PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DOSSIER

Passion, Politics, and People

Introduction

by Karen Beckman

The SCMS Professional Development Committee (PDC), which I chair, is charged with the task of "collecting and disseminating information about jobs and job searches, planning methods to improve experiences in job searches for candidates and employers, and organizing at least one career-related workshop at the annual conference. Other career concerns covered by the PDC include publishing, tenure and promotion, administrative service, etc." Most years, the committee understandably focuses its attention on workshops designed to help newcomers navigate their way through the intensely stressful and at times opaque academic job market, but over the last couple of years the committee has turned its attention to other moments in the arc of an academic career when scholars might feel lost, overwhelmed, or at least in need of some mentoring and advice. The Professional Development dossier gathered here began life as an informal exchange initiated by Victoria Johnson, the PDC's previous chair, who wrote the following e-mail to the newly configured committee in 2007: "I conducted an informal survey of several people who regularly attend SCMS, asking what kind of Professional Development workshop they would eagerly attend. Several responded that they would be interested in a workshop devoted to the potential benefits and drawbacks of making the transition into administration (as Chair, Program Director, Institute director, etc.). This interest was expressed, particularly, by female scholars who are at the Associate rank."

For many who take on these roles, there is little or no training provided in the new areas we find ourselves negotiating, such as budget management, development, curriculum design and revision, program founding and building, designing web flowcharts, building DVD collections, public programming, or personnel management and recruitment. Although such transitions will rarely be painless, they might be easier than they are. Many of us are already lucky enough to benefit

© 2010 by the University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 93 2/16/10 4:02:34 PM

from the informal mentoring of generous colleagues, but the organization of SCMS is populated by thousands of members who have long experience with these and other tasks, and who have managed to survive them in times when institutions were more suspicious of our field than they currently are. Though this dossier attempts to respond to the professional concerns of mid-career scholars, it is also a call for SCMS—perhaps via its annual conference—to develop a more formal system for mentoring new chairs and program directors in field-specific as well as general administrative skills, something along the lines of the "Workshops for New Chairs" offered by both the Association of Departments of English and the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages.

At the Philadelphia conference in 2007, the committee initiated this kind of conversation by running a workshop that highlighted academic administration, something that often heralds the arrival of the ominous moment Patricia White describes here as "what I am learning to call [my academic career's] midpoint." In choosing to focus on the issues surrounding academic administration, we also had to opt *not* to run an (equally pressing) workshop for new participants in the job market, and so we hope that by bringing these issues to the attention of the wide readership of *Cinema Journal,* we can gradually move toward a situation where both new and experienced members of SCMS have somewhere to turn when they need help. What would you like to see? Would a handbook for new chairs be useful? Or a caucus? If you have ideas, please do pass them on (beckmank@sas.upenn.edu) so that the committee can start to act on them on your behalf.

But what about the "etc." that comes at the very end of the committee's list of designated areas: "publishing, tenure and promotion, administrative service, etc."? As I began to solicit contributions to this dossier on the topic of mid-career responsibilities, it became increasingly clear that many film and media scholars, regardless of what stage they are at in their careers, end up doing work such as journal editing, media distribution and activism, DVD supplement creation, and festival programming that, though it often goes under-recognized by institutions that primarily reward teaching and research, sustains the research that scholars do and the material we teach. Furthermore, the committee's early e-mail exchanges about this "etcetera" category also brought to light the significance of those film and media professionals who are not scholars and teachers, such as film archivists, curators, and programmers. These people often emerge out of film and media studies PhD programs, and they play a vital role in nurturing and expanding the lively conversation that takes place across the spaces of the classroom, the library, the archive, the museum, and the festival. How do people prepare to enter these nonteaching film jobs? What are the challenges and pleasures of these jobs? What skills are required? How do people working in these professions view those of us who have taken the academic track, and how might SCMS help to facilitate better exchange among us? Haden Guest, for example, gently raises two painful points: 1) the potential imperialism and myopia of scholars who claim, then never look beyond, a narrowly defined terrain; and 2) the problem of film scholars having either not enough time or inclination to attend film screenings and directors' visits at local archives. Yet the point of this dossier is not to instill feelings of guilt in readers and add to their already-long lists of things they should be doing. Rather, we hope it will start

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 94 2/16/10 4:02:35 PM

an inclusive conversation that extends beyond the walls of the classroom and facilitates the exchange of skills and resources, eventually resulting, we hope, in what E. Ann Kaplan describes as "a structured collaborative process for sharing."

I would like to end by addressing a tension that Patricia White points to in her title, "Feminist Commitment and Feminized Service." Are we suckers for agreeing to take on administrative roles or to participate in the realms of the "etcetera" that seem so invisible within the academic rewards system? Apparently not. As I read through the various contributions to this dossier, I was struck by the prevalence of words that I did not expect to find, words like "pleasure," "people," "passion," and "politics." Through the work described in these pages, our contributors have forged alternative political and professional communities and social networks; they have created and modeled programs that were not already in place; they have experienced the joy of being present when an archival object calls out from the shelf in search of an interlocutor, and the satisfaction of knowing that, in times of economic crisis, they are actively engaged in the struggle to preserve the objects and viewing structures that keep our field alive. Though some of the work described here does not seem to count as much as it should toward tenure, promotion, or salary raises within the academy (and perhaps we need to bring about structural changes to ensure that it counts more), it is clear that many of us are indebted to this kind of labor. And so let me close with an expression of gratitude, not only to the contributors here, but also to the many members of SCMS who sustain the academy and the film and media arts through their work. Thank you.

Thanks very much to all the members of last year's and this year's PDC for their suggestions for this dossier, and special thanks to Jackie Reich and David Slocum for their help with bringing these materials together. ✻

Challenges and Opportunities for Mid-Career Administration

by E. Ann Kaplan

It is well known that while many media academics find themselves doing administration of one kind or another, none of us has been specifically trained for it. This dossier, in addressing such an important reality, brings the dark secret out of the closet. Perhaps the combined experiences collected here will inspire our organization to create a structured collaborative process for sharing with younger media colleagues the joys and pitfalls of taking on administrative positions.

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 95 2/16/10 4:02:35 PM

There are different ways of getting into administration. Perhaps most common is that your academic department needs a new Chair, and colleagues put your name up. The other way—and this speaks to my reasons for going into administration—is wanting to build something that is not already in place: This means you have to undertake the leadership needed to bring the new project about. At Rutgers, where I taught for twelve years (1974–1987), I experienced both ways of getting into administration. On the one hand, my small English Department in what was then University College (Rutgers consists of several different colleges) needed a Chair and I was asked to take it on, but my main motive for becoming an administrator in the mid-1970s was not any wish for such a position in itself but a desire to build a minor in Film Studies at Rutgers University.

I must say that I did not feel at all prepared to chair the University College department, but with the help of more senior colleagues, I gradually learned the ropes. The good thing about taking on the position was that my being in Film Studies gave visibility and status to what was then an embryonic field, still by and large not considered a serious and scholarly area by my literary colleagues. Another advantage of such administration is that, depending on the particular way your institution is structured, you get to interact with associate deans, deans of various colleges, provosts and, at times, presidents. The more the higher administration knows about you and the fields you represent, the better for Film Studies and the humanities in general. At many large research-oriented universities, the humanities get short shrift. The natural sciences (and some social sciences) bring in huge grants—and money is power—while humanists, as we know, compete for meager funding opportunities. Lettered social sciences face similar problems, although they still fare better than nonquantitative scholarly areas. Media Studies varies enormously across colleges in regard to its disciplinary methods and related chances of obtaining grants. (Digital Studies often does well, as do any number of quantitative or production projects.) For good or ill, I found myself in universities without sizable Film Production units and where Film Studies had a theoretical, critical, and interpretive focus. We were thus often underneath the higher administration's radar. Being a Chair usefully brings some visibility to Media Studies.

But here is where faculty taking on such positions could use counseling. I didn't know much about how higher administrators thought or the challenges they usually face. I didn't realize the broad purview they have to have, the numerous departments they control and have to take into account, the complexity of distributing funds, the juggling between sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities that has to go on, the significance of their attitudes toward the various humanities disciplines (higher administrators are rarely literary or media scholars) or the power that those bringing in huge grants have. I would advise faculty thinking about taking on administration to talk to senior scholars who have been at the university for some time about the particular agendas of the higher administration in your context. Or talk to the folks running the Arts and Humanities Senate or to union representatives (if your college has a union).

I took up my second and third administrative positions because I wanted to build something new: I thought I could contribute in the first case to Film Studies at Rutgers, and in the second to new interdisciplinary scholarship at Stony Brook and elsewhere. Rutgers had no Film Studies as such when I accepted an offer to teach English and

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 96 2/16/10 4:02:36 PM

Film at University College. There were good faculty teaching film in the language departments, in history, and in the Arts School. But there was no one teaching film in the English Department and no coordinated Film Studies program. As some of my colleagues know, as a graduate student at Rutgers in Comparative Literature in the mid-1960s, I helped organize the first film screenings for the Graduate Student Association and managed to screen (against upper administration opposition) Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* (1963) and to bring Paul Morrissey and the Velvet Underground to perform at Rutgers. But when I returned, while screenings had continued there was still no academic study of film in English. After establishing the first graduate film course—"Introduction to Film Criticism and Theory"—in the English Department, and finding a great deal of student interest in film at the undergraduate level, I decided to bring together all the faculty teaching film at Rutgers and to develop an undergraduate minor in Film Studies. I had no experience in doing this, and I am sure many of the difficulties I got myself into could have been avoided had there been mentors in SCS (as it was at the time) to give me the benefit of their experience. I am sure I didn't press the higher administration for either sufficient space and equipment or funds to run the program. I don't recall getting any release time for my efforts. However, I did somehow manage to establish the program: I was given share of an office as its headquarters, and we began to enroll students.

One of the main skills in administration is the ability to network and to deal with differences among the faculty involved in your project. My lack of sensitivity to such differences at Rutgers got me into trouble, but I did gradually learn from that experience when I moved to Stony Brook to found a brand new Humanities Institute geared toward stimulating new kinds of interdisciplinary knowledge. It was 1987, and the Culture Wars were in full flower, but at any time for such endeavors to succeed great tact is essential. Frequent consulting with others is also essential. I established an internal Advisory Board with representatives of all humanities disciplines (at the time, the Institute was housed in a Humanities and Arts Division), but I only gradually understood how to be as open as possible to divergent points of view about Institute programs and about very different visions of the humanities. Once again, I learned on the job. However, I did realize that talking to others directing institutes on the East Coast would be useful, and so started an East Coast Humanities Directors Association. Later on, once the national (and now international) Consortium for Humanities Institutes and Centers (CHCI) was founded, new directors had a chance to learn from veterans at the annual CHCI Conference. While we have kept these annual meetings intellectual events, we always include some hours for sharing experiences directing Centers so that new directors can learn from what others have done. Perhaps SCMS could include such a meeting for media scholars going into administration at our annual conference.

The structure that SCMS set up for training the new President seems to me exemplary. I would not have agreed to stand for President of SCMS had I thought I would have had to immediately take up the position. The six-year commitment works well: two years as President-Elect learning the job; two years as President (by which time one is ready); and two years as Past President, when one can help out as needed and offer suggestions from the experience of being President. Strange as it may sound, I

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 97 2/16/10 4:02:36 PM

actually enjoyed a great deal about being SCMS President. It was hard work on top of my Stony Brook administration, but I did get a course release. (I now realize I should have asked for more—an assistant to help keep track of zillions of documents, help in the year I had to be Program Chair for the annual conference, etc.) I would advise anyone now agreeing to be President to work with their current Dean for reasonable resources for a position that does bring visibility to one's university. The collegiality of the Executive Council (now the Board of Directors) and the home office staff, and the sense of building an ever larger and more productive association were very satisfying.

A good time to take on administration is after getting tenure. I would seriously advise against anyone doing major administration before having gained Associate Professor status. Inevitably, administration takes its toll as regards time for research and keeping up with ongoing scholarship in your field. Normally, administrative positions are for three to five years, and sometimes are renewable. For me, the most frustrating aspect of being so heavily involved in administration for so long has been keeping up with scholarship and writing. During the semester, when I am teaching and doing administration, there is hardly any time for research. I have had to rely on sabbaticals and getting visiting fellowships at various national and international universities to get my books written. Administration is very distracting and prevents the kind of concentration one needs for generating ideas, for good writing, and for keeping up with scholarship. I suggest you try to time accepting administrative positions so that you are between books, or at a point when you would welcome a change of pace from intense writing. Usually, you will have a reduced teaching load (request it as a condition for taking on administration if not) which helps. But don't take on the position unless you are ready to be in the office three or four days a week. If you can negotiate an Associate Chair (or equivalent, depending on the position), by all means do so. Certain tasks could be assigned to the Associate Chair, relieving some of the pressure. At Stony Brook, Chairs get a summer stipend of 20 percent of salary and are expected to be on duty most of the summer as a result. Do not work in the summer unless you are given an extra stipend!

On the other hand, administration can be extremely satisfying. In addition to my comments above about taking on positions enabling you to build new programs that interest you and that you think are needed, administration gives you the satisfaction of helping younger colleagues, shepherding good faculty through the grueling tenure or promotion process, building a department in years when there is money for hiring, improving a department that has fallen behind, starting new programs, supporting faculty envisaging new interdisciplinary programs, and so on. Unlike scholarship, which often takes years to complete and where one is often lost or having problems moving forward, in administration you face concrete tasks that have to be done, and that once done, bring a certain concrete pleasure. I have thoroughly enjoyed directing the Humanities Institute—so much so that I have been doing it for twenty years. But directing an Institute is a very different type of administration from chairing a department. The rewards, are, I think, greater since my main job is to stimulate new kinds of interdisciplinary knowledge, thus always learning myself from the programs the Institute organizes. Now that my people skills are honed, I very much enjoy bringing scholars from

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 98 2/16/10 4:02:36 PM

different disciplines together to create new ideas and to form an intellectual community much broader than is possible within one's own department. Department chairing can be satisfying if the Chair has a chance to build new programs and to hire faculty to teach in them, but it also involves bureaucratic tasks and daily paperwork. Being an Institute Director offers freedom to think outside the box, to envision where disciplines are moving and how best to stimulate what seem like productive directions.

Let me conclude by recommending that you try administration, unless research is such an overwhelming part of your life that you would resent the extra hours or days administration demands. Administration is often a welcome change of pace from only teaching and doing research, and its challenges can result in your developing (or discovering in yourself) new skills, and perhaps growing psychically as well as intellectually. Administration can be as creative in its own way as research; in addition, it is important to have administrators who bring scholarly skills to the position. Such skills will partly guide your administrative hunches: Scholarly interests may inspire ideas for new programs and other initiatives. *

Feminist Commitment and Feminized Service: Nonprofits and Journals

by Patricia White

The activities and commitments I've been asked to reflect upon are not necessarily intentional or linear enough to include under the heading "professional development," although they certainly flow directly into what I "profess" on the job. Alongside my graduate training and the progress of my academic career to what I am learning to call its midpoint, I've been involved in independent feminist and LGBTQ media distribution and exhibition through service on the boards of nonprofits: in the 1990s I worked with the New Festival, which presents the New York Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Film Festival, and over the past decade with Women Make Movies (WMM), the feminist media arts organization and educational distributor of films by and about women. This work has been crucial to my pedagogy and scholarship, and I try to invest whatever cultural capital I've accrued as an academic back into the organizations that have sustained me. Many questions that press on us in the humanities—new

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 99 2/16/10 4:02:36 PM

technologies and distribution systems, digital rights, arts funding, globalization—affect media arts organizations in interlocking ways, and the structures particular to each institution can support the other.

But I'm mostly into the films. Commitment to the work of independent filmmakers is central to Film Studies, with its politicized disciplinary history and the many producers/theorists and departments that teach both theory and practice, making the pursuits complementary ones. Think of what P. Adams Sitney did for the New York avant-garde. But it is notable the degree to which women, people of color, international scholars, and queers in the profession remain connected to community-based media organizations as sustaining contexts for their work—evidence that the questions they pursue in their research matter. In particular, the explosive growth of LGBTQ festivals in the 1990s offered an unprecedented symbiosis—the phenomena of AIDS activism, television deregulation, niche marketing, and globalization had a direct impact on the production and circulation of alternative media and generated scholarship not only about the work but also about these shifting contexts and forces, often by young scholars involved in curating for these events.[1] My own experience participating in the premieres of *Paris Is Burning* (Jennie Livingston, 1991) and *Go Fish* (Rose Troche, 1994) in New York, organizing a panel with Marlon Riggs, Pratibha Parmar, and Richard Fung, and inviting Vito Russo, Richard Dyer, Thomas Waugh, Judith Mayne, Judith Halberstam, and Gayatri Gopinath to present clip shows (all pre-digital) in the festival context shaped me as a lesbian film scholar and built political commitments and professional and social networks that I brought back to campus. Of course, curating and nonprofit board service do not necessarily count for tenure; but they foster institutional knowledge, including how to value working for the public good.

The New Festival still presents the annual festival, though it has not attained the prominence and fiscal stability of its peer organizations Frameline in San Francisco and Outfest in Los Angeles, with their demographic advantages and successful navigation of the queer media market explosion of the 1990s. WMM has an unmistakable institutional identity, a worldwide brand, one that is exemplary for independent distributors and for feminist media organizations founded in the 1970s, and my work on its board is accordingly less hands-on. WMM has a grassroots history, but its institutional position depends on the university as both primary market and source of critical commentary (publicity) for its collection. My involvement with WMM has been coincident with my professional development. Booking WMM films for the Feminist Film Society (really) at college led me to a summer internship there; generations of my students have followed, and though it is a radically changed organization and media climate, a similar passion animates them. Later, during a period of indecision about academia, I joined WMM's small staff. The late 1980s wasn't necessarily the most

1 As an editor with B. Ruby Rich of film and video reviews for *GLQ,* I was able to solicit short essays on festival films. *GLQ* also published proceedings of a panel on the LGBTQ festival network, "Queer Publicity: A Dossier on Lesbian and Gay Film Festivals," with essays by B. Ruby Rich, Eric O. Clarke, and Richard Fung, with an introduction by Patricia White, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 5 (January 1999): 73–93, and under coeditors Chris Straayer and Tom Waugh, a more in-depth series of roundtable discussions: "Queer Film and Video Festival Forum, Take One: Curators Speak Out," *GLQ* 11 (2005): 579–603; "Take Two: Critics Speak Out," *GLQ* 12 (2006): 599; and "Take Three: Artists Speak Out," *GLQ* 14 (2008): 121–122.

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 100 2/16/10 4:02:37 PM

robust time for media arts (with Reaganomics, the culture wars, and the adoption of VHS as the first of many big disruptions to distribution models due to technology changes), but WMM with its exciting and extensive collection of work by lesbians and women of color flourished in the age of identity politics.

Today there are twelve on staff, the budget's well over $1 million, and the collection exceeds five hundred films—documentary, experimental, animation, and short fiction. All of the growth has been shepherded by longtime executive director Debra Zimmerman. The profile of the organization and its filmmakers internationally has never been higher—British documentarian Kim Longinotto's films won jury prizes at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam and Sundance and were featured in a MoMA retrospective, and films about rape in the Congo, reconciliation in Rwanda, the murdered women of Ciudad Juarez, polygamy in Iran, the legacy of Palestinian hijacker Leila Khaled, and the prospects of Afghani MP Malalai Joya offer independent, feminist and otherwise missing perspectives on world events.

At WMM I met heroes Ulrike Ottinger, Sally Potter, and Vera Chytilova and worked on the release of Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* (1989), one of the most important films about women and national identity, and on a complementary collection of experimental films by women of color. Such films remain the focus of my collection building and teaching. My current book on global women's feature filmmaking is informed by WMM even when it doesn't focus on it directly. I joined the board as a tenured professor in 2001 and have chaired for the past several years. Distribution— unglamorous but crucial—helps to push at feminist film theory's comfortable understandings of women's media, making visible who is actually seeing the work and in what contexts.

Perhaps most generalizable about my board experience with WMM is what I have learned about the economics of independent distribution, notably the dependence of nonprofits and of artist compensation on university acquisitions. Material questions of copyright, access, and library policy, technological challenges (VHS to laser to DVD to VOD) and digital rights concern us mutually and inform academic debates around the forms and status of documentary, film festivals, and remix culture. As arts funding cuts are being felt in educational programs, advocacy needs to be shared across the nonprofit sector.

But service with WMM has mainly been about the people. Debbie Zimmerman is a role model, but so are her young staff. And the board rocks. I often feel my skill set pales in comparison with these women: Taina Bien-Aimé, executive director of Equality Now, Leslie Field Cruz of the National Black Programming Consortium, Sundance's Caroline Libresco, and other funders, filmmakers, lawyers, and advocates. But I try to represent the customer base and hold my own in debates about feminism and media representation. (Many other academics—Catherine Benamou, Joe Boles, Faye Ginsburg, Chris Straayer, Amy Villarejo, and Janice Welsch—have supported the organization through distribution recommendations, programming, and the all-important catalog squib over the years, and Patty Zimmerman directly preceded me on the board.) Rather than the feminization of service they represent the feminization of power, showing how alternative media intersects with many dimensions of cultural life to shape a feminist public sphere.

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 101 2/16/10 4:02:37 PM

I believe that the culture of independent progressive media by underrepresented groups can be more visible and accounted for in cultural studies scholarship. Here is where my activities of programming and distribution intersect with a more recognized professional commitment, and a far more demanding workload—journal editing. Since 1996, I've served as a member of the editorial collective of *Camera Obscura,* like WMM a survivor of the dozens of 1970s feminist media organizations because its role and mission have adapted to changing ideologies, politics, and business models.[2] The journal was an auratic object for me as a student, representing the convergence of high theory and radical feminist film culture. As an editor I am engaged by many new directions in the field, but independent feminist filmmaking remains my passion.

Journals are, of course, central to professionalization in the academy; peer-reviewed articles are earlier and earlier goals for PhD candidates, even as online publishing presents challenges to the identity of the journals themselves. Journal editing also has prestige and "counts" for promotion and tenure, though it's never clear how much; professional development opportunities for journal editors are scarce. Editorships are frequently institutionally supported by university administrations or scholarly associations. Thus, journals are different from "outside" work such as service on nonprofit boards. But journal editing is vitally linked to what's "out there"—if only because it comes on a schedule.

The radical feminist pedigree of *Camera Obscura* persists in the fact that we operate as a collective: over the years editors Amelie Hastie, Lynne Joyrich, Constance Penley, Sasha Torres, and Sharon Willis have modeled intellectual and professional commitment through the journal's many vicissitudes, and I look forward to similar inspiration from new members Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Lalitha Gopalan. Forms of sociality and conviviality, of institutional and "anti-institutional" memory are sustaining in our sometimes isolating profession. Such contact extends to that with the writers, both young and established, and makes unquantifiable, uncompensated work worthwhile.

In the past month I've had the pleasure of working with brilliant scholars—some who are ABD, some approaching tenure, and some preeminent. I've also struggled with turning down work by scholars whom I greatly admire. I've contributed a short piece on recent women's films with "festival buzz" to launch a new section: "In Practice" is designed to provide a more timely connection with filmmaking and other kinds of feminist media praxis. Giving room to short-form writing, it serves a purpose similar to *Cinema Journal*'s In Focus.

Trying to craft a statement that encompasses all three commitments—festival programming, service on the board of a nonprofit distributor, journal editing—shows up how such "extra-curricular" activities tug in different directions. There's no linear development here, mostly scheduling snafus and action items—like the committee service we've all learned how to juggle. I like to joke about the "alternative CV" that chronicles your life in terms of the things you failed to complete, therapies attempted, runs of especially addictive television shows, and so on. But what makes mine a narrative of professional development rather than professional impediment is how the

2 Amelie Hastie, Lynne Joyrich, Patricia White, and Sharon Willis, "(Re)Inventing Camera Obscura," in *Inventing Film Studies,* ed. Lee Grieveson and Haidee Wasson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 298–318.

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 102 2/16/10 4:02:37 PM

feminist politics of all these organizations are sustained in and by the personal relationships that constitute them. (Not to say that contradictions—personnel disputes, communication styles—don't arise, ones that temper any expectation of a kinder, gentler female organizational style.)

Feminist dynamics inform academic contexts, though they need to be balanced alongside the "feminine" politics of service in the profession generally. There is still the pressure for a junior woman or person of color to be, as my colleague Nora Johnson quipped, a combination of Michel Foucault and Mary Richards. I worked with these organizations before I had tenure. I teach at a liberal arts college, and I trusted that the complement to my teaching and the institutional ethic of service would make such activities count. Without a Film Studies department, I found these associations vital. It is crucial to nurture and advise our junior colleagues' ongoing commitments to the cultures of media production and critique that complement academic ones, even if they never converge in a developmental narrative. ✻

DVD Supplements: A Commentary on Commentaries

by Giorgio Bertellini and Jacqueline Reich

In the last few decades, as graduate seminars have explored the postmodern heuristics of the "death of the author," DVD editions have popularized a range of audio and print supplements that have, directly or indirectly, expanded films' authorial halo. The notion of the commentary is, of course, nothing new to the academy: consider the multiple annotated editions of literary classics. But its material extension to the home theater "experience" has had peculiar cultural and economic consequences. As value-adding paratexts, audio and printed commentaries can turn film texts into critical or luxury editions, to be marketed to different levels of cinephilic and commercial consumption.[1]

Introduced in 1984 by Criterion Collection (then part of the Voyager Company) for a niche market of laser disc buyers, Ronald Haver's audio commentary on *King Kong* (Merian C. Cooper, 1933) ultimately

1 Aaron Barlow, *The DVD Revolution: Movies, Culture, and Technology* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005); Deborah Parker and Mark Parker, "Director and DVD Commentary: The Specifics of Intention," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 62, no.1 (Winter 2004): 13–22.

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 103 2/16/10 4:02:37 PM

inaugurated this trend. Since the late 1990s, most DVD editions of classic, critically rediscovered, and new films have made the audio commentary a key component of an ever-growing menu of special features—including entire director's cuts, deleted scenes, making-of documentaries, exclusive or vintage interviews with the film's makers or celebrated critics, video essays, professional biographies, and photographic essays. Criterion's success in this area is widely acknowledged, and their releases with commentaries are not limited to art or classic films: the company's best-selling DVD is the hyper-commented *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (Terry Gilliam, 1998; Criterion DVD, 2003).[2]

Specially written essays (often referred to as liner notes and derived from recording industry practices) have also become a familiar fixture in the marketing of authorially ambitious DVD releases. They are particularly common as inserts with box sets or special two-disc editions, when they may even take the form of elegant booklets that share the size, cover, and layout of the box set and of its DVD cases. Even though materially extrinsic to the DVD content, accompanying essays affect the appeal of many DVD editions as they too, when accessed, mediate consumers' overall experiences—as film instructors (and their students) know all too well.[3] Because they are cheaper to produce, written materials are sometimes added *in place of* audio commentaries. As Jason Viteritti, Director of DVD Production at Koch Lorber, a division of E1 Entertainment, recounted in an interview with the authors, this was the rationale in the production of the eight-disc box set, *The Marco Ferreri Collection* (2008), which includes a documentary on Ferreri's films, a vintage filmed interview with the director, and a booklet—but no audio commentary.[4]

Two types of commentaries dominate the market: those made by directors and individuals variously involved in the making of the film (cinematographers, screenwriters, actors, producers, and even sound designers); and those made by critics and scholars solicited if filmmakers are foreign (Wong Kar-Wai), permanently unwilling or unavailable (Godard), excessively loquacious (Tarantino), or deceased (Lang, Truffaut, Fellini). There are also sub-scenarios or exceptions: when the critic-scholar in question was actually present during the filming, as in the case of British critic-photographer Gideon Bachmann who comments on Federico Fellini's *8 1/2* (1963; Criterion DVD, 2001); or when filmmakers express their opinions as critics of a film made by someone else, as director Steven Soderbergh and writer/director Tony Gilroy did for the Criterion edition of *The Third Man* (Carol Reed, 1949; Critierion DVD, 2007).

When soliciting an audio commentary or an essay, DVD production companies take several factors into consideration. The identification of the contributor generally reveals the desire for an established authorial or a balanced critical competence capable of attracting an audience of cinephiles, or an added "plus" for the average consumer, which in turn leads to multiple film viewings. Commentaries vary a great deal in quality,

2 Bradley Schauer, "The Criterion Collection in the New Home Video Market: An Interview with Susan Arosteguy," *The Velvet Light Trap* 56 (Fall 2005): 32–35.

3 Our personal experience in this area of professional development arose both deliberately and serendipitously. For the booklet of Koch Lorber's Marco Ferreri DVD collection, Reich was solicited by a former student who is now head of Vice President of Marketing and Product Development for E1 Entertainment. David Shepard of Preservation Film Associates asked Bertellini for an audio commentary on *The Italian* (Reginald Barker, 1915) after locating him through a search of scholarly contributions on the film's star, George Beban.

4 Jason Viteritti, interview with the authors, July 20, 2009.

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 104 2/16/10 4:02:38 PM

as every viewer knows. They can paraphrase the obvious in an all-too-close analysis or get lost in the vagaries of anecdotes or historical contextualizations. Although audio commentaries (as well as written essays) tend to provide "suggested readings" that often crystallize established critical interpretations, for teaching purposes we particularly appreciate those that, rather than sealing a film's meaning, allow viewers room for personal interpretation. They do so by grounding current critical urgencies and historical discussions firmly in the text.[5] The opposite of that may be narcissistic, but also visionary. Consider Godard's *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* (1988), Scorsese's *My Voyage to Italy* (2001), and Zizek in *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema* (Sophie Fiennes, 2006). Here, rather than a critical voice commenting on a single film, dozens of film clips become the "essay on cinema" by a star filmmaker or scholar—the DVD's ultimate author.

The critical value of audio commentaries may be indisputable, but their future is linked to the commercial viability of DVD supplemental materials, which looks simultaneously grim and bright. In 2008, DVD sales fell 9 percent from the previous year, as did the sale of DVD players (from 33.5 million in 2007 to 25.3 million in 2008), while Blu-ray spending rose threefold.[6] Threatened by instant downloads (both legal and illegal) and various on-demand services, DVDs and their supplementary materials will have to find a way to make their products relevant through further innovation or, as is already being implemented, with restrictions on the ever-growing rental by mail market. Studios such as Fox, in fact, have removed all supplemental materials from DVDs destined for the rental market, thus creating the market niche for these extras solely through consumer purchase.[7] According to Koch Lorber and E1 Entertainment Vice President of Marketing and DVD Production Walter Schmidt, the focus has now shifted to digital, with films in their catalog available for instant download on Netflix, iTunes, and Hulu (Criterion.com offers select films in their catalog for immediate viewing as well), and to fewer but more "loaded" releases that attempt to attract institutions and individuals lured by commodities with high cultural capital.[8] Thus for general consumers, the audio and written commentary will continue to provide both useful and useless (if highly marketable) information—for a price. As an avenue of professional development, providing DVD commentaries remains an interesting option, but one, unfortunately, whose future is in doubt. ✻

5 In our view, admirable models of audio commentary are Martin Scorsese and Thelma Schoonmaker on *Raging Bull* (Martin Scorsese, 1980; Criterion DVD, 2005), Robert Altman and Michael Tolkin on *The Player* (Robert Altman, 1992; New Line Platinum Series DVD Special Edition, 1997), Robert Stam on *Contempt* (*Le mépris;* Jean-Luc Godard, 1963; Criterion DVD, 2002), and Yuri Tsivian on *The Man with the Movie Camera* (*Chelovek s kino-apparatom;* Dziga Vertov, 1929; Image Entertainment DVD, 2002). Peter Jackson's commentaries for the various installments of *The Lord of the Rings* series would require a category of their own. See Craig Hight, "Making-of Documentaries on DVD: *The Lord of the Rings* Trilogy and Special Editions," *The Velvet Light Trap* 56 (Fall 2005): 4–17. On the cottage industry of audio commentary, see Barlow, *The DVD Revolution,* 121–126.

6 Diane Garrett, "DVD Sales Down by 5.5% in '08," *Daily Variety Online,* January 7, 2009, http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117998174.html (accessed October 2, 2009); and Press Release, Digital Entertainment Group Year-end 2008 Home Entertainment Sales Figures, January 8, 2009, http://www.dvdinformation.com/News/press/CES2009yearEnd.htm (accessed July 27, 2009).

7 Susanne Ault, "Fox DVD Creates Two Classes of Discs," *Daily Variety Online,* March 4, 2009, http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118000857.html (accessed October 2, 2009); and Mark Graser, "DVD Rentals Re-energized," *Daily Variety Online,* March 13, 2009, http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118001206.html (accessed October 2, 2009).

8 Walter Schmidt, interview with the authors, July 20, 2009.

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 105 2/16/10 4:02:38 PM

Cinema Journal 49 | No. 3 | Spring 2010

The Archive and Academia

by HADEN GUEST

The past decade has witnessed the rapid transformation of motion picture archiving into a professional and, gradually, academic field. In the United States, the emergence of specialized degree programs designed to educate and train motion picture archive professionals has encouraged, even galvanized, interest in the film archive as a career destination. The promise of professional accreditation and vocational training has drawn a new generation of college graduates to archiving in much the same way, one could say, as many have turned recently to information science as a "cool" profession.[1] The vast majority of applicants for the new archival programs share an undergraduate degree in Film Studies and a desire to find a "practical" application for their interests in film and media history. This is, indeed, precisely the background common to the many aspiring archivists who have contacted me during my three years as Director of the Harvard Film Archive for advice on how to enter the field of moving image archiving.

In responding I invariably point back to my graduate education—to my PhD in Film and Television from the University of California–Los Angeles—as the crucial stage in my training and education where I gained the research and curatorial skills that remain invaluable to my work. I encourage those would-be archivists interested in pursuing work in conservation, collection management, or cataloging to consider applying directly to one of the excellent professional degree programs. Yet I also describe the PhD as an ideal preparation for a more curatorially oriented career in archiving, whether as a film programmer, archive director, or archivist with collection development/management responsibilities. I believe that the dedicated, patient work of a doctoral candidate—and specifically the development, research, and writing of a dissertation—can offer an ideal means of honing the type of judgment and understanding of historical and cultural values necessary for curating archival collections and cinematheque programs.

A career in the film archive is best suited, in my opinion, for those scholars whose PhDs have trained them as film historians. For motion picture archiving offers an exciting alternate mode of practicing film history to a teaching career, a firsthand engagement and often

[1] Kara Jesella, "A Hipper Crowd of Shushers," *New York Times,* July 8, 2007.

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 106 2/16/10 4:02:38 PM

direct shaping of the very material foundation upon which the history of cinema is built. Indeed, the knowledge and research skills of a film historian are essential tools for discovering or assessing the value of a collection. Archivists must be able to judge the value of the many collections—of films, manuscripts, photographs, technology, or periodicals—that come their way, often at a moment's notice, in order to determine if valuable resources should be used to bring these materials into the archive. From a long list of film titles provided by a film collector, for example, an archivist must be ready and able to evaluate the collection's research and preservation values by distinguishing the obscure and otherwise unobtainable works from those better known and more readily available films.

The work of the motion picture archivist requires a type of curatorial judgment grounded in precisely the type of broad knowledge of film history and aesthetics gained by graduate study—an understanding of key national cinemas and production companies, historical periods and movements, film technology, filmmakers, performers, and cinematographers, as well as their historical, sociocultural, and intellectual contexts. Experience in academic film study can provide a crucial base of knowledge and research skills that will continue to be built upon and expanded by work within a film archive. At the same time, however, curatorial judgment also calls for a set of skills for which most academic programs rarely provide training. Indeed, the type of engagement with and evaluation of a wide range of vital primary sources typical of archival work (whether in the form of film prints, manuscripts or, perhaps most crucially, the artists themselves) is a mode of research that most graduate programs, at best, only touch upon. I have always felt that more attention should be given in graduate film studies to training in primary research beyond simply industrial and personal documents; students could be trained, for example, in actually viewing films to identify and appreciate historical artistic and exhibition formats, or trained in conducting oral histories.

Motion picture archivists must remain fully aware of the field of Film Studies itself and of the ever-evolving relationship between the archive and academia. In recent years the dialogue between academic film scholarship and the archive has become particularly rich, with inspired work by scholars such as Dana Polan, Rob King, and Janet Bergstrom furthering the "new historicism" that remains among the more exciting trends in American film study. Such scholarship is based on exhaustive and immersive research within archival collections of industrial, institutional, and individual artists' papers. Training and experience in academic film study is essential for forging and maintaining the type of productive and symbiotic relationships with the research community that grounds cutting-edge scholarship in film history. Ideally an archivist must be able to engage in an active and ongoing dialogue with film scholars and historians, recognizing and learning from the distinct paths through a given collection taken by each specialized research project. Solid footing in film studies and research trends allows an archivist to fully appreciate and take advantage of such engagement with visiting researchers. And hopefully those scholars, in turn, understand the tremendous benefits that lie in truly engaging the archive or collection head about those collections relevant to their research, beyond the obviously relevant materials. Although the role of the archivist is often described as that of a gatekeeper, one who controls access in

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 107 2/16/10 4:02:38 PM

and out of a given collection, I prefer to think of an archivist in less threatening terms, as a welcoming host, guide, and colleague.

Certain recent directions in film scholarship and the motion picture archive world point toward an increasing and rich intersection between the archive and the academy. One of the more exciting of such directions is the recent surge of interest in all manner of amateur, industrial, and educational cinema that falls into the loose category of "orphan films." A relatively new field of study, the study of "orphan cinema" is remarkably vibrant today, drawing energy from an active and diverse community of scholars, filmmakers, collectors, and archive professionals. The always-excellent biannual Orphan Film Symposium reveals the extent to which the study of this previously ignored branch of cinematic production is in no way an exclusively academic pursuit, but is instead shaped by interest from the academic and archival worlds. The symposium provides an important forum for sharing and discussing the latest orphan discoveries, principally drawn from archival collections, and creates an especially productive meeting ground for archivists and scholars. The ever-deepening interest in silent cinema in Film Studies also continues to thrive on a productive meeting of the archive and academia, with the major archival film festivals—led by Pordenone and Bologna—revealing the close community of film scholars and archivists, as well as preservationists and industry professionals whose shared interests and passions all lead, in some fashion, to the film archive.

When I look back over my own career trajectory, I realize that I have always been drawn most immediately to archive work and have been somewhat ambivalent about a purely academic career as a Film Studies professor. Yet I only began to notice a pronounced difference between archival and academic work after completing graduate school and becoming established at my subsequent posts, first at the Warner Bros. Archives at the University of Southern California and now at the Harvard Film Archive. The graduate school experience today is increasingly shaped, I believe, by an intense pressure to specialize, to define a distinct subject expertise which is often described in almost imperialistic terms—as a "carving out" or "laying claim" to a certain intellectual terrain or subject matter—with the dissertation implicitly understood as a type of flag firmly planted to declare possession of a carefully delimited subject area. There is an uncontestable and lasting value to the dissertation as a rite of passage and a means of proving one's academic qualifications. And yet, I think there is also a real danger of intellectual myopia and a shrinking of the field itself when scholarship is so intensely defined in terms of the narrowest of niches.

The type of specific subject specialization gained from graduate film study has, in truth, only limited value for a career as an archivist or archival curator. Curating a collection or cinematheque program demands a far broader, open, and generalist perspective. So many of the curatorial tasks at the heart of the archive involve firsthand and unexpected encounters with primary materials—such as films, manuscripts, or photographs—which one may or may not have ever studied, let alone selected as a dissertation topic. Even more exciting, such encounters are often with films or filmmakers which may have never been written about before or even generally known about. An archivist must be equally invested in what remains unknown, or only vaguely suspected, as those subjects and fields already well explored by scholars and researchers.

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 108 2/16/10 4:02:38 PM

Academic researchers, for the most part, seek out specific primary materials that fit their project at hand, testing the limits and validity of a given thesis with a type of strategically limited archival fieldwork. Quite the opposite is true for the archivist who is instead confronted, indeed sought out, by the primary materials themselves—often quite literally in those frequent cases when a filmmaker actually brings his or her work to the archive door. It is difficult to describe the intensity and indelibility which can define these at times revelatory encounters. When I search for an image to describe the state of near constant overstimulation which I personally find to be the quintessence of the archival experience, I recall the magical scene in Nagisa Oshima's *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief* (*Shinjuku dorobo nikki;* 1968), in which a selection of the more audacious works of literature on the shelves of the flagship Kinokuniya bookstore in Tokyo's Shinjuku neighborhood gradually come alive, each mysteriously reading itself aloud, with the volumes of Jean Genet, Anaïs Nin, Henry Miller, et al. speaking their words to weave a multilayered soundtrack that builds to an almost overwhelming chorus. I think of archival collections, like the haunted books in Oshima's Kinokuniya, as voices searching for interlocutory partners, rather than passive objects sitting on the shelves. And I see the opening of archival collections through exhibitions and effective, efficient research access as the crucial means for sparking animated and vital conversations between scholar and source.

The very notion of being a generalist runs, in so many ways, counter to dominant trends in academic film studies. The pressures to complete one's studies make it difficult, if not impossible, for a graduate student to reach or wander outside his or her established specialization. When I was in graduate school, I noticed how many of my fellow graduate students chose to restrict themselves entirely to their stated or intended dissertation topic and often right from the very start of course work. In this way, these students only rarely encountered or explored collections or even films outside their dissertation area. And when unique opportunities presented themselves outside the seminar room, such as once-in-a-lifetime film retrospectives, or the chance to view and discuss works by such legendary directors as Budd Boetticher, André de Toth, or Michelangelo Antonioni—with these directors actually in attendance—few of the, admittedly very busy, graduate students had the inclination or time to attend. In truth, many Film Studies graduate students openly admitted that they did not actually enjoy viewing films but rather saw this as a form of "work." With the discovery of cinephilia as a rich subject of research, a change seems to be in the air which goes hand in hand with the burgeoning interest in archival work and with a new interest in a wide and dynamic range of primary research, from the viewing and appreciation of historically accurate film projection to oral history projects. Perhaps the increased intersection between the archive and Film Studies central to this new mode of cinephilic and archival oriented scholarship offers a means to reinvigorate the field of film studies, reorienting a new generation of scholars and archivists alike to embrace a materially grounded understanding of film history and to seek out the unique insight, excitement, and, yes, pleasure of primary research.

As a profession I see motion picture archiving as poised, triangularly, between museum and library work and Film Studies; archiving is a profession that requires as much administrative as curatorial and intellectual acumen. While I strongly believe

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 109 2/16/10 4:02:39 PM

that graduate Film Studies offers an ideal mold for a moving image curator/archivist, I also recognize that the archival profession has a limited appeal because it requires a certain disposition, a willingness, shall we say, to be pulled in many directions at once without somehow becoming too distracted. Many seem to be drawn by a romantic ideal of motion picture archiving as a type of treasure hunting; the archive is imagined as a veritable Ali Baba's cave rich with hidden cinematic gems. Although I personally find actual truth to this image and ideal of archive work, I am continually surprised by just how extraordinarily different are the many types of "treasure" one encounters within a film archive. Film archivists should expect to be drawn away from their own dominant research interests and perhaps to discover some sort of archival "treasure" where and when they least expect it. At the heart of the intellectual and artistic work of curatorship is the need to be always receptive and able to discerningly consider those unexpected collections and unique opportunities that find their way to one's doorstep, keeping an open ear to the constant murmur of voices that emit from each archival object and collection and that engage or enable the vital conversation with the past which is the very lifeblood of historical inquiry. ✻

On the Intersection of Media Studies and Market Research: Exploring the Exchange Between Academia and Business–Justin Wyatt

by Justin Wyatt

The SCMS Professional Development Committee has asked me to consider the opportunities for Film and Television Studies doctorates for work in the so-called "media industries." Immediately betraying my own academic roots, I must start this project with a series of caveats, large and small. The largest caveat is that I must situate all my comments and analysis within the very specific world of "market research" within the media industries. It's the region of the bulk of my own work within the industry, and I feel that it would be disingenuous to extrapolate to other areas within the media industries (such as production, distribution, new product development, and

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 110 2/16/10 4:02:39 PM

finance). While there is certainly movement between market research and these allied areas, most media researchers stay within the boundaries of marketing, occasionally venturing into the closest allied fields of creative advertising, marketing strategy, and media planning.

Market research occupies a particular niche within the media industries: closer to the "technical" field of finance and further from the creative fields of production and development. Compared to the worlds of consumer package goods, market research is considered to be an imperfect fit by many for the media industries. Creative executives often chafe at the idea of considering consumer insights about their film, TV, and multimedia products. Nevertheless, insights from market research inform a variety of levels within the media industries: from market sizing to pilot testing and ad testing. The world of media market research operates along two sets of axes: quantitative/qualitative research and client/supplier affiliation. Generally, most media market research divides into two functional areas: quantitative research (large-sample testing through online, phone, or occasionally mail surveys) and qualitative research (small-sample projects including focus groups, in-depth interviews, ethnographies, and usability testing). These projects are usually serviced directly by suppliers for clients, although, in the recession, more market research is being conducted in-house by clients rather than outsourced. So, keep in mind that my own boundaries and my analysis are set by media market research within the realm of marketing.

Further, I want to stress that my comments are, first and foremost, driven by my own direct experience from both fields: market research and academia. Anyone seeking advice through an informational interview in the media industries soon discovers that almost all "objective advice" is filtered through the prism of personal experience and lived history. Rather than hide this tendency, I want to foreground it, with the hope that my personal experience may be useful to others in traversing these fields.

Media Economics: Another Time, Another Place. My own academic training encompasses both Economics (BA degree at the University of British Columbia) and Film and Television Studies (MA and PhD degrees at the University of California–Los Angeles [UCLA]). In large part, my academic and media industry career has been an attempt to reconcile the diverse learning from these fields. The differences are readily apparent, but the similarities may not be so visible. My economics training was focused strongly on neoclassical microeconomics, centered on the theory of the consumer, the producer, and the marketplace. Built around a fixed set of objectives (maximize profit or utility), agents (consumers, producers), and interactions (production, consumption, exchange), neoclassical economics posits a worldview that is inherently narrative in nature: everyone has goals, and these are met, as closely as possible, through trade and exchange. Consider, for instance, the construct of the "Invisible Hand"—the notion that consumers acting selfishly toward their end goals leads to resources being used to their best use and prices being set to clear the market. Rather than leave the concept abstract, the name gives it a strongly visual presence and encourages the narrative of economic theory. The pioneering work of Deirdre McCloskey considers this characterization of economic theory through the rhetoric used by economists to build their arguments, theories, and tenets. McCloskey's work demonstrates how my interest in

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 111 2/16/10 4:02:39 PM

economics and in narrative and storytelling dovetailed. I discovered the world of Film and Television Studies, then, through model building, albeit models encapsulating the viewer, the cinematic apparatus, and theories of pleasure.

At the time of my doctoral studies, there was limited academic work in the specific area of media economics, though there were historical studies by scholars such as Tino Balio, Douglas Gomery, Bruce Austin, and Thomas Schatz. While much of this work borrows models from neoclassical economics, there is relatively little interest in investigating economic methods of addressing media. The focus instead is on writing film history with particular attention to the economic determinants of industrial practice and change. In another vein altogether, political economy scholars such as Manjunath Pendakur, Janet Wasko, Thomas Guback, and Eileen Meehan considered media history through a Marxist prism, highlighting the specific political and social inequities posed by shifts in the industry. These two strains of scholarship were presented as fairly separate from a more conventional mass communications model that was anchored by empirical research on media effects and media impact.

My major interests—understanding the economic "product" of film and TV and working toward a method of textual analysis that accounted for the economic life of these products—were largely absent from these academic undertakings in the traditional media economics field. Indeed, I felt a stronger kinship with the writings of British Cultural Studies, particularly the pioneering scholarship of Judith Williamson. Williamson's *Decoding Advertisements,* borrowing from semiotics and Marxist economics, seemed to me a crucial first step in writing media economics through texts. Williamson suggested a way to consider media economics that really captured textual elements and their circulation within consumer society.

Taking advantage of UCLA's geographic location in the center of the media industries, my graduate education was also informed by internships within the film and TV industries. My goal was to augment my academic training with an in-depth understanding of current industrial practice. If I wanted to analyze and theorize the media industries, it seemed important to argue, as much as possible, from a firsthand perspective. This was particularly the case since so much of the industry history, then and now, relied on the industry trades, which many consider merely publicity for the studios. My experience with internships involved market research in TV syndication (at Lorimar) and development/marketing (at J2 Communications). Both of these positions led directly to working in market research in the film industry at the National Research Group (NRG) under Joseph Farrell and Catherine Paura. At the time, Farrell had a virtual monopoly over market research within the industry, consulting and conducting film and advertising testing for all the major studios. NRG offered market research through the life cycle of a movie: market positioning studies based on the screenplay, ad testing (print, TV spot, trailer), recruited audience screenings, and opening weekend in-theater surveys. While the consulting advice of Farrell anchored the business in substantive ways, the complete agenda of market research allowed me to understand how research could be a powerful tool in shaping a creative work at several points of inception. Further, the complete entrenchment of market research within the creative process let me understand how market research could help (i.e., clarify, focus, communicate) and hinder (i.e., dilute, streamline) a piece of entertainment.

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 112 2/16/10 4:02:39 PM

This background illustrates that my own training is not firmly within the boundaries of Film and Television Studies. Certainly, my academic coursework was augmented, in substantial ways, by my previous work in Economics and my ongoing attempts to engage with the current industry through internships and employment in marketing/market research. With this background, I have traversed employment opportunities in both academia and industry, working for several years in each area. How did my background facilitate this path? Both Economics and Film and Television Studies have substantially aided my professional development in the media industries. The training in Economics has been instrumental for quantitative media research, particularly the knowledge of probability, statistics, and multivariate analysis. On the other hand, my academic background in Film and Television Studies has fostered many market research projects in terms of content and understanding the role of the media product in the industry. In many ways, I also see an exchange between academia and industry, with crucial skill sets crossing back and forth.

Academia → Industry & Industry → Academia. Film and Television Studies allows me to appreciate and consider in depth the flexibility of the term "media." Understanding media consumption, and, in particular, the variety of engagements viewers have with media, is certainly the most significant academic knowledge base bolstering my work in the media industries. At the center of market research is the ability to model viewer attitudes, motivations, and preferences. To do so with any precision, you must first allow for the full range of reactions to media. Certainly the strain of Mass Communications research on Uses and Gratifications comes into play here, but in terms of my own attempts to capture these behaviors, I have found the works associated with British Cultural Studies to be even more helpful. The *Nationwide* study, while more than thirty years old, still provides a paradigm for longitudinal media market research with its mixture of research methods and its dramatic range of qualitative and quantitative insights on media consumption. Tellingly, the study allowed me to see market research in its purest terms—apart from the simple stimulus/response type of testing, and truly revealing how research can help define and shape the "market" and its participants. To this day, the model of market research from British Cultural Studies aids me in project and model design. The rigorous analysis and plurality of readings fully retain their power in the digital era.

From this landscape of media consumption, Film and Television Studies also shaped my understanding of positioning media products for consumers. Positioning is simply presenting the media product using a certain rhetoric to amplify specific appeals to a target group. One of the challenges of media marketing is to distill the "takeaways" from market research to build coherent and sustained positionings of the media products for well-defined demographic and psychographic audience segments. These positionings, in turn, are tested to confirm their appeal and to adjust advertising media to highlight attractions for specific targeted groups. Many case studies from film and television history were helpful for understanding this practice. Certainly the development of the studio system and the movement toward the producer-unit system of production offered a useful way to decipher the parallel system of building and testing targeted positioning for each media product. To that end, one crucial text

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 113 2/16/10 4:02:39 PM

for my graduate studies, and the only sustained critical argument linking economics, technology, and aesthetics in the development of Hollywood filmmaking, was David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Janet Staiger's *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*. Bordwell, Thompson, and Staiger's work was most illustrative in demonstrating how industry targeted consumers; the more successful and precise the targeting, the greater the potential for growth, development, and diversification. Positioning in current industry practice was familiar given the strong parallels evident in media history.

Studying media history also reinforced another aspect of working media industries: the ability to model technological change. With the development of digital media, mobile devices, and the concurrent explosion of venues for entertainment, one of the most pressing needs in market research has been reconciling the different release platforms. The questions facing media distributors, producers, and studios are daunting given the rapid shifts in technology and media delivery: What is the optimal release pattern for media at online and offline windows? How can marketing and distribution maximize audience share at each of these windows? What is the strategy for crafting entertainment at and across different windows of release? Attacking these questions through marketing and market research is a challenge, no doubt. Nevertheless, this work is informed and strengthened by knowledge of past technological "revolutions" in media history. These technological shifts are new, certainly, but understanding earlier changes (e.g., the movie industry's response to TV, the integration of home video into the industry) allows one to place these technological shifts in an appropriate context (social, economic, industrial). Further, connecting the dots between these technological shifts, past and present, reveals that the fundamental issues facing media producers remain the same across time—namely, how to create compelling characters and narratives that "play" across windows.

Academic training in Film and Television Studies facilitates understanding media consumption, market positioning, and technological change. All of these issues are important for working successfully in entertainment media research. The greatest intersection between the academic world and market research occurs for me on the level of method, however. My experience as a teacher has been invaluable as the basis for leading qualitative research, ranging from focus groups, small group discussions, and one-on-ones to ethnographies. Certainly, there is an inversion that occurs—instead of disseminating ideas, theories and knowledge, the qualitative researcher becomes a sponge, posing questions and listening for attitudes, motivations, and underlying drives. Rather than simply asking a rote list of questions and recording the answers, the qualitative researcher must probe appropriately, go "off script" to develop lines of questioning as needed, and, most significantly, filter and analyze the responses to develop a directional sense of the findings. Consequently, qualitative research continually moves between the minute, tactical elements of the discussion guide while keeping in mind the large-scale business objectives and implications of the project as a whole. Media scholars are well versed in this dual purpose through their pedagogy. The challenge of teaching the narrative functioning and social impact of a media text, for instance, derives from anchoring a discussion to a specific object while simultaneously creating a compelling argument on how the object functions aesthetically and socially.

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 114 2/16/10 4:02:40 PM

Similarly, the qualitative market researcher is continually moving between gathering feedback on specific media issues, understanding how this feedback coalesces, and analyzing how the viewer input meshes with the core research questions and business goals at the heart of the study.

While I'm currently a "recovering academic," having worked in the media industries for nearly ten years after being a tenured professor at the University of Arizona, I think it's important also to highlight the learning that occurs in the other direction, from industry to academia. On finishing my doctorate, I had the chance to leave my industry position at the NRG to take my first tenure-track teaching position. The greatest pleasure of the transition was the chance to consider issues and ideas in depth, to share that knowledge, and to contribute original scholarship. From my experience, media industry work is characterized by sharp deadlines, bottom-line thinking, and an almost alarming lack of reflection. As a result, there is little chance to pursue ideas, theories, and arguments without a clear business objective. The ability to develop and refine arguments through research, teaching, and interaction with colleagues and students seemed like a complete luxury after numerous fast-turnaround tactical projects in the media industries. Further, there is certainly almost no chance to instill a clear social, political, or ideological message as part of the research. Coming of age in the time of high theory within Film and Television Studies, I was impressed at the ways in which media research can be used to further a social, political, or activist stance. Sometimes this would occur even at the level of choice of topic; other times, the author would be explicit about his or her personal stake in the research and the larger social implications at play. With most market research in the media industries, there is a clear set of goals: to build a larger audience and to bolster viewers' connection to a specific media product. Of course, these goals are mostly value neutral, espousing any ideological or social agenda necessary to connect with the viewers.

In sum, for all those interested in contributing to media market research, I would encourage advanced training in media history and technology, preferably within a context that explores the industrial development of the media industries. As would be expected for such a young field, there have been large advances in academic consideration of media industries over the past two decades. Today, academics routinely include economic evaluation and analysis as part of an overall media analysis. Further, scholars have been addressing the costs and benefits of different methods for writing economic analysis and history; the recent anthology, *Media Industries: History, Theory and Method,* edited by Jennifer Holt and Alisa Perren, is an outstanding example of this trend. While Economics, by itself, is certainly not a prerequisite, a working knowledge of statistics, probability, and "media math" most definitely is needed for any position beyond an entry-level one. In the current media environment, any training should be guided, first and foremost, by the flexibility of the term "media." Forget film and TV as the end point; media market researchers must be comfortable and able to work through an array of entertainment media, including mobile devices, video games, web pages, and social networking. Certainly a Media Studies program reflecting this flexibility is a necessity for anyone interested in working professionally in media market research. ✻

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 115 2/16/10 4:02:40 PM

Contributors

Karen Beckman is the Elliot and Roslyn Jaffe Associate Professor of Film Studies in the Department of the History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania; she is also the director of the program in Cinema Studies. She is the author of *Vanishing Women: Magic, Film, and Feminism* (Duke University Press, 2003) and coeditor of *Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography* (Duke University Press, 2008), as well as *Picture This! Photography and Literature* (forthcoming).

E. Ann Kaplan is Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies at Stony Brook University. Her many books include *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (Rutgers University Press, 2005), *Looking For the Other: Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze* (Routledge, 1997), and *Feminism and Film* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

Patricia White is Professor of Film and Media Studies at Swarthmore College. She is the author of *Uninvited: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Lesbian Representability* (Indiana University Press, 1999), and coauthor with Timothy Corrigan of the introductory film studies textbook *The Film Experience* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004). Her essays and chapters have appeared in *The Feminist Reader in Early Cinema, Screen, Camera Obscura,* and *Cinema Journal.*

Giorgio Bertellini is Assistant Professor in Screen Arts and Cultures and Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor. He is the author of *Emir Kusturica* (Castoro, 1996) and *Italy in Early American Cinema: Race, Landscape, and the Picturesque* (Indiana University Press, 2009). His edited and coedited anthologies include *The Cinema of Italy* (Wallflower, 2004, 2007), *Early Cinema and the "National"* (John Libbey, 2008), and *Silent Italian Cinema: A Reader* (John Libbey, forthcoming).

Jacqueline Reich is Associate Professor of Italian and Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies at Stony Brook University. She is the author of *Beyond the Latin Lover: Marcello Mastroianni, Masculinity, and Italian Cinema* (Indiana University Press, 2004) and coeditor of *Re-viewing Fascism: Italian Cinema 1922–43* (Indiana University Press, 2002).

Haden Guest is Director of the Harvard Film Archive and Lecturer in Film and Visual Culture in Harvard's Department of Visual and Environmental Studies.

Justin Wyatt is Senior Consultant, Primary Research at the Comcast Entertainment Group. He has held positions in market research at the ABC TV Network and Frank N. Magid Associates. Before leaving academia in 2000, Wyatt was an Associate Professor of Media Arts at the University of Arizona.

06_Dossier_093-116_CJ_49-3.indd 116 2/16/10 4:02:40 PM