

# Bridging Gaps:

**Where is the film scholar in Hollywood filmmaking?**

March 17-19, 2017  
University of Southern California  
Los Angeles, USA

**Conference Program**

**cmcs**  
Centre for Media & Celebrity Studies

 **ESI.CORE**  
Centre for  
Ecological, Social & Informatics  
Cognitive Research

**WH**  
WATERHILL  
PUBLISHING

**Celebrity**  
**hat**

# Bridging Gaps:

## Where is the film scholar in Hollywood Filmmaking?

There have been significant debates on gaps between filmmakers and film scholars. Film scholars have been critical of dominant representations that tend to overlook classist, sexist, and ethnocentric trends in the production of films and glamorous images in Hollywood. Yet, scholarly views in academic writing are not adequately addressed in film production and in journalism. Scholars can address the issues through journalism and moving image practices in which filmmakers are trained. CMCS sponsored *Celebrity Chat* is an example of this trend. Can a new form of film 'critic' be situated in journalistic and scholarly discussions and screenings? Can the critiques become a new form of 'activism' that is different yet supports ideals of celebrity activism in Hollywood and beyond?

The Centre for Media and Celebrity Studies (CMCS) *Bridging Gaps* conference, in association with sponsors Centre for Ecological, Social, and Informatics Cognitive Research (ESI.CORE) and WaterHill Publishing, presents papers and audiovisual material that explore the relationship among four key themes related to Hollywood – theory, production, criticism, and activism. We invite academics, filmmakers, journalists, publicists, and guests to present and connect cutting-edge research areas from a range of interdisciplinary fields and address social justice issues in moving image practices. Extended versions of selected papers will be invited for publication.

## Celebrity Chat Screening

Celebrity Chat is a series on the CMCS YouTube channel, which is based on scholarly discussions on celebrity culture. We will be screening the winning Celebrity Chat video at the conference. The top video will win a \$100 CMCS screen award. There will also be an opportunity for delegates to record their own Celebrity Chat videos while at the conference. For further details on Celebrity Chat please read here - <http://cmc-centre.com/celebritychat/>

**Conference Chair:** Samita Nandy

Special thanks to Nicole Bojko, Kiera Obbard and Jackie Raphael for the conference organization and editorial reviews.

	<b>DAY 1: Friday, 17 March 2017</b>
7:00 – 9:00pm	<p><b>Pre-conference meet and greet (cash bar) at the gLance Lobby Bar, located on the lobby level of JW Marriott Los Angeles at L.A. LIVE.</b></p> <p><b>900 West Olympic Boulevard</b></p> <p><b>Los Angeles, California 90015</b></p> <p><b>Phone: 213-216-3390</b></p> <p>Hosted by Samita Nandy.</p>

	<b>DAY 2: Saturday, March 18, 2017</b>
8:00 – 8:45am	<b>Registration</b>
8:45 – 9:00am	<p><b>Introductory Remarks</b></p> <p>Samita Nandy</p>
9:00 – 9:45am	<p><b>Keynote Speaker</b></p> <p>Nancy Yuen</p>
9:45 – 10:00am	Q / A
10:00 – 10:15am	<b>Tea and Coffee Break (catered)</b>
<b>Session 2A</b> – Session Chair: Jennifer Clark	
10:15 – 10:30am	<p><b>Reinventing American Film Criticism</b></p> <p><i>Walter Metz</i></p> <p>In order to get filmmakers, audiences, and academics talking to each other more productively, I propose that we dismantle the imagined institutional boundaries between academic and mass media journalistic film criticism. Both sectors should demand that our criticism find a middle ground, one which both forces journalists to say something new and interesting about</p>

	<p>the cinema and its relationship to the world, yet also presses academic approaches to be less filled with jargon and obfuscation. In my presentation, I will explore a case study of a film by a very popular Hollywood filmmaker, Christopher Nolan. <i>The Prestige</i> (2006) is caught in the crosshairs of Walter Benjamin's famous essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936). Our 21st century American civilization, baffled by the contradiction between the benefits and horrors of technological modernity, is in desperate need of both popular art such as <i>The Prestige</i> and the thoughtful criticism that Benjamin provided Weimar Germany, writing for a popular newspaper, <i>Frankfurter Zeitung</i>. If one reads today's popular journalistic reviews of Nolan's film, there is no trace of such engagement. We are in need of a re-invented film criticism, imbued with historical and theoretical ideas, housed in comprehensible and direct writing. It's time we start training journalists to write with greater theoretical and critical rigor, and academics to write with comprehensibility as a central goal. If we accomplish both tasks, it will become clear that they are one and the same.</p>
<p>10:30 – 10:45am</p>	<p><b>Beyond Screenings: Film Festivals and Diversity</b></p> <p><i>Marie-Therese Antony</i></p> <p>The public debate about the 2016 Oscar nominations, and the realization that #oscarssowhite should actually be #hollywoodsowhite, raised an important question about diversity in film: At what point in the process of filmmaking can we as scholars or filmmakers create more equity and inclusion?</p> <p>It is in this larger debate that I want to situate my paper about the diversity politics of the Sundance Film Festival, in particular the labs and workshops promoted as the space for unheard voices in American Independent film. I would like to demonstrate that the labs and workshops offered by the Sundance Institute represent an institutional intervention to actively seek out the content that is missing. It is therefore important to ask what kind of diversity is supported at the Sundance Institute and if this mentorship offers opportunities for the translation of symbolic value to economic value for the supported artists. Furthermore, it is necessary to explore the relationship between Hollywood, Sundance and diversity politics situated in this space of Independent film to understand the support as a form of institutionalized activism and thus part of the governmentalization of social causes as criticized by Foucault. By looking at who is included as diverse filmmakers, I propose that the labs and workshops are nevertheless an intervention to improve equity and inclusion, making content production rather than the screenings the essential act of institutional activism, changing who tells the stories we see on the screen and how we as a diverse society are represented on the screen.</p>
<p>10:45 – 11:00am</p>	<p><b>Twisting Fate in 'Rosemary's Baby': Cassavetes/Polanski Interface as Hollywood Influence</b></p> <p><i>Ian Dixon</i></p> <p>From the 1950s to the 1980s, John Cassavetes was a Hollywood actor with a mission: to challenge cinematic art by generating enduring performance authenticity for the ('accidental') advancement of film art (Fine, 2006). While critics and filmmakers still venerate, indeed 'hero-</p>

	<p>worship', Cassavetes as the 'spiritual father' of American independent cinema, they generally elide his primary connection to the economic and artistic forces of Hollywood mainstream (Carney 2001, p. 527; Martin 2007; Ventura 2007, p. 20). This paper seeks to redress that misunderstanding and build upon Kouvaros' (2004) argument, in stating that Cassavetes' art was not opposed to, but a disquieting adjunct to the Hollywood machinery. By exemplifying the actor-director's legendary clash with Roman Polanski on 'Rosemary's Baby' (1968), through Leo Braudy's (1977) axiom for 'Open' and 'Closed' filmmaking, Cassavetes can be seen to operate within the Hollywood system to augment and even subvert it in the way he understood human experience – from within – while remaining wedded to its benefits. Thus, Cassavetes resisted the 'destiny-locked' plot of the thriller-horror form by contributing to one of Hollywood's most enduring (and fraught) classics: 'Rosemary's Baby'. The paper thus demonstrates how Cassavetes changed Hollywood and how Hollywood filmmaking continues to plunder the rich history of Cassavetes' cinema to augment and extend the New Hollywood.</p>
11:00 – 11:15am	Q / A
<p><b>Session 2B</b> – Session Chair: Samita Nandy</p>	
11:15 – 11:30am	<p><b>The Actress as Activist: Subversion of a Century of Hollywood Misogyny in Three Modes</b></p> <p>Kerry McElroy</p> <p>The question of how and where to situate social justice activism in film studies is a timely one, and one that is central to my methodology as feminist film historian. I have endeavored within my scholarship to do both memoir mining and oral history interviews with women in Hollywood (largely, actresses) as a type of reclamatory social justice historiography. The ethos to moving such texts in women's own words to centrality is to correct the historical record in relation to the gender imbalances and exploitations baked into patriarchal-capitalist Hollywood, from its inception. Within this approach, I am able to recast the system-critical filmic industry woman as internal, subversive activist-critic- and women's writings on the exploitations of filmic systems as, themselves, social justice texts.</p> <p>In this paper, I propose the actress or filmic woman as system-critical activist both in the historical and contemporary modes, through three types of texts I analyse via close reading or have undertaken in my own research – memoir, oral history interview, and fictional text. Firstly, I situate the actress as activist and corrector of the historiographic record by analysing the critical writings of Louise Brooks. Secondly, I give voice to the actress as witness and complainant by reading both oral history interviews I have conducted with Hollywood women and the records of the Bill Cosby interviews and depositions. Finally, I show a common revisionist thread with a third type of actress text, actress poetry about the system's exploitations in Amber Tamblyn's <i>Dark Sparkler</i> (2015).</p>

11:30 – 11:45am	<p><b>The Limits of Exceptional Women: Reframing the Rhetoric Around Women Directors</b></p> <p><i>Alicia Kozma</i></p> <p>There is little doubt that Hollywood’s record of gender parity in behind-the-screen hiring and employment is dismal. While gender diversity lags in all areas of production, the role of the director has been particularly highlighted in academic and popular writing as the standout example of this failure. From wide ranging studies like those at San Diego State’s Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, to USC’s Media, Diversity &amp; Social Change Initiative, to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s investigation into Hollywood’s directorial hiring practices, issues of women’s labor, film, and directorship dominates contemporary narratives around production, criticism, and activism. Therefore, this presentation asks how a change in the rhetoric around women directors could provide generative progress toward rectifying this issue. Specifically, I posit that moving away from the rhetorical paradigm of the ‘exceptional woman’—the idea that women filmmakers are positioned as exceptions to the rule of male dominance in directing, which thereby conveys aspirational status for present and future female directors while simultaneously de-normalizing the very concept of women directors—could provide generative progress toward rectifying gender disparity in Hollywood. As such, this presentation makes the case for the mobilization of expanded archival knowledge, women’s historical role as directors, and a move away from exceptionalism and tokenism in writing around women directors as one solution to Hollywood’s ever worsening gender disparity in hiring and employment.</p>
11:45 – 12:00pm	Q/A
12:00 – 1:30pm	<b>Lunch Break</b>
<p><b>Session 2C</b> – Session Chair: Ian Dixon</p>	
1:30 – 1:45 pm	<p><b>When the Revolution Comes: Mary C. McCall and the Future of Hollywood’s Screenwriting Women</b></p> <p><i>J.E. Smyth</i></p> <p>Film historians, critics, fans, and even screenwriters are often stunned when I tell them the first female head of the Screen Writers Guild was elected in 1942 and was the woman most responsible for getting screenwriters their first union contract with the producers, obtaining a minimum wage, and regular pay raises during the war. They are even more stunned when told a quarter of women made up guild membership in the 1930s and that even today, women’s equality initiatives have tabulated women’s representation in the screenwriting profession at under 25%. If the real gains for women’s equality in screenwriting were made eighty years ago under the studio system, what does this say about the current state of Hollywood? This paper looks at my recent efforts as an archival film historian to revise historical knowledge of Hollywood writers in the studio era and to connect McCall’s experience and marginalization at</p>

	the hands of critics, historians, and even filmmakers to wider contemporary discussions about women’s representation and creative control in the industry.
<b>1:45 – 2:00pm</b>	<p><b>The Invisible Ones: What the Life and Work of an Austrian-Jewish Female Exile Scriptwriters in the Hollywood of the 1940s and 1940s Can Teach Us</b></p> <p><i>Regina Range</i></p> <p>This presentation argues that the Austrian-Jewish exile novelist and screenwriter Gina Kaus (1893 – 1985) offers a case study for social justice issues in the moving image practice. Taking a closer look at the life and works of one of the few female scriptwriters in Hollywood during the 1940s provides a way to link theory, production, criticism, and activism. The example of scriptwriter Gina Kaus gives insight into the way in which this female scriptwriter successfully managed to pursue her feminist endeavors, despite Hollywood’s rigid production codes. It offers insight into her agency in undermining dominant perceptions, especially in regard to the understanding of “inherent” gender roles. Kaus’ scriptwriting and choice of topics becomes a site of agency – even within the restrictive Hollywood apparatus and environment of the 1940s and 1950s. Moreover, the discussion offers an opportunity to reflect on the continuing marginalization of female scriptwriters in Hollywood today. Additionally, this presentation seeks to increase the visibility of the émigré Gina Kaus as a scriptwriter, thus drawing attention to a part of her life and work that literary scholars (both German and American Studies scholars) have long ignored and undervalued. Furthermore, the discussion aims to encourage an incorporation of the film script, a widely understudied text form, into the teaching and discussion of film in literary, cultural, and film studies. The focus on Kaus’ film work demonstrates that both literary and film studies would benefit greatly from examining the screenplay as a textual form, and from investigating the role of the screenwriter in the overall production process. Currently, the absence and continuous ignorance of such methods of analysis greatly contributes to the marginalized position of this textual form and its authors. Finally, the presentation draws attention to the collaborative nature of scriptwriting and the various stages of scripts in and of themselves, arguing that the practice of scriptwriting in the overall production process still needs more scholarly and journalistic attention to their entirety and complexity.</p>
2:00 – 2:15pm	Q / A
2:15 – 2:30pm	<b>Tea and Coffee Break (catered)</b>
<b>Session 2D – Session Chair: Sreya Mitra</b>	
2:30– 2:45pm	<p><b>History and Empire On Screen: Writing the Non-White Protagonist, a screenwriter-led intervention in diversity on screen</b></p> <p><i>Sheridan Humphreys and Funke Oyebanko</i></p> <p>Where is the film scholar in the Hollywood crisis of diversity on screen? Diversity is one of the biggest issues affecting the film industry. In this presentation, we offer an example of a</p>

	<p>university-funded public engagement project that responds to the film and television industry's problem of the lack of diversity on screen and has led to the creation of eight original screenplays, all historical dramas based loosely on true stories, and all with non-white protagonists. History and Empire On Screen: Writing the Non-White Protagonist is a writer-led public engagement project, funded by the AHRC and King's College London, and supported by the Cultural Institute at King's and the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies. Black lead characters in historical dramas are rare. Name one. Name two...But what if suddenly every spec script in this genre had a black protagonist? What if these scripts were in fact based on historical fact, true stories that through a particular view of history/empire/nationhood have somehow fallen off the national narrative? For example, we know that there were thousands of Black people living in eighteenth century Britain, yet why is their presence absent from historical dramas? Why do we never see their stories on the small screen and big screen? In this presentation we will discuss how we write and teach, exploring ideas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does one create characters excluded by history and how does one re-insert them credibly into mainstream history and into the screenplay?</li> <li>• How do you research a character who comes from a culture that does not have a written history tradition? First Nations people, for example.</li> <li>• How do you make a character without agency into a hero/heroine?</li> </ul>
2:45 – 3:00pm	<p><b>“Just Like Everyone Else”? Representations of South Asians on the U.S. Screen</b></p> <p><i>Bhoomi Thakore</i></p> <p>How does the media influence society? How do media representations of South Asians, as racial and ethnic minorities, perpetuate stereotypes about this group? How do advancements in visual media, from creative storytelling to streaming technology, inform changing dynamics of all non-white media representations in the 21st century? Analyzing audience perceptions of South Asian characters from The Simpsons, Slumdog Millionaire, Harold and Kumar, The Office, Parks and Recreation, The Big Bang Theory, Outsourced, and many others, I argue for the importance of understanding these representations as they influence the positioning of South Asians into the 21st century U.S. racial hierarchy. On one hand, increased acceptance of this group into the entertainment fold has informed audience perceptions of these characters as “just like everyone else.” However, these images remain secondary on the U.S. Screen, and are limited in their ability to break out of traditional stereotypes. As a result, a normative and assimilated white American identity is privileged both on the Screen, and in our increasingly multicultural society.</p>



**Session 2E – Session Chair: Jing Wang**

3:00 – 3:15pm

**Hollywood on the Nile Redux**

*Iman Hamam*

Hollywood blockbusters have been accused of propagating images of Arabs as threatening “brute murderers, sleazy rapists, religious fanatics, oil-rich dimwits, and abusers of women” (Shaheen 172). Documentary filmmakers have critiqued these stereotypes by examining their historical roots (see Planet of the Arabs (Jackie Salloum, 2005), Hollywood Harem (Tania Kamaledin, 1999), and Valentino's Ghost (Michael Singh, 2012). Most agree that these films act as ambassadors of Hollywood - and by extension American ideals. This ongoing debate can be coupled with another, related to the whitewashing of Arab characters. Looking at recent news items about Hollywood stars who were born in the Middle East or who are of Middle Eastern origin and the recent celebration of Mr. Robot performer Ramy Malek (a 21st century Omar Sharif, perhaps), I would like to ask whether the inclusion of Arab performers and actors validates or undermines the Hollywood aesthetic and ideology. Following the announcement (later retracted) that Leonardo Dicaprio would be performing the role Jalaluddin al Rumi, a series of photographs were released which A-class Hollywood celebrities were refashioned as "typical" Egyptian people - wearing traditional headdress or baking traditional bread. These images seemed to counter objections to Hollywood stereotypes by placing celebrities in an Egyptian context familiar to local Egyptian audiences. While most critiques of these stereotypes highlight the negative impact of stereotypes on western audiences, what is the impact of these images on Arab audiences? How might film scholars and performers frame their understanding of Arabs, first, by putting into consideration the ways in which stereotypes have been appropriated in Egyptian cinema; and second, by looking at these images in the context of Saudi and Emirates based satellite channels that air subtitled Hollywood blockbusters to Arabic speaking audiences. Furthermore, to what extent has the Hollywood model of production, distribution, fandom and celebrity culture been mimicked by local industries?

3:15 – 3:30pm

**Entertainment-Education for Social Change through Filmmaking: A Proposal for Baseball Participation among African-American Youth in the Inner Cities**

*Herman Howard*

This proposal is for a new entertainment-education film initiative to encourage African-American youth to participate in organized baseball. A new educational program targeted for minority youth will be proposed through filmmaking. The purpose of this plan is to provide and design an entertainment-education proposal through film to encourage more African-Americans to participate in youth baseball in the inner cities. It will also incorporate an aggressive media and community campaign to encourage African-American boys and girls to play baseball for improved health and social benefits. For this study, the major research

	<p>question is, "How can the theory of Entertainment-Education through film are best incorporated to encourage more participation among African-American youth to play baseball?" Entertainment-Education was designed by the late Communication scholar Dr. Everett Rogers as, "the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message both to entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members' knowledge about an educational issue, create favorable attitudes and change overt behavior" (1999, p.9). With this endeavor, the expected outcome is that African-American youth will be encouraged to play baseball as a result of watching the baseball programs through new and innovated filmmaking. The goals of this proposed entertainment-education program are to do the following: 1) keep the youth from participating in illegal summer activities such as drugs, violence or gangs; 2) offer a new method of positive communication with parents; 3) improved physical health through exercise and; 4) to develop new friendships with teammates, opposing players and parents.</p>
3:30 – 3:45pm	Q / A
3:45 – 5:15pm	<p><b>Scholars as Critics: CMCS Media &amp; Career Workshop</b></p> <p>Nancy Yuen, Vanessa Diaz, and Kevin Del Principe</p>
5:15pm	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p> <p>Samita Nandy</p>
6:30pm	<p><b>Drinks, food, and trivia game. Your first drink is free!</b></p> <p><b>Pig N' Whistle Pub</b></p> <p><b>6714 Hollywood Blvd.</b></p> <p><b>Los Angeles, CA 90028</b></p> <p><b>Telephone: (323) 463-0000</b></p>

	<b>DAY 3: Sunday, March 19, 2017</b>
8:45 – 8:50am	<b>Introductory Remarks</b> Samita Nandy
<b>Roundtable – Session Chair: Samita Nandy</b>	
8:50 – 9:20am	<p><b>Roundtable - Twisting Fate: John Cassavetes as Hollywood Influence</b></p> <p><i>Ian Dixon</i></p> <p>John Cassavetes worked within and on the periphery of Hollywood as an actor, director and screenwriter from the 1950s to the 1980s. During this period, Cassavetes vigilantly espoused non-Hollywood processes in theme, performance codification and film production. Indeed, as a television star from such shows as Johnny Staccato (1959), Cassavetes used his celebrity influence to advocate for change within industry and morality. His films embraced women's rights and ethical positioning on the objectification of women (Faces (1968); A Woman Under the Influence (1974); Opening Night (1977)). The filmmaker advocated for animal rights in his eccentric depiction of sibling relationships in Love Streams (1984). His cinematic treatment of otherwise functional 'weepy' themes, such as mental illness in A Woman Under the Influence or the trauma of institutionalizing spectrum disorder children in A Child is Waiting (1963) defied format-written screenplays. Thus, Cassavetes ensured his films, whether indie or studio-based, were rehearsed, performed, shot and edited in subversive manner. Indeed, Cassavetes' famous contribution to Roman Polanski's lovemaking scene in Rosemary's Baby (1968) (by disrobing while wriggling on his back awkwardly rather than pandering to Hollywood clichés of sensuality) critiqued sexist depictions of intimacy in the entertainment industry.</p> <p>How can we respond to Cassavetes' textual interpretations through inventive subversions while observing genre and entertainment principles? Most importantly, the workshop illustrates that Cassavetes' methodology rose from practice with disdain for purely theoretical approaches. This current workshop provides an overview of how Cassavetes renders his cinematic art: employing ebullient 'play' as advocacy for change. Through practical performance and text-generating exercises, this workshop is therefore designed to honor Cassavetes by making film theory relevant to contemporary practice. The workshop cements gaps between filmmakers and film scholars, by exemplifying the relevance of both. Building on my Cassavetes-Chekhov workshop from Sapianza University, Italy in 2013 (published through Common GroundPress, USA), this current workshop embraces all four conference themes: theory, production, criticism, and activism.</p>

**Session 3A** – Session Chair: Iman Hamam

9:20 – 9:35am

**Viewing the Virtual Rez: The Spatial Representation of Cultural Memory and Historical Trauma in Native Cinema**

*Summer Sutton*

Film acts as the ideal medium with which to bring a person into an alternative world experience, as cinematography allows a filmmaker to imbue the visual presentation of a plot with perceptual cues unique to the protagonist's state of mind. This paper will in turn focus on contemporary Native American cinema and argue that contemporary native directors are using the visual capabilities of film as a medium to refute the gross stereotypes of natives found in early Hollywood film by troubling Western ideas of time and space. My argument will focus on the techniques native filmmakers employ to visually present a relationship to time and space particular to native culture, specifically by considering how they play with the common use of the screen space as representative of the present moment in incorporating seemingly unreal elements (i.e. outside of the ostensible plot), that represent either cultural memory or historical trauma, into their protagonist's experience of the present. Further, I will extend upon Michelle Raheja's concept of the virtual reservation by demonstrating how film, as a virtual experience of life, can incorporate visual representations of cultural knowledges into narratives that are intangible in reality. To support my arguments, I will be look at two films, Rhymes for Young Ghouls and It Starts with a Whisper, and ultimately argue that both films' experimental presentations of time as non-linear work to demonstrate how the past, particularly one involving transgenerational trauma, is not a stable entity left behind but rather an active force that constantly influences the present.

9:35 – 9:50am

**Refuse, resist, exist: "Aquarius" and the cinema of resistance in Brazil**

*Susan Liesenberg and Camilla Barbosa*

The article reflects on the transversal impacts of the reception to the film "Aquarius"(MENDONÇA, 2016). The script presents a female lead, from the middle class, who is an independent woman, idiosyncratic (not completely good or bad), and who is resisting the status quo when she fights to preserve her "vertical island" (her apartment in an old building, "Aquarius", by the seashore on a capital city in the Brazilian northeast). She is trying to prevent the expropriation of the building which is facing real estate speculation. The focus of the discussion falls on a narrative that points to several tension sources in contemporary Brazil such as: a) the political context (the impeachment of the then president, led by political maneuverings and influenced by the media, and considered to be a coup d'état), b) the social context (a woman as head of the household, the role of ageing, the condemnation of values such as owning property and obtaining profit), c) the economic context (showing the corruption and dishonesty in a violent and unequal country), and d) the media context (showing all the camaraderie and protectionism on the domain of information, as well as the repercussions of the movie both locally and internationally). The film converges to the neuralgic point of the historical moment when it was released. All of the elements here cited

	are understood as agents articulated with activism – both in film production and in the critic arising from “Aquarius” – by its meaning and its social representations and self-reflexive provocation.
9:50 – 10:05am	Q / A
<b>Session 3B</b> – Session Chair: Samita Nandy	
10:05 – 10:20am	<p><b>From Bollywood heroine to ‘cross-continental glamour icon’: Priyanka Chopra and the shifting trajectories of (global) Bollywood stardom</b></p> <p><i>Sreya Mitra</i></p> <p>For a star-driven industry like the Bombay film industry, the star occupies a role similar to that of genre in Hollywood cinema, dominating almost all realms of the cinematic idiom, from its economic structuring to its textual and narrative conventions. (Majumdar, 2009) The stars’ pivotal role has become all the more relevant in the context of India’s transition from a socialist economy to a consumerist model, following the economic liberalization policies of the nineties, and the accompanying shifts in the Indian mediascape. With the increasing synergy between film, television, and digital media, the Hindi film star now straddles multiple platforms, effortlessly essaying the varied roles of a cinematic idol, a television personality, and a transmedia celebrity. This paper attempts to analyze not only the changing discourses of contemporary Bollywood stardom, but also, recent shifts in the Bombay film industry and its response to the globalization of the national (and cinematic) imaginary. Employing a detailed analysis of Bollywood star, Priyanka Chopra’s recent crossover stardom as ‘Alex Parrish,’ the protagonist of the ABC primetime show, <i>Quantico</i> (2015 – ), I explore the shifts in contemporary Hindi film stardom. As the first South Asian actor to headline an American network show, Chopra’s foray into mainstream American media and popular culture offers an interesting glimpse into the changing media landscape of the Bombay film industry. Though not the first Bollywood star to lay claim to a transnational stardom, Chopra’s commercial success and critical acclaim underline the Hindi film star’s attempts at forging an international/transnational stardom and consequently, redefining the hegemonic norms and conventions of Bollywood stardom.</p>
10:20 – 10:35am	<p><b>The possibility of transnationalism in cinema between Hollywood and China: Ang Lee’s film as an example</b></p> <p><i>Lixin Wang</i></p> <p>As a famous Taiwanese-born American film director, screenwriter and producer. Ang Lee 李安’s professional career is so successful both in Hollywood and in China, that the director himself in some degree became a cultural symbol of Chinese film circle. Ang Lee 李安’s contribution of cinema, including to skillfully deal with the Eastern and</p>

	<p>Western's traditional ethical or ideological topics ,such as Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Sense and Sensibility, Lust, Caution, etc. with a special aesthetic style meet the cultural imaginary both sides. 2016 Ang Lee 李安's new film Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk arise the public attention as usual, because the film focus on a revolutionary technological development in the film industry. Within the field of film industry in the 21th Century, the transnationalism in cinema have a important role in culturally significant and cultural exchanges among different countries. Ang Lee 李安's film is a prominent sample In terms of transnationalism. This essay aims to map some of the reasons for Ang Lee 李安's film successful in the cultural contexts, while also pointing towards new interventions and theoretical perspectives about the possibility of transnationalism in filmmaking between Hollywood and China.</p>
10:35 – 10:50am	Q / A
10:50 – 11:00am	<b>Tea and Coffee Break (catered)</b>
<p><b>Session 3C</b> – Session Chair: Susan J. Eddington</p>	
11:00 – 11:15am	<p><b>Towards an aesthetic of online video</b></p> <p><i>Bernardo Palau</i></p> <p>Since the birth of sound movies, film language had been limited to certain aesthetic resources that television adopted without major changes to the extent of their formal possibilities. However, with the advent of online video, film language has grown considerably, expanding its expressive resources and even altering some aesthetic principles held since the beginning of cinema. The definitive consolidation of digital video as a recording format, the massification of smartphones, the use of applications that use smartphone's video camera, and the multiple sites that allow users to share their own creations, have been the main responsible for the birth of this new visual language, characterized by an 'amateur aesthetic' which conveys the low production values that generates it, breaks the traditional aspect ratios used in film and television, use presetted effects from apps, and transforms the interaction with the viewer in a radical way through an interface interconnected with other content. Understanding the elements of film language in the era of online video is a necessary effort, especially considering that the millennial generation, which is the main consumer of this kind of content, may well permeate film and television production with this aesthetic in the near future.</p>

11:15 - 11:30am	<p><b>Branding celebrity: documentary film as self-promotion</b></p> <p><i>Kristen Fuhs</i></p> <p>How do we reconcile documentary objectivity with the project of star-building? What are the complications inherent to documenting a living subject, especially one whose actual story may be incompatible with his public brand? This paper will explore the porous line between self-revelation and self-promotion through the case study of <i>Brand: a Second Coming</i> (Ondi Timoner, 2015). On the one hand, this documentary is a straight-forward portrait of comedian Russell Brand's journey to refashion his public image from the merry prankster who was once Mr. Katy Perry to a serious public intellectual who wants to use his fame to combat social inequality. On the other hand, the fraught production and distribution of this documentary highlight many of the inherent tensions that accompany investigations of famous, living subjects. Brand's vocal disapproval of the final cut of the film sparked a number of problems, many of which speak to the stakes – ethical, political, financial – of documenting a subject whose interests for the film may not align with those of the filmmaker. Like other recent documentaries in which public figures attempt (more or less successfully) to rewrite their scandal-plagued images through documentary (Tyson, <i>The Armstrong Lie</i>, Weiner), <i>Brand: a Second Coming</i> shows how stars use the cultural cache of documentary to legitimize as authentic a rebranded public image. This paper will look at this tendency in contemporary documentary, while exploring what this means for how filmmakers and audiences come to draw the line between the project of documentary representation and the business of publicity.</p>
11:30 - 11:45am	Q / A
<p><b>Session 3C</b> – Session Chair: Samita Nandy</p>	
11:45 – 12:00pm	<p><b>Chinese Stars in Hollywood Films: A New Stereotype</b></p> <p><i>Jing Wang</i></p> <p>Chinese images have always been a complex existence to Hollywood films. Over the past decades, representative Chinese roles and cultural elements in Hollywood films have transformed from mostly negative and disliked figures and strange oriental myths to dominant Kongfu masters and traditional fashions, till most recently to an image of China as an advanced country thanks to the participation of more and more young, good-looking Chinese stars picturing China as dynamic and modern. Commercial motivations include the huge potential in market, investments and cooperation with Chinese companies. Hollywood blockbusters take advantage of hiring popular Chinese stars in exchange of a box office guarantee. This prosperous economy to a large extent forges an unreal look of Chinese culture that overshadows the true and crucial inner core. My essay intends to argue that this recent portrayal of China in Hollywood films is indeed a new stereotype imposed upon Chinese culture. The stardom brought along is as a matter of fact functioning politically rather than artistically. Chinese media tends to overlook the cultural defects of this dominant positivism.</p>

	<p>Meanwhile, film scholars often neglect this study or consider it as a mere commercial matter. Furthermore I intend to argue that this stereotyped image and stars represents the conformity of native Chinese culture towards the US centered culture, therefore causes a great loss in establishing an authentic Chinese identity on screen</p>
12:00 – 12:15pm	<p><b><i>Does Chinese Film Industry Foresee a New Hollywood Era?</i></b>  <b><i>Myths of Celebrity Activism and Post-90s, Cases in China</i></b>  <i>Yuxiao Li</i></p> <p>As the new consumer group, born after 1990 who are called post-90, coming up to be the dominant buyers of entertainment products, there appears more and more fan-movies, starring hot stardom and achieving huge success in box office. Jingming Guo, a novel writer without any professional train and experience in film-making, selected by the sponsors as the director to adapted his own works into a 4-volume series movie, which won almost 26,353,210 dollars. It has nothing to do with his talent in film-making, since he has been received plenty of criticism towards the incoherent plots and random narrative, but to do with the support coming from those stars' followers. Those amateurish filmmaker undoubtedly stretched the gap between film-making and scholarly views. To analyze this phenomenon, the thesis will develop from four perspectives: the changed characteristics of the post-90, the film function and genre, cinematic adaptations of novels, and the relationship among celebrity, fans and the entertainment industry. The fan movies could keep being popular as long as there is an energetic consumer group. In the products market, there always are products selling for a higher price than its real value, but its booming could take too much resources from others.</p>
12:15 – 12:30pm	Q / A
12:30 – 2:00pm	<b>Lunch Break</b>
<b>Session 3D – Session Chair: Kristen Fuhs</b>	
2:00 – 2:15pm	<p><b>The Cultural Influence of Media Representations: For Better or Worse</b>  <i>Susan J. Eddington</i></p> <p>In our increasingly segregated society the most common media portrayals of members of minority groups (Allport, 1954/1979; Tajfel &amp; Turner, 1979) affect the attitudes and opinions members of the majority group hold towards the minority groups when there is little direct social contact. Evidence has shown that particularly for White audience members, their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors are influenced by “the limited and often stereotypical</p>



	<p>representations of race and ethnicity” as characterized in media (Dixon, 2008, p. 18). Equally important is the fact that the self-concept of minority group members could also be affected by media representations (Tukachinsky, Mastro, &amp; Yarchi, 2015, p. 18). Studies of representations have consistently shown that African Americans are the only minority group seen on primetime television as leading or supporting characters in numbers that correlate with their percentage of the overall population. However, most of these characters are clustered in situation comedies. I will present an argument for a potentially fruitful collaboration between media psychologists and those who make films and television programs, including producers, screenwriters and directors. Such a collaboration could yield greater diversification in the stories told, more realism in character on screen behavior, and stories that reveal the breadth and depth of the lives of racial and ethnic minorities as opposed to relying on stereotypes.</p>
2:15 – 2:30pm	<p><b>Feminist Borers from Within: Activism in the 1970s Television Workplace</b></p> <p><i>Jennifer S. Clark</i></p> <p>When academics lament the lack of activism within media industries modelled upon U.S. film studios, contemporary media conglomerates, and commercial television, we assume unbridged divisions between sound ideological investments and profit-driven media organizations. While certainly well-founded in myriad industry practices and representational outcomes of those practices, this position overlooks moments when critically-informed and politically-minded influences actually make their way into mainstream media industries. To temper assumptions about the impossibilities of critical awareness in commercial media and to provide a template for how future progress could be made, I propose turning to historical moments when activist industry workers brought to the workplace ideas about how to revolutionize their respective industries. To illustrate how workplace practices bridged divisions between profit-driven media, including but not limited to Hollywood, and activist perspectives and provided political pressures from within rather than without the industry, I look to the emergence of women’s groups at television networks during the 1970s. This media-specific approach suggests how organizing did happen outside of the relatively precarious labor practices of post-studio era Hollywood and how the television industry offered alternatives to Hollywood’s top-down relationships between management and workers. Based on archival research and interviews with women involved in these groups, my work traces the formation of employee groups at all three networks, their personal experiences in transforming their work lives, and their collective political actions. These groups agitated for meaningful improvements in workplaces practices, in hiring politics, in the education of peers and superiors, and in the articulation of an explicitly feminist culture of ethics. While I include all three networks in this analysis, I focus particularly on the CBS Women and President Arthur Taylor, as they proved the most successful in their cooperative efforts to introduce feminist politics into their New York City headquarters. They inaugurated at the network educational programs, consciousness raising training, maternity and paternity leaves, health care policies for women, and paid work leaves for social justice endeavors.</p>
2:30 – 2:45pm	Q / A
2:45 – 3:00pm	<b>Tea and Coffee Break (catered)</b>

**Roundtable** – Session Chair: Samita Nandy

3:00 – 3:30pm	<p><b>Roundtable: Youth as the Bridge: Teaching Media Production and Media Literacy to the Makers of Tomorrow</b></p> <p><i>Miranda Banks, Ellen Seiter</i></p> <p>Four scholars with deep roots in youth and media, girl culture, and gender and media production examine bridging connections of industry and academia and teaching future filmmakers. Mary Kearney explores girls and young women mobilizing media production as activism. Alison Trope’s Critical Media Project is a media literacy initiative. CMP raises critical awareness around media representations of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class, giving teachers and students tools to decode the media, tell their own stories, and create their own representations. The site is built primarily by undergraduates at USC most of whom are students who plan to enter the media industries on graduation. In the process of developing content, they learning about the kind of media that makes a difference in the lives of youth. Miranda Banks discusses her study of “Pre-Industry”students and tackling the race and gender disparities in student films--so that students do not mirror industry biases. Ellen Seiter is an expert in media for youth and young people making media. Her insight on the legal rights of creative artists in the neoliberal economy provides a fascinating lens from which to bridge the interactions of students, scholars, and makers. This roundtable considers how film faculty can counter biases and support inclusivity using playful interventions, community-building exercise, and creative reflections. Across the country, college students are calling for an end to institutional racism. How can we inspire students interested in joining media industries to counter patterns of discrimination and make transformative change in their communities and careers?</p>
3:30– 5:00pm	<p><b>Gap Bridging Activity</b></p>
5:00 – 5:15pm	<p><b>Best Paper Award and Closing Remarks</b></p> <p>Samita Nandy</p>

## **Authors**

*Alicia Kozma*

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA

*Bernardo Palau*

Film director and producer, Professor, Universidad de Los Andes, Chile

*Bhoomi Thakore*

Elmhurst College, USA

*Camilla Barbosa*

Ph.D. Communication and Information, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Brazil

*Ellen Seiter*

Nenno Endowed Chair in Television Studies, USC School of Cinematic Arts, USA

*Funke Oyebanko*

Script consultant, trainer and scriptwriter, M.A. Scriptwriting, London College of Printing

*Herman Howard*

Graduate and Undergraduate Chairperson for the Department of Communication and Mass Media, Angelo State University, USA

*Ian Dixon*

SAE Institute, Australia

*Iman Hamam*

American University in Cairo, Egypt

*Jennifer S. Clark*

Assistant Professor, Fordham University, USA

*Jing Wang*

Lecturer, School of Foreign Languages and Literature, Shandong University, China

*Kevin Del Principe*

Lecturer. School of Film and Television  
Loyola Marymount University (LMU), California

*Kristen Fuhs*

Assistant Professor, Woodbury University, USA

*Lixin Wang*

Post-doctoral Researcher Associate and Professor, Chongqing Jiaotong University, China

*Marie-Therese Antony*

M.A. Candidate, New York University, USA

*Miranda Banks*  
Associate Professor, Emerson College, USA

*Nancy Yuen*  
Chair and Associate Professor  
Department of Sociology at Biola University, California

*Regina Range*  
Assistant Professor, University of Alabama, USA

*Sheridan Humphreys*  
Ph.D. Candidate, King's College London

*Summer Sutton*  
Virginia Commonwealth University, USA

*Susan J. Eddington*  
Ph.D. Candidate, Fielding Graduate University, USA

*Susan Liesenberg*  
Journalist, M.A., Communication and Information, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Brazil

*Sreya Mitra*  
Assistant Professor, American University of Sharjah, UAE

*Vanessa Diaz*  
Faculty, Department of Communication at Cal State Fullerton  
Ford Postdoctoral Fellow at University of California (UCLA ), Los Angeles

*Walter Metz*  
Professor, Southern Illinois University, USA

*Yuxiao Li*  
Shandong University, China

Selected papers will be invited to adapt their presentation into a book chapter. Further details will be emailed out in the coming months.

Please keep the conference conversation happening through #BGCS17 @celeb\_studies on Twitter.

For more information on the Centre for Media and Celebrity Studies, please check out our website <http://www.cmc-centre.com> or email us at [info@cmc-centre.com](mailto:info@cmc-centre.com)