

Theme of issue 1: *Hybridity, Borders and Margins in English-speaking Cinema*

Hybridity is a term that has changed its meaning considerably in recent years. Originally a biological term, it has traditionally been applied in a social context to racial or ethnic mixture, and has been associated with discourses (such as miscegenation, creolisation, métissage and mestizaje) articulating the recognition and/or fear of such mixture. Anxieties of this kind, expressing a concern for racial purity, became more generalised across the world in the postwar decades, as colonialism came to an end and increasing international migration and economic liberalization prompted growing social hybridity. A second interpretation of hybridity has emerged in the context of postcolonial discourse and its critiques of cultural imperialism. It focuses on the effects of colonialism – the relationship of colonizer and colonized – in terms of identity and culture. Homi Bhabha and others have highlighted the ambivalence created by such hybridity in the minds of colonial masters toward the colonized Other. There have also been important consequences for the dominant culture of the colonizing power as it has been influenced by contact with those it had colonized—in terms of interactions with the latter both as indigenous peoples and, later, as migrants to the metropole from former colonies. A third, very specific meaning of hybridity for film scholars has its origins in the idea that there are no single genres of film any more – that all films, whether features or documentaries, are, at least in some sense, ‘hybrids.’

The idea of hybridity as a social and cultural phenomenon can also be linked with notions of social and geographical borders and margins. From the 1960s on, historians have been following the lead of anthropologists in exploring social groups on the fringes of society. It has at times seemed that those who dwelt on the borders of a society or culture offered a more revealing perspective than more mainstream figures. Poststructuralist writers, Jacques Derrida in particular, made a parallel point in linguistic terms: that the cultural meanings of a text were often better elucidated by words on the borders and margins of the text itself.

The articles in this issue analyse outsider groups such as prostitutes in American films of the 1929-34 period (Jean-Marie Lecomte) and Irish Travellers (Andrea Grunert). One article (Robert Lang) examines two modern films that challenge but then largely confirm the idea of melodramatic destiny in mixed-race relationships. Two additional articles (Melvyn Stokes and Arlene Hui) explore representations of black-white and Asian-white miscegenation respectively on screen. Christophe Gelly, in a different vein, analyses the hybridity of words and images in both Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness* and Francis Coppola's film *Apocalypse Now*.

The theme of this issue is one that touches on a considerable range of work on film. The issue will therefore remain open for additional contributions. Those who wish to submit an article for consideration should contact the editors Melvyn Stokes ([melvynstokes@hotmail.com](mailto:melvynstokes@hotmail.com)) and Gilles Menegaldo ([Gilles.Menegaldo@univ-poitiers.fr](mailto:Gilles.Menegaldo@univ-poitiers.fr))