

HOLLYWOOD/EUROPE: A TRANSNATIONAL FILM CULTURE

Part 2: Hollywood vs. European Cinema

Europe's Hollywood Cinema

Department of Film and Audiovisual Culture

Dr. Richard Nowell

Agenda

12:35–14.20

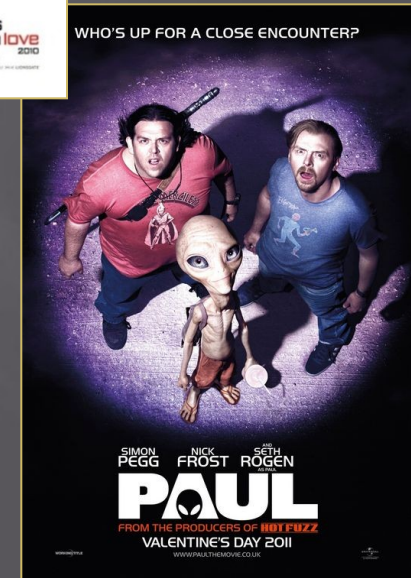
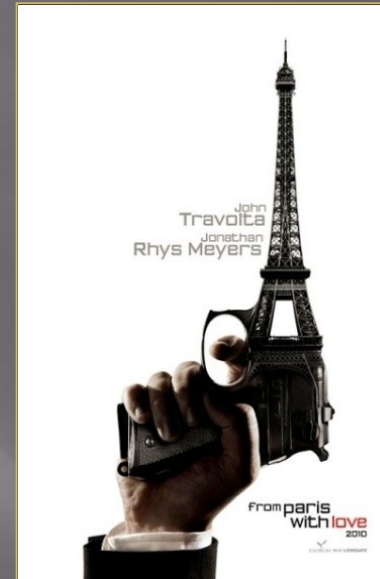
Screening: *Paul* (2011)

14:20 – 14:30

Break

14:30 – 15:45

Europe's Hollywood Cinema



Paul Questions

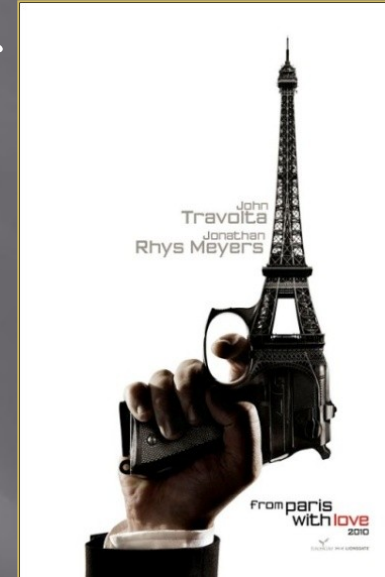
1. How does *Paul* exemplify Working Title's in-house approaches to content-tailoring?
2. How does *Paul* suggest that the international flow of cultural producers, artifacts, and ideas is involved in non-national forms of community building?
3. How does *Paul* use allegory to promote this film – and by extension Working Title Films – as a legitimate non-American part of Hollywood?

Focus

Europe as a structural component of Hollywood

The cases of EuropaCorp and Working Title Pictures

Two dominant content-tailoring strategies



The Limiting Imagination of Hollywood- European Production Histories

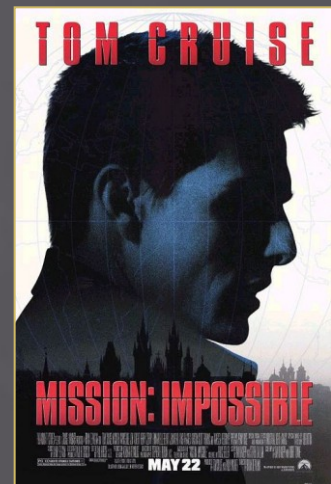
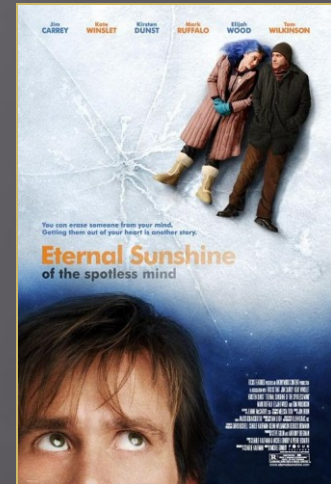
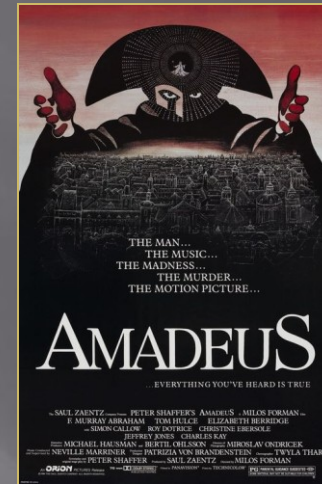
Discussion of “International division of cultural labor” emphasizes two topics:

1. Émigré Filmmakers
2. “Runaway” Productions

Both acknowledge the transnational status of Hollywood, but still uphold distinctions

Imply rare, temporary cooperation between distinct parties via travel to or from the US

Paradoxically, these notions maintain the nominally American status of Hollywood



Euro-Hollywood: Constantin, Polgram, Credit Lyonnais, The Kremlin

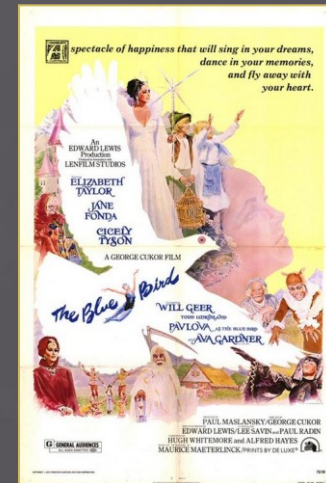
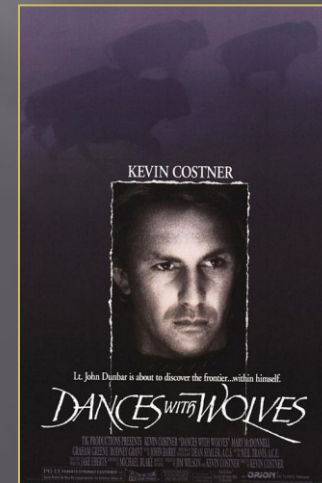
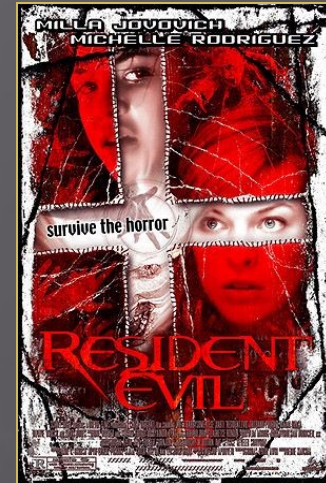
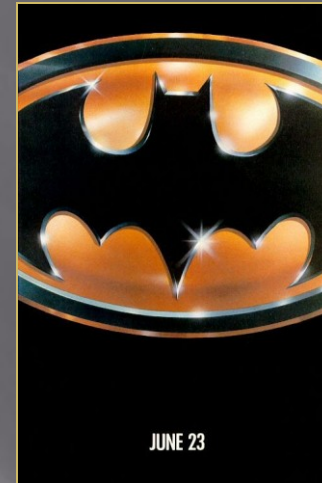
However, European production companies are imbricated within the structures of Hollywood

This is possible because Hollywood companies have long since out-sourced production

As we have seen European firms produced or coproduced myriad Hollywood films

These have included blockbusters, genre films, and thematically “American” films

Crucially, the European bases of some of these producers determines the nature of their output



EuropaCorp

1. What is EuropaCorp?
2. Broadly speaking, what types of film has EuropaCorp produced in the twenty-first century?
3. How does Vandershelden suggest these product lines complement each other?
4. Do you find anything curious about her explanation?

EuropaCorp: L'Hollywood Francais

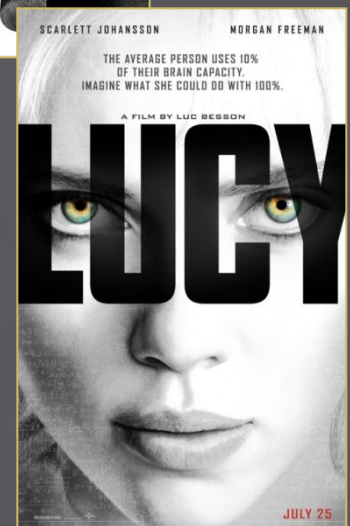
Produces ultra-low-budget French-language films mainly for Francophone (but also other) markets

Also produces medium-budget Anglophone fare for export (NOT blockbusters as VDS claims)

Aims to sell these films to Hollywood distributors on their appeal to US and international markets

VDS argues films like *Taken* are a necessary means to support EuropaCorp's "French Cinema"

No!!! It spreads risk, generates revenue, and entitles a major corporation to taxpayer support



In what ways do the makers of *From Paris with Love* attempt to distance this film from its French production origins, and why?

Hyper-corrected “American-ness”, generically and thematically

Ge

Part “Euro-thriller” Part 80s Action throwback

Style

Slick, US-Asian type comic book violence

Themes

1. Bush-Cheney “Others”
2. US violent international interventionism
3. Demonization of France (autocratic/impractical)
4. Recuperation of preemptive violent pragmatism
5. Promotion of US’s surveillance technologies
4. Fears of US M/C imperiled by globalization



Textual Strategy I: Imperso-Nation

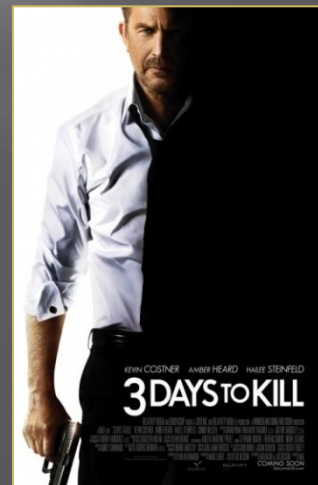
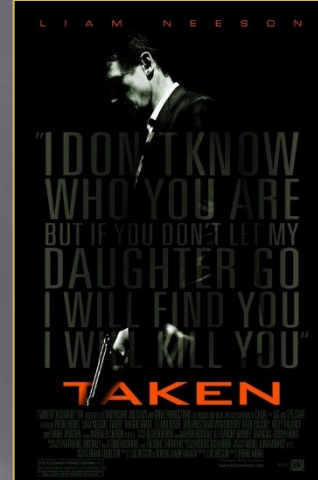
EuropaCorp leans toward Imperso-Nation

It exploits the Hollywood/US association to increase its potential consumer base

Tailors content in order to mask national production origins of its medium-budget films

Stresses qualities that most audiences would deem “quintessentially American”

1. Emulates “Hollywood” conventions
2. Articulates “Hyper-American” positions



Working Title Films

What is Working Title Films?

How is Working Title part of the structure of Contemporary Hollywood?

What is meant by Working Title's "Mid-Atlantic" Approach to films?

What is meant by Working Title's "Pan-European" Approach to films?

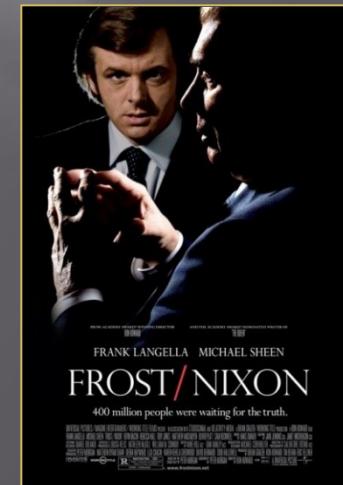
Working Title Films: Commodifying the Jolly Olde “Special Relationship”

UK-based company with ties to Universal Pictures & Canal Plus

1. Best known for its transatlantic romances
2. Sometimes offers pan-European appeal
3. Sometimes practices “Imperso-Nation”
[backed most of the Cohen Brothers’ films]

Its trademark is the promotion of transatlantic harmony through onscreen relationships

EG: Hugh-Grant + US actress = metaphor for UK-US corporate and cultural partnerships



Paul Questions

1. How does *Paul* exemplify Working Title's in-house approaches to content-tailoring?
2. How does *Paul* suggest that the international flow of cultural producers, artifacts, and ideas is involved in non-national forms of community building?
3. How does *Paul* use allegory to promote this film – and by extension Working Title Films – as a legitimate non-American part of Hollywood?

Brining the likeminded together through media, on the screen and in front of it

Paul is posited as a sophisticated advertisement for non-American contributions to Hollywood

Suggests “aliens” (i.e. non-Americans) contribute to “American” popular entertainment, esp. sci-fi

Paul/Paul unites people through media choices

Stresses that tastes transcends states: media forges psychographic – rather than national – communities

Promotes Working Title as the glue binding together likeminded consumers ... all around the world



“Midatlanticism” – or should that be “Transatlanticism” (?)

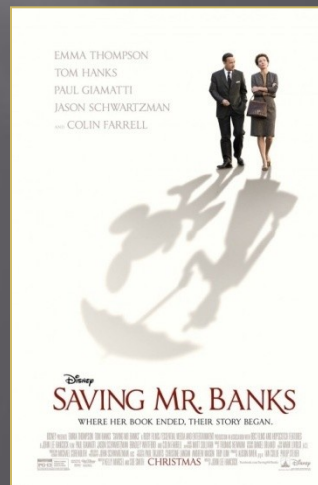
Does not obscure production origins;
Transnational in terms of content/themes

Often articulated through shared media
culture/heritage, or joyous exchanges

Insulates films from nationalistic viewers,
who might reject it on the basis of its origins

Also, promotes the long-term future of the
non-US contributors to Hollywood

After all, nominally non-American films have
historically struggled to make it statesid.



In Sum

European companies are part of the very structures of Hollywood, contributing to myriad films we tend to think of as American

They also employ two tailoring-content strategies to attract Hollywood distributors, by undermining Europe's reputation for art cinema

“Imperso-Nation” masks European origins, making the films appear to be American-made – sometimes hyperbolically so

“Mid-Atlanticism” foregrounds European origins but promotes transatlantic (media) relations textually, and thus corporately

In both cases, Hollywood's reputation for accessible, appealing fare is seen as a replicable, commercially attractive asset ... not as a foil