

the iafor european conference series 2014

ecah2014 libeuro2014 euromedia2014 eurofilm2014
Official Conference Proceedings ISSN: 2188-9686

“To Open Minds, To Educate Intelligence, To Inform Decisions”

The International Academic Forum provides new perspectives to the thought-leaders and decision-makers of today and tomorrow by offering constructive environments for dialogue and interchange at the intersections of nation, culture, and discipline. Headquartered in Nagoya, Japan, and registered as a Non-Profit Organization (一般社団法人), IAFOR is an independent think tank committed to the deeper understanding of contemporary geo-political transformation, particularly in the Asia Pacific Region.

INTERNATIONAL

INTERCULTURAL

INTERDISCIPLINARY

iafor

The Executive Council of the International Advisory Board

IAB Chair: Professor Stuart D.B. Picken

IAB Vice-Chair: Professor Jerry Platt

Mr Mitsumasa Aoyama

Director; The Yufuku Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

Professor David N Aspin

Professor Emeritus and Former Dean of the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia
Visiting Fellow, St Edmund's College, Cambridge University, UK

Professor Don Brash

Former Governor of the Reserve Bank, New Zealand
Former Leader of the New National Party, New Zealand
Adjunct Professor, AUT, New Zealand & La Trobe University, Australia

Lord Charles Bruce

Patron, Japan Society of Scotland
Patron, Scottish Centre of Tagore Studies at Edinburgh Napier University
Chairman, Kolkata Scottish Heritage Trust

Professor Judith Chapman

Professor of Education, Australian Catholic University, Australia
Visiting Fellow, St Edmund's College, Cambridge University, UK
Member of the Order of Australia

Professor Chung-Ying Cheng

Professor of Philosophy, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, USA
Editor-in-Chief, The Journal of Chinese Philosophy

Professor Steve Cornwell

Professor of English and Interdisciplinary Studies, Osaka Jogakuin University, Osaka, Japan
Osaka Local Conference Chair

Professor Michael A. Cusumano

SMR Distinguished Professor of Management and Engineering Systems, MIT Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA

Professor Dexter Da Silva

Professor of Educational Psychology, Keisen University, Tokyo, Japan

Professor Georges Depeyrot

Professor and Director of Research & Member of the Board of Trustees
French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) & L'Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris, France

Professor Donald E. Hall

Herbert J. and Ann L. Siegel Dean
Lehigh University, USA

Professor June Henton

Dean, College of Human Sciences, Auburn University, USA

Professor Michael Hudson

President of The Institute for the Study of Long-Term Economic Trends (ISLET)
Distinguished Research Professor of Economics, The University of Missouri, Kansas City

Professor Koichi Iwabuchi

Professor of Media and Cultural Studies & Director of the Monash Asia Institute, Monash University, Australia

Professor Sue Jackson

Professor of Lifelong Learning and Gender & Pro-Vice Master of Teaching and Learning, Birkbeck, University of London, UK

Professor Sing Kong Lee

Director; The National Institute of Education, Singapore

Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd

Senior Scholar in Residence, The Needham Research Institute, Cambridge, UK
Fellow and Former Master, Darwin College, University of Cambridge
Fellow of the British Academy

Professor Keith Miller

Orthwein Endowed Professor for Lifelong Learning in the Science, University of Missouri-St. Louis, USA

Professor Kuniko Miyanaga

Director; Human Potential Institute, Japan
Fellow, Reischauer Institute, Harvard University, USA

Professor Dennis McInerney

Chair Professor of Educational Psychology and Co-Director of the Assessment Research Centre
The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong SAR

Professor Ka Ho Joshua Mok

Chair Professor of Comparative Policy, Associate Vice-President (External Relations)
Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong SAR

Professor Michiko Nakano

Professor of English & Director of the Distance Learning Center, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

Professor Baden Offord

Professor of Cultural Studies and Human Rights & Co-Director of the Centre for Peace and Social Justice
Southern Cross University, Australia

Professor Frank S. Ravitch

Professor of Law & Walter H. Stowers Chair in Law and Religion, Michigan State University College of Law

Professor Richard Roth

Senior Associate Dean, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University, Qatar

Professor Monty P. Satiadarma

Clinical Psychologist and Lecturer in Psychology & Former Dean of the Department of Psychology and Rector of the University, Tarumanagara University, Indonesia

Mr Mohamed Salaheen

Director; The United Nations World Food Programme, Japan & Korea

Mr Lowell Sheppard

Asia Pacific Director; HOPE International Development Agency, Canada/Japan

His Excellency Dr Drago Stambuk

Croatian Ambassador to Brazil, Brazil

Professor Mary Stuart

Vice-Chancellor; The University of Lincoln, UK

Professor Gary Swanson

Distinguished Journalist-in-Residence & Mildred S. Hansen Endowed Chair; The University of Northern Colorado, USA

Professor Jiro Takai

Secretary General of the Asian Association for Social Psychology & Professor of Social Psychology
Graduate School of Education and Human Development, Nagoya University, Japan

Professor Svetlana Ter Minasova

President of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Area Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University

Professor Yozo Yokota

Director of the Center for Human Rights Affairs, Japan
Former UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar

Professor Kensaku Yoshida

Professor of English & Director of the Center for the Teaching of Foreign Languages in General Education, Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan

The International Advisory Board is composed of distinguished academics, business executives, former and current government officials, and community leaders. Its role is to consult and provide counsel on the business and affairs of IAFOR, and suggest areas of scholarly investigation. Membership of the International Advisory Board is by invitation only. For a full list please see the IAFOR website.

The European Conference on Film and Documentary 2014

Brighton, United Kingdom

Official Conference Proceedings

ISSN: 2188-9686

© The International Academic Forum 2014
The International Academic Forum (IAFOR)
Sakae 1-16-26-201
Naka Ward, Nagoya, Aichi
Japan 460-0008
www.iafor.org

Table of Contents

<i>The Film is the Story: Story-Extension in Digital Marketing of Independent Films</i> Nico Meissner	pp. 1-10
<i>Minorities' Stereotypes in Pakistani Films</i> Bilal Khloid Abdul Fatah Daudpoto	pp. 11-26
<i>Indian Woman's Search for Identity Vis-A-Vis Mainstream Bollywood Cinema</i> Michelle Philip	pp. 27-34
<i>Showing Conflict on the Screen: Film Festivals and Cinematic Events Bridging the Gap between the Individual and the Community. Cinema and Social Function in Conflict Resolution</i> Elisa Costa-Villaverde	pp. 35-46

***The Film is the Story:
Story-Extension in Digital Marketing of Independent Films***

Nico Meissner, Multimedia University, Malaysia

The European Conference on Film & Documentary 2014
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

This article tells the story of the making of Spanish independent feature film *The Cosmonaut*. It highlights that this story was shared with the film's audience while the film was made. Therefore, so the argument, the story of *The Cosmonaut* was extended and served as the basis for the film's audience building.

The concept of story-extension acknowledges the multimedia, interactive and archiving aspects of the Internet. Independent films no longer have to be standalone products. They can be one, though often central, part of an extended filmmaking story. Related events or products allow a story to transcend the film's temporal boundaries and even the limitations of its medium.

The paper concludes that story-extension (a) helps to create communities and audiences, who (b) individually experience the making of a film and (c) view a film merely as an end product while 'watching' takes place over an extended period of time. Such ongoing storytelling allows continuous audience growth that helps the filmmaker to self-distribute.

Keywords: *The Cosmonaut*, Independent Filmmaking, Story Extension, Audience Building

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

Introduction

Independent films have always found themselves at the margins, most even completely outside of popular film culture. Traditionally, only a small number of filmmaking centers controlled film production, distribution and exhibition. Expensive production and exhibition equipment limited filmmaking to a select few.

Digital media and the Internet are often celebrated for popularizing independent filmmaking. Making and sharing films has become almost as normal as reading and writing. This has created what some have termed 'truly' independent filmmaking, with individual filmmakers not only making films but also independently distributing them to mass audiences via the Internet. Such mass publishing, however, has led to an abundant amount of available small-scale culture on the Internet (Hesmondhalgh, 2007). Findability becomes a critical problem that threatens the promises of popular independent films.

This article uses the case study of Spanish feature-length independent film *The Cosmonaut* in an attempt to make the argument that applying storytelling principles to the communication around a film and its making in today's digital age may allow formerly niche independent films to access and nurture mass audiences - therefore crossing into popular culture.

The Story of *The Cosmonaut*

The Cosmonaut is the brainchild of Nicolas Alcalá, Carla Rodríguez and Bruno Teixidor of Riot Cinema Collective in Spain. The three met at university when they studied marketing. After graduating, they worked together in advertising, doing small video projects. They had no filmmaking experience prior to making *The Cosmonaut*.

In 2008 Nicolas and Bruno discussed conspiracy theories of lost cosmonauts. These are popular fictions about the Soviets only reporting successful space flights like the one of Gagarin, but not the unsuccessful ones. These unreported unsuccessful space flights, so the conspiracy theories, would leave some Soviet cosmonauts alive but lost in space. In the same year, Alcalá read the book *Poetics for Cosmonauts* by Henry Pierrot. Inspired by both events, he started to work on a script for a short film about a lost cosmonaut. A short while later, he ultimately decided to make it into his first feature length movie: *The Cosmonaut*.

What do you need to make a film? You need money. And Riot Cinema Collective got almost obsessed with the theoretical opportunities the Internet offers independent content creators. Their blog starts to discuss the experiences of Radiohead and John Freese, the drummer of Nine Inch Nails, who gave their music albums away for free online and asked people for donations. They celebrated this new freedom as a revolution that empowers independent producers and ends the reign of big media conglomerates. *The Cosmonaut* was meant to follow these and similar examples and prove that films can be successfully financed and distributed in today's digital age without the help of established media companies.

Enthused by those opportunities, the team devised a document they called *The Plan*, laying out a financing and distribution approach for *The Cosmonaut* that centered

around a day-and-date release, crowdfunding and making the film and all its source materials freely available to the public. When the first Plan was published online, The Cosmonaut's budget was 450.000 Euros. This quickly grew to 860.000 Euros. The goal was to use crowdfunding, sponsorship, investors and deferred payments to raise the money. The Cosmonaut was supposed to be different from traditional film productions. The Internet was not seen as the enemy but as an ally:

Until now it was the exhibitor or distributor who decided when and how you had access to the film. The Internet has changed that paradigm and it is now the users who decide how to enjoy the contents. But above all, they decide when. With this in mind we planned on designing a distribution system adapted to this new reality. A system that had the spectator and his needs in mind above all else (N. Alcalá, personal communication, 2010).

Of the total budget of 860.000

AMOUNT NEEDED FOR	ACHIEVED	TO BE ACHIEVED
Salaries	82.016,89 €	220.365,46 €
Preproduction	46.491,25 €	18.810,51 €
Filming	257.802,85 €	0 €
Postproduction	69.654,79 €	110.330,00 €
Distribution	25.828,25 €	28.700,00 €
TOTAL	481.794,03 €	378.205,97 €

Achieved so far

PROVENANCE	AMOUNT
Merchandising	138.061,52 € ¹
Private investors	260.880,38 €
Awards and others	22.906,57 €
ICAA grant for the use of new technologies in Transmedia	99.595,00 €
Team members who have swapped their salary for an investment percentage	123.640,27 € ¹

Total amount obtained via crowdfunding: 398.941,90 €

Figure 1: The Cosmonaut's budget (Riot Cinema Collective, 2012a).

One of the central elements of Riot Cinema's marketing and financing strategy for The Cosmonaut were individual producers and investors. Investors paid a minimum of 1,000 Euros for a portion of the final film's profits. For as little as 2 Euros, everyone could become a producer of the film. Producers would receive a batch, online access to behind the scenes information and a credit in the final film. To recruit producers, Riot Cinema organized Campus Parties, concerts with indie bands and other space-themed promotional events such as Yuri's Nights.

On 28 July 2009, The Cosmonaut got its first 'producer' at a Campus Party in Madrid - Rodrigo Pineda paid 13 Euros. Three days later, the number of producers grew to 100. After another two months, The Cosmonaut welcomed its 1000th producers. On 25 April 2011, the 3000th producers joined the project. In the end, The Cosmonaut had over 4,500 producers.

With marketing and pre-production successfully underway, the first teaser trailer went online in January 2010. The soundtrack for the trailer was provided by Edward Artemyev, who also created the soundtrack for Tarkovsky's Solaris. Following their

approach of openness and inclusiveness, Riot Cinema asked their fans to remix the teaser trailer. The team received over 100 remixes. This number as well as the fact that Edward Artemyev could be convinced to support a project of novice filmmakers, indicate how successful the marketing campaign for *The Cosmonaut* was at this point and how Riot Cinema was able to convince other people about their dreams and enthuse them for the project.

Riot Cinema continued to make use of the opportunities digital media provides independent content creators. They crowdsourced tasks like location scouting, prop acquisition, extras casting as well as identifying support services and companies through the platform Wreckamovie. Wreckamovie was developed by the people behind fan film project *Star Wreck: In the Pirkinning*. The platform allows fans to participate in the production of a film, enabling collaborative filmmaking.

On the financing side, Riot Cinema celebrated a huge success in the summer of 2010. After being turned down a year earlier, Riot Cinema received a grant of almost 100,000 Euros from The National Film Board of Spain (ICAA) in August 2010 for the transmedia portion of *The Cosmonaut*. In addition, in May 2011, Riot Cinema published on their blog that they came to an agreement with the Russian-Latvian co-producer Phenomena Films, supporting them with money and production services.

Three years after the idea for *The Cosmonaut* was born, Riot Cinema Collective concluded its pre-production. In May 2011, the team went to Latvia to shoot its film. Everything was ready: the production budget was raised, the actors were casted and present, all crew and extras were in Latvia, the team got space suits, props and all the necessary equipment. Everything was set for principle shooting to start on 4 June 2011. But, on 26 May 2011, three weeks after the co-production agreement was announced and one week before the scheduled start of principle shooting, Riot Cinema announced that the co-producer pulled out, leaving a 40,000 Euro financing gap. The crowdfunding campaign *Save The Cosmonaut* was born. Riot Cinema Collective turned to its supporters - by now a big group of people who either helped to fund the film or just followed it out of interest. Only five days later, on 31 May 2011, the campaign had raised 60,000 Euros. After another ten days, the *Save The Cosmonaut* campaign had raised 130,000 Euros - 300% of the amount needed; in only two weeks.

Due to the successful campaign, principle shooting could start as scheduled on 4 June 2011. Again the team used the Internet to involve their fans. It live broadcast a number of shooting days through Livestream.com. Seven weeks later, on 22 July 2011, the end of principle photography was announced.

What followed were 20 months of post-production and increased marketing activities. The first official trailer was published in November 2011. On 29 May 2012, Riot Cinema announced: "We have finished the editing!" (Riot Cinema Collective, 2012b). A number of magazine articles, festival announcements, conference presentations, interviews and promotional parties were celebrated on the project's blog and through social media.

The preparation for the world premiere was underway. The team planned a live screening with actors, acting out certain parts of the narrative, and a big party in

Madrid. One day later, the same event was to be held in Barcelona. Canal+ bought the television rights and showed the film in a parallel premiere on its day-and-date release. Four years in the making, the film culminated in this day-and-date release. The crew had achieved what it set out to achieve.

On 14 May 2013, five year after the idea for *The Cosmonaut* was born, the film had its world premiere in Madrid in front of 1,000 people. One day later, another 1,000 fans saw the Barcelona premiere. During the week that followed, the film could be seen all over Spain, in London, Moscow, France, Canada, Kiev, Los Angeles, Ecuador. Three different VOD platforms showed *The Cosmonaut* (Filmin, Yomvi, Nubeox), in addition to the film's website.

But *The Cosmonaut's* story did not end here. The film had to recoup its costs. Most crew deferred their payments. Riot Cinema had planned for donations, VOD income, sales of DVDs, cinema screenings and international sales to gain the income they needed to not only pay everyone but also make a healthy profit and proof their vision of a new business model for independent films in the digital age.

But this was not about to happen. The film reviews were almost devastating. *The Cosmonaut* received an average rating of 4.2 over 10 on IMDb (n.d.) - a disaster for a film that is the child of the Internet and the crowd. Its crowd now abandoned it and rated it poorly. Viewing figures and, subsequently, income were disappointingly low.

On 6 July 2013, Riot Cinema Collective turned to their fans, somewhat apologizing for disappointing their artistic expectations. But they still celebrated their achievement - possibly rightly so. They had built a huge audience online, raised almost half a million Euros in funding, made a feature film that did not disappoint on a technical level - but failed to tell a story that the masses appreciated. Somewhat disappointed, the team went on in their attempt to sell the film, set up screenings, getting it into festivals, finding distribution partners, and so forth - to little success.

Overall, Riot Cinema Collective had created not only a feature film, but also 34 short films (for their K-Pass), a Facebook Fiction, one book, lots of behind the scenes videos, plenty of parties and marketing events. In the end, *The Cosmonaut* had 80 theatrical and semi-theatrical screenings in 14 countries during its premiere week (most of them requested by fans). 8,000 people have seen it in cinemas. 10,000 people watched it on Canal+. The film collected almost 27,000 VOD views (through Amazon, iTunes and smaller Spanish VOD platforms), amounting to VOD revenue of 1,800 Euros (the same amount the aggregator charged to put the film on VOD platforms). 17,580 people watched the film on its website. Of these, 2.5% decided to pay for it an average of 3.55 Euros. *The Cosmonaut* had 47,000 official P2P downloads and 38,000 views for its most popular, illegally uploaded, YouTube version. 505 DVD-books and 81 USBs of the film have been sold. The transmedia episodes garnered 80,000 views. Despite being represented by Imagina International Sales, one of the biggest sales agents in Spain, the film did not get any international sales. It was officially selected for 28 film festivals.¹

¹ All numbers taken from a blog entry on 18 May 2014 (Riot Cinema Collective, 2014).

The story of *The Cosmonaut* had one final episode. In early 2014, Riot Cinema Collective received a letter from The National Film Board of Spain (ICAA), the agency that gave them a grant of almost 100,000 Euros. In the letter, the ICAA asked back 73,000 of the 99,500 Euros grant money. The agency argued that their funding rules state that a producer has to cover 30% of a project's costs herself. Riot Cinema had stated that the deferred payments for the creators of the transmedia material would account for these 30%. This was acceptable when the funding agency made the decision to award the project. But since the payments were never made, the ICAA did no longer accept this argument and asked the money back.

As of this writing, Riot Cinema Collective is in a legal battle with the ICAA. They used their last money to pay the lawyers. The company is bankrupt and currently being dissolved. Their only asset, *The Cosmonaut*, is still with them - and therefore the crowd who had funded it. But should they lose the lawsuit, they will lose their film and therefore everything they have worked for during the past five years.

The Cosmonaut & Story Elements and Structure

The story of *The Cosmonaut* is one of ambition, success and failure. More importantly, it is, in fact, a story. The making of *The Cosmonaut* has traditional story elements and follows established storytelling structures.

The story of *The Cosmonaut* features a hero, Riot Cinema Collective, with the desire to make a feature length film and to revolutionize independent filmmaking. Like most heroes, Riot Cinema Collective also has a weakness the team is unaware of: the need for modesty. Nobody on the team had any prior filmmaking experience before making *The Cosmonaut*. Yet, they attempted to revolutionize independent filmmaking – a goal that was probably too big for any hero in a similar situation. The hero's opponent in the story of *The Cosmonaut* is the traditional film industry. The hero creates a plan (Riot Cinema Collective even calls it 'The Plan') of how to get her desire. Once set on its path, Riot Cinema Collective is confronted with plenty of obstacles concerning funding, marketing and distribution of the film. The premiere of *The Cosmonaut* solves the main dramatic tension. The current lawsuit against the ICAA is the hero's final battle against the opponent. The story ends with a heartbreaking self-revelation that, despite the film being made, Riot Cinema Collective failed in the attempt to make back its financial investments. The story ends in a new equilibrium with a hero that has learned new things about the world and herself and therefore ultimately changed.

This film is witness to one of the hardest things we have done in our lives. Shooting "The Cosmonaut" became a point of no return. Trapped. We couldn't come back. We couldn't not shoot. Had we done so, our careers would have ended. We would have let everyone down, our prestige down the drain. Our first and last movie... and it was almost so. (Blurb about the behind-the-scenes documentary 'Fighting of'; Riot Cinema Collective, 2012a).

According to John Truby (2008), desire, weakness, opponent, plan, battle, self-revelation and new equilibrium are the seven key elements to any story. All of them can be located in the story of the making of *The Cosmonaut*.

The making of *The Cosmonaut* does not only contain the key elements of a story but also follows an established story structure. The 8-sequence structure is an extension of the traditional 3-act structure in storytelling. It was proposed by Paul Gulino (2004) and builds on the teachings of Frank Daniel.

Following the model of the 8-sequence structure, any story starts with an undisturbed status quo that is disturbed by the 'point of attack' (sequence one). For *The Cosmonaut*, this inciting incident is the finding of Poetics for *Cosmonaut* and the inspiration it provided. The story was set on its way.

Sequence two elaborates the main dramatic tension of a story and a commitment by the protagonist to push for the set goal. In *The Cosmonaut*, it is the decision to make a feature film and with it the dramatic tension whether the film will be completed or not.

The third sequence starts the second act of a story. First obstacles arise and the audience learns why things may be more difficult than they initially seemed. In the case of Riot Cinema, the audience learns about a budget of over 800.000 Euros, a crowdfunding campaign and a planned day-and-date release. This was a tremendously ambitious project, trying to reinvent independent filmmaking. The stakes were high, the obstacles plenty.

The fourth sequence builds up to the midpoint and the first culmination of the story. *The Cosmonaut* had a successful funding campaign. Riot Cinema's plan seemed to work. The team was in Latvia, ready for principle shooting to start. But then the co-producer pulled out, creating the first real crisis and culminating in the Save The *Cosmonaut* campaign.

After the intensity of the first culmination, the fifth sequence is often more romantic. It usually explores sub-plot and characters. After the successful Save The *Cosmonaut* campaign, the attention shifted away from funding to behind the scenes coverage. Riot Cinema and *The Cosmonaut* team were on an emotional high. They were making the film they wanted to make. The audience learned more about the work on set. Life broadcasts and diaries from set allowed for a deeper exploration of the protagonists.

Sequence six ends the second act. It contains the story's main culmination, resolving the main dramatic tension. The main goal is either reached, not reached or has changed. In *The Cosmonaut*, completing the film was always the main dramatic tension. Sequence six therefore builds up to the film's world premiere. After countless little obstacles, different cuts and an intensifying marketing campaign, *The Cosmonaut* had not only built a huge following but also had its premieres in sold-out theaters in Madrid and Barcelona.

At this point, the story could be over. But the main culmination of sequence six creates new tension for sequence seven. This new tension is the result of the main tension. *The Cosmonaut* was a product now. It was made and now had to be seen, sold and make back its production money. But, like most seventh sequences, the story of *The Cosmonaut* features a twist. *The Cosmonaut* was not a good film. It received negative reviews, low to none income and one of its funders, the ICAA, demanded its money back.

The final sequence eight includes the final battle and a resolution. Again, both can be found in the story of *The Cosmonaut*. At the time of writing this article, Riot Cinema Collective was still in a legal battle with the ICAA – the final battle that would decide whether the team and their investors could hold onto the rights to *The Cosmonaut* or whether they would be transferred to the ICAA. And the hero changed, as the following excerpt from a very long reflexive blog post indicates:

Because in the end, we feel happily frustrated. We look back and we can see how we put everything we got out there. How we were the best we could be but maybe that wasn't enough. We haven't managed to pay our team yet. Or give back our investors their money. And that's hard. And makes hesitate about many many things: was it really enough? did we do enough? maybe it wasn't the time or the project to expect a return? were we too ambitious? naïve maybe? did we dreamed too high? [sic] (Riot Cinema Collective, 2014).

Conclusion

Digital media and the Internet have changed many facets of film industries around the globe. Film production, marketing, distribution, story structures and copyright issues have been impacted, experimented with and debated in academia as well as by practitioners.

Habitual movie going, pre-existing audiences and mass exhibition and appreciation characterized traditional popular film. Independent film could rarely afford such practices. The mass cultural aspect of popular film made communal conversation and appropriation difficult at best.

The Cosmonaut seems to be an example of a changing landscape in film marketing. The point is not just that the film's making follows storytelling rules. It is much more that the story of its making is made public. And the story of the making of *The Cosmonaut* is not only told - it is told while it unfolds:

[Our fans] can live a two-year experience instead of a two-hour experience. That's because we are telling them what we are doing every day. And they can live it with us (N. Alcalá, personal communication, 2010).

The making of *The Cosmonaut* is a story. It is not an uncommon story in independent filmmaking. But this story has been told 'live', not retrospectively. For five years, the team has blogged and used social media to update their audience on the progress of their filmmaking journey. From day one, the team was transparent. They told a story about a story. This story allowed Riot Cinema Collective to slowly grow an audience that helped them raise 400,000 Euros.

Sharing the story of a film's making, attracts audiences. *The Cosmonaut* received a score of 4.2 on IMDb. It had countless bad reviews and did not break even financially. As a one-off product, *The Cosmonaut* looks like a failure. But it was seen over 200,000 times and raised 400,000 Euros through crowdfunding. People were interested in the story of the film, not the film itself. Following traditional ways of

rating a film (reviews and income), *The Cosmonaut* is a disappointing film. The story of its making, however, may prove useful for other independent filmmakers.

We love stories. That is why we love films. But this is also the reason why we love stories about the making of films. Any film contains a point of attack (idea), a lock in (the decision to make the film), a main tension (will it be completed?), a plan, obstacles, ups and downs, a resolution (the film got finished or not) with further implications, a new goal (distribution/reviews/income) and a hero (filmmaker) that changes throughout this journey. Independent filmmakers can now tell these stories while making the film, sharing it with audiences and therefore building audiences over time. Their stories are no longer just their films but the processes of their making. By doing so, everything seems to become one big story (no longer just one film). This also allows filmmakers to extend the story of the actual feature film and include transmedia elements, publish books, Facebook fiction, a music album or Gagarin-themed parties (all done by *The Cosmonaut*) to create one big story universe. The story is everywhere - in the feature film, its making and ancillary products.

Treating the filmmaking process as the story to tell changes the audience building from a one-off campaign for a finished product to an ongoing process. In this scenario, time and commitment can replace money as the main driver of an audience building campaign. As such, a slightly more level playing field between the commercial mainstream - with its huge marketing budgets - and the independent filmmakers might be created.

Extending the story of a film by telling the story of its making is one way to overcome to problem of findability among the abundance of competing small scale cultural products in today's digital age. It (a) helps to create communities and audiences, who (b) individually experience the making of a film and (c) view a film merely as an end product while 'watching' takes place over an extended period of time.

References

Gulino, P. J. (2004). *The sequence approach. The hidden structure of successful screenplays*. London: Bloomsbury.

Hesmondhalgh, D. (2007). *The cultural industries*. Los Angeles; London: Sage.

IMDb (n.d.). *The Cosmonaut*. Retrieved from <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1629747/>.

Riot Cinema Collective (2012a). *The Plan*. Retrieved from http://en.cosmonautexperience.com/web/contents/theplan3_eng.pdf.

Riot Cinema Collective (2012b). *We have finished the editing!* Retrieved from <http://www.thecosmonaut.org/blog/?p=433>.

Riot Cinema Collective (2014). *Interview*. Retrieved from <http://www.thecosmonaut.org/blog/?p=547>.

Truby, J. (2008). *The anatomy of story: 22 steps to becoming a master storyteller*. London: Faber & Faber.

The logo for the International Association for Film and Documentary Research (iafor) is centered on the page. It features the lowercase letters 'iafor' in a light blue, sans-serif font. The text is enclosed within a circular graphic composed of two overlapping, semi-transparent arcs: a light blue arc at the bottom and a light red arc at the top, creating a partial circular frame around the text.

Minorities' Stereotypes in Pakistani Films

Bilal Khalid, National College of Arts Lahore, Pakistan
Abdul Fatah Daudpoto, University of Sindh, Pakistan

The European Conference on Film & Documentary 2014
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

This project is largely concerned with the stereotype depiction and portraiture of minorities in feature films of Pakistan. This research is designed to explore the reasons behind such discrimination with minorities i.e.; Hindu, Christian, Sikh. The media provide distorted representation of women and minorities and exposure to these distorted images can have a negative effect on users' perception (Yi Mou & Wei Peng, 2009). Further the Christian and Hindus greatly suffer from discrimination and oppression at society level (Yousaf, 2006). The purpose of research is to explore the reasons to which minorities' discrimination is growing within different sectors of the society. A content analysis approach is adopted to analyze the data, the stereotype roles as part of master narrative in films produced in Pakistan for the purpose of entertainment. The feature films produced between the era from 1979-1988 are part of the study. This period deliberately imposed new laws; regulation for the production of feature films as Christian, Hindus were greatly represented as schedule cast. Findings suggest that 'Negative approach for minorities in our mind and the portrayal of such thinking via Pakistani films is one of the major factors of disgrace of minorities i.e.; Hindu, Christian, Sikh.

Keywords: Minorities, Pakistan Films, Gender roles, Stereotype, Misrepresentation.

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

INTRODUCTION

The film was introduced in subcontinent in 1911 during the era of British Raj. In 1947, the subcontinent got divided in two independent countries India and Pakistan. In Pakistan, Dhaka, Karachi and Lahore were three big cities where film industry was working and many film companies were running. The newly found Pakistan had got independent in the name of Islam and about a million of people migrated from India to Pakistan. Right away following the division, the newly founded Pakistan faced a shortage of funds. Deficiency of filming equipments further paralyzed the nation's film industry. With much hardships faced, the new film industry was able to produce its first characteristic film, "Yaadon" 7 Aug, 1948, premiering at the Parbhat Theater in Lahore. In the following year "Evernew Studios" were founded which started to be recognized as the biggest film company of the time. For some of the years to come, films which were released had met ordinary success until the release of "Do Ansoo" on 7 April 1950. Dou Ansoo becomes the very first film to achieve a 35 week successful business and the first film to reach silver jubilee status.

Recovery was obvious with Noor Jehan's directorial debut "Chan-vey" releasing on 29 April 1951. This was the industry's first film to be directed by a female director. Syed Faqir Ahmad Shah produced his initial production in 1952. "Jagga Dakku" directed by Saqlain Rizvi, could not obtain much of positive response from the audiences due to the element of violence exposed in it. With the cinema viewership greater than before, "Sassi" released on June 1954 reached golden jubilee status because of staying on screens for 50 weeks. Famous playback singer Ahmed Rushdi started his career in April 1955 after singing his first song in Pakistan "Bander Road Se Kemari". Umar Marvi released in March 1956 became the first Pakistani film made in the Sindhi language. To celebrate the success of cinema with such big hits, film journalist Ilyas Rashidi launched an annual awards event named "Nigar Awards" on July, 1958. Since then, it has been considered Pakistan's premier awarding affair celebrating great performances in various categories of film making. Pakistan has not continuously as emerged as democratic country, unfortunately President Sikandar Mirza imposed First Martial law in Pakistan and appointed General Ayub Khan Chief Martial Law Administrator, field marshal General Ayub Khan got power in 1958, which was continued by his successor General Yahya Khan, in 1969 and was ended with fall of Dhaka in 1971.

The state control of film and TV was institutionalized when General Ayub Khan came to power (Gazdar 1997:73-74). The strategy of using documentary film making for government propaganda was enforced. The first major project was *Nai Kiran* (A New Ray of Light), an hour-long feature film. *Nai Kiran* had the well-defined objective of dismissing politicians and politics as corrupt and projecting Ayub as savior of the country. Through martial law orders, it was made mandatory for every cinema house to run this film free of cost for a week. During the 1960s, over fifty films were produced defaming politics and politicians, creating antagonism towards democracy, and hailing the imposition of martial law (Ibid). The first ever people elected government of Mr Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came into power in 1972, which prepared first ever constitution of Pakistan approved unanimously by the National Assembly on 10th April 1973. Where in censorship policy was reviewed and a new policy was approved for production and release of films in Pakistan. Bhutto's government, realizing the deteriorating condition of the film industry, established the National Film

Development Corporation (NAFDEC). Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government ended by a military coup of General Zia-ul-Haq on 5th July 1977, he suspended 1973 constitution of Pakistan and issued emergency act. Zia regime struck a crushing blow to the film industry. In 1979, all Pakistani films produced in the preceding three years were banned causing a void badly affecting the progress of film making. A new film policy was formulated and the Motion Pictures Ordinance 1979 was promulgated. The ordinance was so restrictive that it became virtually impossible to express new ideas through form, content or artistry in a film. While Bhutto's government had not allowed the demolition of cinema houses, Zia facilitated it by relaxing the rules; hence hundreds of cinema houses were converted into shopping malls. But the emerging contemporary cinema has introduced a new innovative generation of directors and filmmakers like Shoaib Mansoor, Jamshed Mahmood and Bilal Lashari giving our industry a hope for future and an idea of better stories, screenings and an upgraded level of cinematography.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is a critical and in-depth evaluation of previous research. It is a summary and synopsis of a particular area of research, allowing anybody reading the paper to establish why you are pursuing this particular research program.

Regardless of practicing beliefs, it has been noticed that a cluster of people sharing a common religion, language and cultural pattern, are always keen on displaying and maintaining unity. This is a characteristic of those states containing ethnic and religious minorities, having the citizenship of their respective states (Conode, 1999, pp. 89-90). According to International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Minority can be defined as a race, sharing linguistic and religious affinity, which thinks of itself different from a majority and respectively that majority thinks it to be different from them to the point of stigma. Modern sociologists propound that since these minorities lack political or general power, they face specific discrimination, and disparity. (International Encyclopedia of Social Science.1968, p.365). Oxford Dictionary describes minority a small group in a society, state etc, having different religious beliefs, language and culture. (Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary. 1992, p. 570). Jalal U Din in his study defines that for an effective functioning of a society it is essential that all members of the society contribute, and minorities form an integral part of that society. (Jalal U Din, 2011). Further Ahmed in his findings define that Pakistani minorities are not only treated with equality but most of them also enjoy employment in the fields of Pakistan civil service, judiciary, journalism, army and business. They contribute to the country's development and prosperity. They are supportive of the Muslims of the state in every situation. So it can be assumed that the white in the Pakistani flag represents these minorities, since they also played a pivotal role in the Pakistani movement, hence, justifying their importance. (Ahmad, 2002, p.2).

We are living in the age of digital and technological advancements, it cannot be denied that media is one powerful tool that is effectively influential in image building and inspiring various certain behaviors. It is a medium of communicating and projecting the image of the world. Media is instrumental in creating public opinions especially for minorities, for whom researchers and practitioners endeavor to make media conscientious. In his book Public Opinion by Walter Lippman, he says

stereotyping has become a defense mechanism, firstly being an offshoot of tradition of stereotyping, Walter Lippmann writes that stereotypes are created from “the pictures in our heads.” Irion explains that the world is much too large for people to come into contact with each other. Because of these limitations, mass communication relies on stereotypes to provide depth and background to information about others (LaViolette & Silvert, 1951, p. 528) Stereotypes are formed by social interaction or the lack thereof between people, in this reference Greenberg (1972) sought to discover the extent that Film is a primary source of information about another race, specifically for Caucasian and African American children, and some of film’s influences upon African American children.(Greenberg, 1972).

Further George Gerbner and his colleagues conducted several quantitative research studies of minorities representation on U.S Film in late 1960s through the 1990s, through these studies they concluded that the quantity wise representation was improved on the other hand quality is still the same. (Gerbner & Signorielli, 1979; Gerbner, et al., 1993; Gerbner, et al., 1998). Greenberg, brand later research, also confirmed it. In several quantitative research studies conducted by George Gerbner and his colleagues, on representation of minorities in US films from late 1960s to 1990s, it was observed that although quantitative representation had improved, the quality was still the same. This fact was confirmed by a research conducted later by Greenberg.

In the research, “Between radicalization and democratization in an unfolding conflict: Media in Pakistan” conducted by International Media Support (2009), it is stated that Pakistani media enjoys quite an independence regardless of the turbulent politics and bans on behalf of the state. This unique attribute contributes to the vibrant media landscape of Pakistan. The film sector received a media boom after it was liberalized in 2002. Ali states in his research, “Media and Minorities: Exclusion, Distortion and Stereotype” that minorities are often classified as fanatics and fundamentalists, and acts committed by some people of that community are assumed to be approved by the entire community (Ali 1999). In *The Christian Minorities in Pakistan Issues and Option*, Gregory (2008) says that it goes without saying that Pakistani Christians are treated as second class citizens, not legally but in function. They face violence, oppression, coercion and they do not have any power whatsoever, to thwart these pressures and improve their living conditions. According to the research; *Pakistan: the Situation of Religious minorities* by Gregory. R. Shaun and Simon R. Valentine, minorities in Pakistan are susceptible to differentiation and oppression in the form of religious intimidation, sexual assaults, violence, murders etc, by the Muslim members of their society. This is especially prevalent where law enforcement bodies are ineffective or worse, indifferent. This is partially the result of long held tradition of directing antagonism towards religious minorities, which are further intensified in schools’ curricula that festers stereotyping attitudes of inferiority of non Muslims by the belief of superiority of the Islamic faith.

Anita Kim in his research article “Sikh Roles, representations and revenge, in the media” The researcher has found in north America Sikhs are greatly underrepresented in the media as professionals, anchors, actors and middle class families. A research conducted by Massoud Ansari entitled “Minorities in Pakistan” the researcher has presented the critical analysis about Ahmadi community. The researcher has also given the example of column added in the application forms for Pakistani passport

and national identity cards whereby all citizens have to declare whether they are Muslims or non Muslims (Ansari, 2006). M. Ali Yousaf in his case study found Ahmadis and Christians has regularly documented of discrimination and oppression both at official and society levels. Hindus also suffer stigmatization and discrimination (Yousaf, 2006). In his research, Hindu Minority in Pakistan, Mesti (2011) has stated that Pakistan inculcates stereotypical image of the Hindu minority in its curricula. In the research, Rights of Christian Minority and Blasphemy Law in Pakistan, Nazeer has claimed that discrimination on the basis of religious affiliation of minorities has been institutionalized. In his research, Munir claims that religious groups capture that national interest agenda and one way or another, promote their nationalistic beliefs and agendas. The very same phenomenon is supported by Rehman and Zia (2010) in their study reports regarding the dominance of the majority. In the research article, Representation of Cultural Diversity in Urdu Newspapers in Pakistan, by Syed (2006), it has been evidenced that ethnic or religious sub identities are generally, negatively perceived, and likewise, they are underrepresented.

The second historical strand informing the status of Christians in Pakistan is that which arises from the caste structure, widespread across the Pakistani subcontinent. Many, and according to some sources the majority of, contemporary Pakistani Christians are the descendents of “untouchables” who during the era of colonial rule converted *en masse* to Christianity in the hope of securing a better dispensation from their colonial rulers.

In Pakistan, only print media research has been conducted regarding the issue of minority, it is to be agreed with Graves (1999) when she states that TV is capable of creating, maintaining and modifying stereotyping and prejudice in a society. With the aid of this research, a researcher is able to explain acts of stereotyping and misrepresentation of minorities that reinforce their prior status portrayed by the media, such as not giving them major roles, and acting out roles that are stereotypical, since the history of film and TV programs. This only serves to influence the viewers’ perceptions of such minorities and minorities’ perceptions of themselves in front of the public.

METHODOLOGY

The study has adopted quantitative and qualitative methodology, to achieve the goals and to examine the impact and the portrayal of minorities in Pakistani films. Both, the primary and secondary sources are used to gather the data. Research has collected information and data to analyze the mainstream Pakistani films. The research is very much significant as it intends to reveal the underlying meanings of the stories presented by Pakistani cinema in the name of culture. Beneath the sugar-coated message, there is an enormous amount of negativity for Non-Muslims and as well as for future of Pakistan. The identity of Non-Muslims is regularly and repeatedly challenged.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

A content analysis approach is adopted to analyze the data, the stereotype roles as part of master narrative in films produced in Pakistan for the purpose of entertainment.

The aim of analysis with respect to its content, stereotyped roles of the minority religious communities is the main subject of this study. In order to conduct the content analysis, the 10 category are made and are under the unit of analysis.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

The selection of films, that are centered around characters of minority religions, or any film that deal with minority religions that famous for religious abuse, minority distortion or de-moralization of minority.

SAMPLING

Researcher has used Purposive sampling to verify this hypothesis. The focus was on the movies that take up the issues related to Non-Muslims. The sample includes only Pakistani movies and thus this analysis, by and large, reflects the perception about Non-Muslims. In order to confirm reliability, selected scenes were visualized twice. To elaborate the portrayal of Non-Muslims in an understandable manner, the overall impression of selected films from the sample has been given as précis.

CATEGORIES

All the samples were categorized in three types: Positive, Negative and Mixed films. Positive films are those which contain truthful portrayal of Non-Muslims and their social conditions in Pakistan. Instead of using negative stereotypes, these movies present Non-Muslims as real characters with positive frame. They can have positive qualities such as love for peace, respect for universal ethics and patriotism. They have got an urge to stand for humanity and betterment of mankind. In negative films, which Non-Muslim characters are painted black and their image is distorted. They are usually presented as criminals, slum dogs, Traitors, Muslim Enemy, Mean and danger for Pakistan. The movies which expound nearly equal proportion of negative and positive Non-Muslim characters fall in the category of mix movies. For example, a movie charge as well as a positive such character would be known as the mix movie. In other cases, the negativity of a character is rationalized by explaining the circumstances and the character is not portrayed as inherently evil

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are following:

- To study how minorities are represented in Pakistani films.
- To examine how pictures depict minorities in Pakistani films.

HYPOTHESIS

After conducting pilot study of Pakistani movies, the following hypothesis has been developed and tested: The proportion of negative portrayal of Non-Muslim characters would be greater as compared to the ratio of positive image of Non-Muslims in Pakistani movies, so Pakistani Film reflect the positive/distorted image of Minorities in Pakistan, and Pakistani films are free from bias and prejudices toward minorities or not?

RESEARCH QUESTION

The research is based on following research questions.

1. Either Pakistani film is giving positive or negative portray to a minority?
2. Does the representation of minorities in Pakistani film coincide with the accurate political and social position of minorities in Pakistani society?
3. Is there any prejudice in Pakistani films while representing on screen?

LIMITATION:

This study belongs to the visual portray of minorities in Pakistani film, therefore it is not extended to other parts of film production, the study will have limited focus upon the theory of demoralization of minorities by majority population, with reference to practices , ritual, language, cast, creed and body language etc.

The logo for 'iafor' is centered on the page. It consists of the lowercase letters 'iafor' in a light blue, sans-serif font. The text is enclosed within a circular graphic composed of two overlapping, semi-transparent arcs. The upper arc is light blue and the lower arc is light red, creating a stylized circular frame around the text.

1.	Kartar Singh	(Punjabi - B/W)	1959
2.	Shaheed	(Urdu - B/W)	1962
3.	Baji	(Urdu - B/W)	1963
4.	Malangi	(Punjabi - B/W)	1965
5.	Mujahid	(Urdu - B/W)	1965
6.	Jag Utha Insan		1966
7.	Zarqa	(Urdu - Color)	1969
8.	Yeh Aman	(Urdu - Color)	1971
9.	Gharnata	(Urdu - Color)	1971
10.	Khak aur Khoon		1971
11.	Chann Veryam	(Punjabi - Color)	1981
12.	Ahat	(Urdu - Color)	1982
13.	Muthi Bhar Chawal		1982
14.	Ghulami		1985
15.	Jarnail Singh		1987
16.	Barood Ki Chhaon Mein	(Urdu - Color)	1989
17.	International Gorilay		1990
18.	Jeeva (1995 film)		1995
19.	Gabbar Singh		1995
20.	Uqabon Ka Nasheman	(Urdu - Color)	1997
21.	Tere Pyar Mein		2000
22.	Soldier		2001
23.	Moosa Khan		2001
24.	Muslaman		2001
25.	Gazi Alam Din		2002
26.	Larki Punjaban		2003
27.	Laaj	(Urdu - Color)	2003
28.	Aik Aur Ghazi		2011
29.	War		2013

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The research is quantitative as well as qualitative in its nature. Over all 30 films were analyzed on the basis of 5 categories with classified incline. Distribution of incline in these 30 movies is 3(12%) **Positive**, 23(75.6%) **Negative** and 4(12.4%) Neutral (See Table No.1). The data clearly shows that the portrayal of Non-Muslims in Pakistani films is mostly negative. Table 1 describes the survey that the number of negative films (75.60%) is far greater than the number of positive films (12%). Through this analysis, we can easily discern the paucity of positive attitude and reverence for Non-Muslims in Pakistani cinema. The survey confirms the hypothesis that the proportion of negative portrayal of Non-Muslim characters would be greater as compared to the ratio of positive image of Non-Muslims in Pakistani movies.

Table 1: Categories of Pakistani movies as per portrayal of non-Muslim characters

Total numbers of Films	Positive Films	Negative Films	Mixed Films
30	3(12%)	23(75.60%)	4(12.40%)
Total Percentage	12%	75%	13

The list of all the movies included in sample is given in Annexure-1

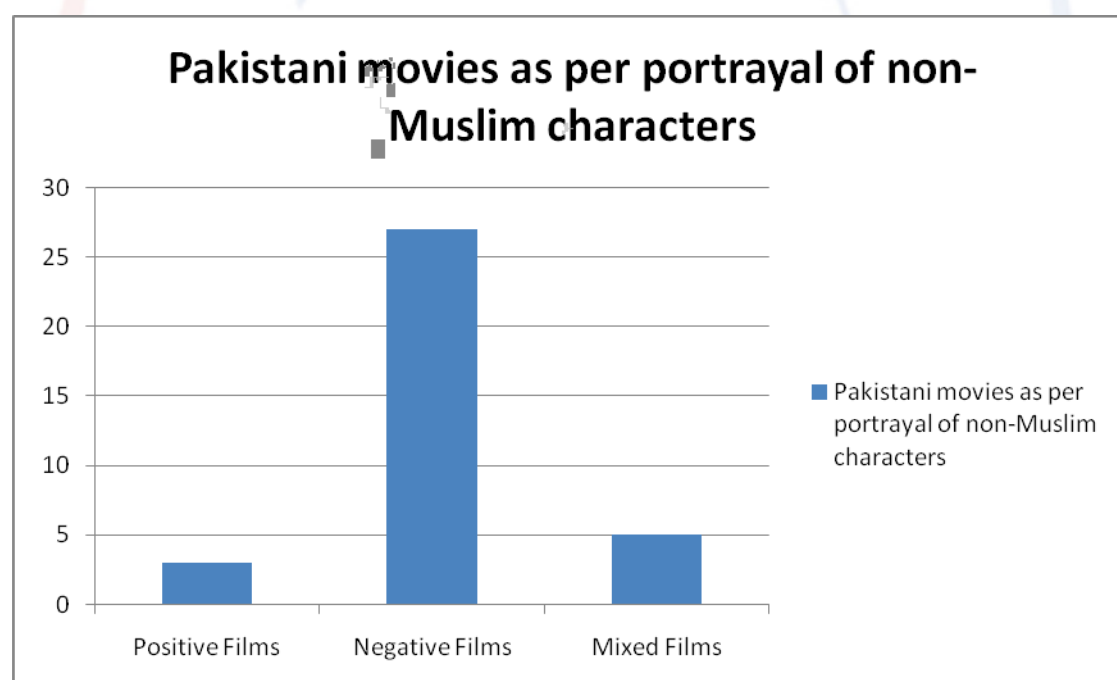


Figure 1: Categories of Pakistani movies as per portrayal of non-Muslim characters

This study has evaluated the films character representing the Religious Minorities in Pakistani; In this regard researcher has analyzed and explored the films that were already been selected. Researcher observed that films have tremendous power to influence public opinion and even has power to resolve various issues related to minorities due to film's immense capacity. Researcher has examined the coverage of

Religious Minorities in terms of film items, characters, social roles and characterization of these minorities. An overwhelming emphasis on Pakistan's Islamic identity was witnessed in the Pakistani film's analysis, Islam and Islamic identity seemed to be served as a broad melting pot within which other forms of identity such as racial/ethnic or regional identities remain widely invisible. The other parameter used for content analysis was the element of social status assigned to characters from religious minority. It was found that mostly minority's characters been shown as belonging to upper state of the society and associated with British Raj. Mostly, they were been portrayed as someone who existed on the always on scheme and divide Muslims to rule and had no major contribution to make to the society on the whole, and furthermore minority's characters were portrayed as "homeless", "modernity" and portrayed as characters that lacked a sense of belonging for this country they have been living in for years.

Most alarming situation is that the representation of minority as always been rendering, scheming conspiracy against country, these aforementioned stereotypes is particularly harmful because they are nowhere close to facts, and hence drift from the ethical responsibility of accurate representation of minorities. Researcher also understood that occasional use of stereotypes in Cinema is not only inevitable but also essential as a film-making tool, filmmakers should be cautious and more careful while indulging in stereotypical representations as a part of their social responsibility, that is totally missing and they became bias in representation of social realities and facts.

Researcher find only film Ramchand Pakistani that deal with minority social issues, the study of the characters, their dialogues and actions conclude that Dalit Hindus in Pakistan are living a poor life where the feudal lords and most of the Muslims consider them un-touchable and worst kind of people. As it was first time in Pakistani Film Industry that a lead role was presented as a child role plus a minority in any Pakistani film, so the first impression of any Hindu Dalit would be similar to Ramchand and Champa. They were presented as innocent and loveable people who follow their religion and culture. But on the same time they are living such a low life that there reach to basic human rights is not heard on any level. Film Ahat was also one of the film that portray the christen family with soft and social image. Film TerePyar Main and Jeeva was a product of subjects affected by the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh clashing relations in the Subcontinent and the time prior to the War of Independence of 1857 and recently, the Kargil War of 1999, which inadvertently made portrayal of Hindus in movies as negative. On the other hand Sikh characters were shown with soft image; the stereotypical characterizations in the form of apparel, role and characterization were done for the purpose of Sikh identification. Due to the racial theme of the movie, the role of Sikhs was positive and influential.

Investigating the first research question "Is Pakistani cinema presenting a negative image of Religious minority?" After analyzing the available data, researcher got the findings that proved this research question correct. In Pakistani movies, Majorly Minority is being presented negatively. The phenomenon of conspiracy is associated with Minority.

Exploring the second research question: Does the representation of minorities in Pakistani film coincide with the accurate political and social position of minorities in Pakistani society, and is Pakistani films prejudice while representing them screen? All

in all, it can be deduce from the analysis that among the productions that touch upon the issues related with Muslims and Pakistan, the number of the movies which depict and render the Non-Muslims as brutal and rogue is greater than the number of the movies which present and portray Non-Muslims in positive frame of mind. Their presentation of Non-Muslim character as negative and reprobate increased. The images used to represent the Non-Muslims are a reflection of the prejudices prevalent in Pakistan against Non-Muslims.

This representation does not coincide with the accurate political and social ground reality that is minority communities of Pakistan have played an important role in the socio-cultural development of the country, creative contributions of Joshua Fazluddin, Nasreen Anjum Bhatti, Nazeer Qaisar, Bapsi Sidhwa, Sobho Gian Chandani, Vali Ram Vallabh, Raja Tiridev Roy, Dr. Sabir Afaqi and Professor Pritam Singh, Justice Cornelius, F.C. Chaudhary, Cecil Chaudhary, Wallis Mathias are few prominent names in different fields. In this reference, Lollywood cinema does not actually represent the social reality at least in the case of Non-Muslim identity and its expressions. Rather, it creates its own allusions and nostalgia of the past.

Hypothesis depicts that portrayal of image of Non-Muslims in Pakistani movies will be more negative than positive. Results of this study supported the hypothesis Table 1 describing the survey that the number of negative films (75.60%) is far greater than the number of positive films (12.20%). Through this analysis, we can easily discern the paucity of positive attitude and reverence for Non-Muslims in Pakistani cinema.

DISCUSSION

The data reveals that the issues related to diversity and subcultures in Pakistani society remain generally ignored or downplayed. The paper has demonstrated that Islam is the predominant discourse in Pakistan, which serves as the overwhelming melting pot of any sub-cultures including ethnic and religious identities. The narrator seems to present and perpetuate the discourses in which any identity other than the Islam or Pakistan is treated as undesirable or less valued. Issues of ethnic minorities though highlighted at macro-political level lack thorough understanding and information. For instance, no presentation is presented in terms of minority achievement, their social issue as unemployment, indigenous cultural practices and their protection, local environment, etc. Their perspectives remain hidden, issues and challenges largely misunderstood. In the Pakistani Films, routinely carry a verse from the Qur'an, while the teachings or beliefs of other religions are not displayed at all. Some of the films played a responsible role while representing on plural issues, but communal elements popularize anti-minority myths, especially presenting an Islamic narrative. The data analyzed confirmed that there isn't any effort on organized effort to raise awareness of other religions or of the need for pluralism. The lack of a proper educational system and a holistic syllabus that takes Pakistan's plural traditions into account has only added to a great sense of loss.

CONCLUSION

This study has been conducted with the aim of study how minorities are represented in Pakistani films and to examine how pictures depict minorities in Pakistani films, Consequently, the is giving positive or negative portray to minority, minorities social

roles in reality and media is also discussed, analyzed and concluded. Film is form of popular culture and produced by cultural industry, motion films is metamorphosis of written, oral medium and ultimately thought. Historian define films as a force that can shape your future, in fact, know civilization depends upon how they used it, we live in today; media has come to take the place of primary agents of communication.

While depicting the actual characterization of non-Muslims., Pakistani films have to come out of its engagement both with past nostalgia and the image of the non-Muslim other as a villain, terrorists, and these stereotypes should be resisted both inside and outside the film industry by the secular democratic and politically conscious people. The imaging of non-Muslim characters in negative terms should be replaced with a positive tendency. The image constructions in the form of iconography and in term and presupposed notions, is largely formed by the general public, with distorted facts, wrong information, ignorance and subversive truth disseminated in the mass psyche manufactured by the Pakistani cinema. Without having a dialogue, without knowing anyone in person, people carve out an image of a particular community in their minds in black and white terms. In this respect, Pakistani films have played an enormously key role in producing the myths and stereotypes of Non-Muslims. Still Pakistani cinema shown very little about the non-Muslim secular character, in our research for a more optimistic portrayal of the non-Muslim social, devoid of mythical characterization, and to challenge the hegemony of the dominant stereotype of the non-Muslim other, we need to produce more Non-Muslim protagonist films. Sameena Imtiaz of Pead Foundation said "The media has the power to change the narrative and must play a role in promoting religious harmony and tolerance and representatives from minority communities for acceptance".

References

- Abbas, H. 005, *On this Islamization trend in Pakistan and the strengthening of Islamism and Islamic conservatism in Pakistan* .Pakistan's Drift into Extremism, retrieved June 2012.
from:http://www.socialcohesion.co.uk/uploads/1278089320islamist_terrorism_preview.pdf
- Abbas, H. (2008). *Frontline Pakistan*, retrieved June 2012 from:
http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/print_view/215
- Abbas Tahir.(2007). *Muslim Minorities in Britain: Integration, Multiculturalism and Radicalism in the Post-7/7 Period*, retrieved May 2012
from:<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13691830500058729#preview>
- Ahmed, A.S. (1997). *Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity*. The Search for Saladin, London: RoutledgePress, pp 175-7
- Ahmad, B.(1994). *Ahmadiyya Movement: British Jewish Connection* , Rawalpindi: *Islamic Study Forum*. Retrieved June 2012 from: <http://alhafeez.org/rashid/bjc.pdf>
- Ahmad, G. M.(1989). *Jesus in India* , Islamabad: Islam International Publications, p. 66
- Ahmad, I. (2002). *Coverage of minorities in Pakistani newspapers*. Unpublished M.A thesis. Department of Mass Communication. B.Z.U. Multan, Pakistan, pp.2
- Ahmad, M. T.(1989). *Murder in the Name of Allah*, Cambridge: Lutterworth Press
- Ahmad, M.T.(1994). *The Holy Quran* , Islamabad: Islam International Publications Ltd, sura2:257;
- Ahmad, M.G.(1974). *Sitarah Qaisariyyah*, RuhaniKhaza. vol. 15, pp. 120-1, cited in Chaudhry, p.7
- Ahmad, W.(1988), *A Book of Religious Knowledge for Ahmadi Muslims*, Athens: Fazl-i-Umar Press, p. 38
- Ahmadiyya Muslim Association.(1988). *Persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan*, London, p.6
- Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at, *Mahzarnama the Memorandum: Submission by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama' At to the National Assembly of Pakistan Regarding Its Basic Tenets* , Tilford: Islam International Publications Ltd, (2002), p. 108, retrieved June 2012 from <http://www.alislam.org/library/books/mahzarnama/Mahzarnama.pdf>.
- Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at, *Mahzarnama – the Memorandum*.(2007). p.iii For the text of Ordinance XX, and a full report of the persecution of Ahmadi in Pakistan, see Ensor, J. (ed.), *Rabwah: A Place for Martyrs*, London: Parliamentary Human Rights Group,
- Ali A.(1999). *Economic and political weekly*, *Media and Minorities Exclusions, Distortions and Stereotypes* retrieved May 2012
from:<http://www.cscsarchive.org:8081>
- Ali, C. H. (2001). *Establishment of khilafa* , *Review of Religions* , Vol. 96, No. 5, p. 38
- Ali, M. (1984). *The Ahmadiyyah Movement*, Lahore: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, p. 13.
- Amnesty International.(1999) .*Open Letter to General Parvez Musharraf*, retrieved June 2012 from: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA33>
- Amnesty International.(2007). *Death Penalty*, London, retrieved June 2012 from: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA33/012/2007/>

Amtul, M.(2006). *The Impact of Partition: Refugees in Pakistan*, Delhi: Manohar Press, retrieved June 2012 from: http://www.rcss.org/rcss_ppapers.php

Associate Press of Pakistan, APMA.(2008). *Chairman Asks Government to Increase Minority Seats in Assemblies*, retrieved June 2012 from: http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.

Baixas, L.2007, *Chronological Index: Thematic Chronology of Mass Violence in Pakistan, 1947-* in *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence* , retrieved June 2012 from http://www.massviolence.org/+Pakistan- +?id_rubrique=6&artpage=1-12.

Baha'i Faith in Pakistan, Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/> retrieved June 2012, The Bahá'í World News Service, Media Information, Statistics , retrieved June 2012 from <http://news.bahai.org/media-information/statistics>.

Barrett,D.(2000). *World Christian Encyclopedia*,retrieved June 2012 from: <http://worldchristiandatabase.org/wcd/about/more.asp>

Belton. P. (2007). *Karachi's Forgotten Jews*, *The Jewish Chronicle*, retrieved June 2012 from: <http://website.thejc.com/home.aspx?Aid=54702>

Bennett,J.(2000). *Pakistan's Blasphemy Law U-turn*,BBC World News, retrieved June 2012 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/751803.stm

Bhatti.S.2008. *Pakistan Christen Post*, *The Trial of Pakistani Christen Nation Volume 1*, June 2012 from: <http://pakistanchristenpost.com/ebook/The%20Trial%20of%20Pakistani%20Christen%20Nation.pdf>

CDF, SAHFR(n.d), *Religious minorities in Pakistan*, retrieved May 2012 from: www.safhr.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task

Centre for Peace and Development (CPD) and South Asia Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR).(2011). *Religious minorities in Pakistan, Mapping in Sind and Balochistan*, retrieved May 2012 from: http://www.safhr.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=776&tmpl=component&Itemid=651

Chaudhry, A.A.(1995). *The Promised Messiah and Mahdi*, Islamabad: Islam International Publications,p.5, retrieved June, 2012, from: <http://www.alislam.org/library/books/ludhiana/LectureLudhiana.pdf>

Christian Century.(2005). *Declared on April 11, Christians in Pakistan*,, retrieved June 2012 from: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_11_122/ai_n13806516

Consitution of Islamic Republic Pakistan.(1973). Retrieved May 2012 from <http://www.mofa.gov.pk/Publications/constitution.pdf>

Dawn.(n.d). *editorial policy*, retrieved June 2012 from: <http://dawn.com/category/today-editorial/>

Haenens.(2010). *Ethnic minorities and the media. Trends in research in the Low Countries*, retrieved June 2012 from: <http://repository.ubn.ru.nl/handle/2066/90309>

Haqqani, H.(2005). *Between the Mosque and the Military*, Washington: CEIP Press. Retrieved June 2012 from: <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/05/17/>

Hinnells, J.R.(2005). *The Zoroastrian Diaspora: Religion and Migration*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, retrieved June 2012 from: <http://www.questia.com/library/118032597>

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, *Rights Denied: Ahmadiyya Community*, 29 May 2008. See also Ensor (ed.).

Information concerning persecution against the Ahmadi is gained from a variety of sources including CLAAS, the Barnabus Fund, Amnesty International, the Human

- Rights Commission of Pakistan, and the Pakistan Christian Congress as well as Ahmadi sources.
- Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Ahmadi Held without Any Evidence of Blasphemy – HRCP, 12 February .(2009). (press release), retrieved from <http://www.hrcp-web.org/hrcpList.cfm?catId=180> retrieved June 2012.
- Hussain.M.(2000).Islam Media and Minorities in Denmark, retrieved from May 2012 : <http://csi.sagepub.com/content/48/4/95.short>*Sage Journal*
- HortonYurii.(1999).Portrayal of Minorities in the Film, Media and Entertainment Industries, retrieved June 2012 from : http://www.stanford.edu/class/e297c/poverty_prejudice/mediarace/portrayal.htm
- Iqbal, M.(1984).Qadyaniat, Qaumi Digest, pp. 243-62; retrieved June 2012 from: http://www.friendskorner.com/forum/sitemap_9.xml.gz
- Jaffery.G. (1998).*The Potrayl of Muslim Women in Canadian Mainstream Media*,retrieved June 2012 from:pdfscout.org/The-Portrayal-Of-Muslim-Women-In-Canadian-Mainstream-media
- Jaffery, J.Gul.(1998).The Portrayal Of Muslim Women In Canadian Mainstream Media, retrieved May 2012 from www.cab-acr.ca/english/social/diversity/taskforce/.../cdtf_phase_1a.p
- Jalaludin, (2011), *Pakistan Journal of Social Science*, Potrayl of minorities in elite press of Pakistan, Vol. 30, pp 141-156, retrieved May 2012 from: http://www.bzu.edu.pk/PJSS/Vol30No12010/Final_PJSS-30-1-13.pdf
- Jamil, U.(2002). Minorities in ‘Islamic States’: Explaining Baha’i and Ahmadi Marginalization in Iran and Pakistan, MA thesis, Quebec: McGillUniversity, retrieved June 2012 from:<http://digitool.library.mcgill.ca:8881>
- Khan, A. S.(2009). Sikh Families Leave Orakzai after Taliban Demand Jizia, Daily Times Lahore, 15 April 2009, retrieved June 2012 from:http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009/04/15/story_15-4-2009_pg7_5 .
- Khan, F.(1989).HadratPirMeher Ali Shah of Golra Sharif, 3rd ed., p. 82, retrieved June 2012 from: http://www.golrasharif.com.pk/Hazrat_PirMeher_Ali_Shah_of_GolraSharif.htm.
- Khan, S.K.(2008). Church Attacked in Pakistan, The Persecution Times, retrieved June 2012 from:<http://thepersecutiontimes.com/church-attacked-in-pakistan/2008/03/26/>
- Munir, I.(2002). The Consequence of Fundamentalism on Pakistani media, master thesis, SimonFraser University, retrieved June 2012 from: <http://summit.sfu.ca/item/7508>
- Mussarbash, Y.2007, Islamists Destroy Buddhist Statue, Spiegel , retrieved June 2012 from: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,druck-515958,00.html>
- Najam, A.(2005). Where Have Pakistan’s Jews Gone, Daily Times Lahore, retrieved June 2012from:http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_16-9-2005_pg3_3.



Indian Woman's Search for Identity Vis A Vis Mainstream Bollywood Cinema

Michelle Philip, Wilson College, India

The European Conference on Film & Documentary 2014
Official Conference Proceedings



iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

The search for a purpose in our lives, for an identity which will help us better understand the purpose of our existence has bothered Man for centuries since perhaps the Renaissance. Woman being the Second Sex, the Double oppressed has had things a lot harder than her male counterpart. Filmic representations, either positive or negative, in shaping the Indian woman's psyche: the voices of these women, their bodies and the spaces they occupy is the subject of this exploration.

Replacing the storyteller of yore, movies form the myths we tell ourselves as a culture to, 'banish contradictions and make the world understandable and therefore more habitable.' (Claude Levi Strauss). The potential of film as propaganda was recognised as far back as the First World War when it was used to manipulate the masses. In disagreeing with Munni Kabir's claim that audiences, 'know that films are not real life', a film's potential to *interpellate* to use an Althusserian term, the individual in subtle ways, forcing him/her to take a certain 'subject stance' as a person who has certain values and views, usually reiterating the interests of the ruling class or, in the case of women, reiterating the Patriarchal mind-set, cannot be overlooked. Cinema being the cheapest form of entertainment, viewership is assured, the films acceptance being perhaps, 'the most visible way in which we stage and perform the drama of self-formation.' (John Storey, *Popular Culture as the Roots and Routes of Cultural Identities*) Boys and girls, men and women, emulate their favourite stars-be it hairdos, fashion trends or behaviour. The medium of film represents an 'other' world and mainstream audiences live their fantasies through them and deconstructing the representations of women and men in Mainstream Bollywood Cinema and spectatorship of these films will show how together they 'construct images' promoting dominant cultural values and indirectly shaping both personal and cultural identities. In spite of the reputation of films as commercial products intended strictly to entertain, it is essential to recall Bertolt Brecht's view that, 'Good or bad, art is never without consequences'. The cinematic image needs necessarily to be deconstructed for a greater understanding of why films portraying women in bolder roles, challenging the status quo, usually meet the fate of box office flops with few exceptions and why audiences comprising of men and women alike continue to patronize films where women are portrayed as puppets of patriarchy. The nexus between roles and audience responses is therefore undeniable and forms the basis of this study.

In the Indian context, the status of woman is among the most talked about issues, the paradox being her veneration as goddess on the one hand, while still being thought of as the second, more undesirable sex, male domination stultifying her very existence. With the alarming data on female foeticide, the girl child is first of all, lucky to be born. Mainstream media powerfully peddles images of womanhood producing this creature which is then 'described as feminine' (Simone de Beauvoir). For centuries the Indian woman's sense of self has been tied to her role in society, her identity always a binary to that of man. Bollywood like Cricket, being the religion of the masses, and the actors, gods, more than any other form of media, plays a key role in moulding opinions, constructing images and reinforcing dominant cultural stereotypes. Jackie Stacey's view in 'Star-Gazing: Hollywood and Female Spectator' that, 'identification is the means by which women conspire and become complicit', in the process, is unquestionable; women, identify with women characters on screen, and generate fantasies of power, control and self-confidence within women.

Film maker Satyajit Ray captures this so effectively and poignantly in the opening scenes of his film adaptation of Tagore's short story, *The Broken Nest*, outlining the sense of emptiness in the life of the protagonist Charulatha. His choice of title for the film, *Charulatha*, makes it evident that the focus of the film is the 19th Century Renaissance Bengali woman; educated, well read and married to wealthy and successful men but still missing that satisfaction which comes from achieving a sense of self-worth. In the opening scene space and emptiness unfold, Charu is at a loose end, embroidery keeps her busy, but then the sound of the *damaru* draws her to look outside the window, in search of the origin of the sound. She finds, eventually a circus trainer with his monkey, seemingly mocking her. Metaphorically the *damaru* represents the primordial sound of Lord Nataraj drawing mankind to be a part of the dance of infinity. Charu, however, finds only bondage similar to the circus trainer and his monkey. Which begs the question, can Indian woman ever truly discover her own space where she can dance with abandon to the primordial sound of the *damaru*?

When asked by the director of 'Salt' if she would like to play Bond girl in his next film, Angelina Jolie replied, 'I want to be Bond and nothing else'. A young Indian girl recently posted on her blog, 'They told me I needed a hero, so I became one'. The woman in general and the Indian woman, in particular is a globalised, professional, modern woman, aware of her rights and privileges. Not every Indian woman however can claim this privilege thanks to the diversity of Indian culture, the urban/rural and the class/caste divide. To understand this one must trace the changing role of the heroine in Bollywood cinema and her influence on the female spectator. The role of the female spectator in shaping the representation of the hero should not be undermined and therefore this research will also try to show that although overtly traditional, the average Indian woman, far from being a passive observer, is quite aware of her sexuality and is equally beholder/ beheld(object) of the gaze.

Early film heroines, closely modelled on mythological characters, probably to give respectability to the role and justify the presence of women on screen, were almost always highly virtuous women; helpless weepy creatures whose identity and existence depended entirely on the presence of the man, be it her father, brother, husband or son. (Manu Smriti). The heroine's identity was so strongly fused to that of the hero that it often spilled over into their off screen relationship. Although married, society was willing to accept the affair provided the woman was still single. The larger-than-life roles of the leading ladies revolved around the values of love, care, discipline and obedience. The woman was depicted as the passive, submissive wife, the obedient daughter-in-law, the ideal mother; all roles demanding a sacrifice of self for the sake of country, family and community, making her something of a martyr to her own family. The institutionalization of Patriarchal values in films like *Biwi ho to Aisi*, *Pati Parmeshwar* and more recently, *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gam*, is undeniable. While the hero continues to be posited not as an individual but as a metaphor for the country, the woman is touted as preserver of tradition in stereotypical roles. As far back as 1957, Mehboob Khan's film *Mother India*, told of a poverty-stricken, village woman who raises her two sons against all odds, never succumbing to the advances of the village landlord. Instead she remains the epitome of virtue, displaying not only high moral values but also a strong sense of patriotism as she sacrifices her son Birju, a criminal; killing him for the greater good of the community.

Women in more substantial roles were missing since films with bold, forward, forthright women usually ended tragically with either death or disgrace. It is the view of this researcher that there has been no dearth of bold women; it would instead appear that there were weak, spineless men; men who lacked the conviction to rise to the challenges thrown by bold women. One such instance is seen in P.C. Barua's film *Devdas* (1935). Parvati or Paro, as she is usually called, the housekeeper's daughter, is the perfect, pure conventional heroine on the surface but she is willing to elope when the situation demands. In love with Devdas, the anti-hero Protagonist, she comes to his house to beg him to run away with her before she is married off to someone else by her family. Devdas asks, 'Did anyone see you enter?' instead of taking decisive action one way or another. This film also gives us Chandramukhi, the prostitute with the heart of gold and with it paved the way for the opposition of two kinds of women in film; the noble, honourable, virtuous, socially acceptable heroine and the goodhearted but social outcast prostitute who later came to be recast as the vamp.

A complete antithesis of the traditional woman/heroine is the vamp or courtesan; the wayward, reckless, irresponsible woman or *tawaiif* who either dies in the end or is actively left out of the happy ending. The courtesan was forced into the role but remained virginal, sacrificing her life for the hero like Rekha in the films *Umrao Jaan* and *Muqqadar ka Sikander*. The Vamp, on the other hand, had choices. While the Indian heroine's main aim was to win the heart of the hero, vamps were promiscuous women, cabaret dancers whose aim it was to seduce the man and incidentally also excite the man in the audience without overturning the Indian value system. The role of the vamp was to evoke sexual desire; she could wear the most outrageous clothes, do the sexiest dances to songs loaded with sexual innuendo and move freely through seedy nightclubs. Actress Helen played this role with amazing alacrity, ruling the screen between the 1950s and 70s. Clad in fishnet stockings, feather boas and gloves that stretched to her elbows, she often outshone the heroine as she unapologetically danced onto the frame, challenged the male spectator and disappeared as quickly as she came, boldly claiming her body and the space for herself as an entertainer. Her presence, I believe, is the slippage, where we catch glimpses of the real Indian woman, as Helen confesses that her fan mail included letters not only from men but from appreciative women as well. The modern Indian woman is a bit of both; the traditional and the vamp. She has a strong screen presence, wears skimpy clothing, rides a bike, and fights with the villain all with her long mane of hair seductively flying.

Although it may appear that female roles portrayed women as either good or bad, heroine or vamp, some directors did experiment with non-traditional roles but dislocation if any was only temporary. Since woman defines herself with reference to the other and since she derives her selfhood from her role in society, she is, in turn denied independent existence. The film trajectory is fashioned in such a way that the woman, however different, had to eventually submit to male desire, within the patriarchal framework or face disgrace or death. Directors who try to make a difference still sadly remain chained to cultural constructs where in a film like *Biwi No 1*, the hero can expect to lead a normal married life after having an adulterous relationship but Vidya Balan in her character in *The Dirty Picture* has to die in the end because of her lascivious lifestyle. The talented Jaya Bachchan gives up her career both in reel as well as real life, adhering to traditional values of marriage and

motherhood. Sonali Bendre, in the film *Hum Saath Saath Hain* plays the role of a doctor, but except for a single shot in the entire film, Bendre is shown against a backdrop of domesticity instead of the professional. In films *Fashion* and *Corporate*, intelligent, successful women become victims of a corporate struggle rather than being portrayed as women who have fought to carve a niche for themselves in their professions. Sadly, the focus remains on their shortcomings.

Some directors have dared to explore the taboo subjects of sexual infidelity, surrogacy, divorce and live-in relationships from a woman's point of view in films like *Jism*, *Astitva*, *Salaam Namaste* but these are few and far between. Films like *Chak de India* with innovative realistic and substantial roles showcasing real conflicts faced by ordinary women in a male dominated world and *Black* which portrays a strong female character in a powerful role will, however, continue to be remembered as a Shahrukh Khan or an Amitabh Bachchan film. The films will always be a man's film and the women, always, Charlie's Angels. For the same reason *Revolver Rani* was rejected by mass audiences. A film riding on the success of Kangana Ranaut in *Queen*, it represents the woman as a kind of political Don, a bandit queen. But her forthright and blunt nature as well as overt sexuality comes as too much of a shock for mainstream audiences who reject the film. The film *Queen* on the other hand is a runaway success as the protagonist Rani decides to go off to Europe on her own, taking her planned honeymoon, albeit minus the groom, when she is left almost at the altar as her fiancé calls off the wedding. Innocent and virginal, she has a great time with the really 'nice' people she meets. She saves herself from losing her purse to a bag-snatcher convincing audiences that her innocence and good intentions have kept her safe. The quintessential modern Indian woman continues to be bolder but accepted only when her rebellion is within the accepted shifting paradigm of the Modern *Bharatiya Nari*.

Javed Akhtar, in an interview said, 'we take the morality and aspirations of society and personify them. That becomes a character who is idealized'. Like everything post-modern when the world is not quite sure who or what embodies the individual, the identity of the real Indian woman is called upon to constantly reinvent itself. Black and white has made way for shades of grey, for the woman who can be either good or bad as the situation demands. Roles have changed, the focus of the camera has shifted but the woman returns to the traditional role at the close of the film narrative. However in subtle or not-so-subtle ways, the real woman has begun to reshape her identity from behind the safety of the veil, within the inner courtyard, the *pardah*.

Women are not expected to be sexual beings; they are transformed from virginal young girls into sexless creatures as mothers. In spite of stereotypical casting and the staple of writhing bodies draped in rain soaked saris, the Indian woman has evolved into the individual who can straddle the worlds of the professional and the domestic with equal ease. Indian audiences who will never tire of the female form are increasingly being treated to the camera's eye lingering a fraction of a second longer on the male form. From Salman Khan with his penchant for displaying his toned body, Ranbir Kapoor dropping his towel in *Saawariya*, Shah Rukh Khan displaying his six-pack in *Om Shanti Om*, Ranvir Singh in *Ram Leela* to John Abraham in *Dostana*, the three levels of the cinematic gaze; the camera, the character and the spectator are all directed at the man.

Audiences in the West were treated to the sight of Bo Derek leaving the waves in her one-piece swim suit in the film *10* as long ago as 1979. Halle Berry did a Bo Derek in the Bond film *Die Another Day* in 2002. It was not until 2006 that no less than a Bond hero, Daniel Craig rose like an Adonis from the waves in *Casino Royale* to collective gasps of excitement, preparing Indian audiences for the copycat action of John Abraham in the film *Dostana*, signalling the arrival of the quintessential metrosexual male; a man equally comfortable in the salon as he is in the gym, who thinks it's cool to be in touch with his feminine side. In acknowledging the arrival of the global Indian male, the time has also come to notice what the changing *avatar* of the man represents in relation to his female counterpart. As we rewind to the image of John Abraham coming out of the water, we notice the camera lingering on his body, offering it up as a source of pleasure for a group of giggling girls, subjecting him to the controlling, curious gaze; scopophilia at its Narcissistic best.

Theorists like John Berger, Laura Mulvey and Ann Kaplan continue to posit the male in the audience as the possessor of the gaze, overlooking the role of the female spectator. But there can be no doubt that the male form is being offered as a sacrifice on the altar of male vanity endowing the female spectator with the active power of the erotic look, if we survey it in recent films like Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Ram Leela* and Tarun Mansukhani's *Dostana*, in which Ranvir Singh's torso and John Abraham's derriere remain respectively the spectacle of the cinematic gaze. Film makers are increasingly choosing to place the man on display; to glamorise and sexualize him. The obvious exhibitionism and undiluted appreciation of the screen image of the modern man makes it quite obvious that the woman can be the active bearer of the gaze and not merely passive object of the male gaze. The Indian woman is in the process of rewriting the language of the father, she has learnt to appropriate the tools of patriarchy and subversively use it to define herself within the parametres of the inner courtyard.

Indian Culture which gave us the sculptures of *Khajuraho* and the sex manual, *Kamasutra*, boasts a certain level of comfort with the body and the act of sex. As long as sex remained confined to the private world of individuals, there could be problem. Displaced from the private world because of Western Influence and globalisation, the pressure to retain what we think of as Indian culture has increased. The pantheon of hindu gods gives us the concept of *Ardhana-easwara*-half man/half woman, recognising the need for men to be in touch with their feminine side as well as women to be comfortable with masculine elements of their personalities.

The Indian woman may never perhaps achieve complete equality but she has, it appears managed to partially appropriate the tools of patriarchy, usurping it to make her the designer and shaper of her own identity. The modern *Bharatiya Naari* is truly a shape shifter, a flipped Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde; a modern professional or kitty party, Botox treated, aerobics participating woman by day and a traditional home-maker/manager upon her return home. As the family turns a Nelson's eye to her shenanigans, the woman becomes the definer of her own desires and thereby a greater influence on how the male figure is represented in Mainstream Bollywood Cinema. She may continue to remain in the closet, in *purdah*, behind the veil, but she has come to possess a double consciousness as she watches from within the closet, the voyeuristic camera objectify the male form. By rejecting an overt staking of her claim

to equality, her way has become a more powerful means of subversion, instrumental in shaping the sensibilities of the new age woman.



References:

- Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. England: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, (1972)
- Foucault, Michel as cited in Michele Barrett, *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault*. U.K.: Cambridge Polity Press, (1991)
- Gamman, Lorraine and Marshment, Margaret. *Introduction to The Female Gaze: Women as Viewers of Popular Culture*. London: The Women's Press, (1988)
- Hebdige, Dick. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, London: Methuen, (1979)
- Kabir, Nasreen Munni. *Bollywood: The Indian Cinema Story*. London: Pan Macmillan, (2001)
- Kaplan, Ann. *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze*. New York: Routledge, (1997)
- Modleski, Tania. *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women*. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, (1982)
- Mulvey, Laura. *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975). Originally published-Screen 16.3 Autumn 1975 pp 6-18 <http://www.jahsonic.com>
- Pinto, Jerry. *The Greatest Show on Earth: Writings on Bollywood*. India: Penguin Books, (2011)
- Samaaya, Bhawana. *Cinema Images and Issues*. New Delhi: Rupa and Co., (2004)
- Stacey, Jackie. *Star Gazing: Hollywood and Female Spectatorship*. London: Routledge, (1994)
- Storey, John. *An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular*. Great Britain: Prentice Hall Harvester Wheatsheaf, (1997) www.imdb.com

***Showing Conflict on the Screen:
Film Festivals and Cinematic Events Bridging the Gap between the Individual and
the Community. Cinema and Social Function in Conflict Resolution***

Elisa Costa-Villaverde, University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain

The European Conference on Film & Documentary 2014
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Out of the many roles that a film festival and other forms of cinematic events can play within the community, that of mediating site for debate and reflection on conflict resolution is perhaps one of the most remarkable ones. Film as a medium of reflection on human nature is at its best when accompanied by a forum of debate that reaches the community broadly. A film showing situations of conflict and/or culture clash always involves an individual intellectual exercise for the viewer. A screening followed by a debate with the presence of some of the film agents and with wide media coverage means an even more intense intellectual exercise which usually involves a first step into the conflict resolution process: growing a collective awareness of the need for social reflection, as well as the identification of the causes of clash. The film festival can turn into a window to myriad perspectives on conflict resolution through a collective exercise of analysis of difference and diversity. As a case in point, this paper presents the particular context of the Film Festival and the audiovisual industry in the Canary Islands, a European frontier and a strategic gate to three continents: Africa, America, and Europe. The flow of African population migrating to Europe has become a considerable point of conflict in the social map of the region. This presentation discusses the role that an International Film Festival has played in the perception of a situation that impacts on the whole European continent.

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

“What happens if one gathers scholars at crossroads of disciplines, theories, practices, methodologies and so on, in order to freely examine types of crossings – within or outside a Euro-American sphere- via inter –multi- and/or trans- approaches filtered through visual media?” (Maty, B., & Ness, I. 2012, p. 177).

This Eurofilm Conference forum (indeed a live representation of a crossroad of disciplines, theories and practices within and outside a Euro-American sphere in its approach to the study of film), bringing together University scholars working throughout the globe and inviting all forms of media professionals with a clear aspiration to become “a remarkable exercise in cross-cultural and interdisciplinary discussion, which encourages academics and scholars to meet and exchange ideas and views in a forum encouraging lively but respectful dialogue” (Eurofilm 2014 presentation and CFP website) is an answer to the question above, or at least one of the many possible forms of answering to that question posed by Maty Bâ and Ness (2012) in their editorial presentation of *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture* Special Edition “Media(te) migrations, migrant(s) disciplines: contrasting approaches to crossings” (Vol 3, N2, 2012), a question certainly worth asking when considering the role that filmic events can have on the community and how scholars can contribute their expertise to the community-shared act of searching for global solutions to points of culture clash.

All forms of media professionals, including film and documentary-makers, have long recognized cultural differences (ultimately, all ideologies have their root in cultural codes and values) as the inner cause of all forms of friction when they try to explain conflict through various narratives, as well as in their systematic exploration of ideas, words, and artistic expression. By proposing such a wide-ranging conference theme, we certainly have a golden opportunity here “to encourage exciting new avenues of research, inspire the creation of new explanatory concepts, and provide a context for academic and personal encounters.” (Eurofilm 2014 presentation and CFP website).

As a part of that partial answer to the introductory question above, comprehensively shared and represented in this Eurofilm Forum 2014, this paper intends to contribute some thoughts, reflections and analyses to that unlimited answer that the International Academia needs to keep building throughout this twenty-first century ahead of us. Due to obvious reasons of time and space restriction here, this paper focuses on an object of study precisely framed within one case in point. By attending to the role that the International Film Festival of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (European peripheral region in Spain, geographically located off the West African coast) and other audiovisual events play within a local community highly polarised in their perception of the regular arrival of illegal immigrants, the work here presented intends to draw general conclusions that can be extrapolated into a repeated universal pattern.

Out of the many roles that a film festival and other forms of cinematic events can play within the community –e.g. as a business, economic or educational platform, among others- that of mediating site for debate and reflection on conflict resolution is perhaps one of the most remarkable ones in terms of their social function. Film as a medium of reflection on human nature is at its best when accompanied by a forum of debate that reaches the community broadly. Watching a film showing situations of conflict and/or situations of culture clash is always an individual intellectual exercise for the viewer. A screening followed by a debate with the presence of some of the

film protagonists and creators, together with a wide mass media coverage means an even more intense, collective intellectual exercise which usually involves a first step into the always complex conflict resolution process: growing a collective awareness of the need for social reflection, as well as the identification of the real situation of clash. The film festival or film event usually turns into a window to myriad perspectives on conflict resolution through a collective exercise of analysis of difference, diversity and a whole universe of related subjects.

As mentioned above, the case in point illustrating this social function refers to the Film Festival and the audiovisual industry in the Canary Islands, a peripheral European frontier territory where the recent massive flow of African population migrating into Europe has certainly become a considerable point of conflict in the social map of the Islands. In that permanent system of cultural exchanges that the Atlantic has been for centuries, the Canary Islands -a strategic gate to three continents: Africa, America, and Europe, as well as a historical witness to the Atlantic diasporas- are suffering an undergoing transformation process which has seen the place change from a port of call to an arrival point receiving migration flows from Latin America and West Africa. The audiovisual and film-related events existing in the region, including an International Film Festival, have played a role in a collective position towards a situation of culture clash that ultimately impacts on the whole European continent.

Over the centuries, Spain has been a country of emigrants, particularly during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, due to the political and economic instability of the nation in these last two centuries. From the 1940s onwards the country became a nation of emigrants and exiles too. Therefore, seen from a historical perspective, the transformation of Spain as a nation of emigration and exile into a nation receiving immigration happened in an extremely brief lapse of time, we can affirm that a significant affluence of immigration has only been appreciated in the last fifteen years approximately, or hardly two decades. Contemporary local culture and society are still adapting to the new social patterns and the new human geography brought by this phenomenon. The impact of these rapid changes in the socio-political and cultural context is openly reflected and variedly represented in all current forms of representation in film, media and the arts, and that includes forums of debate at cinema-related events.

In the formulation of his theory of inner exile, Paul Ilie (1981) presented Spain as a country with a history and tradition of migration and exile over the centuries, and claimed this as an inherent condition to the Spanish centenary culture. He even illustrated this historical phenomenon with a lexical and semantic exploration of the presence of migration and exile in the Spanish language, which has imprinted endless terms to express these conditions: “*desterrados, exiliados, emigrados, transterrados, peregrinos, despatriados, y transplantados*” (Ilie, 1981, p. 17).¹ At that time, it would have been totally unconceivable that only some twenty years later we would be

¹ “Exiles, emigrants, pilgrims, expelled, transplanted”. Note that the semantic field for this concept in English is shorter than in Spanish and, therefore, the Spanish vocabulary expressing these and other related notions contains a longer list of words than that of the vocabulary existing in English.

talking about Spain as a country receiving immigration and making out of it one of the most current subjects of preoccupation and debate.

Recent theories of multiculturalism coincide in remarking that current societies (Western world societies in particular) are characterised by their heterogeneity and by having lost the traditionally innocent homogeneity they used to have in the past, an innocent homogeneity which also used to ignore difference, plurality and diversity within one same culture (Innerarity, 2001). In a way, the new theories are nothing but the development and reaffirmation of earlier departing ones, such as Julia Kristeva's thoughts in her *Stranges to Ourselves* (1989), which represents a landmark in the theoretical formulations of ethnicity and gender both in cultural and literary studies. According to her psychoanalytical critical approach, Kristeva was the first theorist postulating that the ethical and political implications of the social relation are interior to the psyche. Again, as far back as the late 1980s, multiple attempts to draw a theoretical frame for studies of ethnicity, migration and the "otherness" were born, with more or less success. It certainly was, and still is, a daunting task, as the literature on these subjects has been an overwhelming production since the late 1960s and early 1970s and the study of these topics involve too many secondary implications.

Ethnicity and anthropology, political interpretations, cultural translation, "otherness" and "foreignness", migration and diaspora, inner and outer exile, and many other interrelated concepts have all been framed under theoretical approaches which converge in twenty-first-century readings of the multicultural societies and their current expanding globalisation. Their interpretation basically comes to the recognition of an essential premise: the discovery of pluralism within what we used to consider as a homogeneous, compact social cluster. Put in other words, this means blurring or fading the line between what we consider as ours and what we consider as stranger, between what we think as familiar and what we think as unfamiliar. In a way, this means, then, a more sophisticated re-elaboration of Kristeva's departing point: becoming strangers to ourselves.

Representations of foreignness and otherness are naturally present in all artistic forms and they permanently seek for innovation in their representations and this is, of course, the case of Spanish film, media and the arts. Although Spain was living practically unaware of all these theories and debates while they were common debates in most Western nations, the importance of such discussions has become a sudden priority in recent years and we can affirm that this nation is now living what Britain and Europe lived at the times of their first generations of immigrants.

In the period of hardly over one decade, the Canaries have seen their social scenario totally subverted: a population which has massively emigrated to Latin America in the past two centuries, mainly to Cuba and Venezuela, is now receiving significant numbers of migrants from those two countries and from all over Central and South America. But it is the massive African affluence that has become the socio-cultural and political phenomenon of the moment. The desperate situation of emergency in Sub Saharan Africa and in some areas of the Maghreb, the unsolved process of decolonisation of the Western Sahara and the considerable level of development that the Canaries had achieved precisely in the Spain of the pre-crisis scenario ironically gave the islands the status of unexpected host to "the new slaves of the 21st century",

as the African immigrants arriving in precarious, crowded, rustic boats have often been defined by the mass media in Spain. Ironically too, after having passively observed the slave trade over centuries, in a past which nowadays seems so distant, the Canaries cannot elude taking an active role in managing one of the world's biggest diasporas at present.

Obviously saving all distances, it would not be excessive to claim that the Canaries are now experiencing a similar situation to that of the London of the time when the commodities of the empire were unloaded at the Canary Wharf, named after the islands at the request of the British trade making companies bringing fruit and wine (amongst other Canarian goods) during the golden years of the English liners. However, on a sudden unexpected turn of the screw, the financial collapse of Spain - nowadays a bankrupt country as a result of the financial crisis- the Canaries, always behind the level of development with reference to that of the mainland territory, currently hold the gloomy score of being one of the top poorest regions in Europe, registering an alarming record of unemployment (34,1% and up to 65,3% in the case of the young population, source: *El País*, 15 April 2014); poverty (39,3% of the population live under the threshold of poverty, source: *El País*, 16 May 2014); and also the worrying top figure of school failure in Europe (28,3%, source: Europa Press, 14 July 2014) and alarming levels of uneducated population for European regular standards. This sudden collapse of a society in an even shorter period of time has turned what seemed to be a thriving road to the building of an exciting new melting pot in the Atlantic, based to a great extent in a reshaping of the concept of insular identity, into an uncertain path to an uncertain social result of the socio-cultural changes to be expected in the insular identity of the Canaries due to the new population sector represented by the immigrant citizens. A point of friction and conflict between the local and the immigrant community, the hardly-existing job market, and the dramatic drop in levels of development which have suddenly brought the region decades back in time (some local and national media have compared this retrogression to the backward region of a pre-democracy/post-dictatorship economic scenario).

Current discourses on these modern Atlantic transnational migrations can be read and analysed in images disclosing features of conflict presented at cinema events; images in which the community can see itself reflected on and that can turn into a departing point towards conflict resolution by debating how the individual relates to that point of conflict in the community/with the community. The discourse analysis can be done in a double direction: on the one hand, by paying attention to the transformation of the human and socio-cultural map of the Canaries. This represents a challenge for both governmental institutions and scholars and other social researchers too. The government institutions have the duty of managing all possible situations of conflict from a local, regional, national, as well as an international approach, since part of the migrants arriving today in London, Paris, and other European capitals and cities come from Africa via Spain: usually, African migrants of the twenty-first century reach European territory through a first stop in this Atlantic archipelago in their route to the Continent. On the other hand, academics and social researchers in general have in this case of transnational and transcontinental migration a clear case for exploring a situation of identity re-shaping and transformation, and an indispensable reference point for studying changes in cultural identities.

The attention to analyses and reflections on how collective forums of debate in cinema-related events can help as a part of a process of transformation at a major scale, that is to say, within the context of the major agents involved, indicates that from very many perspectives, this situation of culture clash, and often of conflict seen from a section of the public perspective, has been present in different cinematic events in the capital city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. The international Film Festival appears as a frame of debate and discussion which indeed has quite a remarkable repercussion and impact on the local media. Whether attracted by the presence of international celebrities, or by the interest in the event itself, the public gets enthusiastically involved in the Festival and it is undoubted that the massive media coverage has helped in this public involvement and participation. Presentations and debates by film makers, producers, or performing protagonists have been systematically fully booked (or nearly fully booked) throughout the 13 editions (details consulted with the Film Festival organisation in personal communication, as well as contrasted with the publications catalogue resulting from the Festival, held at the Canarian Film Archives).

Coincidentally, there has been no special edition of the festival exclusively devoted to the illegal migration phenomenon in the region, and it is the thesis of this paper that, precisely the defocalization or decentralisation of this subject has perhaps helped to debate the issue of conflict (that is, the conflict of local population rejecting illegal migrants with xenophobic connotations) from a different perspective from that traditionally shown on the canonical bulleting news editions by the established mass media (systematically presented as conflict and controversy only).

Not really differing from the real core of the discussion when rising points about the arrival of illegal immigration in different waves throughout the last decade, the many themes of debate in the film presentations with the public participation in the festival have dealt with universal themes with a prevailing reflection on the subject of the individual versus the community. The participation in a such a debate from whichever of the infinite perspectives it may take will always mean a reflection on clash and conflict and one of the many chances for individually and collectively working towards bridging the gap between the individual and the community.

Philosopher Claudio Canaparo (2012) observes that political approaches to the issue of migration, like the canonical media approaches, also tend to apply the conflict perspective:

“Traditional political approaches currently treat migration issues as a newspaper reporter carries out a criminal’s section of a Mediterranean media that is dealing with everyday social events or, alternatively, as part of the State’s policy making activities. Classical social approaches consider migration in relation to general categories like ‘society’, ‘culture’, ‘education’, etc. As standard analysis these approaches prevail within the majority of authors and are grounded in a sort of social determinism justified by philosophical naturalism and/or by a financial form of capitalism” (Canaparo, 2012, p. 195)

Alternatively to the common established norm, an event like a film festival can offer room for other approaches outside the canonical media and politics presentation of

illegal migration. The organisation of parallel activities such as debates, round tables, lectures, talks, presentations with the film agents (actors, directors, producers, and others), as is the case at the International Film Festival of Las Palmas, offers to the public that space of thought leading to an awareness of the many dimensions and varied perspectives of consideration that the established media canon usually prevent from discussing. The social function of activities like these allows for a collective reflection on an issue which the individual regularly perceives as conflict only or mainly. Thanks to the act of debating the issue of the individual versus the community, even if the debate is not openly held on migration, images like these two following below can be open to other perceptions and interpretations different from controversy. The images are licensed and published by Boston.com, both authors and agency are credited in the captions (as they appeared published):



Would-be immigrants sit on a fishing boat while arriving at Arguineguin port in the Spanish Canary Island of Gran Canaria, September 18, 2008. Some 86 hopeful immigrants were spotted five miles south of Gran Canaria island and towed into port on their way to reaching European soil from Africa, according to authorities. (REUTERS/Borja Suarez)



African immigrants wait to get off their rescue boat as they arrive to Los Cristianos port on Spain's Canary Island of Tenerife early September 30, 2008. Some 229 would-be immigrants were rescued by Spanish rescue workers after being intercepted aboard a fishing boat adrift some 60 miles (97 km) offshore. (REUTERS/Santiago Ferrero)

These are only two samples of the many millions of images repeatedly shown by the canonical media to Spanish viewers, who are made spectators of a show presented by information agencies as a controversial issue, as a provoking dispute, as a threat to the local population, ultimately, as one form of conflict. Dissenting voices have emerged from different social sectors strongly criticising this one-sided presentation and have long vindicated a comprehensive, multi-perspective analysis to be encouraged among the local and national populations. The Academia has been a particularly active sector of society in discussing the issue of African migration to Europe, and so have been visual artists (many of them through film and documentary). An international voice representing both social sectors at the same time, that of Roshini Kempadoo, a media artist and a scholar at the University of East London has clearly summarised the reality of this situation, as her words lucidly reflect on:

“By September 2010, agitated by the portrayal of ‘migrants arriving in Europe’ I became familiar and numbed to the way the ‘irregular African immigrant arriving in Europe’ had been visualised. Online, the result of keyword searches using Google’s image menu such as those found in the ‘inmigrantes en España’ section only confirmed the images seen in the popular press. Online these thousands of photographs appear on the screen as if little points of light overwhelming the monitor’s surface. Search engines truly make a mockery of differentiation between types of images - indiscriminately presenting photographs associated with the key words in the simplest and literal way. These photographs – as documentary ‘windows on the world’ range from the most technically sophisticated stock photographs for commercial use, through to photographs posted on personal blogs taken with a mobile phone by a tourist

whilst on their beach holiday caught up in the 'event' of a boat landing on a Spanish coast. Whilst the techniques, quality and composition of the photographs vary, I stare wearily and blankly at the view of the thousands of homogenized images that have somehow become endlessly repetitive, commonplace and normalized into our visual repertoire. There is a coherence and consistency of colour and shapes such as the bright red of the blankets, the danger flags, the Red Cross symbol, the black woollen scull caps worn by many of the African men as arrivants, or the bright orange paint of the 'official' vessels being deployed. What is most disturbing in these commonly made, now stereotypical and repetitive photographs of the 'boat people – the *cayqueros*', is the portrayal of the African arrivants at the centre of the event. Like a distant echo to the cumulative photography and texts in the popular press that visualised black folk arriving from the Caribbean to the United Kingdom in the 1950s, the African and Arab in Europe is at the Centre of the social problem itself (Hall 1984). This journey is of a different and exhausting kind; an arrival that for many Europeans appears unexpected, and is occurring in response to an altogether different economic moment of global inequality. As African men appear to be subjected to being photographed and filmed, official processing, charitable assistance they are made to stoop, sit, crouch, clustered together as a mass of non-entities. And the visual event thus created of the 'migrants arriving in Europe', contains a look back from those in the image. It is a non-communicative presence with not the slightest flicker of response in the eyes or in body language. The question is why would we, as those sitting on the shore, somehow expect or long for something else, some dialogue?" (Kempadoo, 2012, p. 242).

Under the same premises and reflections, the work presented here is framed within a much wider research project and this paper represents an early advance of the final results yet to be published at a later stage. Throughout a seven-year period, a sample of reactions towards the reading or watching of canonical pieces of news about illegal migration in the Canaries by students of the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria has been collected and these have been contrasted with reactions by the same students attending cinematic events followed by a collective forum of debate on films and/or documentaries with a wide range of subjects involving thoughts and reflection on individual versus collective identities.

The reactions to the media presentation of headlines referring to the arrival of illegal migrants have been collected at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting from students enrolled for an English course applied to translation with a major focus on cultural values and multiculturalism. A majority of students manifested their perception of this subject as a problematic, controversial issue and in extreme cases, a significant number of them showed alarming xenophobic connotations, under no circumstances acceptable for any member of the higher education community. The overall evaluation is that students at higher education mostly perceive the issue of illegal migration as a situation of conflict and as a real threat to the normal functioning of the local community.

Once the same students have attended one or more of the varied types of cinematic events that the capital city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria offers, the International Film Festival, the Film Society activities at the University, events organised by the

regional centre for audiovisual arts –Gran Canaria Espacio Digital-, the Casa Africa (the national centre for international relations with Africa in Spain, located in Las Palmas), the *Filmoteca Canaria*, the Latin American Film Society which organises the *Ibértigo* Film Festival, among many others, the number of students changing from slightly to considerably their attitude towards the same issue was striking and worth of consideration and thought. The common element to all the events was the presence of a debate between the audience and the film agents on the themes contained in the films.

I argue that it is through debating and reflecting publically with the community that we might further develop and map a response to popular imagery and collective projections of foreignness by locals or “non-others”. It is through exploring and envisioning practices that can rectify conflictive popular definitions of situations of culture clash and conflict that we scholars can make more explicit the viewpoints, perspectives, perceptions and positions of all sides involved in the context of illegal migration.

The role that the International Film Festival of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria has for the cultural development of the community is evident in many other ways, and the function here asserted is that of helping to bridge the gap between the individual and the community on the grounds that “each intellectual act is a path traced between a form of ignorance and a form of knowledge, a path that constantly abolishes any fixity and hierarchy” (Rancière, 2011, p. 11). It is perhaps by directly addressing the real object of study, that is to say, dealing with facts first, and relegating the necessary theoretical frame of analysis to a later stage of the action to undertake against xenophobic perceptions of conflict by the community, and not viceversa, that we can react to and intervene locally in processes of cultural clash. Claiming the need to act at an administrative, governmental level and at educational institutions is stating the obvious. What this paper vindicates is the need to attend to all forms of events outside the educational, governmental, and economical institutions as necessary companions to these major actions in their condition of agents for awareness of conflict and culture clash.

The current socio-cultural map of the new human geography in the Canary Islands demands that events bringing negotiation between individuals and the community as well as awareness of changing cultural scenarios keep proliferating and not disappearing as it tends to happen due to the current financial crisis situation in Spain. As a final reflection, we should note that this case in point here considered represents a global pattern and so does the social function of cinematic and audiovisual events here identified as the bridging of the individual and the community. Ultimately, migration has become a massive global phenomenon in the twenty-first century and it is no foreign subject to any human community nowadays, therefore, all individuals are able to debate and reflect on this subject with their own community, a debate leading to further awareness through collective thinking and consideration: “speculating about experiences is not the same as *having* the experience” (Canaparo, 2010, p. 196).

The human kind of the twenty-first century is the human community in which one case in point represents the globality in most of the significant social issues.

“Finally, the question is not only about how far academic approaches to migration have changed or not, because it is more relevant to acknowledge that all elements related to human knowledge have radically changed in recent years. Migration’s basic questions may not have changed substantially since the nineteenth century [...], but the current planetary environment is substantially different –and we cannot think (about) migration outside of this environment or ecological immediacy” (Canaparo, 2010, p. 196).



Bibliography

Canaparo, C. (2012). Migration and radical constructivist epistemology. *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture*, 3 (2), 181-200. doi: 10.1386/cjmc.3.2.181_1

Ilie, P. (1981). *Literatura y exilio interior*. Madrid: Editorial Fundamentos.

Kempadoo, R. (2012). Creating notebooks, photographs and interventions: Visualizing African, Caribbean and Arabic presence in Europe. *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture*, 3 (2), 241-254. doi: 10.1386/cjmc.3.2.241_1

Kristeva, J. (1991). *Strangers to ourselves*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Maty Bâ, S. & Ness, I. (2012). Media(te) migrations and migrant(s') disciplines: Contrasting approaches to crossings. *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture*, 3 (2), 173-179. doi: 10.1386/cjmc.3.2.173_2

Rancière, J. (2011). *The emancipated spectator*. (G. Elliot, trans.). London and New York, NY: Verso.

The logo for the International Association for Cultural and Media Studies (iafor) is centered on the page. It consists of the lowercase letters 'iafor' in a light blue, sans-serif font. The text is enclosed within a circular graphic composed of two overlapping, semi-transparent arcs: a red one on the left and a blue one on the right, which together form a partial circle around the text.

©The International Academic Forum 2014
The International Academic Forum (IAFOR)
Sakae 1-16-26-201
Naka Ward, Nagoya, Aichi
Japan 460-0008
www.iafor.org