

The Special Relationship: British Cinema and Hollywood in Edgar Wright's *Cornetto Trilogy*



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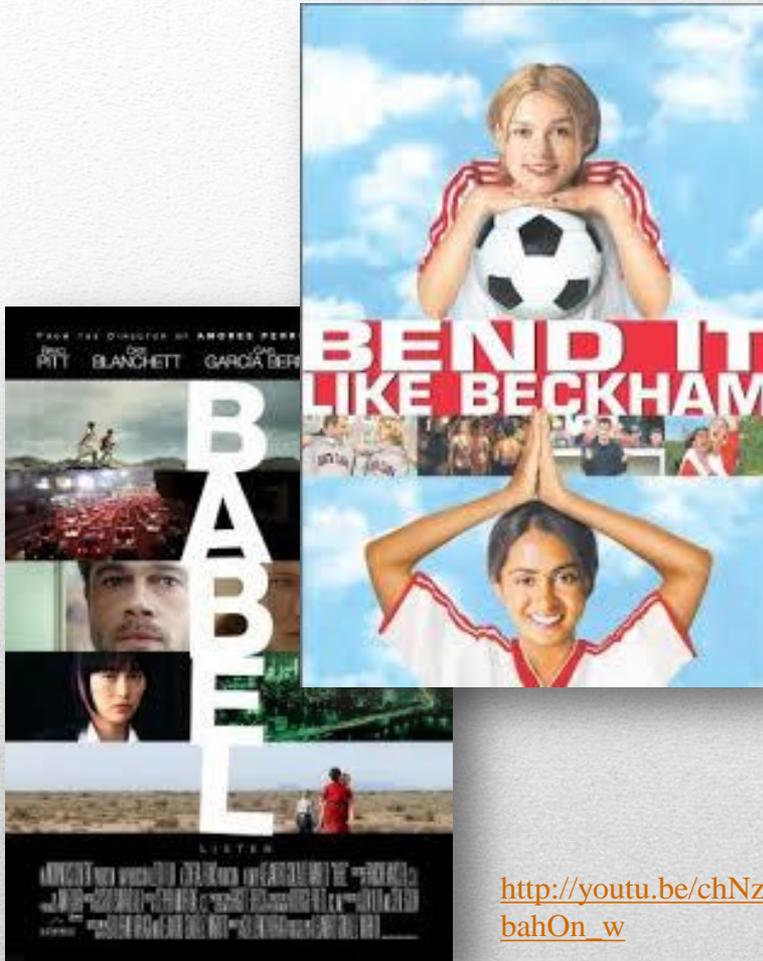
- Overall aim: to explore how Wright's films appropriate and recirculate particular images of British identity for international consumption
- To investigate how Hollywood films, American identities evoked in British cinema
- Number of issues en route:
 - Transnational British cinema
 - Citation
 - Construction of masculinity

Aims of the session

- What constitutes a British film?
- UK government devised official tests:
 - the maker test
 - the production cost test
 - the labour cost test
 - previously filmed material



British Cinema?



- Transnational cinemas disregard notions of national cinema
- Embrace or erase diversity of national cultures.
- Contrast between *Babel* (Inarritu, 2006), and Nolan's *Batman* trilogy
- Similar patterns in British cinema

Transnational Cinema?



Shaun of the Dead (Dir. Edgar Wright, 2004)



Hot Fuzz (Dir. Edgar Wright, 2007)



The World's End (Dir. Edgar Wright, 2013)

Cornetto Trilogy?

- Three principal types of landscape:
 - Traditional heritage England
 - Mundane urban modernity
 - Monumental metropolitan modernity



Transnational English Landscapes



- Chris Ritchie identifies Albion in British comedy film and television
- Albion: a highly stylised vision of England that contrasts with its history of social realism.
- Notably, Ritchie observes that in comedy cinema and television, Albion is always under siege, under threat of being lost forever.

Albion: an exportable vision of England

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- **Traditional heritage England** – is most obviously seen in *Hot Fuzz*
 - **Mundane urban modernity** – can be seen both in *Sean of the Dead* and *The World's End*
 - **Monumental metropolitan modernity** - is briefly seen at the beginning of *Hot Fuzz*.
 - Albion, is seen throughout the *Cornetto trilogy*. but is reworked. Change is welcomed and embraced.

Transnational landscapes

- Dominant types associated with particular forms of British landscape:
 - Debonair/action hero – monumental metropolis
 - Everyman figure - the middlebrow suburbs
 - Anachronistic Mr Darcy types - rural English idyll.



British Masculinities



Hot Fuzz

- Disjunction between landscape and pastiche particularly acute in *Hot Fuzz*
- Mobilises all of the landscapes of transnational British cinema
- Neighbourhood watch association revealed to be serial killers.
- Engages and subverts notion of Albion

- Intertextuality is widespread
- Two films expressly cited: *Point Break* (Bigelow, 1991) and *Bad Boys II* (Bay, 2003)
- Citations:
 - Excerpts shown
 - Describing scenes
 - Acting out scenes from earlier films



“Point Break or Bad Boys II? [...] Which one do you want to watch first?”

Citation of Hollywood



- Plays on Danny's perceived positioning outside the work of "real" police work.
- Contrasts diligence and drudgery of everyday policing "real" police work with Danny's action film fantasies.
- Urban v rural; inside and outside "real action"
- Demonstrates incongruity of action in rural British landscape yet places it there

“Police work isn't about proper action – or shit.”

- Judith Butler: gender is performative
- Butler situates gender as a form of citation
- Butler subverts the conventional priority of the citation
- Butler: the citation 'brings into being the very authority to which it then defers.' (1993: 118)



Citation and masculinity



http://youtu.be/_wjTopWZaVc

- Multiple levels of imitation: between national cultures, characters, physicality, time periods and genre
- Fence jump lifted from *Point Break*
- Nicholas parodies the heroics of Swayze and Reeves
- Danny follows Nicholas in a further citation
- Blend of multiple elements of British and Hollywood cinema

Shoplifting scene

- *Point Break* only constructed as source of authentic, action hero masculinity through incongruous citation
- Danny: Keanu Reeves “loves him so much.”
- Multiple citations of the Hollywood action film reveal queer potential of action cinema
- Citation able to rework film history



The Effect of Citation on Hollywood Genre

- Construction of British masculinity is connected to dominant constructions of landscape
- Judith Butler: apparent approximations in fact have the power to alter the retrospective interpretation of the texts cited
- A reflection on parochial, rural British landscape and the Hollywood action genre – question our assumptions
- Representations of British and Hollywood masculinity revealed as a type of construct

Concluding remarks



Any Questions?

On British Cinema

- Higson, A, 2010 *Film England*, London: IB Tauris
- Leggott, J, 2008, *Contemporary British Cinema*, London: Wallflower
- Ritchie, C, 2010, 'England? Whose England? Selling Albion in British Comedy Cinema,' *Comedy Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 33-42

On Transnational Cinema

- Ezra, E and Richardson, T, 2006, *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*, London: Routledge
- Redfern, N, 2007, 'Defining British Cinema: Transnational and Territorial Film Policy in the UK,' *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 150-164
- Bergfelder, T, 2005, 'National, transnational or supranational cinema?' *Rethinking European Film Studies*, *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 315-331

Further reading

Intertextuality and citation

- Allen, G, 2011, *Intertextuality*, London: Routledge
- Butler, J, 1993, *Bodies that Matter*, London: Routledge

Masculinity and Spectacle

- Neale, S, 1983, 'Masculinity as Spectacle: Reflections on Men and Mainstream Cinema,' *Screen* Vol. 24, No. 6, 2-16
- Cohan, S, and Hark, IR, 1993, *Screening the Male*, London: Routledge
- Dyer, R, 1982, 'Don't Look Now: The Instabilities of the Male Pin-Up,' in Dyer, R, 2002, *Only Entertainment*, London: Routledge

Further reading
