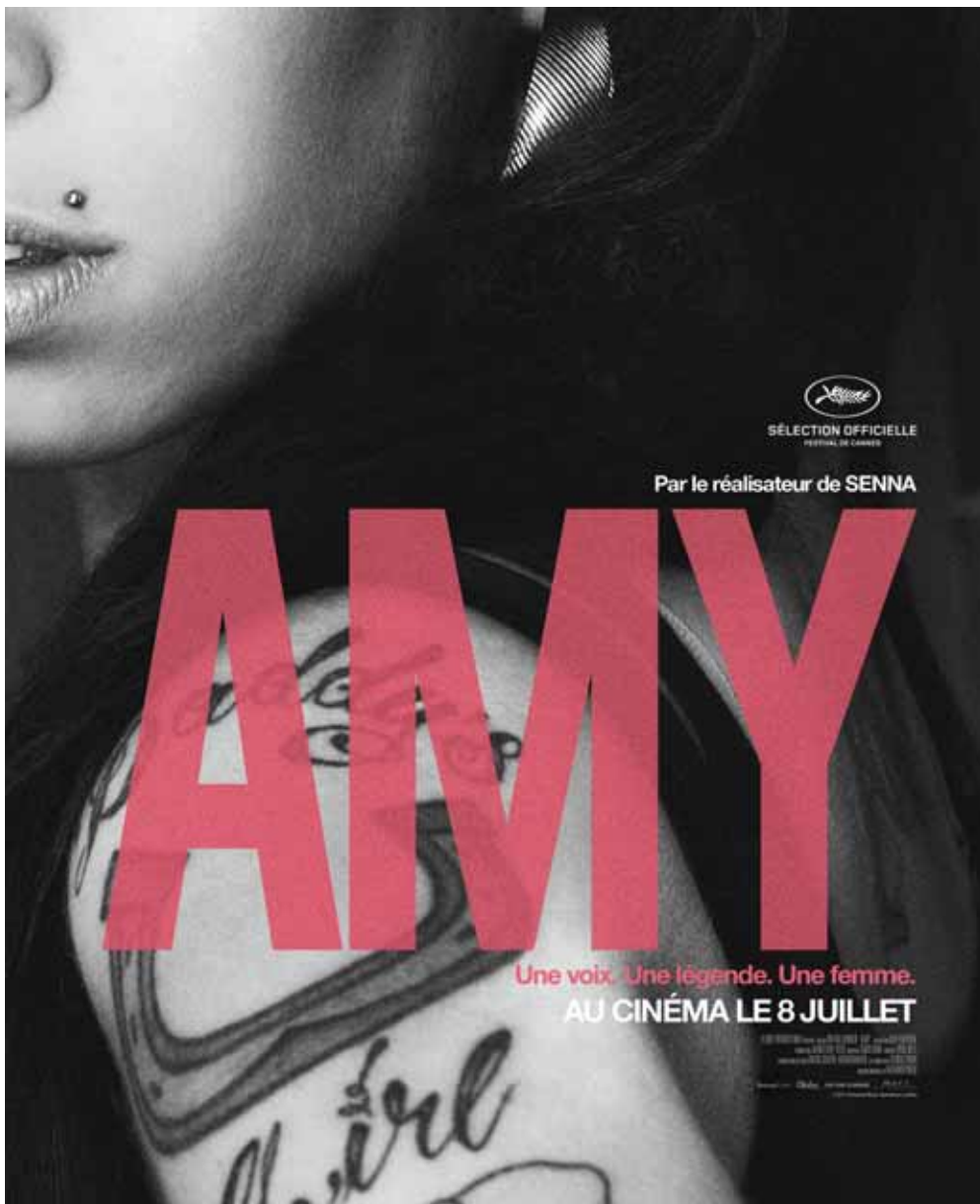
The biopic documentary *Amy* premiered at Cannes film festival in 2015 and won a BAFTA and Oscar for Best Documentary in 2016. The film is currently the most successful British documentary at the UK box office ever, securing its budget of £3.4 million in the UK before going on to make £22 million in worldwide box office receipts. A spin-off soundtrack album also sold well.

The Director

The success of the film is in part down to UK filmmaker, Asif Kapadia (b. 1973), who also directed the fourth most successful documentary at the UK box office, *Senna* (2010). It was this film, which attracted Universal, the company behind Amy Winehouse's music. *Senna* is about Ayrton Senna, the iconic, three-times world champion-racing driver who died tragically in 1994. To make the documentary Kapadia eschewed talking head interviews and a narrative voice-over, favouring archive footage and audio from interviews. For *Amy*, Kapadia forced strong, trusting relationships with nearly 100 principal characters in Amy Winehouse's life, securing access to previously unpublished images, video and audio such as home movies shot by friends, and personal phone messages, along with unreleased tracks and video from live recording sessions.

Every documentary should be watched with two questions firmly in the spectator's mind. Firstly, we should be asking whose truth, whose perspective, is represented? And secondly, immediately the documentary ends, we need to ask: how did that make me feel?

The aesthetics of documenting truth – realism – and emotionally engaging an audience are both essential measures in the assessment of a successful documentary. A documentary we suspect of lying and manipulation may lose our respect; and one that fails to emotionally connect with us loses our interest. As its generic name implies, the term 'documentary' suggests a record of objective reality, like those 'documents'



The Style

Clearly Kapadia's aesthetic is unusual. He has little interest in the classical form and leaves it to the spectator to work out their own response to the film and the issues raised. Even for the production team the film was never a mere publicity-driven biopic: David Joseph, CEO of Universal Music UK called it

a very complicated and tender movie [which] tackles lots of things about family and media, fame, addiction.

Kapadia himself notes,

It was about Camden, London, music. It was about her but about all of us.

The aesthetic decisions to

forego a 'voice-of-god' narration, and to avoid staged interviews, helps audiences to form a more personal response precisely because the subject feels more real.

Nor is Kapadia committed to the observational form – yes, some amateur observational footage is included, but Kapadia has no ideological distaste for emotionally-driven montage or non-diegetic music. Quite the opposite

– *Amy* is a tour-de-force of editing – condensing countless hours of material into a powerful and coherent film that ends with just such an emotive montage of photographs and music.

Kapadia also chooses to remove himself from the filmmaking process; in this he is unlike participatory and self-reflexive documentary essayists such as Michael Moore, Morgan Spurlock, Nick Broomfield and Louis Theroux – all of whom perform as central characters in their own work. *Amy* is not a film where the personality of the filmmaker looms large and is central to the work's narration and marketing.

Kapadia resists the temptation to tell us what he feels. His persona is absent, unlike, say, the arch-philosopher and documentarian Werner Herzog, who is more than happy to guide the spectator with his own portentous voice-over and commentary, as well as favouring stylisation and fabrication over mere observation (see *MediaMagazine* 43).

The Spectator's Response

However, leaving the spectator room to form their own response can work both for and against the filmmaker. It is unsurprising that the film was heavily criticised by *Amy*'s estranged Dad, Mitch (he left the family home when *Amy* was 9), who unsuccessfully demanded a re-edit. Certainly on my viewing of the film he comes out as a less than sympathetic character. Kapadia was very careful to manage the various perspectives that emerged in interview, double-checking statements that conflicted, and seeking visual or aural corroboration of claims. Kapadia's aim, if not necessarily the result, was to achieve objectivity. And that does appear to be the critical consensus on the film. On review-aggregator site Rotten Tomatoes the consensus view reads,

As riveting as it is sad, *Amy* is a powerfully honest look at the twisted relationship between art and celebrity – and the lethal spiral of addiction.

Peter Bradshaw from the *Guardian* describes the film as,

Amy Winehouse the human being emerges from the film as someone hounded both by her inner demons and the media, and the latter certainly seems complicit in her sad downfall.

a tragic masterpiece [...] an overwhelmingly sad, intimate [...] study of a woman whose talent and charisma helped turn her into a target.

Geoffrey Macnab from the *Independent* reviews it as 'brilliant' and 'unutterably sad', commenting that,

There were many, many contributory factors to *Amy Winehouse going off the rails, which are explored in [...] Amy.*

The Role of the Media

The media's role in pursuing *Amy Winehouse* to an early grave is certainly one of the main features that emerges in the film. As noted earlier, she swiftly became an icon, and her image was heavily mediated – be it through commissioned photo-shoots or the crude opportunistic snaps of the paparazzi. The image created by various media representations was not necessarily in keeping with her actual personality. Fellow singer-songwriter, Lily Allen, for example, commented in 2008,

I know *Amy Winehouse* very well. And she is very different to how people portray her. Yes, she does get out of her mind on drugs sometimes, but she is also a very clever, intelligent, witty, funny person who can hold it together. You just don't see that side.

Amy successfully communicates this sense of a rounder personality than the one glimpsed through the lens of a *Rolling Stone* photo-shoot or a paparazzi scrum outside a

London nightclub. *Amy Winehouse the human being* emerges from the film as someone hounded both by her inner demons and the media, and the latter certainly seems complicit in her sad downfall.

So what scenes in the film stand out? Beginnings and endings are always fruitful ground for analysis of representation, and *Amy* is no different. The film starts with footage of *Amy* as a 14-year-old singing raucously and joyously at a friend's birthday party, and concludes with harrowing news footage of *Amy*'s corpse being removed in a body-bag from her flat; a visual character arc leading from hope to tragedy.

For me, however, aside from the shockingly destructive passion of her relationship with her husband, as infamously recorded by the paparazzi after a bloody, post-rehab bender, it is the last video of her singing that brings home her tragedy. The filmed session is a studio duet with legendary crooner, Tony Bennett – an icon of both hers and her father's. The scene showcases her talent but also her innocence – here she is, merely a fan, star-struck in the presence of a singing legend, living the dream. It is documented moments like this that make *Amy Winehouse* human. Kapadia's film fulfils the promise offered to us in its tagline and we do, I think, however fleetingly, meet and mourn, 'the girl behind the name... *Amy*'.

Mark Ramey teaches Film and Media Studies at Collyer's College, Horsham, East Sussex.



Sympathy for the Devil

Representation of the Reich in
The Man in the High Castle

Fay Jessop introduces a chillingly powerful 'what if...' Amazon Prime drama in which multiple alternate dimensions form the backdrop for an exploration of moral ambiguity and the dangers of absolute rule.





© Amazon Prime

Adapted from the allegedly unadaptable Philip K Dick novel of the same name, *The Man in the High Castle* burst onto our screens (if you subscribe to Amazon Prime, that is) at the beginning of 2016, with Series 2 premiering in its entirety in December of the same year. It follows the destinies of several characters as they seek answers to a number of increasingly dangerous and uncomfortable questions concerning their way of life, and the role of the mysterious titular character.

What If... Germany Had Won WW2?

Set in an alternative 1962, when the United States has been split roughly in two by victorious German and Japanese forces after World War Two (with a buffer strip in the middle called the Neutral Zone), the series follows the arcs of those on both sides of the divide. The Japanese hold

the West Coast, while the Nazi Reich holds the East, both sides engaged in an increasingly heated Cold War. The Japanese have developed the capability to build an atomic bomb (there is passing reference to a bomb being dropped on Washington, hence the Reich's centre of operations being in New York), and tensions are rising. The first series builds this alt-reality, throwing in a curve-ball right at the end when one character, the high-ranking Japanese trade minister Tagomi, appears to drift between one reality and another. It is unclear whether this reality is the world that we as an audience know and understand (Tagomi's son is heading up an anti-nuclear demonstration in the alternate 1963 timeline, in a world where the Allies appear to have won the war) or just another parallel universe that runs alongside the world dominated by the alt-Reich. This may have some relation to *The Man* himself, whose cine film reels appear to depict several

alternate realities; just as the source novel remains mysterious, so does the onscreen adaptation. *The Man's* films have come to the attention of an ageing and increasingly infirm Fuhrer, who still rules from Berlin with a somewhat shaky iron fist.

The Man in the High Castle is filmmaking on a grand scale, and its depiction of an alternative reality is both shocking and seductive. The Nazi Reich, in particular, is minutely rendered, from the domestic sets of the leading Nazi protagonist, Obergruppenfuhrer John Smith (played with both ruthlessness and compassion by Rufus Sewell) to the fin de siècle decadence of sixties Berlin. Not to mention the towering, eagle-topped office buildings of Reich Headquarters in central New York. The focus on fragments; the integrated televisions, the kitchen utensils, the shine on the worktops; all of the details represent a way of life that is reflected in every brass button of every uniform.

Nazi Nightmare, American Dream

What is particularly interesting is the parallels that are drawn between the alt-Reich and the American Dream. In the Reich, the nuclear family is all-important; John Smith might be tossing traitors to the cause off buildings during the day, but he comes home to a wife and three well-behaved children every evening. A house in the suburbs, flowers in the hall and plenty of wholesome family fun is juxtaposed against the ruthlessness of his day job. In a particularly memorable scene from Series 2, ideologies collide when the Nazi wives are all taking tea in Helen Smith's kitchen and discussing the scandal of a newly discovered (and eradicated) 'Semite' nanny. 'Imagine, one of them says 'allowing someone like that to get so close to children.' It's a conversation that is intended to shock and appal; to remind the viewer that, although things look civilised on the surface, beneath it is much more terrifying.

In the same vein, Smith's personal conflict with the practice of institutional eugenics is thrust to the fore when his beloved teenaged son Thomas is diagnosed with a congenital disorder.

When Dr Adler, the Smith family GP, discovers the boy's condition, Smith is told to deal with the problem by giving his son a lethal injection. The man who has signed the death warrants of countless others is now forced to kill his own son. This is where Smith's inner pragmatist comes into play. The beautifully-shot setup suggests that he will carry out the doctor's orders; taking Thomas to the lake for a final chat, close-ups on Sewell reveal the man's pain and horror at what he has to do, only for the doctor himself to end up as the recipient of the lethal injection. Smith, it seems, is not averse to playing fast and loose with the Reich's rulebook in the name of protecting his own family. While stopping short of giving a Nazi an epiphany (which would be entirely out of character in the series so far), we see how Smith is prepared to put his own reputation and life at risk to save his son. The ensuing, somewhat convoluted plot to get Thomas out of the country is a stretch, to be fair, but perhaps again is there to demonstrate the hopelessness of fighting against the Reich. John Smith is the embodiment of the career Nazi; the character appears to exist to show that such men could be three-dimensional, but also to demonstrate the futility of trying

to change an all-powerful system.

In contrast, the character of Joe Blake, who in Series 1 is revealed to be (at least) a double agent working for the Resistance, has increasing issues with the regime he has literally been born into. Joe, and to a greater extent, Juliana Crane, are the audience's representatives onscreen; the ones who kick against authority and attempt to make changes. But by the end of Series 2, Joe has been seduced by the offer of power in Berlin after his previously-estranged father becomes the new Chancellor, and Juliana has begun to be naturalised into the Reich in New York (although she still intends to bring them down from within, especially if the Resistance has its way). These characters give the viewer an insight into the grey areas of absolute rule. Juliana finds herself feeling sorry for the wife of a high-ranking Nazi who has failed to conceive a child ('motherhood is all in the Reich'), and Joe's induction into Berlin society shows the ambiguity of such a place; what is loathsome can also be seductive, if you hold the money and the power. An LSD sequence in Series 2 sums up perfectly Joe's inner turmoil, but outward seduction.

That, in essence, is what makes *The*



Controversial
Amazon Billboard,
New York, NY USA

©Ronald Lopez / Alamy Stock Photo



Man in the High Castle such interesting television. It does not shy away from presenting antagonists as attractive, and even sympathetic. We find ourselves sympathising with the father and husband John Smith, even as he's betraying longstanding friend, Rudolf Wegener, who has betrayed the Reich. In a pivotal moment early in Series 2 John embraces his wife Helen on the doorstep of their immaculate home when he returns from interrogating Rudolf. Their intense emotion is a reminder that all Reich society exists on a knife-edge; one slip and they could just as easily fall on their swords. Helen, holding John's pistol in her apron (yet another perfectly executed visual metaphor for this version of a Nazi dystopia) is prepared to shoot should another man have come to her door. Their relief at being reunited

is palpable, and a snapshot of the superb dynamic between actors Chelah Horsdal and Rufus Sewell. The whole thing is gloriously, morally ambiguous for the viewer; here we are, feeling intense relief that this man has not lost his family – while knowing of his many appalling crimes.

Where Is It All Going?

It remains to be seen whether *The Man in the High Castle* will be a redemption story, or whether it will be something more mainstream in the sci-fi genre. Certainly, the source material suggests that multiple alternate dimensions will end up being its focus, and it may well move away from the initial study of character. There's a whole other essay to be written on the journey of Tagomi, on the Japanese side; and another for

Frank Fink, Juliana's former fiancé, whose own Jewish heritage and associated losses are the catalyst for him to join the Resistance. However, in this current climate of Brexit and Trump, perhaps it's not too far-fetched to muse upon alternate realities, and the possibilities that may exist on the 'what if' scale. *The Man in the High Castle* is certainly an interesting reminder that nothing is certain in turbulent political times, and the will of the people can be a powerful force both for good, and for ill. If television is a mirror, *The Man in the High Castle* reflects some pretty interesting issues.

Fay Jessop is a teacher at Blackwell School whose debut novel *The Second Chance Tea Shop* has recently been published by Aria Fiction. Book number 2 will be published later this year.

ARGO

A large crowd of people in a busy street, with Ben Affleck's character in the center. The scene is filled with diverse individuals, some looking towards the camera, others looking away. The background is slightly blurred, emphasizing the density of the crowd.

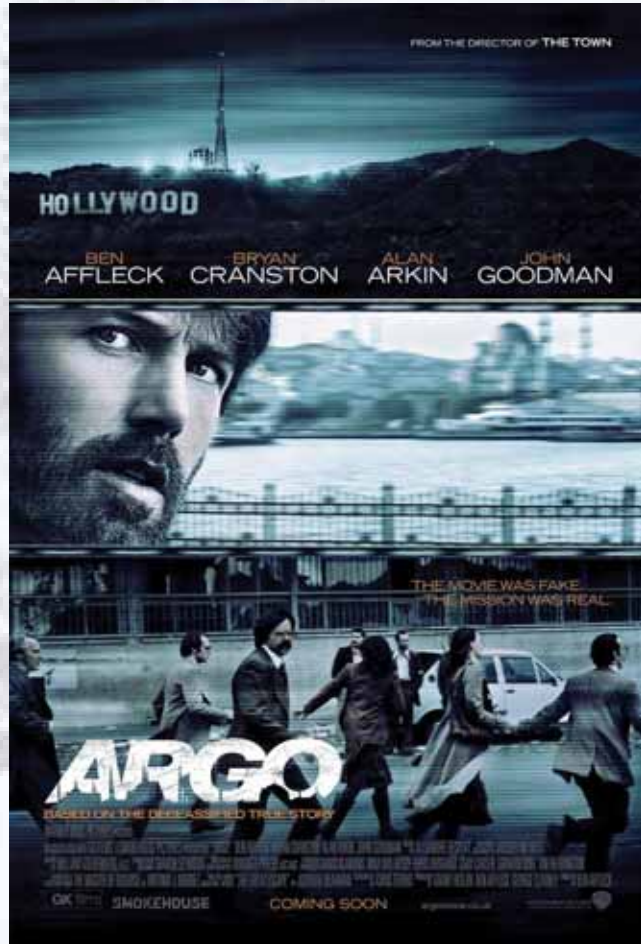
A FILM FOR OUR TIMES?

How far does *Argo* reflect the political and moral uncertainties of the modern era?

Axel Metz takes issue with Ben Affleck's directorial debut *Argo*, a film which arguably misrepresents a historic event from a 21st-century perspective.



ARGO 2012
Warner Bros film
with Ben Affleck



Ben Affleck's *Argo*, released in 2012, is a work that draws on many of the stereotypes and false representations, particularly of gender and race, that remain ever-present within contemporary Western society. These are often constructed to deal with difficult issues and events of the past, and effectively function to scapegoat and misrepresent specific groups and lifestyles that the western world does not entirely understand, perhaps in fear of similar events recurring in the future.

Argo recounts the mission of CIA agent Tony Mendez (Ben Affleck), acting under the cover of a Hollywood production company scouting a location for a science fiction film, as he launches a dangerous operation to rescue six Americans in Tehran, during the hostage crisis of 1980.

The Iranian hostage crisis was the culmination of years of diplomatic friction between Iran and the United States. 52 American diplomats and citizens were held hostage for 444 days between

November 1979 and January 1981 after a small group of Iranian militants and protestors took over the US Embassy in Tehran. The hostage-takers were supporters of the Iranian Revolution, which had recently enforced an orthodox Islamic regime in Iran and exiled the autocratic Iranian monarch, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who took refuge in the US. The protesters demanded the Shah's return for retribution, and the removal of American influence in Iran. The siege remains the longest hostage crisis in recorded history, and is still seen as a turning point in Iran/US relations.

The Narrative Context

The film opens with a brief summary of events leading up to the crisis, and the audience is immediately exposed to a representation of Iranians that depicts them, rightly or wrongly, as the antagonists of the narrative. The violent footage showcases the brutality of the rioting and protests against the US embassy, giving the impression that the Iranian people are acting

irrationally and unfairly – a representation which ignores the fact that the crisis was actually a response to American imperialism and hostility. While the film depicts events that took place nearly 40 years prior to its production, the audience is encouraged to draw parallels between this historical uprising and the contemporary events of the so-called 'Arab Spring' in 2011, in which numerous African and Middle-Eastern countries rose up into revolt and chaos in their fight for democracy. While this is perhaps a flawed comparison, the Western production of *Argo* has no issue in exploiting the ignorance of its demographic in an attempt to draw sympathy for the white American characters, and equally a (predictable) dislike and fear towards their foreign counterparts.

Terrorism, Fear and Hatred

In addition to the association of revolution and anarchy with the film's depiction of Iran, the concept of terrorism further adds to the negative representation of these characters. Since the 9/11 attacks – the deadliest terrorist attack in US history – the country has been involved in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; the Department of Homeland Security has been established; Osama bin Laden has been killed; and the Patriot Act has expanded government intrusion into the personal lives of US citizens. In short, the country now has a repertoire of fear and hatred towards terrorism, particularly Islamic, and all the negativity it has left in its wake.

Unfortunately, as a result of numerous terrorist groups' associations with Islam, Muslim culture across the western world has fallen victim to prejudice and racism. The weekend of writing this article, newly-elected President Trump has shocked the world with his restrictions on migration, and his proposed deportation of Muslims from the US, despite the absurdity and narrow-mindedness of this proposal.

The Iranian militia in *Argo* have a similar appearance to the stereotypes of modern terrorists, and this creates a sense of perpetual alarm and aggression for the audience. Even if they weren't clutching rifles and constantly staring with an air of hostility, these characters would struggle to distance themselves from their Western depictions, such as the nature of Islamophobia as explained by Edward Said's theory of Orientalism. It is particularly relevant in *Argo*'s bazaar and airport scenes, in which the American characters appear at their most vulnerable and the atmospheric tension reaches its peak.

Furthermore, the native Farsi language is in itself a tool of aggression for the soldiers in

While the film arguably uses these stereotypes to highlight the inequality in America during this period, the success of the mission that concludes the film suggests that these failures of equality are irrelevant.

ARGO 2012
Warner Bros film
with Ben Affleck

the film. They appear to be always shouting, always on the edge of urgency, and this anger subsequently appears present within all Iranians – or at least so *Argo* would have us believe. The one exception to this representation is the houseworker in the Canadian ambassador's residence, the only place of sanctuary for the trapped US diplomats. While she is still native Iranian, the fact that she aids the Americans by lying to the militia as to their whereabouts represents her favourably to the audience, and her quiet and inviting voice offers a dramatic contrast to every other hostile Iranian character in the film. In this way, even characters of the same nationality as the antagonists have been 'westernised' to appeal to the audience, in this case through the use of voice; further evidence to suggest that *Argo* is a film intended to appeal to an exclusively Western society, even if that means disrespecting and generalising other cultures.

A Critique of Cultural Stereotypes?

As well as stereotypes and misrepresentations of Muslim and Iranian culture, *Argo* also recognises that there are certain generalisations associated within American culture too. Detectives and the authorities within 70s America are depicted as suit-wearing, paperwork-ridden cops who enjoyed smoking and drinking on the job, and these gender stereotypes are replayed in *Argo*. This job sector was overwhelmingly male-dominated, and *Argo* features only four female characters, none of whom appear as very strong or independent individuals. As expected, it is the male characters who are the heroes of the story and the film – even though it was the acts



The contemporary interpretation of issues such as terrorism and gender stereotypes have moulded the film into portraying generalisations of both western and foreign culture which have only developed within the 21st century.

of men that caused the crisis in the first place. Furthermore, while the Canadian ambassador is recognised and takes the credit for the heroic rescue, his wife is not acknowledged by the public eye of the time nor the audience of the film, despite her equal contribution to the mission.

Additionally, the film's representation of family life and divorce is particularly problematic. The lead male character (Ben Affleck) is portrayed as the 'bad' father who struggles to make time for his son, while the mother is depicted as the character who cares for their child, reluctant to let the two meet as much as they should – perhaps a reflection of many real-life situations. *Argo* reinforces the stereotypical nature of 70s society, and is particularly accurate in its portrayal of the male-dominated CIA, the

subdued roles of female characters, and the unconventional notion of a failed marriage.

However, while the film arguably uses these stereotypes to highlight the inequality in America during this period, the success of the mission that concludes the film suggests that these failures of equality are irrelevant. The audience leaves the film recognising only the exclusively male triumph, praising these 'heroes', but ignoring the finer details, and failing to tackle the root causes of the crisis.

To conclude, *Argo* is very much a film for our times, and a production that would have been very different had it been made during the time in which it is set. The contemporary interpretation of issues such as terrorism and gender stereotypes have moulded the film into portraying generalisations of both western and foreign culture which have only developed within the 21st century. It is only when we challenge the reality of its representations that we realise how misled, and politically uncertain, our society really is.

Whatever the critique of *Argo*, Affleck succeeded in producing an undeniably provocative piece of cinema; and in any case the Academy seemed to enjoy it.

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Men



in
Makeup

Men in Makeup



Makeup as a media text? Really? Melodie Karczewski argues that gender boundaries are gradually blurring as social media, Japanese Manga, and the magazine and cosmetic industries are undermining stereotypes.

What do rock legends, K-Pop, and *CoverGirl* magazine have in common? Guyliner! It's a term used to describe eyeliner that men can wear without feeling emasculated.

But why should this be necessary?

In the Western world, makeup is generally seen as something strictly for women only. But in late 2016, the magazine *CoverGirl* gave no apology for their front cover of 17-year-old makeup artist James Charles, adorned with false lashes, a nude lip, and eyebrows you could only describe as 'on fleek'. A senior from a high school in New York, James, now has 1.3 million followers on Instagram and 630,000 YouTube subscribers, where he regularly posts tutorials and shows off his talent to the world. Starting on Instagram only one year ago, he gained celebrity-follower Zendaya before catching the eye of *CoverGirl* magazine, with interviews for *TeenVogue* and the TV show *Ellen* following. James said to *TeenVogue* that it was 'amazing that this industry is going genderless'. But when makeup is currently perceived to be so stereotypically feminine, can it ever be all-inclusive?

Modern terminology tells us not. The phrase 'guyliner' suggests that when men are wearing eyeliner it transforms from being the feminine liquid into a new, exclusively male product. Coupled with 'man tan', it seems that fabricating new terminology makes it easier for men to use something traditionally deemed as 'feminine'. Does makeup have to be re-branded to be acceptable by male standards? It's unlikely that the male image represented in cosmetic advertising would be spotted holding a blusher brush; yet it's entirely expected that the classic 'girly girl' should be seen experimenting with her new contour palette.

Metrosexuality

Other emerging terminology can be seen to drive men away from cosmetics. For example, the term 'metrosexual' describes a heterosexual man who is particularly meticulous about his grooming and appearance. The word originated in 1994 in Mark's Simpsons article for the *Independent*. In 2003, the *New York Times* published a story 'Metrosexuals Come Out', making a direct

connection with sexuality through the use of the phrase 'come out'. Its relation to sexuality – something that arguably should be seen as completely separate from appearance – implies that grooming and cosmetics are the exclusive province of women and homosexual men.

In contrast to metrosexuality, the stereotypically more acceptable term 'retrosexual' describes men who spend as little money on their appearance as possible, and would classically be deemed as the stereotypical 'man's man' – broadly considered the norm in Britain. Defining words like these are divisive, and reinforce broader gender stereotypes, including the assumption that makeup is naturally linked to gender, rather than being about individual self-expression and confidence.

It has been argued that the media have encouraged men to fear women, rather than relate to them. You may remember that at one time the Yorkie chocolate bar slogan was 'Not for Girls', branded with the jokey strapline 'King Size Not Queen Size'. However, you may not know that this was part of a £3 million advertising campaign orchestrated by Nestle's then marketing director Andrew Harrison to 'reclaim chocolate for men', and to disassociate it from the 'feminine silks and swirls' ubiquitous in most advertisements for confectionery. Even silky chocolate is too girly for guys; and any inkling of elegance, just like glamorous makeup, doesn't quite fit into the category of the stereotypical man.

Makeup, Taste and Decency?

Men across the globe face discrimination for wearing makeup. In 2010, seven male models from the show *Sudanese Next Top Model* were convicted of indecency and fined for wearing makeup. Their lawyers argued that makeup is regularly used by men on television; but the Khartoum judges referred to Islamic Law, and ruled that men wearing makeup were indecent. Meanwhile in most countries across the world, including the UK, most cosmetic staff are not even trained in how to apply foundation to a bearded man, adding to the insecurity of males who might be reluctant to try it.

A History of Male Cosmetics

Men in makeup are hardly the norm nowadays; but, a historical approach suggests that the earliest record of men using cosmetics dates back to ancient Asia and Egypt. In 3000 BC both men and women in China and Japan used gelatine and egg to stain their fingernails in order to signify their social status. Ancient Egyptians were known for their bold and elaborate kohl eye makeup. Men and women, including King Tutankhamen, wore green pigment to induce or evoke the God of the Sky and Sun, Horus. Warriors in Ancient Britain became known by the Romans as Picts, meaning 'The Painted Ones', due to their use of blue woad. The Romans painted their heads to hide their premature baldness, and makeup was even worn by Alexander the Great, who was undefeated in battle and ruled the largest empire of the ancient world. So makeup has a long history of use by both men and women. But when did it all change?



Patriarchal Prudery

Queen Victoria (1819-1901) declared the use of cosmetics and makeup vulgar and impolite, asserting that only prostitutes should wear it. However, male actors were an exception to this rule, and were especially encouraged to perform in drag. Men could wear makeup if they were portraying women on stage; perhaps there is a link here to how our society feels about the feminine connotations of makeup today.

Many critics and theorists suggest we still live in a patriarchy which is in part responsible for our negative response to men in makeup in our everyday lives. The use of cosmetics could be seen as a challenge to the status of males, and arguably promote further equality between genders. The shock factor and controversy of *CoverGirl's* newest face is evidence of the lack of representation for genderless makeup in the media.



Cultural Differences: Korea

Some cultures, however, are more inclusive. The Korean pop culture, or 'K-Pop' as it is commonly known, encompasses the use of makeup for both genders. It's hard to find a Korean music video that doesn't show men with flawless skin. Bright lipsticks and eye makeup are frequently used by males as a form of expression and creativity, rather than making a point about gender boundaries. In fact, an attraction to more 'feminine' men is becoming a trend in Korea thanks to K-Pop stars such as DBSK (or TVXQ) who wear earrings and makeup in their videos such as 'Mine Hero' and 'Step by Step'. They represent the trend of the 'Flower Boy', which is also exceedingly popular in Korean TV shows. 'Flower Boys' are the cute, kind boys-next-door, whom some might describe as 'girly'. This trend may be descended from Japanese manga comics, which depict beautifully drawn characters and have a long history in Japan. And it is growing; 21% of sales of US skin-care products come from the male cosmetics industry in South Korea. The country's biggest cosmetics company, Amorepacific, calculated that more than \$885 million was spent on men's cosmetics in 2012, and the demand has increased significantly in the last few years.

The Impact of Social Media

There seems little doubt that contemporary social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube are creating support for a wider use of cosmetics, which extends the boundaries of society. YouTubers such as Ryan Potter, Wayne Goss, and Manny Mua frequently upload videos teaching people how to apply makeup and achieve new looks. They show that our perception of gender boundaries is changing; you can't argue with the evidence of Manny's 2,201,842 subscribers. In fact, Maybelline has followed *CoverGirl* in its campaign for genderless makeup by hiring Manny as their newest ambassador. *CoverGirl* even released a new mascara called 'BlastPRO' promoting #LashEquality, which supports all-inclusive beauty. Online companies selling men's cosmetics such as Kenmen and

4Voo have reported annual sale surges, although there is an argument against these exclusively male products. For example, the British vlogger Georgie Aldous has created an online petition calling for non-gendered British makeup campaigns, claiming that 'people just need to stop genderising makeup as a whole'. He wants Britain to follow the US example by creating more groundbreaking change in the male beauty industry, just like our latest *CoverGirl*.

Perhaps the future will be full of beautified men and women, unafraid to learn from the look of Tutankhamen.

Melodie Karczewski is an A Level Media Studies student and screenwriter.

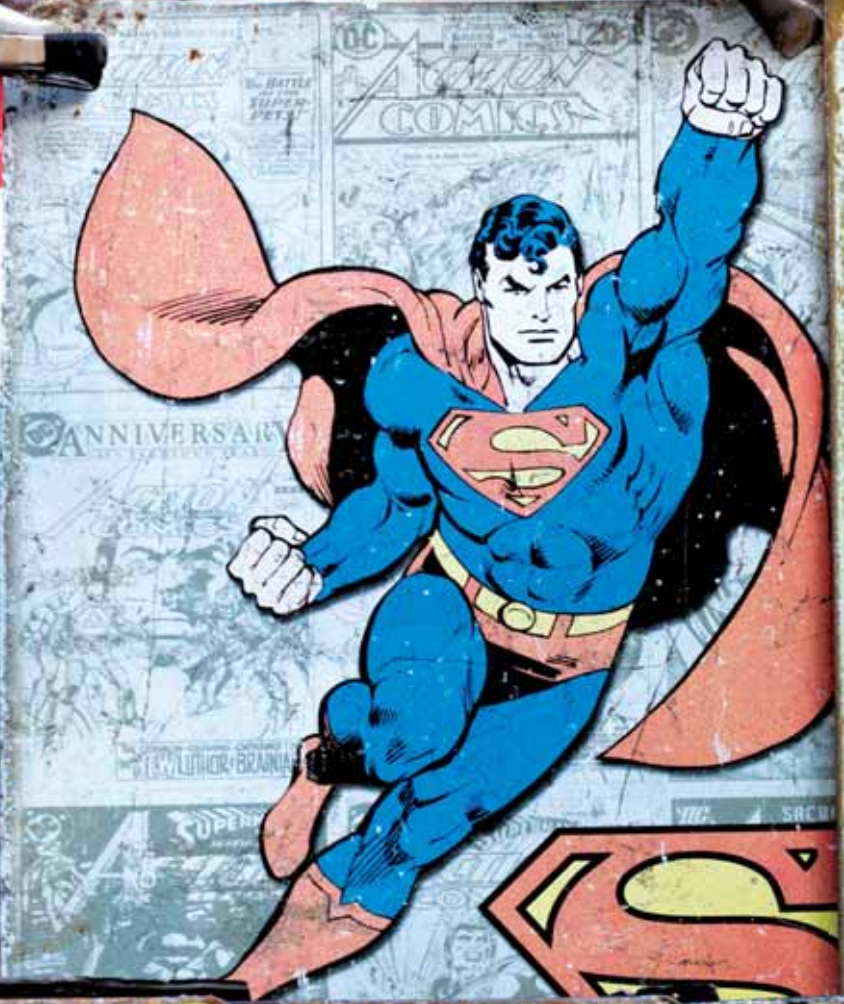


Female

me to
Main Street!

VE

ILLINOIS
MISSOURI
OKLAHOMA
AMERICA
Trip!





TURKISH
MEE-A BEER
A PARAKA-LOH!
GREEK

THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN

THE MIGHTY
THOR

MARVEL'S

DISTRIBUTION REVOLUTION

.....
Eduardo Solórzano explores the world of film distribution and asks how far Marvel's revolutionary approach and cinematic universe has changed the game and made them winners.
.....

Film distribution is the process of making a film available to an audience and is a subject rarely in the limelight, perhaps because it is considered one of the least exciting areas of the industry. Young film fans rarely dream of working in this sector; it isn't flashy and lacks the glamour of acting or the artistic expression associated with directing. It is important, though, not to underestimate its importance. So let's take a quick look at the history of distribution in Hollywood, and an outline of the key deals that Marvel Studios have recently sealed in order to triumph in the contemporary market.

From Studio System to Cinematic Universe

Film distribution has undergone many changes throughout its history. In the early 20th century when the Hollywood studio system was in full swing, the studios controlled every aspect of filmmaking. They employed 'vertical integration', meaning that they had ownership of the means of production, distribution and exhibition of films, and as a result, they received all profits. In other words, the Hollywood studios owned the entire creative process, the channels of distribution, and indeed the cinema chains.

With this monopoly and power, studio distribution tactics were notably dirty. The few cinemas not owned by a studio were often forced to fill their schedules with B-movies they didn't really want, in order to acquire rights to the studio's most coveted films. As a consequence of this and other malpractices, the US government issued the 1948 Paramount Decree, which compelled studios to divest themselves of their theatre chains and effectively ended the studio system.

Curiously, today we find ourselves in a very similar situation as a result of conglomeration. Studios not only have their hand in production, distribution and exhibition but also own smaller subsidiary studios, toy companies, theme parks – you name it, they have it. In 2009 Marvel Studios was acquired by one of these

heavyweights, Disney, which has had a huge impact on its success. But before that there was the Paramount deal.

The Paramount Deal

Today it is hard to remember a time before the existence of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) and its release of at least two films per year. However, its birth is recent. The new millennium opened with the success of the first two Sony *Spider-Man* and Fox *X-Men* films. This may have been what prompted Marvel in 2005 to reconsider the potential of its remaining catalogue. The MCU had just come out of bankruptcy and was ready to exploit its properties, so it made an exclusive deal with Paramount to distribute its first 10 films. One of its key decisions was that none of these movies should be R-rated, in order to ensure the maximum possible audience. The deal's success was confirmed when *Iron Man* (2008) was released in 11% more theatres than Fox's second *X-Men*, and resulted in a worldwide gross that was 42% greater.

The Disney Deal

The success of *Iron Man* and the promise of a shared universe encouraged Disney to buy Marvel for a whopping \$4 billion in 2009. This may sound like a lot; but since *Iron Man 2* (2010), Marvel has generated a total of \$6.3 billion in international revenues. And this doesn't include profits from ancillary markets such as DVD sales, toy merchandising and other licensing deals, such as for a 'Smash' fragrance, in case you wanted to smell like the Hulk.

Disney has provided Marvel with an immense amount of security, which has allowed it to be more innovative. One of the strategies it has employed is to announce a slate of films or release dates years in advance. Back in 2014 it confirmed titles through to 2019, which is part of its 'phases' mechanism, and has been hugely successful in building audience anticipation.

It seems like common practice now for studios to release this information early, but in the past a release date would only be announced once a movie was actually completed. Even

James Gunn, director of *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014), recognises that it's not a method that everyone can pull off. When asked why DC (the rival comic publisher, originator of *Batman*, *Superman* and *Wonderwoman*) seems to struggle to get its universe in motion, he commented that filmmakers today are under immense pressure to meet pre-arranged deadlines. Although not every country gets the same release date, Marvel has also innovated in worldwide distribution as well. To compensate for the spoiler issues inevitable with worldwide internet accessibility, it has released films a week early in foreign markets, such as the UK.



The Netflix Deal

Marvel has also used the internet to solve the problem of maximising audiences without compromising content. The Disney deal brought success, but required films to be 'family friendly'; thus, restricting the potential use of adult themes and grittier superheroes. Then along came Netflix, the internet distributor, and Marvel recognised a solution to its problem. In 2012 the two companies made a deal to form their own universe, which has since brought us the well-received TV shows *Daredevil*, *Jessica Jones*, and *Luke Cage*, which, alongside the upcoming *Iron Fist*, are moving towards a team-up series titled *The Defenders*. Netflix has provided the perfect platform; it does not release ratings, and its focus is not about the number of people watching, but about building a brand and a subscriber-base – and Marvel can provide exactly that.

The IMAX Deal and the Future

Extending its revolutionary marketing strategies, Marvel recently announced a deal that combines both film and TV distribution. The first two episodes of its upcoming TV show, *Inhumans*, will be filmed and exhibited in IMAX cinemas – perhaps its most radical deal yet. Marvel's next developments are likely to revolutionise distribution further, and perhaps transform our attitudes to this vital and dynamic aspect of the industry in the process.

Eduardo Solórzano is a third year Film Studies undergraduate at Oxford Brookes University.



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I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU

Spying, surveillance and snooping in films

Will Rimmer explores the murky world of espionage, surveillance and the invasion of privacy as represented on the big screen.



Freepix

Films about spying, surveillance and pervasive mass control are nothing new. Cinema has a long history of telling stories about paranoid, terrified individuals going up against the might of a government and big organisations in order to protect the greater good. Thanks to some courageous and generally left-leaning newspaper coverage (thank you the *Guardian!*), the extent of illegal governmental surveillance in both US and UK has now been exposed to the public. Yet much of the evidence has emerged from outside traditional media outlets, via ideological truth-seekers and whistle-blowers such as Wikileaks-founder Julian Assange and ex-NSA employee Edward Snowden. A David v Goliath notion certainly plays out in many of the films discussed in this article, which will consider the representation of government surveillance in films produced over the last 30 years.

We now live in a world where invasion of privacy is, from a government's perspective at least, merely a necessary consequence of maintaining public safety in an era of increasing online threats, hacks and terrorist cyber-attacks from rogue nations such as North Korea, and an increasingly antagonistic Russia. Perhaps the Cold War is no longer a relic of the past, but a precursor of more terrible things still to come?



The representation of governments in Hollywood cinema has generally been negative. Invisible dark forces function to thwart the male hero at every turn; caught, he will be imprisoned or harshly executed. Though this seems implausible in reality, the state-sanctioned poisoning in November 2006 of Russian F.S.B. spy and renowned Putin-critic Alexander Litvinenko sent the chilling message that sometimes truth is stranger than fiction.

Enemy of the State: The Role of Technology

Since the 1990s, feature films have detailed how ever-increasing technological sophistication coupled with a decreasing sense of moral responsibility have enabled a government to turn one innocent man's life upside down. This is the case with Tony Scott's *Enemy of the State* (1998) which sets up a conventional man-on-the-run style action thriller. The audience clearly identifies with Will Smith's well-to-do lawyer protagonist Robert Dean, who inadvertently receives a tape-recording of the cold-blooded murder of a congressman, punished for refusing to back a surveillance bill desperately wanted by National Security Agency (NSA) director Reynolds (Jon Voight) who is seeking to maintain total NSA dominance in the global intelligence community.

As Dean becomes ever more paranoid and out of his depth, with an NSA hit squad closing in on him, he is aided by Brill (Gene Hackman), a grizzled, embittered NSA veteran turned surveillance expert. Following thrilling chase sequences and inevitable plot twists, Dean regains his former life and the narrative equilibrium is restored once more. Dean is presented as the typical Everyman: an ordinary guy caught up in extraordinary circumstances. In a key early exchange, Brill explains the extent to which the public have been monitored, and thus unwittingly spied upon:

The government's been in bed with the entire telecommunications industry since the forties. They've infected everything. They get into your bank statements, computer files, email, listen to your phone calls [...] Every wire, every airwave. The more technology used, the easier it is for them to keep tabs on you. It's a brave new world out there. At least it'd better be.

There's an intertextual nod here to the 1974 Francis Ford Coppola film *The Conversation*, in which Hackman played an electronic surveillance expert low on trust and high on paranoia. Even the opening sequence of *Enemy of the State* is something of an homage to Coppola's 70s classic.

While perhaps ultimately a by-the-numbers formulaic genre film, *Enemy of the State* raises serious questions about the ethical grey area of government surveillance techniques. Not surprisingly, the real-life NSA did not take kindly to the filmmakers' representation, which clearly did not result in positive PR! Reflecting back in 2001, then head of NSA. Lt. General Michael Hayden told news channel CNN:

I made the judgment that we couldn't survive with the popular impression of this agency being formed by the last Will Smith movie.

CIA and *The Bourne Identity*

Though the NSA public image was damaged by *Enemy of the State*, the representation of the CIA (also later run by Hayden) in the Jason Bourne films, from 2002 until 2016, was arguably even worse.

In *The Bourne Identity* (2002) CIA spy Jason Bourne is sent to assassinate an exiled African dictator. However, the mission goes badly wrong. Bourne is shot in the back and left for dead floating in the Mediterranean. Suffering from short-term memory-loss, he goes on the run, trying to piece together both his own past, and the true intentions of bosses back at HQ in



Photo: Pixabay

Virginia. Again, themes of government control, and both human and electronic surveillance emerge, as Bourne attempts to stay one step ahead of the CIA assassins sent to kill him.

Interestingly, the film was released just months after George W. Bush's controversial USA Patriot Act came into force. This Act, intended to help government agencies detect and prevent possible acts of terrorism, or sponsorship of terrorist groups, was rushed into legislation after the 9/11 terrorist attacks caught all the US intelligence agencies with their proverbial pants down, an embarrassment they vowed would never happen again. Thanks to the new powers of the Act, all sorts of illegal and unethical techniques were put into place to try and eradicate terrorism against the United States once and for all. Michael Moore's 2004 film *Fahrenheit 9/11* focuses on these issues in some detail, highlighting the notorious Guantanamo Bay military facility in Cuba as the epicentre in which the Patriot Act powers could be put to the test.

In *The Bourne Ultimatum* (2007) the CIA use all manner of technological and satellite devices to hunt down Jason Bourne, but also to spy on innocent members of the public. *Guardian* investigative journalist Simon Ross reveals to Bourne what he has learnt, but his use of key words in communication exchanges soon places him in the line of fire. Despite Bourne's efforts to help him escape an ambush in London's Waterloo station, the journalist is assassinated.

Bourne's real name, David Webb, has a double connotation: he is both David, as in the David v Goliath analogy highlighted earlier, but also Webb, caught up in a web of conspiratorial deceit he cannot escape.



We now live in a world where invasion of privacy is, from a government's perspective at least, merely a necessary consequence of maintaining public safety in an era of increasing online threats, hacks and terrorist cyber-attacks from rogue nations such as North Korea, and increasingly antagonistic Russia.

From Fiction to Fact

Whereas Jason Bourne was a purely fictional character from the pages of Robert Ludlum's novels, Julian Assange and Edward Snowden are real people. Both films made about their lives highlight risks taken in the name of civil liberty, government accountability, and a public right to privacy, in an increasing age of 'Big Brother' surveillance which, for many, is proof of an Orwellian nightmare come true.

Wikileaks and *The Fifth Estate*

The Fifth Estate (2013) details the attempts of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange's aim to release uncensored, un-redacted information to the public, provided by various Government whistle-blowers. Such information is highly sensitive by nature, relating to covert data about government misdemeanours, cover-ups and corporate crimes across the world.

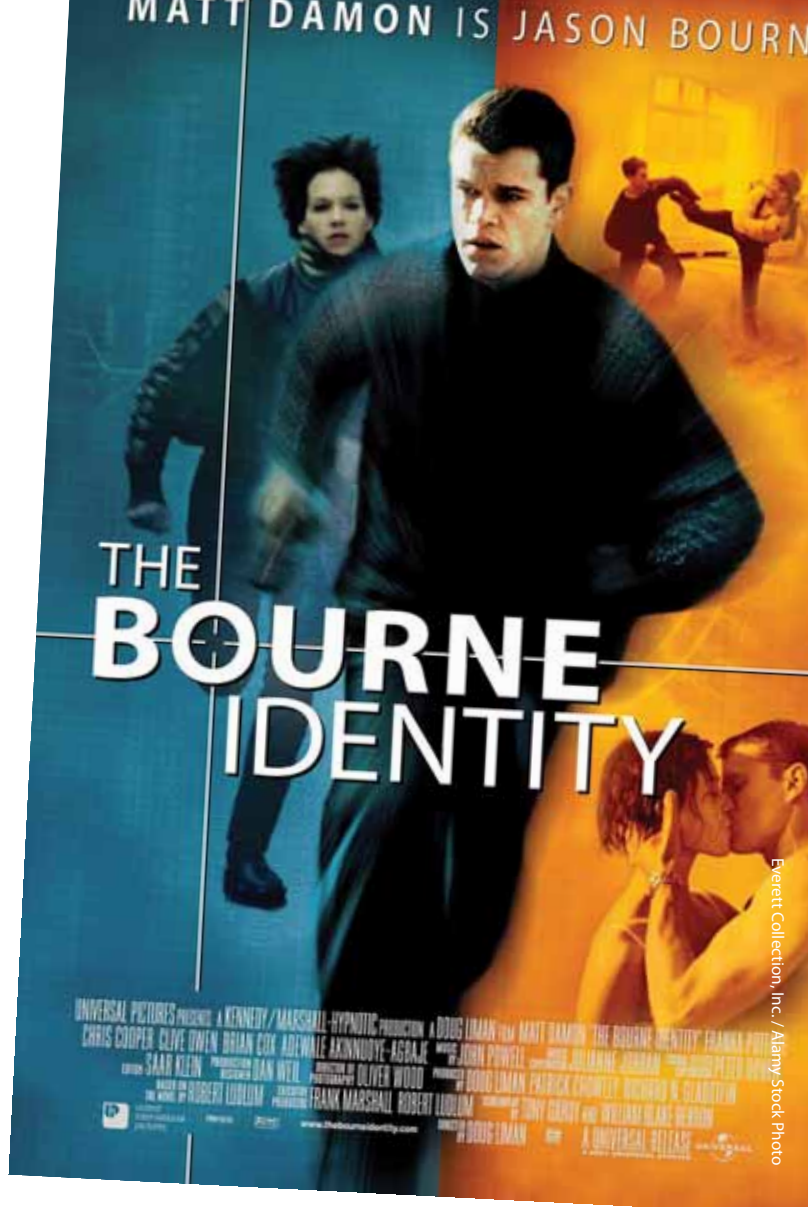
In some ways, Assange is portrayed sympathetically in Bill Condon's film, as a man determined to shine a light on the shadowy activities of global institutions and Western Governments, in the name of transparency and accountability. As Assange, icily portrayed by Benedict Cumberbatch, explains to co-Wikileaks hacker Daniel Berg:

If you want the truth, no one is going to tell you the truth, they're going to tell you their version. So if you want the truth, you have to seek it out for yourself.

Yet as the film's closing credits reveal, Assange has paid a brutal price for his mass-information crusade. To date, he is still currently hiding out in Ecuador's London Embassy, on the run from both Swedish and American authorities. His predicament illustrates the dangers of taking on all-powerful governments who will stop at nothing to protect their secrets from the public at large.

Snowden

Also on the run, and facing harsh reprisals should he ever attempt to return to the US, is former NSA worker Edward Snowden (Joseph-Gordon Levitt). Presented as a computer genius, Snowden suffers a crisis of conscience, appalled by the levels of both legal and illegal global surveillance techniques used by NSA and Britain's GCHQ. He decides to reveal all he knows, and sends data downloaded from NSA files to journalists at a British newspaper (yet again, the *Guardian*) and to American documentary filmmaker Laura Poitras. It is not just the NSA who are revealed as the typical bad guys in the film;



The Bourne Identity, Franka Potente, Matt Damon, 2002



Edward Snowden is an American IT expert formerly employed by the Central Intelligence Agency and the United States government. In June 2013, he copied and leaked classified information from the National Security

Agency (NSA) which exposed numerous global surveillance programs, run by western powers. The material was published in the *Guardian* and *The Washington Post*. Snowden was immediately charged with violating the 1917 Espionage Act, and theft of government property. Almost immediately, he fled to Moscow, which granted him asylum, and he has remained there ever since.



Snowden runs confidently with the hot topic of government control, and the illegal mass surveillance techniques [...] used to keep tabs on an unsuspecting public.

GCHQ are revealed to be just as pervasive and slippery in the dark arts of mass surveillance.

In 2016 following numerous Freedom of Information requests, it was revealed how the British government had access to people's internet data history, something the British press famously described as 'The Snooper's Charter'. As with Assange (and the fictional Bourne), Snowden was forced to go on the run, and in an ironic twist of fate for the US government, he took refuge in Russia. Yet the reprisals for his actions ensures he can never leave his new home. He is trapped in a space, Russia, as big as the Ecuadorian Embassy is small for Assange.

Directed by Oliver Stone, the agent provocateur who has been a constant thorn in the side of successive US governments, the reception of the 2016 film was mixed, due undoubtedly to Stone's already prickly relationship with a conservative mainstream media he has long been baiting, both domestically and internationally. Yet *Snowden* runs confidently with the hot topic of government control, and the illegal mass surveillance techniques (e.g. data collection scooping, known as dragnets) used to keep tabs on an unsuspecting public.

Spectre

A final film focusing on the theme of Government spying and mass public surveillance is the 2015 Bond film *Spectre*. The plot sees villain Blofeld team up with a dirty MI5 boss Max Denbigh, code-named C, who enacts a variety of global terrorist activities to ensure other governments around the world participate in the newly-devised 'Nine Eyes' programme. It provides unlimited access to data streams from nine major countries. In a tense exchange at his desert lair, Blofeld informs Bond and love-interest Dr Madeleine Swann why knowledge through mass surveillance is vital to his plans.

Swann: What is this place?

Blofeld: Information. Information is all, is it not?

On seeing the hundreds of computer screens and the satellite technology Blofeld uses to spy on people around the world, Bond succinctly remarks:

Not much more than a voyeur are you? Too scared to join in?

As with *Snowden*, Ernst Stavro Blofeld's E.S. initials have a tenuous link to the theme of electronic surveillance...

Overall, these films to varying degrees highlight important real-life issues via fictional entertainment. As digital technological sophistication expands further, so the films being made about such topics will continue to be thought-provoking, raising concerns about how much governments know, or indeed should know, about our daily lives.

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Follow It Up

Here's a list of films focusing on issues of surveillance and government intervention, spanning a 50-year period from 1954 to the present-day.

REAR WINDOW
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE FRANCHISE
THE CONVERSATION
JASON BOURNE FRANCHISE
ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN
THE FOURTH ESTATE
SUBURBIA
SPECTRE
THE TRUMAN SHOW
THE HUNGER GAMES FRANCHISE
ENEMY OF THE STATE
SNOWDEN

The Big World of Big Brother

The ultimate media case study



Jenny Grahame explores the development of *Big Brother* as an example of genre evolution, a history of changes in the media industries, and a snapshot of UK popular culture over the post-Millennium, postmodern era.

I'm writing this on Day 2 of the 2017 *Celebrity Big Brother* extravaganza. So what, you might ask? By the time you're reading it, we'll probably already be watching the regular *Big Brother* summer show, and the whole 2017 *Celebrity Big Brother* experience will be long gone, dead in the water, another instantly-forgotten example of a one-time 'water-cooler' media phenomenon. But I'm going to argue otherwise.

Way back in summer 2000 – when some of you were babies! – I wrote a classroom case study of the very first UK series of *Big Brother*, as it actually happened. Looking back on its early, innocent, pre-'nasty' days, study of that first series was rather remarkable.

What Made *Big Brother* Interesting...

It's almost impossible to believe now, but the original *Big Brother* was flagged up as a genuine social experiment, and a ground-breaking documentary format raising serious ethical issues.

Communal living, hidden-camera social observation, fly-on-the-wall glimpses of human interaction, a game show constructed from (supposedly) real-life jeopardy – none of this had been seen before. The impact of the opportunity to eavesdrop 24/7 on a group of (apparently) ordinary people was huge.

Unusually for that time, *Big Brother's* producers, Endemol, were extraordinarily transparent about the production process, giving detailed information on the numbers of cameras, operators, editors, and their routines, and even hints of the budget. Back then, online platforms were relatively new, and few shows had a significant online presence; the *Big Brother* website, with a staff of 50, became instantly by far the most popular in the UK. Even its scheduling, stripped across an entire fortnight on Channel 4, was novel; the show became the highest rated in Channel 4's history, with 9 million, over 45%

of the total TV viewing public, tuned into the show's final. Indeed, so great was *Big Brother's* impact that by 2001, school students all over the country were actually studying it in Key Stage 3 English – unthinkable in today's more limited educational climate.

... And What Makes *Big Brother* Interesting Today

As a mini-history of changes in the modern media landscape, the evolution of *Big Brother* can teach us a great deal. Here, in no particular order, are a handful of the features we could explore which illustrate some of the major technological and cultural changes of the early 21st century.

Iconography

The *Big Brother* eye, the surveillance motif inextricably linked to *Big Brother* changes to reflect the tone or cultural zeitgeist of each series. The title sequence of the first series featured the intermittent appearance of a fly on a wall; interestingly, this visual comment on the alleged documentary form of the show disappeared once audiences had learned to recognise its highly edited and manipulative conventions. Similarly, the layout, décor and entire mise-en-scène of



the *Big Brother* house can be seen as an index of contemporary style: spartan Ikea furniture one series, shabby-chic retro the next, brutal prison-style architecture another. 2017's *Celebrity Big Brother* is all swinging 60s pop-art, comic-strip speech bubbles and onomatopoeic sound effects, no doubt in deference to the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Summer of Love. *Big Brother* has often been described as post-modern and hyper-real, and its iconography is a good starting point to explore the ideas of thinkers such as Baudrillard.

Players and Their Identities

Big Brother has created household names from its presenters and contestants. Davina McCall, Bryan Dowling, Rylan Clark-Neal, Nasty Nick, Jade Goody, etc have all become UK media celebrities in their own rights. Countless other non-winners have exploited their 15 minutes of fame with ongoing media appearances, based on the personality traits and traits highlighted – or constructed – by the show. Other celebrity identities have been formed by their involvement with the show's multiple spin-offs – *Big Brother's Little Brother*, *Big Brother's Big Mouth*, *Big Brother's Bit on the Side* have elevated the careers of Dermot

O'Leary, Russell Brand, Emma Willis and many others in the UK. It would be interesting to consider these players in terms of Henry Jenkins' ideas about fandom, or the pleasures and identification they offer their followers.

Globalisation

Mirroring the increasingly global nature of the media, to date there have been 54 global franchises of *Big Brother*, generating 398 series worldwide. Originally from Dutch origins, a global presence was built into the format, with each host nation able to vary the conventions. Franchises have adapted the format to their own cultural norms and values, to include housemate exchanges between different franchises, eviction swaps, secret missions, twins and triplet housemates, secret houses, and more. The *Big Brother* Wikipedia page gives a global snapshot of the international development of the show, and an illustration of genre development in action. But the key conventions, isolation from the outside world, confessional space of the Diary Room, live online presence, narrator's 'voice of god' and voting procedures remain constants and provide an international unifying *Big Brother* 'language'.

Ownership and Convergence

Big Brother was originally created and developed by Dutch producer John de Mol for his distribution company Endemol, a massive global network which now operates in 30 countries and with over 300 broadcasters, worthy of a case study in its own right. Once mainly known for its reality shows, Endemol has now merged with 21st Century Fox and Apollo Global Management to become Endemol Shine, and has a portfolio of popular drama series including *Peaky Blinders*, *Ripper Street*, *Black Mirror*, and *Benidorm*. Who knows how much of this slate of high-end drama has been financed by the enormous income-generation of the *Big Brother* franchise?

Big Brother originally screened on Channel 4, which axed it in 2010. Since 2011 it has been a gigantic hit for Channel 5. In 2015 Channel 5 was taken over by global corporation Viacom, which has now extended the *Big Brother* deal with Endemol Shine for a further three years at a cost of £150 million. Its hours of back-to-back programming and its 'appointment to view' status has massively increased Channel 5's share of the 16-34 audience. Here in action is a case study in the power of convergence.



Sponsorship

Big Brother 1 was one of the earliest UK shows to rely heavily on branded sponsorship; while broadcast by C4, these were predominantly mobile phone or digital communication providers: a gift to be associated with a reality gameshow relying on phone voting for the first time. In 2005, Carphone Warehouse, and its offspring TalkTalk, paid £2.5million a year to sponsor the entire *Big Brother* franchise; but withdrew its sponsorship during *Celebrity Big Brother 5* as a result of the alleged bad behaviour and racism of the housemates. By *Celebrity Big Brother 6*, the cost of sponsorship had reduced to £800,000.

Interestingly, once relocated to Channel 5 in 2011, the main sponsors were for skincare and hair products – and for Supercasino and Betway, online gambling sites which could be screened before 9.00pm due to Ofcom regulations. Since 2014, sponsor-branding has been less aggressive; *Celebrity Big Brother 17* had no sponsorship at all – perhaps a reflection of the declining impact of TV advertising, or the rapidly diminishing audiences for the show. Nevertheless, Agostino di Falco deputy sales director at Channel 5 has described *Big Brother* as

a commercial powerhouse, unrivalled in British TV in its scope for imaginative commercial partnerships. The sheer breadth and variety of brands that have partnered with *Big Brother* over the years demonstrates the inventive opportunities for integrating brands within the show.

www.campaignlive.co.uk

By 2015 it was estimated that *Big Brother* sponsorship deals have boosted Channel 5's revenues by 35% to around £35 million per year.

Controversies

From the start, the *Big Brother* concept created waves, starting with a legal case where the estate of George Orwell (from whose dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the title was borrowed) successfully sued Endemol for copyright and trademark infringement. Since *Big Brother 1*'s exposure of cheating and rule-breaking in the house, each new series has revealed a new set of debates and controversies, from taste and decency (was there on-screen sex under those duvets?) to duty of care – should more vulnerable contestants have been better protected from

exposure? Allegations of bullying, sexual harassment (and rape in two non-European series), and the infamous racism of *Celebrity Big Brother 5* between Jade Goody and actress Shilpa Shetty have mirrored real-world debates, often with uncomfortable and disturbing consequences. Controversy has been actively sought by juxtaposing inflammatory contestants with diametrically opposed views. In 2014 it became Ofcom's most complained-about show of the year, with 3,784 complaints, mainly centring on the behaviour and bullying tactics of its eventual winner. This makes it an interesting case study for debates around audience effects theories. Does the show's representations of relationships and group interaction reflect, construct, condone or normalise anti-social or coercive behaviour? What pleasures, uses and gratifications or reception theories does it offer audiences? To quote the show: you decide.

Series Finale

Despite following *Big Brother* faithfully throughout its first five years in the interests of – er – media research (and my own guilty pleasures), I ceased to be a devotee some years back, and



the switch to Channel 5 turned me off forever. After Day Two of *Celebrity Big Brother* 2017 I turned it off for good – until the series finale featuring the final evictions, as ever in full pantomime mode, with everyone’s ‘best bits’, the mandatory cheers and boos, the gossip inquisition, the replayed catfights and tears. That formula has changed very little over the years. Because even as a *Big Brother*-refuser, sceptical and often repulsed, I am still transfixed by the success of the format and what it tells me about the changes and evolution

of our media landscape. And if you’re looking for a television research project, or a new way of thinking about genre, or even a debate about audience pleasures or theories of consumption and spectatorship, I challenge you to find a more useful case study.

You have been evicted from the *Big Brother* house. You have 30 seconds to say your goodbyes...

Jenny Grahame is editor of *MediaMagazine*.





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