
Folklore Studies and Popular Film and Television: A Necessary Critical Survey

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Folklore Studies and Popular Film and Television: A Necessary Critical Survey

The study of folklore and popular film and television, although frequently ignored by folkloristics and film scholars alike, has produced a number of articles and paradigms which not only inform its own study, but also other disciplines. This current study is a much-needed critical survey of the existing academic literature on the relationship between contemporary folkloristics and popular film and television.

IN A RECENT ARTICLE IN *CONTEMPORARY LEGEND*, Paul Smith began by decrying the seeming dearth of folkloristic scholarship on popular film. The author noted that “there is perhaps a certain irony in the fact that, while such films as *Candyman* (1992) recognize the role of the folklorist as collector of contemporary legends, very little attention has been given by folklorists to the role of the film and television industry as users and disseminators of contemporary legends” (1999:138). Smith went on to give a short list of those few folklorists who have published on popular film and contemporary legend. Granting that Smith’s focus, on contemporary legends specifically, is necessarily a limited one, he does omit a number of facets whereby academic folklorists can explore popular film and television. It was in response to Smith’s article that I felt it was time for a survey of the academic literature on folklore and popular cinema.

Folklore studies have examined, or at least recognized the importance of examining, popular cinema from a number of perspectives. At one level folklorists are able to observe and trace the process of homogenizing cultural expressions through the mass media. On the other hand, a great deal of folklore scholarship has explored those traditional narrative types and motifs when they appear in popular film and television. Yet, still other folklorists have noted further areas for fruitful exploration of popular cultural texts, such as how popular culture texts reflect contemporary belief traditions, ethnographies of fan culture, the rituals involved with popular cultural consumption, narratives about technology and technological industries, and the existence of multiple versions of seemingly fixed texts. These contributions to folkloristics need enumerating. Since 1989, when Bruce Jackson wrote “A Film Note” in the *Journal of American Folklore*, wherein he, like Smith above, decried the absence

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of systematic research into folklore and film, much has been published. It is time to take stock of these issues so that new areas of film and folklore research can develop.

Märchen and the Movies

Stith Thompson recognized cinema as both a marvelous channel of tale dissemination and a kind of storytelling event:

The cinema, especially the animated cartoon, is perhaps the most successful of all mediums for the presentation of the fairytale. Creatures of the folk imagination can be constructed with ease and given lifelike qualities. Undoubtedly the best of these performances up to the present time [1946] is the Walt Disney production of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* [1937]. Many adults who had long ago dropped their interest in the fairytale unexpectedly found great pleasure in this old product of the folk imagination. (1977[1946]:461)

For Thompson, tale dissemination via cinema would, he felt, encourage viewers to rediscover these tales. He marveled at the fact that one single text could reach so many people at the same time (124). Within Thompson's approach to filmed Märchen was the implicit recognition that the Disney text would be considered but one text among countless other variants.

Ceding Thompson's implicit recognition, later theorists, both folklorists and nonfolklorists, saw the cinema, especially the Disney texts, as an attempt to become definitive, thereby solidifying a single variant. Peggy Russo observed that traditional narratives "can . . . be replaced by *bogus visual versions of themselves*" (1992:19, emphasis mine). Russo traced the attack against Disney at least as far back as 1965, when

In a . . . letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, Frances Clark Sayer criticized Disney "for his debasement of the traditional literature of childhood." Sayer accused him of: 1) lack of respect for the "integrity of original creations"; 2) "manipulation and vulgarization" of text for his own ends; 3) lack of regard for the "anthropological, spiritual, or psychological truths" of folklore; 4) "fixing his mutilated film versions in books which are cut to a fraction of their original forms"; and 5) "illustrations of those books with garish pictures, in which every prince looks like a badly drawn portrait of Cary Grant; every princess a sex symbol." (21)

The Disney Corporation's fixing of their variants into book form (and, in Sayer's opinion, the low quality of that form) clearly implicated Disney in assuming ownership of folk narratives by the creation of hegemonically "definitive" texts. This perception is that the movies fix traditional narratives into single "definitive" texts, which replace the more fluid oral variants. Linda Dégh noted:

In the global village (to use the apt term of Marshall McLuhan) created by the media, a new communality has formed on the basis of the homogenizing effect of uniform information and the mass-marketing of stories to a mass society structured into occupational, ethnic, age, sex, religious, and other population groups, also identifiable as folk or folklore-transmitting communities. The even flow of identical information systematically enculturates the citizens of the world, turning them into the consumers of identical cultural goods by creating a symbolic egalitarian social order that supersedes segmentation by national boundaries. (1994:23)

Dégh seems to indicate that folklorists often felt that popular culture, especially through such media as film and television, attempted to homogenize divergent cultures into a single, unified system of consumerists. Local cultures and regional variants, it was felt, were in jeopardy of being taken over by this popular-culture juggernaut.¹

Likewise Gerald Thomas noted the role television soap operas played in the Franco-Newfoundland storytelling tradition. Thomas recognized that the same word, *contes*, was used to refer to both soap operas and to orally told traditional folktales (1980:343). He ascribed “enough similarity between the real life of French Newfoundlanders (and others) and the soap opera plots to suggest a high degree of personal identification.” What Thomas focused on is the similarity between the two media along traditional narrative formations: specifically Alex Olrik’s “Law of Two to a Scene” in soap-opera cinematography and narrative structure (347). However, Thomas also pointed out that soap operas influenced oral Märchen performance in the community: prior to widespread television reception in the region, storytelling performances were more heavily gesticulated, and he hypothesized that the more static style of current Märchen performance was due to the influence of television drama and its static performance style (348).

Although Thomas made an important observation, the main thrust of his article was the loss of traditional performance styles, and this was in keeping with the perception of the devolutionary influence of the mass media. In the same vein, Elizabeth Tucker viewed the influence of mass-mediated versions of narratives as replacing the oral variants previously in circulation. This coincided with Sayer’s point that Disney versions of traditional Märchen replaced the original orally circulated text and thereby created a sense of canonicity. Tucker’s research was geared to demonstrate that children today were allowing video narrative texts to predetermine their own storytelling performance styles. “None of them [the children she studied] used anything but video versions as starting points for narrations; to this extent, I can assert that videotape is overshadowing traditional print versions of stories” (1992:25). That being said, Tucker noted the *importance* of video-mediated narrative in developing children’s storytelling repertoires. She mentioned a narrative variant of “Cinderella” told to her by a four-year-old informant named Emily, who fused the romantic fairytale with a vampire story.

There was no conflict in her mind between the plot structure of Cinderella and the plot of a typical vampire movie, which seems to be the other model for narration here; she simply took what she wanted from both sources and put them together into her own story. While at least one child in the audience wanted to make sure that the name “Cinderella” was clearly mentioned, Emily knew what she wanted to do and had the confidence in her own skills as a storyteller. (28)

Tucker’s article develops Sylvia Grider’s observation that children frequently reiterate plot narratives from their favorite television shows and movies, but that these reiterations are highly complex and original storytellings. Grider labeled these narrations “media narraforms,” defining them “[as embodying] a symbiotic relationship between the media and oral tradition: the media provide the content, and oral tradition provides the situations and format for the performance of these contem-

porary, hybrid narratives" (1981:126). Likewise, Kay Stone noted that Disney's filmed versions of traditional Märchen, by the retention of the fantastic elements in these stories, allowed the child's imagination to be developed (1981:236–37).

Like Grider and Stone, Tucker also recognized that "while we should keep an eye on children's involvement with VCRs, we needn't be too concerned about creativity being wiped out by repeated viewings of stories on videotape. At *present* there seems to be a productive interdependence between the TV screen and that old-fashioned storytelling device, the mouth" (1992:31, emphasis mine). Tucker noted that although both the mass-mediated and the orally transmitted narrative were currently able to survive concurrently, such coexistence was temporary. Implicit in her article is the idea that both could not survive, and the oral was the more likely to die out so the mass-mediated could live.

Studies such as those by Tucker, Thomas, and Russo debate whether or not mass-mediated texts can be considered folklore, primarily because of their medium of transmission. Elizabeth Bird, conversely, does not see the means of transmission as problematic:

we need to forget about whether or not popular culture "transmits" folklore. Rather, we begin to consider that certain popular culture forms succeed because they act like folklore. To some extent they may have replaced folk narratives, but not with something completely new. Thus popular culture is popular because of its resonance, its appeal to an audience's existing set of story conventions. (Bird 1996:n.p.)

It is this development, of the ways in which popular culture can behave like traditional folklore forms, which many current studies build upon. For example, Koven explored how films like *The Joy Luck Club* (1993) and *How to Make an American Quilt* (1995) reproduce women's speech patterns, narrative contexts, and structures (Koven 1999a), or how *Schindler's List* (1993) can function as ritual storytelling, akin to the Jewish Passover retellings of the Exodus from Egypt (Koven 1998).

Beyond Documentary Cinema: A Neglected Area?

Bruce Jackson commented that, by and large, folklorists have neglected examining feature film and television as an area of study, even to the extent that Dorson's *Handbook of American Folklore* "ignores films entirely" (1989:388). Or rather, Dorson's *Handbook* ignores the *feature fiction film* as an area of folkloristic study, as there are three chapters, two of which are methodological (Blaustein 1983:397–401; Sherman 1983:441–46) and one presentational (Carey 1983:507–12), on the ethnographic *documentary* film and videographic methods of field collection. I shall discuss below how the documentary diverges from what I am mainly concerned with here; however, at this stage let me note in a more preliminary way the seeming privileging of the documentary film as an area of study for folkloristics.

A major and in-depth consideration of the ethnographic film falls outside of the purview of this study, but Sharon Sherman focused almost exclusively on a particular manifestation of the ethnographic film, what she called the *folkloric* film: "Any film having folkloric content might be of use to us, but those films called folkloric

films . . . are ones which deal primarily with topics folklorists study and whose intent is to meet the dictates of folkloristic research and teaching” (Sherman 1981:16). We might potentially call any film folkloric, but true folkloric films are made by trained folklorists or were made in close consultation with folklorists (Sherman 1996:265). It is important to recognize here that Sherman exclusively studied the documentary film, not popular-fiction films:

Many folklorists who use film are tied to the models adopted by their documentary-film forerunners and to the conceptual premises of past-folklore scholars. Thus, in folkloric films, the rural often takes precedent over the urban, and the past assumes greater importance than the contemporary. (1996:264)

Implicit in Sherman’s work is a privileging of the documentary film as the sole discourse for folkloristics.

Sherman did note the existence of folkloristic and ethnographic detail within nonfolkloric (i.e., nondocumentary) films (265), albeit in passing:

A unique twist to the study of film and folklore is the popular use of folklore as the primary plot line or unifying thread for commercial feature films. *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1988), for example, exploits the practices of voodoo. The urban legend about a baby-sitter frightened by a telephone caller is the basis for *When a Stranger Calls* (1979). The film *Avalon* (1990) plays upon family and ethnic narratives to structure the larger narrative of family and ethnic-neighborhood dissolution in the America of the 1940s through the 1960s, using one family as exemplar. *When Harry Met Sally* (1989) relies on the courtship narratives of many different couples as a transition device. (265)

Karl Heider perhaps best illustrated the main difference between the ethnographic film and the fiction film when he noted,

In some sense we could say that all films are “ethnographic”: they are about people. . . . There are many films which have little pretension to ethnographicness but which are of great interest to the ethnographer. I personally feel that *The Last Picture Show* [1971], about the high school class of 1952 in a small Texas town, is a statement which captures the culture of my own high school class of 1952 in Lawrence, Kansas. Likewise, *The Harder They Come* [1973] (about Jamaica), *Scenes from a Marriage* [1973] (about middle-class Swedish marriage), or *Tokyo Story* [1953] all present important truths about cultural situations. As statements (native statements, in fact) about culture, these films are important, and they could very easily be used as raw data or documents in ethnographic research. I am tempted to call them more than just “raw data” and think of them as “naïve ethnography.” (1976:5)

For Heider, as well as for Sherman, the feature fiction film can be seen as *naïve ethnography*; that is, although they are neither *ethnographic* (documentary) nor made by/for ethnographers, the filmic materials may be of *interest* to ethnographic audiences since the fiction film often depicts an emic insight, often complete with an emergent context. However, both perceptions are somewhat limiting insofar as they see popular cinema as tangential to the larger projects of folklore/ethnography. To paraphrase Jackson, such assumptions are neither fair nor accurate (Jackson 1989:388), as some folklorists *have* explored popular cinema. Let me now move on to those scholars who have researched popular cinema in folkloristic terms in order to demonstrate some of the areas of investigation that can be followed.

Motif Spotting—Myth, Märchen, and Legend

One area of popular film that Jackson recognized folklorists have considered is the area of folklore *in* film.

With ordinary film, it's usually a matter of folklore *in* film, the equivalent of Folklore in Faulkner or Folklore in Shakespeare . . . things to be plucked out of a context otherwise lacking folkloric moment. *JAF* regularly reviews films about folklore events or folk processes or folk performers, but it has never published a review or article dealing with feature films or television narratives. (1989:388, emphasis in original)

Put slightly differently, some folklore studies have emerged which seek to enumerate folklore types and motifs when they occur in popular media, in other words, studies that engage in “motif-spotting.”

“Motif-spotting” takes its methodology from the debates surrounding “folklore and literature.” It has been suggested that the most direct way for individual fiction films to be considered “folklore” is to follow some of the theoretical writings that tie folklore studies to literature. Neil Grobman, for example, proposed that one must assess “how authors use folklore in their writings” (1979:17). To follow this procedure requires the scholar to identify the author as being in direct contact with folklore and its scholarly debates (18). The problem with applying the “folklore and literature” debates to discussions about folklore and popular cinema is that literary texts are produced by individual authors whose connection with “folk culture” is more readily provable. Cinema and television are much more collaborative communicative media and, therefore, if one is required to make a connection between the text and “legitimate” folk culture, whose connection is to be considered authoritative?²

When folklorists have looked at popular mass-mediated texts, they did so in order to identify traditional tale types and motifs *in* films. Diverse scholars like Leslie Fiedler and Harold Schechter noted the similarities between Vietnam War movies and traditional hero narratives. Both authors saw in movies like *The Deer Hunter* (1978) and *Apocalypse Now* (1979) (Fiedler 1990), *Rambo* (1985), and *Platoon* (1988) (Schechter and Semeiks 1991) similarities between these “original” texts and the expression of the American “Frontier Myth,” to use Schechter and Semeiks’s phrase. The myths expressed in those films, as Fiedler noted, “represent a symbolic effort to bring back home again what we hope can be recuperated in imagination if not in fact: a not ignoble part of us all squandered in an ignoble war [the Vietnam War]” (1990:399). Schechter and Semeiks likewise noted that in the Vietnam War film the American hero myth was regenerated for the 1980s’ movie-going audience (1991:24–25). Schechter and Semeiks argued that *Rambo* and *Platoon* engaged American audiences with traditional hero narratives. *Platoon* was an initiatory rite, while *Rambo* was a captivity-escape tale. This appeal to traditional narrative patternings accounts for the films’ success, and not the critical assumption of a decline in the audience’s taste. If history were unable to appeal to a cultural perception of the American Self, so their arguments went, then through the medium of popular cinema the culture could regenerate its own sense of worth by righting the wrongs it was unable to fix in “reality.” This was

a highly functionalist argument, one that posited that cinema played itself out for a cultural audience that needed to see its own self-perceptions reified.³

Folklorists have also been concerned with the identification of Märchen tale types and motifs in popular cinema. For some scholars, the Disney-effect, taking traditional tales and turning them into mass-mediated and authoritative texts, as Peggy Russo and Frances Clark Sayer noted above, could have a potentially detrimental effect on the transmission of these tales. In this light, Thompson's affection for Disney movies seems overly optimistic: as a trained and professional folklorist, Thompson was in the ideal position of recognizing that Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, for example, was but one variant of the narrative tradition, but he gave no recognition that children, or adults, would see these cinematic texts as anything other than authoritative. Another point Sayer raised was that these films frequently sanitize the narratives to be so inoffensive as to be almost meaningless. "Sayer argued that Disney 'sweetens' or removes the conflict in folklore that allows children to learn the 'tragic dimension of life, the battle between good and evil, between weak and strong . . . [and] . . . all that is good in the human spirit'" (Russo 1992:21).⁴

Elsewhere, Linda Dégh and Andrew Vazsonyi asked a stimulating question: given their assumption of a "decline" in the magical worldview, why do television advertisements appeal frequently to magical aspects of the products they are flogging? The authors have understood Märchen as a fictitious genre, and the "realistic" setting of television advertisements are mere facade (1979:61). The television commercial is the American adult equivalent of the folktale—for example, magical assistance, and promise of riches beyond our dreams. They also discussed how beliefs were manipulated under the fictitious surface of television advertising.

In spite of the seemingly obvious recourse to Disney films and the less obvious discourse of television advertising, the dominant area for the identification of traditional tale types and motifs was the horror movie. This genre appeared to be the one place, next to television advertising, where the magical worldview that the Märchen purports could exist without being questioned in a secular context. Of course different forms of magic exist within any number of sacred-belief traditions, but for the *secular* world, the horror film's population of monsters, devils, and "hook-handed" killers allowed the "suspension of disbelief" of their existence to function based on the verisimilitude of this genre to the folktale.

Alex Alexander (1979) noted the similarities in *Carrie* (both the novel by Stephen King [1975] and the film by Brian De Palma [1976]) and the "Cinderella" story. This horror story about a young girl who discovers her telekinetic abilities on the eve of her high school prom was told as a modern variant on the traditional Märchen. Alexander made the easy equation between prom and ball, and between her evil mother with the evil stepmother of the folktale. There is even a motif from the "Ugly Duckling" folktale where the ugly duckling turns into a beautiful swan in Carrie's movement from gawky adolescent to beautiful young woman at the prom, a motif also present in some of the Cinderella versions.

Harold Schechter also addressed De Palma's *Carrie*, noting the similarity to folktale-like narratives with which he was familiar. In particular, Schechter dealt with the final image of the film, where Carrie's arm, as he describes it, "suddenly erupts from the

grave" (1988:27). He noted the same motif, of an arm emerging from the grave (or similar surface), in such films as *Friday the 13th* (1980) and *Deliverance* (1974) (in both cases, the arm breaks the surface of a lake; 27–28). The same image was used to advertise the film *The Evil Dead* (1984) (33–34). Schechter traced this single motif back to the Grimm Brothers and their story, "The Willful Child" (29).⁵ The significance of this observation was that regardless of a film's sophistication or its technical complexity, the images a filmmaker uses to tell his or her story are often analogues to traditional Märchen. Schechter took these analogues even further:

to look once more at *Carrie*, however—what we see there . . . is an even more intriguing phenomenon: a pop entertainment which does not simply project nightmares and dabble in dangerous fantasy, but which contains precise parallels to particular and widespread primitive taboos, specifically ones dealing with . . . the dead. (32)

Schechter had likewise done a similar study on the "bosom serpent" motif in American folklore and drawn parallels to popular cinematic representations. He summarized the bosom serpent story thus: "through some unfortunate circumstance or act of carelessness . . . a snake . . . is accidentally ingested by, or grows inside the body of, the unlucky individual, where it remains until it is expelled or in some way lured out of the victim's body" (20). The well-known sequence in Ridley Scott's film, *Alien* (1979), most clearly demonstrates this motif, where an unlucky crew member of a space mining expedition is impregnated with an alien lifeform in his chest, which bursts out during the crew's supper. As Schechter noted, "like the traditional, oral versions that have been popular for hundreds of years, [the sequence in *Alien*'s] only purpose is to produce emotional response: shock, revulsion, morbid fascination" (23).

In recent years, horror movies, and series of horror movie franchises, have emerged based even more explicitly on Märchen than the *Carrie* example. Throughout the 1990s, horror-movie audiences have been presented with adult-oriented versions of traditional Märchen, such as *Snow White*, subtitled *A Tale of Terror* (1997), and *Rumpelstiltskin* (1995). As well, fans of the genre would be familiar with the *Leprechaun* series (1993, 1994, 1995, and 1996), or even *Pinocchio's Revenge* (1996). But this tradition of making adult-oriented films out of Märchen is not new: the French surrealist poet, filmmaker, and artist Jean Cocteau made *La belle et la bête*, an adult reworking of "Beauty and the Beast," in 1946. Cocteau's *La belle et la bête* is also noteworthy for blending the genre of Märchen with the horror film, and as I demonstrate below, *that genre's* connection is also to the legend. Cocteau filmed the Beast's castle in such a way as to be familiar to anyone who grew up on the haunted-house movies of the 1930s. In many respects, what Cocteau did in *La belle et la bête* is return the folktale to its adult audience by appropriating the visual iconography of the contemporary horror movie.⁶

Finally, special mention should be made of Frank Hoffmann's research, as we move in this survey from adult-oriented Märchen to *adult* Märchen. In his 1965 article, "Prolegomena to the Study of Traditional Elements in the Erotic Film," Hoffmann noted that pornographic and "stag" films utilize a number of traditional tale types and motifs. Basing his study on the collection of films held at the Kinsey Institute of Sexual Research, the author wrote:

I have seen and taken notes on approximately 280 of the Institute's collection of 400 [pornographic films]. Of these, close analysis reveals that 175—or better than 60 percent—contain recognizable folkloristic elements. Many of these can be related directly to existing motifs in Stith Thompson's Motif-Index of Folk Literature, whereas others relate to new motifs which I have developed out of my analysis of collections of erotic folktales. (1965:145)

Within legend scholarship, Julia George noted “many non-ethnographic fiction films seem to exhibit elements of folk narrative, transposed into a visual rather than primarily an oral mode of transmission. The structure of film, as well as the themes, present often parallel traditional storytelling methods” (1982:159). She also noted that the horror film in particular shares “components of structure and function” of contemporary legends (159). She applied Alan Dundes' three steps of legend narrative structure to the horror film: interdiction—violation—and consequences (175) and concluded that “horror stories function to scare and to warn; the same seems to apply to horror films” (176).

Larry Danielson's “Folklore and Film: Some Thoughts on Baughman Z500–599” notes the utilization of contemporary legend motifs in horror movies, specifically John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978). He wrote that many horror movies drew heavily on what Ernest Baughman classified as motifs Z500–599, “stories which are not ghost or witch stories—they usually do not deal with the supernatural—which are told because of the effect of horror they produce in the listener. Usually the emphasis is on the grisly or strange rather than on the supernatural” (Baughman, quoted in Danielson 1979:211). Significantly, Danielson's essay appeared at the very beginning of the “mad slasher” cycle of movies in the late 1970s/early 1980s, and he stated that these movies appeal to a variety of contemporary legends:

folklorists, in order to understand the psychology of response to these similar themes and motifs, would gain useful insights into meaning and function if their research nets were more broadly flung. We need to keep eyes and ears open for the appearance of the traditional horror story in film, television, and in print. (Danielson 1979:212)

The relationship between the “slasher” film of the late 1970s/early 1980s and contemporary legends needs greater space than I can afford it here, and the subject will have to wait for a separate article, particularly considering the resurgence of the “slasher” genre in the late 1990s: from *Scream* (1996) to *Urban Legend* (1998) and *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (1997).

Danielson, like Thompson above, noted that movies, like television or print media, are a major factor in legend transmission, as well as a reflection of it (1979:219). But more important, Danielson noted that movies were *not* folkloric art although a few dealt with folklore materials (219). On this latter point, Danielson cited the Japanese film *Kwaidan* (1964), a cinematic retelling of Japanese ghost stories (the American theatrical release has three stories; the international release available on videotape contains four). He argued:

The movie is difficult to deal with in folklore classes because its highly refined film art is based on an equally refined literary treatment of Japanese legends in manuscript, which in turn are based on oral traditional narrative. . . . *Kwaidan* can confront students with the problems of defining text, of the

transmission of traditional narrative in modern media, and of the drastic and subtle consequences of media shifts on folk narrative content. (1979:210)

Implicit in Danielson's argument is that such discussions as are raised by a film like *Kwaidan* are significant for (presumably folklore) students to engage with, yet he held back from presenting such an analysis himself.

Motif-spotting can also be expressed in folkloristic bibliographies/filmographies, like that by Paul Smith and Sandy Hobbs (1990). Their annotated bibliography notes a variety of legend themes and motifs, describes them, and then notes at least one film reference per citation. Given the overwhelming response to this document, the authors also wrote a column in *FOAFtale News* that takes a specific legend and all of its cinematic appearances are then annotated (1992).

Beyond specific folkloristic genres like myth, Märchen, and legend, Tom Burns attempted to develop a methodology for identifying any expression of folklore in popular film and television texts. When an item of folklore is identified in the mass media, Burns proposed a rather rigid paradigm for distinguishing the item's *validity* as folklore. Burns recognized that mass media uses a variety of folkloristic materials ("traditional music and song" [1969:91–93], belief [93–97], gesture [97], narratives [97–99], proverbs [99–100], and custom [100–101]), but it was only when they had contextualized these items within a framework of ethnographic verisimilitude that they could be considered "true" folklore. From this point of view, a "true" folklore item consists of 1) a traditional text (whether composed of verbal, nonverbal, or mixed components), 2) a traditional performance of that text in 3) a traditional (customary) situation in response to or in conjunction with 4) a traditional audience" (90). Other than specific films intended for a specific academic (folkloristic) audience (i.e., "ethnographic" or "folkloric" films), very few popular films could maintain this schema.

Contemporary Studies

Contemporary models are likewise challenging the idea that film texts are "fixed." Jackson, albeit polemically, noted "the assumption seems to have been that since filmmaking is a highly technical occupation, one [that] results in a fixed text, the 'folk' don't have a chance to influence it." Jackson concluded: "the assumption isn't useful; neither is it valid" (1989:388). With the video release of many "directors' cuts" and "restored versions," these "fixed" texts demonstrate a high degree of variation. In addition to these variants, different national film boards require different degrees of censorship and editing of films for public display, based on the community standards of the groups where they will exhibit the film. In the United States, for example, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) is an internal form of censorship. If a studio wishes a film to receive a specific classification (i.e., an "R" rated film, instead of an "NC-17" film, or a film released without a classification—the difference is whether or not the cinema will permit even accompanied children to see the film), the studio will reedit the film. Many distribution companies refuse to handle "unrated" or NC-17 films for fear of community censure. They will distribute these cut-

down, R-rated films domestically, but not necessarily internationally. In 1986 I saw a horror movie, *The Re-Animator* (1985), in the United Kingdom. Great Britain has an external film board (the British Board of Film Classification, or the BBFC) that both classifies and censors films according to community standards. I subsequently re-viewed the film on videocassette in North America. The film I saw theatrically in Britain was the unrated version (in the UK the film received an "18 Certificate" which requires that one must be eighteen years or older to see it), whereas the North American video release was the R-rated version. The difference between the two versions is clearly noticeable with regards to the film's gore (the R-rated version being substantially less gory), but furthermore, the humor in the film was based on these gory images, and therefore with the cut-back version, they also lessened the humor of the film. This may seem like a minor point to make, but it demonstrates that in fact these "fixed" texts do exist in multiple versions, and the context of the distribution of these quasi-variants needs further exploration.

In addition to these multiple versions of film narratives, as Jackson noted, we can tell narratives *about* films (Jackson 1989:388). I have already mentioned Sylvia Grider's "media narraforms," but beyond this coinage, Peter Narváez (1986) studied how changes in technology, like the availability of television, generate new folkloric forms, specifically narratives *about* technology.

Another example of this kind of film-oriented narration is worth noting, especially since it coincides with Hoffmann's work on the pornographic film. Apparently stories circulated in Hollywood during the filming of *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) about the adult actors playing the Munchkins:

Because [*The Wizard of Oz* filmmakers] thought of them [Munchkin actors] as like children, the average-sized adults working on the picture could not think of sexual relations between them as anything other than "unnatural" and stories circulated about orgies among them at the Culver City Hotel. The Disney artists were capable of imagining similar kinds of sexual excess in the seven dwarfs. "Suddenly, near the end of the picture," one of the animators later recalled, "the tension in the studio was too much. To relieve it, there was a spontaneous avalanche of pornographic drawings from all over the studio. Drawings of Snow White being gang raped by the dwarfs, and mass orgies among the dwarfs themselves. Even the old witch was involved. Some of the drawings were about comic sexual aberrations that Krafft-Ebing would never have dreamed of. The mania went on for about a week, and as suddenly as it started the whole thing stopped. It must have been a form of hysteria brought on by fatigue and the relentless schedule. As far as I know, Walt [Disney] never heard about it. (Forgacs 1992:371)

Leo Rosten's 1941 proto-ethnography of Hollywood's movie colony is full of apocryphal and anecdotal examples of these kinds of media legends.⁷ To wit:

In far-off Bombay the magazine *Filmindia* (which regularly denounces Hollywood's portrayals of India) gave exquisite and unforgettable testimony to the influence of Hollywood when one of the advertisements, for a picture made in India, proclaimed: "Brahmin Boy Loves Untouchable Girl!" As the Anzac warriors marched across Libya to attack the Italians at Bardia, they sang a chorus from Mervyn Le Roy's *Wizard of Oz*. (Rosten 1970[1941]:7-8)

These media legends, which are legends and stories *about* the media, need to be identified in mostly nonacademic sources, like Hollywood biographies and fan-culture

sources. One of the few academic sources to investigate these media legends is Charles Kelley's (1991) study of the contemporary legend that the ghost of a young boy who committed suicide can be seen in the movie *Three Men and a Baby* (1987).

Jackson also recognized that technical sophistication was in no way "less folk" than more traditional methods of construction:

[T]he complexity of an event or operation has nothing to do with the folkloric interest: absent nostalgia and sentimentality, a trip by stagecoach is inherently no more folksy than a trip in the Concorde, and bread kneaded by the hand is no more folksy than bread kneaded in a Cuisinart. The folkloric interest is determined by the relation of people to the technology, not the presence or absence of technical sophistication. (1989:388)

Just so, studies need to be done on the relationship between product and process to popular filmmaking within an industrial context (working on from McCarl 1974). Todd Gitlin's ethnographic study of the Hollywood television industry (1983), or Rosten's study of Hollywood movie colony are but two examples. Narváez also saw the popular culture industries as engendering their own forms of folklore (1992:19).

Fandom and Audience Studies

An area that has been emerging as a major area of study for folkloristics within popular culture is the audience ethnography. Jackson noted that "the folklore of audiences" was an area needing to be examined. He subdivided this area into specific subjects: "the information the audience brings to the experience of a film, the social behaviors adopted while in the screening place, and the ways the contents of films enter general consciousness and style" (1989:389). As far back as 1970 though, David Riesman noted:

in America people do not attend to the media as isolated atoms, but as members of groups which select among the media and interpret their messages. . . . Similarly, people go to movies in groups—especially teenagers who make up such a large proportion of the audience—and formal and informal fan clubs are of course a way of organizing these groups. . . . People do not read in groups. (1970:256)

Although Riesman was looking at how nonliterate cultures used mass media as a surrogate for oral culture, we may point to this article as the beginning of the kind of audience ethnographic studies that are becoming popular in folklore studies.

Peter Narváez noted that one of the interstices of folklore and popular culture was "the expressive use of communications media, mass produced goods, and mass-mediated texts in small group contexts" (1992:20). Fan culture is just such a "small group context." One of the areas that fan culture emerges around is that of individual personalities. Studies, such as those by Tye (1987), Byrne (1987), and Ladenheim (1987) document how fans of particular musical performers organize their enthusiasm in creative ways within their fan-based contexts. For example, Diane Tye observed:

The significance of these artifacts might be lost on the uninitiated, but for Sean [a Beatles fan] they lessen the social distance that usually separates fan and star. The bootleg album made by somebody who actually attended a Beatles concert or rehearsal, and correspondence from a man who knew the

group members personally, offers Sean a more direct experience than, for example, the photocopy of a microfilm of a newspaper clipping that is also in his collection. (1987:44)

Elsewhere, Narváez rejected the perception of the popular-culture fan as a passive “victim” of the mass media.

Fans engage in complex manipulations of mass mediated culture for purposes of status and communication. . . . There are those who display or present signs of favorite performers, and the simulated performances of those entertainers, out of emotional involvement and love, hoping to convert their peers to fandom or at least an appreciation of meaningful cultural events. In communicating and appreciating similar popular performances friendship networks and cultural scenes develop and are reinforced in multifarious domestic and public contexts. (1987:38)

Fan culture is also emergent around specific popular-culture genres like supermarket tabloids (Bird 1992) and romance literature (Radway 1984), or even around specific mass-mediated texts like the television series *Star Trek* (Bacon-Smith 1992) or movies like *Gone with the Wind* (Taylor 1989). Elizabeth Bird summarized the interest fan culture has for folkloristics: “If audience members are seen as active in helping to shape the way popular culture is created, they become much more comparable with folk ‘audiences’” (1996:n.p.). Fandom continues to be one of the more popular areas of cultural studies and folklore research (also see Tulloch 2000; Jenkins and Tulloch 1995; Lewis 1992).

Working ultimately from Marshall McLuhan’s understanding that television, as medium, is “cool” (1964:36), Henry Jenkins argued that television audiences must supply their own interpretations of the content, and that these interpretative strategies are highly creative. Beyond this, however, Jenkins noted that enclaves of fans group together, and these fan-groups emerge as distinct cultures. “Far from syncoptic, fans actively assert their mastery over the mass-produced texts which provide the raw materials for their own cultural productions and the basis for their social interactions” (1992:23–24, cf. Koven 1997). Jenkins laid down a theoretical model of fan culture, which later ethnographies should follow in interpreting fan cultures: he referred to television fans as “poachers”:⁸

Like the poachers of old, fans operate from a position of cultural marginality and social weakness. Like other popular readers, fans lack direct access to the means of commercial cultural production and have only the most limited resources with which to influence entertainment industry’s decisions. Fans must beg with the networks to keep their favorite shows on the air, must lobby producers to provide desired plot developments or to protect the integrity of favorite characters. Within the cultural economy, fans are peasants, not proprietors, a recognition which must contextualize our celebration of strategies of popular resistance. (1992:26–27)

Further folkloristic studies need to be done on this kind of poaching; for example, the influences of fan culture in popular cinema genres like the action or horror films—film genres that have huge fan bases. Often those fans become filmmakers themselves within those genres. Postmodern studies, which see *bricolage* in the creation of artistic texts, are needed to do an “archaeology” of influences on these films, even to the point of identifying potential “oikotypes” in film genre history.

Audiences also follow other forms of traditional, and tradition-like, behaviors. Film lecturer Walter Evans noted

the adolescent who squirms and perspires his way through a good monster movie participates in an imaginative experience in many ways incredibly close to the complicated and detailed initiatory practices of premodern peoples around the world. Indeed, the complex initiatory pattern echoed in these films lends tremendous power and significance to their otherwise largely incomprehensible grab bag of formulaic motifs. (Evans 1982[1975]:135)

Although I take issue with Evans's assertion of verisimilitude between traditional rites of passage and the images in monster movies, I do agree that horror movies *function* as initiation rites within our postindustrialist culture. We can see the action of going to a "scary movie" as ritualistic, calendric (at Halloween), or as a rite of passage. One similar study explores the ethnic *film festival* as site for emergent liminality (Koven 1999b), but more needs to be done in the area of the social dynamics of specific film genre attendance.

James McClenon and Emily Edwards (1995) offered another interesting use of film texts within a folklore context. Within the rubric of belief studies, the authors were trying to assess the belief tradition of incubus and succubus attacks. They argued that given the vast number of incubus-themed movies, and noting those movies' demographics, incubus-related memorates should be available from those groups who go to the movies. No such memorates were collected from that group, thereby disproving the idea that exposure to incubus films sparked incubus attacks. What few incubus narratives were collected fell outside of the films' demographics: those people who claim incubus experiences did not watch incubus movies. Movies, in this instance, are expressions of cultural beliefs that experience has informed, not the other way round. What is fascinating about their findings was their unproblematic use of film to discuss culture. For McClenon and Edwards, film is the dominant medium for cultural transmission in contemporary Western culture (i.e., where most people get their ideas). But by studying the belief traditions as expressed in contemporary cinema, the authors discovered that the mass media do not inform belief traditions so much as they artistically communicate the belief traditions *via* the mass media, that is, *transmitted* through media like cinema.

Conclusion

According to Bruce Jackson:

Film is the dominant narrative mode of our time. Film and television provide much of the sense of community in a mobile and electronic world: the verbal and imaginative referents we utilize in ordinary face-to-face encounters are as likely to come from our separate-but-shared media experience as anywhere else. Film and television are far too important to be left to the media studies and literature scholars. (1989:389)

And yet, although certainly not *central* to folkloristic research, folklorists *have* explored certain aspects of popular film and television beyond the documentary cinema.

Studies that identify folkloric motifs and tale types in popular (fiction) films and television have tended to dominate the research—whether from myth, Märchen, legend, or other folkloric sources. Some of these studies suffice to *identify* the folklore within, while others look to analyze the changes to the story's meanings when transferred/adapted/translated from one medium to another.

Next to the “motif-spotting” research, the next most popular (or rather, prolific) interstice between folkloristics and popular-culture studies is fan ethnography. Cultural studies have adopted ethnographic methodologies from the social sciences in recent years and have been producing quite a bit of scholarship in this area, of which I have only touched the surface. Increasingly, film and cultural studies are becoming more interested in issues of audience from a more experiential perspective, as a counter to a perceived dominance of their fields from “ideal spectator”-type research.

But there are still many more areas for folkloristic research to be done on popular film and television. The notion of films existing as a “fixed” text is becoming challenged, as I demonstrated above. The idea that even censored or otherwise altered films are still ultimately the same text needs to be proved or counterarguments developed. Also, more ethnographic work needs to be undertaken within the popular-culture industries.

Separated by a decade, both Paul Smith and Bruce Jackson bemoan the absence of systematic analysis of popular film and television for the discourses of folkloristics. While not *entirely* an accurate observation, and albeit less accurate for Smith than for Jackson (since the intervening decade produced a great deal of the material I have outlined here), folklore studies *is not* film studies, and while relevant for folklorists to discuss, given the correct contexts, popular cinema remains tangential and an adjunct to the main tenants of folkloristics.⁹

Notes

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1. It should be noted, though, that other folklorists and cultural scholars (see below) argued against this idea that the mass media homogenized culture (cf. Narváz and Laba 1984).

2. James Hodge (1988), for example, outlined his position that the structural opposition of binaries that underlie mythology (good/evil, solar/chthonic) was evident in contemporary science-fiction television shows and children's fantasy cartoons. Hodge left his remarks at the level of identifying that they, in fact, were present and did not attempt an analysis of meaning.

3. It is worth inserting here, even parenthetically, reference to some of the research film scholars have done drawing upon shared interests with folklore, specifically regarding structural approaches to myth. Will Wright's structural study of the Western genre, *Sixguns and Society* (1978), examined the popular cinema depicting the “Old West” in Levi-Straussian terms, revealing the mythic underpinnings of that genre. And following on from Wright's study, Robert Baird (1998) likewise applied syntagmatic structuralism to the revisionist Western, *Dances with Wolves* (1990). Other studies have attempted to do similar with Vietnam War films (Williams 1990; Whillock 1990). Proppian *morphological* studies have been carried out on films like *Fatal Attraction* (1987) (Hala 1992) and Hollywood cartoons (Leskosky 1989; see also Cawelti 1976).

4. A point that these debates seem to forget is that the Disney canon was not originally intended as

“children’s” entertainment. Film scholar David Forgacs noted: “*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Pinocchio* (1940), *Dumbo* (1942), and *Bambi* (1942) were all designed as films for both young and old—clean, nonviolent, fantasies with songs and happy endings. They were not targeted at a ‘family audience’ in the modern sense of the term—adults accompanying children as the primary spectators—but over time they helped bring such an audience into being. *Fantasia* [1940] was something of an exception to this pattern, an odd hybrid of light entertainment, a would-be cultural movie and an experiment for the Disney artists in abstract animation suggested by music. In terms of its reception it had a strange reincarnation in the 1960s as a hippy film. Now it is being marketed as a children’s/family film” (1992:366–67).

5. Schechter also notes that the story “The Willful Child” contains little but this single motif (1988:29).

6. Ironically, in 1991, when Disney brought out its version of *Beauty and the Beast*, it utilized many of the surreal *visual* motifs that Cocteau had introduced.

7. Rosten refers to his own work as “putting Hollywood under the microscopes of social science” (1970[1941]:v), but today, we would refer to his work as ethnography.

8. Jenkins acknowledged Michel de Certeau with the idea of “poaching”: “fans become a model of the type of textual ‘poaching’ de Certeau associates with popular reading. Their activities pose important questions about the ability of media producers to constrain the creation and circulation of meanings. Fans construct their cultural and social identity through borrowing and inflecting mass culture images, articulating concerns which often go unvoiced within the dominant media” (1992:23).

9. Those who are interested in developing courses or sessions on film and folklore can use these films as a starting point. Of course, in theory *any* feature film may have folkloristic interest, depending upon how that argument is made, but these films are at least a beginning point. Of course, keeping an eye open for other films, specifically those films students are more familiar and/or comfortable with, is also important; to wit: folklorists need to also look at films like *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (2001), films that I have not directly addressed here but that are certainly relevant for our consideration.

Filmography

- Alien*. 1979. Dir. Ridley Scott. With Tom Skerritt, Sigourney Weaver, John Hurt, Ian Holm, Harry Dean Stanton, Yaphet Kotto, and Veronica Cartwright. Twentieth-Century Fox. 117 min.
- Apocalypse Now*. 1979. Dir. Francis Ford Coppola. With Marlon Brando, Robert Duvall, Martin Sheen, Frederic Forrest, Laurence Fishburne, and Dennis Hopper. Paramount. 150 min.
- Avalon*. 1990. Dir. Barry Levinson. With Aidan Quinn, Elizabeth Perkins, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Joan Plowright, Lou Jacobi, and Leo Fuchs. Tri-Star. 126 min.
- Bambi*. 1942. Dir. David Hand. Animated. Walt Disney. 69 min.
- Beauty and the Beast*. 1991. Dir. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise. Animated. Walt Disney. 85 min.
- La Belle et la bête* [*Beauty and the Beast*]. 1946. Dir. Jean Cocteau. With Jean Marais, Josette Day, and Marcel André. DisCina. 95 min.
- The Blair Witch Project*. 1999. Dir. Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez. With Heather Donahue, Josh Leonard, and Michael Williams. Artisan. 86 min.
- Candyman*. 1992. Dir. Bernard Rose. With Virginia Madsen, Tony Todd, and Xander Berkeley. Propaganda Films. 93 min.
- Carrie*. 1976. Dir. Brian De Palma. With Sissy Spacek, Piper Laurie, John Travolta, William Katt, and Nancy Allen. United Artists. 97 min.
- Dances with Wolves*. 1990. Dir. Kevin Costner. With Kevin Costner, Graham Greene, and Mary McDonnell. Orion. 180 min.
- The Deer Hunter*. 1978. Dir. Michael Cimino. With Robert De Niro, Meryl Streep, Christopher Walken, John Savage, and John Cazale. Universal. 183 min.
- Deliverance*. 1972. Dir. John Boorman. With Burt Reynolds, Jon Voight, Ronny Cox, and Ned Beatty. Warner Brothers. 109 min.
- Dumbo*. 1941. Dir. Ben Sharpsteen. Animated. Walt Disney. 64 min.
- The Evil Dead*. 1983. Dir. Sam Raimi. With Bruce Campbell, Ellen Sandweiss, and Sarah York. New Line. 85 min.

- Fantasia*. 1940. Production Supervisor Ben Sharpsteen. Animated. Walt Disney. 120 min.
- Fatal Attraction*. 1987. Dir. Adrian Lyne. With Michael Douglas, Glenn Close, and Anne Archer. Paramount. 119 min.
- Friday the 13th*. 1980. Dir. Sean S. Cunningham. With Betsy Palmer, Adrienne King, and Kevin Bacon. Paramount. 95 min.
- Gone with the Wind*. 1939. Dir. Victor Fleming. With Vivian Leigh, Hattie McDaniel, Clark Gable, and Butterfly McQueen. MGM. 238 min.
- Halloween*. 1978. Dir. John Carpenter. With Jamie Lee Curtis, Donald Pleasence, P. J. Soles, and Kyle Richards. Media Home Entertainment. 93 min.
- The Harder They Come*. 1973. Dir. Perry Henzell. With Jimmy Cliff, Janet Barkley, and Bobby Charlton. Criterion Films. 120 min.
- Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. 2001. Dir. Chris Columbus. With Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, and Emma Watson. Warners. 152 min.
- How to Make an American Quilt*. 1995. Dir. Jocelyn Moorhouse. With Winona Ryder, Ellen Burstyn, Anne Bancroft, and Claire Danes. Universal. 109 min.
- I Know What You Did Last Summer*. 1997. Dir. Jim Gillespie. With Jennifer Love Hewitt, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Ryan Phillippe, and Freddie Prinze Jr. Columbia. 100 min.
- The Joy Luck Club*. 1993. Dir. Wayne Wang. With Ming Na, France Nuyen, Tsai Chin, Lisa Lu, and Andrew McCarthy. Hollywood Pictures. 133 min.
- Kwaidan*. 1964. Dir. Masaki Kobayashi. With Rentaro Mikuni, Michiyo Aratama, Keiko Kishi, Tatsuya Nakadai, and Takashi Shimura. Janus Films. 164 min.
- The Last Picture Show*. 1971. Dir. Peter Bogdanovich. With Jeff Bridges, Cybill Shepherd, Timothy Bottoms, and Cloris Leachman. Columbia. 118 min.
- Leprechaun*. 1993. Dir. Mark Jones. With Warwick Davis, Jennifer Aniston, and Ken Olandt. Trimark. 92 min.
- Leprechaun 2*. 1994. Dir. Rodman Flender. With Warwick Davis, Charlie Heath, Shevonne Durkin, and Sandy Baron. Trimark. 90 min.
- Leprechaun 3*. 1995. Dir. Brian Trenchard-Smith. With Warwick Davis, Lee Armstrong, and Michael Callan. Trimark. 90 min.
- Leprechaun 4: In Space*. 1996. Dir. Brian Trenchard-Smith. With Warwick Davis, Debbie Dunning, Rebekah Carlton, and Brent Jasmer. Trimark. 90 min.
- Pinocchio*. 1940. Dir. Ben Sharpsteen and Hamilton Luske. Animated. Walt Disney. 88 min.
- Pinocchio's Revenge*. 1996. Dir. Kevin Tenney. With Lewis Van Bergen, Ivan Gueron, Thomas Wagner, Janis Chow, and Ron Canada. Trimark. 96 min.
- Platoon*. 1986. Dir. Oliver Stone. With Tom Berenger, Willem Dafoe, Charlie Sheen, Forest Whitaker, and Johnny Depp. Hemdale Film Corporation. 120 min.
- Rambo: First Blood Part II*. 1985. Dir. George P. Cosmatos. With Sylvester Stallone, Richard Crenna, and Steven Berkoff. Tri-Star. 95 min.
- The Re-Animator*. 1985. Dir. Stuart Gordon. With Jeffrey Combs, Bruce Abbott, Robert Sampson, and David Gale. Empire Pictures. 86 min.
- Rumpelstiltskin*. 1995. Dir. Mark Jones. With John Ducey, Allyce Beasley, Tommy Blaze, Max Grodénchik, and Kim Johnston Ulrich. Spelling Films. 87 min.
- Scener ur ett äktenskap [Scenes from a Marriage]*. 1973. Dir. Ingmar Bergman. With Bibi Andersson and Erland Josephson. Cinema 5 Distributing. 175 min.
- Schindler's List*. 1993. Dir. Stephen Spielberg. With Liam Neeson, Ralph Fiennes, and Ben Kingsley. Universal. 197 min.
- Scream*. 1996. Dir. Wes Craven. With Neve Campbell, Courtney Cox, David Arquette, and Drew Barrymore. Dimension Films. 111 min.
- The Serpent and the Rainbow*. 1988. Dir. Wes Craven. With Bill Pullman, Cathy Tyson, and Zakes Mokae. Universal. 98 min.
- Snow White: A Tale of Terror*. 1997. Dir. Michael Cohn. With Sigourney Weaver, Sam Neill, and Monica Keena. Polygram Filmed Entertainment. 100 min.
- Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. 1937. Dir. Ben Sharpsteen. Animated. Walt Disney. 83 min.

- Three Men and a Baby*. 1987. Dir. Leonard Nimoy. With Steve Guttenberg, Ted Danson, and Tom Selleck. Touchstone Pictures. 102 min.
- Tokyo monogatari* [Tokyo Story]. 1953. Dir. Yasujiro Ozu. With Chishu Ryu and Chieko Higashiyama. New Yorker Films. 139 min.
- Urban Legend*. 1998. Dir. Jamie Blanks. With Alicia Witt, Rebecca Gayheart, Joshua Jackson, and Jared Leto. Phoenix Pictures. 95 min.
- When a Stranger Calls*. 1979. Dir. Fred Walton. With Carol Kane, Charles Durning, Colleen Dewhurst, and Rachel Roberts. Melvin Simons Productions. 97 min.
- When Harry Met Sally*. 1989. Dir. Rob Reiner. With Billy Crystal, Meg Ryan, Carrie Fisher, and Bruno Kirby. Columbia. 95 min.
- The Wizard of Oz*. 1939. Dir. Victor Fleming. With Judy Garland, Ray Bolger, Bert Lahr, Jack Haley, and Margaret Hamilton. Metro Goldwyn Mayer. 101 min.

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