

Stars, nobodies, and other apparitions: cameo roles in Hollywood film and television

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Abstract/Résumé

This project uses the cameo role in film and television to examine how audiences have organized their knowledge about celebrities over the last century. The cameo, relying on the interplay of brief duration and audience recognition of an actor aside from the part he plays, creates an encounter for the audience with a celebrity as a person who is both familiar and strange. Cameos are an important part of the marketing for a film, borrowing the clout of stars and celebrated figures to draw audiences, both niche and popular, to their films, while acknowledging the familiarity of those audiences with celebrity culture. For audiences, cameos and the act of recognition allow the chance to participate in the expansion of a film's meaning outward into the real world by exposing a documentary space. As the nature and function of the cameo has changed over the last century, it has reflected an evolution in who is celebrated and recognized in popular culture, growing from favourite characters to celebrities and their manufactured personalities to stars of sports, politics, and reality TV shows. The cameo encourages audience participation across media landscapes, creating the potential for fan digression and control while ensuring continued and long-term publicity as celebrity images live on outside of the film. Ultimately, cameo roles have used celebrity images to reward fans eager to demonstrate their knowledge of favourite celebrities, allowing them to actively assume a role for themselves within mass culture.

Cette thèse aborde les rôles caméos dans les films et la télévision en explorant la culture de la célébrité pendant le siècle dernier. Le rôle de caméo, qui se définit par sa courte durée et la reconnaissance d'un acteur par l'auditoire permet de simuler l'expérience de rencontrer une célébrité qui est à la fois étrangère et connue. Les rôles de caméo se retrouvent fréquemment importants dans la commercialisation d'un film, car ils peuvent attirer un auditoire diverse avec leur présentation des grandes vedettes du cinéma dans un environnement où leur histoire de vie dépassent l'histoire du film. Un rôle de caméo permet à l'auditoire de démontrer sa connaissance de la culture de la célébrité. Pour l'auditoire les rôles de caméos donnent l'opportunité de participer à l'interaction du film avec la vie réelle. Avec son évolution depuis le début du XXI^{ème} siècle, le rôle de caméo s'est transformé au fil des changements dans la culture de la célébrité, surtout avec le développement d'un public qui connaît de plus en plus la vie privée de

la célébrité. Le rôle de caméo encourage l'interaction du public en identifiant les célébrités, une activité qui se trouve couramment en ligne où les cinéphiles agissent comme experts de la culture populaire et donne de la publicité aux célébrités en dehors du cinéma. Le rôle de caméo et sa réception par le grand public créent une manière active pour les cinéphiles de démontrer leur connaissance de la culture de la célébrité.

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Introduction

As the final credits roll in *Tropic Thunder* (2008), a minor character, the producer of the beleaguered action flick whose production the movie follows, boogies in his office, hamming it up for the camera. Like many codas in contemporary comedies, this non sequitur scene sits somewhere between impromptu, are-we-still-rolling blooper and orchestrated bonus content. In the film, the producer is tough-nosed, canny, and given to obscenity; in the coda the actor's dancing is a silly spectacle far outside of the character the audience has gotten to know after 90 minutes of screen time. Who exactly are we watching getting down, the producer or the actor? The credits give the audience a further clue, as they reveal that the producer is not just any actor's performance in a minor role, but a cameo by perennial leading man Tom Cruise, made unrecognizable by a bald cap and fatsuit. (Fig. 1; Fig. 2) The reveal is twofold as it first shows the breakdown of the movie into pure performance, and then pulls the carpet of recognition out from under the audience again as it shows that the question this sequence asks is not why but who. With this dancing cameo, the audience is asked to reevaluate their relationship to the film and its filmmakers and yet also to reaffirm their deep participation in film culture and its system of celebrities. Cameos destabilize the relationship of a film's fictional premise to the world's non-fictional reality, but also leverage the audience's investment in the personas of celebrity to fulfill their moviegoing experiences. Cameos create a space in the movie that is filled by the audience's extratextual knowledge.

Cameo roles are usually defined as small roles where people play themselves, or, as Ernest Mathijs writes, "a short appearance by a publicly known person who is instantly recognizable, which makes them harder to accept as a character than as the public person they are."¹ The specific qualities that make a person publicly known and instantly recognizable depend, as Mathijs suggests, on the audience. A cameo may be visible or invisible depending on what audience is watching. Scholars and journalists writing about movies use the term to describe roles that run the gamut from Tom Cruise's unexpected turn as the boogying agent to

¹ Ernest Mathijs, "Cronenberg Connected: Cameo Acting, Cult Stardom, and Supertexts," in *Cult Film Stardom: Offbeat Attractions and Processes of Cultification*, ed. Kate Egan and Sarah Thomas (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 146.



Figure 1. Tom Cruise clowning around as Les Grossman in the credits for *Tropic Thunder* (2008).



Figure 2. Leading man: Tom Cruise in *Mission: Impossible 3* (2006).

Buster Keaton's late career bit parts² to a college professor's extra role in *Lincoln* (2012).³ All of these are small roles that rely on the audience's extratextual knowledge to set them apart from other characters in the film, whether they know Tom Cruise as matinee idol or Buster Keaton as slapstick king or the extra as the instructor of a history class. Cameos can fall out of view, while new ones emerge from old footage. An audience in the 21st century might not recognize comedian Red Skelton get shut out of a casino in *Ocean's 11* (1960), but an audience in 1960 was sure to laugh at the irony of the regular-joe treatment Skelton receives. Cameos can be built into films as publicity stunts, in-jokes, or tributes by the director, producer, or writer, but they can only be affirmed by the audience's power of recognition. Cameo roles are transformative, creating an active role for the audience in watching.

Movies ask a lot of their audiences. Usually, they ask that audiences suspend their disbelief and use their imaginations to fill in the details that movies exclude: multiplying crowds, transforming known locations into other worlds, trusting that actors and actresses are the characters they say they are. Thanks to the suspension of disbelief, movie reality and real-world reality are two separate realms that often bear only a slight resemblance to each other. There are genres that cross this threshold, such as documentary film that purports to record life as it really is or experimental film that distorts and plays with vision. However, Vivian Sobchack suggests that within fiction films, there can be moments of documentary space that are created when the viewer acknowledges that the world onscreen is contiguous with the viewer's lifeworld.⁴ Cameos point towards this real world, but it is up to the viewer to recognize the cameo as a documentary

² Charles Wolfe, "Buster Keaton: Comic Invention and the Art of Moving Pictures," in *Idols of Modernity: Movie Stars of the 1920s*, ed. Patrice Petro (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 42.

³ Larry Carroll, "'Tropic Thunder' Multitasker Ben Stiller Can't Discuss Tom Cruise's Cameo, But He Did Reveal Jack Black's Water-Buffalo Baby," *MTV News*, April 2, 2008, <http://www.mtv.com/news/1584693/tropic-thunder-multitasker-ben-stiller-cant-discuss-tom-cruises-cameo-but-he-did-reveal-jack-blacks-water-buffalo-baby/>; Andrea Mandell, "Secret Cameos of 'American Hustle' (Renner's Baby!)," *USA Today*, December 10, 2013, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/life/people/2013/12/10/secret-cameos-of-american-hustle/3968715/>; "Kentucky College Professor Has Cameo Role in New Spielberg movie 'Lincoln'," *The Levisa Lazer*, accessed January 24, 2014, <http://www.thelevisalazer.com/lifestyles/arts-a-entertainment/6474-kentucky-college-professor-has-cameo-role-in-new-spielberg-movie-q-lincoln>.

⁴ Vivian Sobchack, "Inscribing Ethical Space: Ten Propositions on Death, Representation, and Documentary," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 9, no. 4 (1984): 294.

space that accesses the world outside the film. This space invites audiences to examine how the real world and the movie world overlap, potentially exposing the actors, directors, writers and technicians who create the movie for who they really are, or at least, who they might be in real life. Like a cinephilic moment where the viewer is prodded into private reflection by a cinematic image,⁵ documentary space asks audiences to exit the diegesis of the film. The interplay of reality and fiction fuelled by the recognition of a documentary space is the basis for the cameo's attraction.

While according to Victor Burgin, a pure cinephilic moment is based on private memories, the reflection produced by the cameo is grounded in a very public and mass culture. In order to recognize the documentary space within fiction, the audience needs to recognize the person onscreen as a person in the real world.⁶ As Leo Braudy points out, in this highly visual age, who we recognize has extended beyond people we have met to include people we have only seen in media images.⁷ These celebrities may be famous for their achievements; they may be famous, as Nathalie Heinich suggests, only because of their continued visibility.⁸ Celebrity emerges from recognition while also making recognition likely. Overwhelmingly, those recognized in cameos are celebrities. However, the celebrity's own image in the increasingly manipulated world of publicity often relies on the interplay between a public and private persona, enlisting fans, as Joshua Gamson suggests, to assemble and assess the available information to determine the real nature of the celebrity they only know from afar.⁹ Celebrity culture challenges fans by asking how familiar audiences can really become with someone they recognize but do not and cannot know. The cameo trades on this double register of personal and public person that consumers of celebrity culture have become versed in where the object of interest is both unknown and familiar. The potentiality of documentary space suggests the encounter that fans desire with a real person; however, the recognition of that documentary space

⁵ Mary Anne Doane, "The Object of Theory," in *Rites of Realism: Essays on Corporeal Cinema*, ed. Ivone Margulies (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 82.

⁶ Victor Burgin, *The Remembered Film* (London: Reaktion, 2004), 68.

⁷ Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame & Its History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 553.

⁸ Nathalie Heinich, *De la visibilité: excellence et singularité en régime médiatique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012), 37.

⁹ Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 163.

is attendant on the machinery of celebrity culture that has made the celebrity visible. Audiences, when recognizing a celebrity onscreen, are thus reminded of the limits of the documentary space that is opened up to them, in that it is contiguous with their own real world while remaining separate. Each cameo reaffirms celebrity culture while at the same time exposing it to reflection on its own nature.

The cameo exists at the intersection between celebrity culture and participative audience practices that recognize and extend documentary space. Cameos allow audiences to participate actively in the construction of the story onscreen as they identify cameos by weaving their own extratextual knowledge into the diegesis. Cameos expose the audience to documentary space but rely on the audience to fill that space, offering up a potentially private cinephilic moment that is nevertheless built for a mass audience. As it has evolved over the last century, the Hollywood cameo has reflected changing perceptions of celebrity as fans have sought to become more and more intimate with the stars who are the object of their interest. Cameos, like celebrities, depend on visibility for their existence, and some cameos are more visible than others. Ultimately, the cameo positions audiences not only as consumers of celebrity and mass culture, but offers them the opportunity to participate in the making of meaning by recognizing and reflecting on who is celebrated and why.

About the Cameo: Existing Scholarship

As a filmic event, an investigation of the cameo falls squarely within the overlapping disciplines of film and celebrity studies. The study of the cameo can be counted within the domain of celebrity studies, a discipline that encompasses not only the study of cinema, but examinations of entertainment and media culture in general. Celebrity studies has developed over the last fifty years, expanding its focus from the phenomenon of film and music star to document an evolving relationship between power and stardom that now encompasses such concepts as the political media star and the transmedial entertainment star.¹⁰ Examining how stars are manufactured, received, and shared as cultural artifacts, the field of celebrity studies

¹⁰ Edgar Morin, *The Stars : An Account of the Star-System in Motion Pictures* (Grove Press, Inc., 1960), <http://archive.org/details/starsaccountofst00mori>; Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: BFI, 1979); Richard deCordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Gamson, *Claims to Fame*.

focuses on the role of the celebrity in popular media culture, and its reflection on the development of that culture.

Existing scholarship on the cameo focuses primarily on roles in Hollywood-set movies where Hollywood plays itself. While not explicitly examining the cameo, much of this literature addresses the cameo in passing as a symptom of Hollywood-set films. Cinema scholars began to show an interest in films that take Hollywood as their setting and the industry as their milieu in the late 1970s, producing encyclopedic works like Alex Barris's *Hollywood According to Hollywood* in 1978 or James Parish's *Hollywood on Hollywood* that same year, which included synoptic entries on everything from animated renditions to X-rated films.¹¹ Rudy Behlmer and Tony Thomas's *Hollywood's Hollywood: Movies About the Movies*¹² from 1975 is a broad examination of the overarching genre that groups films into themes from cowboy westerns to Baby Vamps, providing anecdotes about their production alongside lists of which industry professionals played themselves. Patrick Donald Anderson's *In Its Own Image: Hollywood's Cinematic Vision*, also from 1978, examines movies set in Hollywood as exploring the dichotomy of illusion and reality, tracing three cycles of self reflection from the rough-and-tumble unskilled days of early Hollywood to the deep nostalgia that he sees exemplified by Hollywood in the 1970s.¹³ Anderson identifies cameos as allowing studios to serve audiences who "enjoyed seeing their favorite stars as 'themselves'"¹⁴ as well as to make use of actors who were under contract and "readily available to do the kind of brief walk-on parts these appearances entailed." Anderson asserts the cameos offered publicity and exposure for star and studio alike.¹⁵ More recently, in *Movies About the Movies: Hollywood Reflected* from 1997, Christopher Ames characterizes the genre as both celebrating and critiquing the idealized Hollywood of the American Dream. For Ames, cameos are part of the challenge of "what to

¹¹ James Robert Parish, Michael R Pitts, and Mank, Gregory W, *Hollywood on Hollywood* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1978); Alex Barris, *Hollywood according to Hollywood* (South Brunswick, NJ: A.S. Barnes, 1978).

¹² Rudy Behlmer and Tony Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood: The Movies about the Movies* (Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1975).

¹³ Patrick Donald Anderson, *In Its Own Image: The Cinematic Vision of Hollywood* (New York: Arno Press, 1978).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

reveal and conceal,"¹⁶ not only revealing Hollywood movies themselves as movies, but exposing acting ability as an ability to pretend.¹⁷ Anderson and Behlmer and Thomas trace the origins of the Hollywood-playing-itself genre back to the Vitagraph two-reeler *Making Motion Pictures: A Day in the Vitagraph Studio* from 1908, set in the same Vitagraph studios that a few years later would produce the first cameo of studio executives appearing as themselves.¹⁸ For these scholars writing about the Hollywood genre, cameos were "living set decoration, making the celebrity parties and hangouts look authentically Hollywood."¹⁹ Identified by scholars of the genre as both a celebration of their milieu and a practical use-what-you-got strategy, cameos in Hollywood-as-Hollywood movies are predicated on the recognition that the star system had already built for its celebrities.

More recent interest in the cameo has radiated from attention to the small part. Scholarship into the extra has been primarily the ground of those interested in film acting as a reflection of a society, where extras stand in for the ordinary masses, and, according to Georges Didi Huberman, relegate them to invisibility.²⁰ Conversely, Serge Regourd suggests that the extra in prewar French cinema was an appreciative reflection of the common man and thus the common filmgoer, a reflection that has increasingly gone out of style.²¹ While Regourd's extras belong to the larger whole of French society, for Paul Willemsen the extra is disconnected even from the society of cast and crew, existing in his anonymity as a cipher for meaning without orientation towards the plot.²² The cameo seems to reconcile these two visions of the extra, rarely oriented towards the plot yet never melting into the background, calling out for the audience's recognition as part of their everyday lives yet apart from their ordinariness. Unlike the extra, the cameo is never an "empty signifier."²³ Will Straw has demonstrated how actors

¹⁶ Christopher Ames, *Movies about the Movies: Hollywood Reflected* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 16.

¹⁷ Ibid., 62.

¹⁸ Anderson, *In Its Own Image: The Cinematic Vision of Hollywood*, 62.

¹⁹ Ames, *Movies about the Movies*, 207.

²⁰ Georges Didi-Huberman, *Peuples exposés, peuples figurants* (Paris: les Éditions de Minuit, 2012), 17.

²¹ Serge Regourd, *Les seconds rôles du cinéma français: grandeur et décadence* (Paris: Archimbaud/Klincksieck, 2010), 45.

²² Paul Willemsen, "The Figure of the Extra," in *Actors & Extras*, ed. Paul Willemsen and Thomas Trummer (Brussels: Argos Centre for Art and Media, 2009), 12.

²³ Ibid., 14.

considered exemplary of social types were often recirculated as extras in Hollywood's Golden Age in B films where "every role was a familiar face."²⁴ While early film actors like Anna Q. Nilsson and Buster Keaton may have evaded the obscurity of Straw's perennial extra Bess Flowers, one can witness their increasingly small roles in the period that Straw documents, culminating most famously in their roles as the silent bridge partners to Gloria Swanson's fading silent star in *Sunset Boulevard*. However, even in the background, Nilsson and Keaton were never absorbed as extras. Because of their former fame and the sensational stories of their rise and fall, their roles are consistently credited in catalogues like those of Behlmer and Thomas or Barris due to the awestruck recognition accorded them by a dwindling number of older patrons and film buffs.²⁵

While I have addressed the cameo as a moment of Sobchack's documentary space, it should also be considered in relation to cinephilia. As a mode of film appreciation, cinephilia is subversive and nonstandard because it is a refusal to devote one's attention to the resolution of the film's plot; it is, as Mary Anne Doane writes, "a love that is attached to the detail, the moment, the trace, the gesture."²⁶ Classical Hollywood movies march inexorably towards resolutions where wayward behaviour is punished and characters are recuperated into the bosom of dominant ideology. However, as Gilles Deleuze suggests, there are moments within a film that welcome an alternative type of attention against the "movement-image" that drives the plot along.²⁷ According to Deleuze, these "time-images" ask the audience to turn their attention away from the boundaries of the diegesis and reflect, not only on the construction of cinema, but that of reality in "a memory of the world directly exploring time."²⁸ While this may seem like a heavy burden for the brief cameo to bear, the cinephilic moment need carry within it only the precursor to these reflections. Writing about similar details in the novel, Alex Woloch suggests that characters appear within a character-system and a character-field, where character-spaces expand and contract according to not only their position within the novel, but the attention that individual readers give them. Rather than contenting oneself with the narrative as parceled out by

²⁴ W. Straw, "Scales of Presence: Bess Flowers and the Hollywood Extra," *Screen* 52, no. 1 (March 15, 2011): 121–27.

²⁵ Sam Staggs, *Close-up on Sunset Boulevard: Billy Wilder, Norma Desmond, and the Dark Hollywood Dream* (New York: Macmillan, 2003), 153.

²⁶ Doane, "The Object of Theory," 82.

²⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1986), 29.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

the discourse among the character-system, the cinephilic viewer participates in the divergent "pattern of attention"²⁹ towards alternative character-spaces that Woloch suggests narratives solicit. Unfolding the potential of the hidden character-space, the cinephilic moment is an "homage to possibility."³⁰ The alternative spaces this digression leads to do not necessarily belong to the diegesis of the story. Mirroring Sobchack's attention to the audience's fascination with moments of documentary space within fiction, Burgin asserts that audience's cinephilic interest in what Woloch would call the character-space onscreen is tied to autobiographical recollections.³¹ In the case of the cameo, this autobiography paradoxically concerns the received culture of contemporary celebrity, suggesting that an audience's relationship to celebrity has an important place in the story of our contemporary lives.

The audience's fascination with stars has been well examined in the twentieth century. Leo Braudy identifies in his history of celebrity a centuries-long shift in popular fascination from the seat of power to its image and image-makers, beginning with artist-patron relationships of the Renaissance, developing through the popular theatre of the 18th century, and ultimately creating a 19th century public invested in the idea that the appearance of power was as important as its reality. Achievement was made all the more compelling by its visual portrayal, and admiration transferred to those imitators who were only portraying success.³² By this token, Braudy suggests that a 19th century focus on outward appearances spread the fantasy that any ordinary person could take up the trappings of power. Braudy asserts that "fandom mediates the disparity between the aspirations fostered by the culture and the relatively small increments of personal status possible in mass society."³³ For Richard Dyer, stars fascinate audiences within a mass society because they enact the conflicted experience of individuals who must conform to the roles ordained by dominant ideology.³⁴ Over and over again in the movies, stars negotiate and resolve the disparity between their real selves and their onscreen roles. At the same time, these stars reflect an aspirational origin myth of the ordinary person bestowed with special talent.³⁵

²⁹ Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 41.

³⁰ Doane, "The Object of Theory," 88.

³¹ Burgin, *The Remembered Film*, 70.

³² Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 335.

³³ *Ibid.*, 590.

³⁴ Dyer, *Stars*, 31.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

This dream is one of the enduring myths of Hollywood stardom, taken up regularly if sometimes critically in the Hollywood-as-Hollywood genre.³⁶

Whether this dichotomy of real self and onscreen role can ever really be resolved is another question that theorists of celebrity culture address. For deCordova, the accretion of roles and performances onto the actor's biography means that a star "cannot be viewed simply as a real individual."³⁷ Marxist theorists of celebrity culture suggest that the star biography is mobilized as a commodity. King situates the celebrity as a reflection of the process of commodity creation, where the personal attributes of the star are openly commodified. While King asserts that workers usually deny their individuality in order to fit interchangeably within a system of work, stars "profit from the sale of their own personae."³⁸ Turner modifies this claim to suggest that the star in fact does locate himself within a system of roles, occupying a position somewhere between the repeatable standard and the unique individual.³⁹ Historically, this reproducibility has been visited as typecasting, where, as Wojcik notes, theatre actors were consistently employed in the same specialized types of roles for which they owned the scripts and costumes. Actors exerted ownership over their previous roles, and could expect to take them up again, meaning that roles were literally carried around with them. However, these 19th century actors could sell off the sheets of lines that represented the ownership of roles. In the age of what Barbara Klinger calls "replay culture"⁴⁰ where media products are preserved and repeated on multiple platforms, actors are continually represented in their past roles, making it hard to separate Arnold Schwarzenegger from *The Terminator* (1984) or Al Pacino from Michael Corleone in *The Godfather* (1972). Lusted has suggested that stars often enlist these past roles as a record of their labour, reinscribing the star as an ordinary worker among the working masses. Indeed, audiences are increasingly aware of and in awe of the labour that ostensibly, following Dyer's model, transforms an ordinary but talented person into the extraordinary star. Gamson counters that audiences are not charmed by celebrities as former everymen but embrace them as

³⁶ Anderson, *In Its Own Image: The Cinematic Vision of Hollywood*, 62.

³⁷ deCordova, *Picture Personalities*.

³⁸ Barry King, "The Star and the Commodity: Notes towards a Performance Theory of Stardom," *Cultural Studies* 1, no. 2 (1987): 152.

³⁹ Graeme Turner, *Understanding Celebrity* (London: SAGE, 2004), 37.

⁴⁰ Barbara Klinger, "Becoming Cult: The Big Lebowski, Replay Culture and Male Fans," *Screen* 51, no. 1 (March 20, 2010): 1–20.

entertaining products of an industry.⁴¹ For Gamson, cued by "the visibility of glamour production,"⁴² fans find pleasure in unraveling the manufactured elements of celebrity identities in a quest not merely for their true identities but for the seams of their construction.⁴³

For popular audiences to be interested in picking at seams only confirms that modes of viewing associated with cult film have become mainstream. Umberto Eco identifies the cult film as allowing the spectator to "break, dislocate, unhinge it so that one can remember only parts of it, irrespective of their original relationship with the whole."⁴⁴ By turning attention to celebrity, cameo roles allow just such a dislocation, as they offer up a juncture to the audience's lifeworld through documentary space. The cameo induces a cultish break-up of a film's content where background becomes foreground, and non-diegetic information overtakes the diegesis. For many authors, the exemplar of cult film is *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), which induced particular behaviours and rituals from the audience linked not only to scenes but specific lines and appearances onscreen.⁴⁵ Cult viewing is participative, as viewers participate in the breaking up of a film as a contained whole. According to Eco, Hollywood narratives increasingly take advantage of "a 'Casablanca universe' in which cult has become the normal way of enjoying movies"; the frequency of the cameo in new films is evidence for this shift. Barbara Klinger supports this assertion, while Thomas Elsaesser sees these new narratives as taking the form of "game logic,"⁴⁶ noting that filmmakers are purposely disrupting their films by "disorienting or misleading the spectator"⁴⁷ to create narrative puzzles that need to be solved. The cameo is one such narrative puzzle or game. While cult may privilege the contingent and the happenstance,⁴⁸ narrative logic can also purposely be broken. Writing about audience reception, Henry Jenkins confirms that "texts play central roles in shaping the terms of their reception, even if they do not

⁴¹ Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 5.

⁴² Ibid., 49.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Umberto Eco, "'Casablanca': Cult Movies and Intertextual Collage," *SubStance* 14, no. 2 (1985): 463.

⁴⁵ Ernest Mathijs and Xavier Mendik, "Introduction," in *The Cult Film Reader*, ed. Ernest Mathijs and Xavier Mendik (New York: Open University Press/McGraw-Hill Education, 2008).

⁴⁶ Thomas Elsaesser, "The Mind Game Film," in *Complex Storytelling in Contemporary World Cinema*, ed. Warren Buckland (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 16.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Mathijs and Mendik, "Introduction," 7.

totally control their meanings."⁴⁹ For Klinger as well, cult digression can allow a kind of audience-led "re-narrativizing,"⁵⁰ but nonetheless this "difference in viewing ... is not necessarily alternative or oppositional."⁵¹ Audiences are increasingly drawn towards interpreting and commenting on the images they receive, taking on the roles of "artifice detectives,"⁵² as Gamson suggests, or assembling details as evidence of a fan mastery that rivals that of its authors, as Klinger suggests.⁵³ Studios have recognized and adapted to this need. Reality TV and puzzle films are two such concessions; the cameo, I suggest, is another.

Although the cameo has existed in film culture for over a century, there are many questions about cameo roles that have yet to be answered. Why did the cameo initially emerge, even before the culture of movie stars had been developed to adulate the personalities and biographies of individual actors, and how did audiences react? How did studios harness the power of the cameo in Golden Age Hollywood? The ownership of the actor and his star image, and the ability to deploy that at any time was clearly a factor, but other types of cameos from producers to wardrobe assistants also appear. Why do audiences react to and recognize so many different kinds of small roles as cameos, from almost hidden sightings of famous heartthrobs to movie debuts of local boys made good? The breadth of roles assigned the name of cameo by journalists and scholars suggests that the cameo role cannot be strictly defined, but exists as a constellation of interactions between duration and recognition, dependent on who is watching and when. Why do cameos continue to be surprising and engaging for audiences of the twenty-first century, who are inundated with the details of not only the lives and times of movie stars and star directors on a daily basis, but are habituated to the fact of watching videos of people they know personally? Cameos continue to grow in television, and be catalogued on the internet by dedicated viewers. Ultimately, what do cameos tell us about celebrity and identity in contemporary society, and how we interact with, understand, and pay tribute to the labour behind

⁴⁹ Henry Jenkins, "Reception Theory and Audience Research: The Mystery of the Vampire's Kiss," in *Reinventing Film Studies*, ed. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (London: Arnold, 2000), <http://web.mit.edu/cms/People/henry3/vampkiss.html>.

⁵⁰ Barbara Klinger, "Digressions at the Cinema: Reception and Mass Culture," *Cinema Journal* 28, no. 4 (1989): 15.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 180.

⁵³ Barbara Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies, and the Home* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 88.

our popular culture? The cameo parallels the growth of a visually-based celebrity culture that pervades questions of identity today.

In this project, I present a history of the cameo over the last hundred years using a variety of methods, including textual analysis of films, consultation with primary sources like production files and personal correspondence, and analysis of secondary sources of both a journalistic and academic nature. I begin by examining the origins of the cameo in the historical precedents of portraiture, Victorian concepts of remembrance and tribute, and the emergence of celebrity culture in the early 20th century. I then turn to examine how cameos were used during and after the Golden Age of Hollywood cinema as studios and then independent producers capitalized on the cinephilic power of images of stars past and present, and the fallout as those same kinds of images lost their charge for audiences. I explore the disruptive cameo in the comedy of Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, and the cameos links with naturalism and nonstandard viewing in the 1950s. Next, I examine the celebrated cameos of Alfred Hitchcock, his unique genre of hidden cameos, and their influence on celebratory cameos of film authors of all kinds. I explore cameos on television, and their legacy of self-parody and access to intimate viewing. Finally, I examine how cameos circulate online and through on-demand viewing, enabling fans to demonstrate their author-like mastery of cameos as filmic details. While cameos are now circulated in explicitly participative platforms like internet forums, they have long been intrinsically participative, encouraging audiences to engage in the recognition of stars and the affirmation of celebrity culture.

What is a cameo?

Critics and scholars refer to many different types of roles as cameo appearances, often using other labels like guest appearance, guest star, or bit part interchangeably.⁵⁴ These cameo roles include celebrities playing an ordinary person, the celebrity as another celebrity, the celebrity as him- or herself, and the non-actors and non-celebrities who nevertheless appear in cameos as celebrated figures in the real world. Ultimately, recognition and brevity are the clearest criteria for identifying what is and is not a cameo. Frank Sinatra in *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956), playing the piano in the background of a saloon and finally revealed in a silent close up is appearing, as Dyer notes, in a cameo; Frank Sinatra playing organizational whirlwind

⁵⁴ Dyer, *Stars*, 89.

and criminal mastermind Danny Ocean in *Ocean's 11* is just acting. (Fig. 3) Cameos occur when audiences recognize and celebrate the performer despite their brief appearance onscreen, whether that performer is a world-famous crooner or a writer escaped from behind his typewriter. While celebrity once stood for achievement, the cinema age and its valuation of the visual has meant that celebrities are no longer recognized for their achievements, but a major part of their achievement is the power to be recognized. The cameo is an important symptom of this changing visual celebrity culture, where the mere circulation of one's image is an achievement worthy of note.

Celebrity cameos and movie stars

Most cameos are celebrity cameos. When celebrities appear in small roles as other people, they are subverting the star hierarchy. Reacting against the dominant logic whereby major roles are reserved for stars, and those who ply the smallest roles are unknown, celebrity cameos provide an element of surprise.⁵⁵ They create an incongruity between what the savvy audience, well-versed in the celebrity- and image-manufacturing process, expects from the conventions of casting.⁵⁶ By appearing in a small role, the star flouts expectations. *The Film Encyclopedia's* disparaging entry on the cameo as “publicity gimmick”⁵⁷ suggests that the disparity in star status and role length in the cameo largely results from the astronomical rate per minute that stars command. If studios are paying for the time of the star in promoting the film as much as the minutes of onscreen performance, the cameo becomes an economical way of attaching star endorsements to films, and thus “'guarantee' audience purchase of tickets to the celebrity's vehicle.”⁵⁸ The marketing for films like *A Man's Man* (1929), where repurposed newsreel footage of Greta Garbo and John Gilbert attending a premiere allowed the stars to be credited in the film to much fanfare,⁵⁹ indicates that studios have long traded on star aura. More recently, Brad Pitt's well publicized cameo as an exceedingly moral itinerant labourer in *12 Years a Slave* (2013), which he co-produced, certainly helped to draw multiplex audiences to a

⁵⁵ Ann Chisholm, “Missing Persons and Bodies of Evidence,” *Camera Obscura* 15, no. 1: 128.

⁵⁶ Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 52.

⁵⁷ Ephraim Katz, “Cameo,” *The Film Encyclopedia* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁵⁹ Behlmer and Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood*, 119.



Figure 3. Frank Sinatra as a saloon piano player in *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956).



Figure 4. Gwen Stefani as Jean Harlow in *The Aviator*.

"less multiplex-friendly film."⁶⁰ While perhaps cameo roles permit celebrities to trade long hours of labour on set for comparatively less taxing but equally valuable talk show sound bites, small roles have value in and of themselves, as often minor characters are allowed to have alienating qualities that major characters who must carry the affection of the audience for the duration of the film cannot risk. Such small roles are often publicized as exercises in humility and commitment to acting. Indeed, while Pitt's *12 Years* cameo reinforces his humanitarian brand, many cameo roles allow celebrities to play counter to type like Tom Cruise in *Tropic Thunder*. Although celebrities are not playing themselves, these roles nonetheless are couched in the terms of their stardom.

Celebrity as celebrity

Turner suggests that celebrities are essentially interchangeable commodities created by entertainment industries and recognized for their visibility rather than any achievement that are manufactured, consumed, and ultimately disposed of.⁶¹ If celebrities are recognized by audiences as interchangeable but for the smallest details of biography, then it makes sense that one celebrity should represent another onscreen. Reality TV feeds this logic, bringing together season after season groups of different yet similar celebrities in camera-rigged compounds that show them interacting in the imagined wild of an *MTV Cribs* episode. Brady tells of an encounter between Jacqueline Kennedy and Elizabeth Taylor in the 1970s, two celebrities who had never met before that occasion, and the air of disbelief with which this fact was reported in celebrity tabloids.⁶² If cameos call on performances that tie together the diegetic and real world, then the celebrity is uniquely poised to play a famous personage. Celebrities as celebrities include pop star Gwen Stefani as Jean Harlow in *The Aviator* (2004) or comedian David Cross as Allen Ginsberg in *I'm Not There* (2007). (Fig. 4) Celebrity is Turner's infinitely reproducible personified commodity, and therefore, naturally, any celebrity can replace any other.

⁶⁰ "Brad Pitt Says He'll Only Cameo In 'Twelve Years A Slave,' Hopes 'World War Z' Will Have Socio-Political Themes," *The Playlist*, accessed January 23, 2014, <http://blogs.indiewire.com/theplaylist/brad-pitt-says-hell-only-cameo-in-twelve-years-a-slave-hopes-world-war-z-will-have-socio-political-themes>.

⁶¹ Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 4, 84.

⁶² Brady, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 7.

Celebrity as self

Director Alfred Hitchcock's cameos in his films are often so brief as to be unnoticeable. Hitchcock's cameos are not speaking roles, but momentarily glimpses: disembarking in *Strangers on a Train* (1951), scurrying down the hallway in *Marnie* (1964), or exiting the elevator in *Spellbound* (1944). These brief cameos appear almost as if Hitchcock does not want to be recognized, but instead lost among the extras. (Fig. 5) Of course, if that is the case, why appear in the first place; extras were in no short supply in Golden Age Hollywood. For Straw, "The film extra belongs both to the domain of mise-en-scene, of the filmic ornament and detail, and to the realm of performance, of the acting body,"⁶³ both set dressing and performer. Hitchcock's cameos link an extraordinary and ordinary persona, as he is celebrated enough to be recognized, yet outside of the regular constellation of film faces. By relegating himself to the background, Hitchcock joins the masses; as Regourd suggests, attention to the groups in crowd scenes is a populist action that reflects the image of the people back to the audience who it comprises.⁶⁴ The celebrity cameo thus becomes paradoxically truly ordinary. After all, the extra is the absolute non-celebrity. However, the appearance of Hitchcock, as emphasized by the *Spellbound* trailer that trumpets this otherwise hidden moment to the audience with a freeze frame and voice over, makes the anonymous crowds of the film noteworthy. The ordinary thus becomes worthy of note, and the people milling in the background become the subject of interest. The kind of minute attention that Hitchcock prided himself on is thus cultivated in the audience with the cameo as an "ironic wink to the viewer from the director-demiurge who banished the coincidental or accidental from his films."⁶⁵

Set within the image-making industry, backstage comedies frequently feature celebrities playing themselves as extras, combining verisimilitude with the affective jolt of celebrity sighting. In the black comedy *This is The End* (2013), which follows a group of comedians trying to reach heaven following the Rapture, the extras in the initial party scene are so thoroughly seeded with celebrities that when the heroes finally reach their ultimate destination and throw another party, the crowd of somewhat awkward-looking extras became the subject of unusual

⁶³ Straw, "Scales of Presence."

⁶⁴ Regourd, *Les seconds rôles du cinéma français: grandeur et décadence*, 144.

⁶⁵ Willemsen, "The Figure of the Extra," 9.

scrutiny. Placed under close attention, extras appear "forced, wooden and unreal."⁶⁶ Willemsen suggests that "what distinguishes an actor from an extra is a form of orientation...through anticipation and interaction within a broader whole whose final crystallized form is still hidden at the moment of shooting."⁶⁷ Unlike standard extras, celebrities as extras are oriented towards a broader performance: that of their own persona. While both are "indifferent to the directing,"⁶⁸ which is focused on the major roles, the celebrity performance suffers less because of his internal sense of direction. They can be neglected without succumbing to the boredom and surly lack of conviction of the extra who is meant to disappear rather than be discovered.

Sometimes the celebrity plays himself in a major or starring role. This is the case in *This is the End*, where all five major roles are played by comedians as themselves. In *Jack and Jill* (2011), Al Pacino, playing himself, falls in love with Adam Sandler, who is playing a woman. These large roles partake in some of the confusion and tension of the cameo, as they combine both the register of reality - Al Pacino is a real person - and tenuously distinguishable flights of fiction - Al Pacino is not in love with Adam Sandler, nor is it likely he thinks Adam Sandler is actually a woman. However, unlike the bite-sized cameo roles that serve to suggest both the celebrity as real person and performer, larger star-as-self roles undermines the intimacy and contingency of the celebrity sighting even further. Unlike brief cameos, where the celebrity may not be identified by name, the work of fan recognition is already done for the audience by the clearly defined celebrity character of these larger roles. Played for the duration of a feature film, the fictional character-space (where Al Pacino and Adam Sandler as Jill are united in true love) supplants the real world character. To the dismay of fans who seek accidental hints of the real alongside the constructed celebrity persona, the major star-as-self role creates an alternative character that is populated purely with fictional details.

Celebratory cameos and the non-celebrity

To the audience of today, Hitchcock's cameo refers to a readily recognizable image: the beaky nose, the large head, and the larger belly. His image, although already a publicly self-referential act, as evident in the *Spellbound* publicity, was made ubiquitous through the abstract

⁶⁶ Ibid., 12.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 10.



Figure 5. Alfred Hitchcock could be mistaken for an extra in this still from *Rebecca* (1940).

silhouette that began the television series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* in the 1950s and 1960s, transforming in the opening credits from sketch to shadow to the photographic image of the man himself introducing that evening's episode. Hitchcock built celebrity around his image, despite participating behind the scenes of film production as a director. In large part, his image is celebrated because of his cameos. Yet even Hitchcock's early appearances in the 1920s and 1930s are cameos, because he has the potential to be recognized. Although not yet a celebrity, he is celebrated within his own film as its creator. These cameos of celebrated figures who are otherwise not widely known have a cultish appeal. Because they restrict their possible audience to those who can celebrate them and why, they further divide an audience. The earliest filmgoers who appreciated Hitchcock's appearance as cameo would have been restricted to people working in the film industry, personal acquaintances, or perhaps eagle-eyed readers of film magazines. Such cameos for a restricted or minority audience of fans continue, creating distinction around those who take part in a community that can identify the images as belonging to a celebrated figure rather than a celebrity.

Unlike movie stars, who historically were anonymous but known by their image, celebrated figures may be known to many but their physical appearance recognized by few. Unlike celebrity cameos, these cameos often consist of faces that are not famous, although the names attached to them might be. Performing the star-making process, these cameos of celebrated figures, or celebratory cameos, reward the ability to validate an image with a name. Almost any performance can be perceived as a cameo by its audience if the figure in a cameo can be celebrated on some scale. For example, upon the release of *Lincoln*, local newspapers separately profiled local extras like a college professor and an "Allentown native" for appearing in what they called cameo roles.⁶⁹ Sometimes, the celebrated person is not the actor but the character portrayed. Masur, a scholar of American history, writes about the characterization of mulatto housekeeper Lydia Smith in *Lincoln* as a cameo.⁷⁰ For Masur as audience, the

⁶⁹ "Kentucky College Professor Has Cameo Role in New Spielberg movie 'Lincoln'"; "Allentown Native Dane DeHaan Has a Cameo Role as a Union Soldier in Lincoln," *The Morning Call*, accessed January 24, 2014, http://articles.mcall.com/2012-11-15/entertainment/mc-lincoln-spielberg-dane-dehaan-emmaus-20121115_1_daniel-day-lewis-cameo-union.

⁷⁰ Kate Masur, "In Spielberg's 'Lincoln,' Passive Black Characters," *The New York Times*, November 12, 2012, <http://www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/stories/2012/11/opinion-masur-nyt.html>.

recognition of an extra-diegetic performance is for a little-known historical figure rather than the little-known actor who plays her. While studios may cast stars in cameos to draw audiences to the box office, ultimately audiences decide who is worthy of their attention.

Like other cameos, celebratory cameos reveal the unseen labour behind the film, bringing to light faces other than those of the star. When artists of the 16th century first celebrated the importance of their roles as creator of an image of power, they turned to their own self-portraits, including themselves alongside saints, heroes, or their patrons like Dürer in the *Altarpiece of the Rose Garden* or Velazquez in *Las Meninas*;⁷¹ writers, illustrators and directors perform the same self-referential attribution through cameos. Yet, while the creative minds of the 16th century were establishing themselves as individual authors of their work, film cameos celebrate the multiple authors of a movie. Usually these celebratory cameos are extremely brief, even by cameo standards, and appear among the extras, like Hitchcock or baroquely costumed director Peter Jackson in his *Lord of the Rings* trilogy or comic book writer Stan Lee in the Marvel movie adaptations. The celebrated cameo has the advantage that they may appear as themselves while also being ordinary. To those who are not aware of the reasons for which the person is celebrated, they are merely another extra. Straddling this line, they have a less recognizable image and persona than the celebrity, and the line between fiction and reality, ordinary and extraordinary is effectively blurred. In *Barfly* (1987), where Charles Bukowski, the film's screenwriter appears at the local bar, is he appearing as the notoriously down-and-out author or is he merely playing a drunk? Because only some audience members will recognize him as Charles Bukowski, he can play both. However, like Hitchcock's increasingly publicized cameos, the recurrence and recognition of a celebrated cameo helps them make the transition to celebrity cameo. In *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer* (2007), the ninth Marvel film in which he appears, Lee insistently plays himself rather than a bystander, a point driven home when he is refused entry to a celebrity event despite insisting "Don't you know who I am? I'm Stan Lee!" Because celebratory cameos are exclusively by non-actors, they frequently suffer from the wooden acting that Regourd laments in the extra. Thus, every small badly acted role can suggest either poor casting or a hidden meaning, allowing for a cultish appreciation of the "seams, gaps,

⁷¹ Brady, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 328.

and shiftings"⁷² of the film that allow audiences to become more fully involved in the production of the film's meaning.

A century of cameos

While the notion of the cameo has clearly developed its own complex constellation of meanings and associations in the last one hundred years, the idea of the cameo as an artwork that provides the minimum detail by which a person can be recognized as himself has been around for much longer. The cameo as a concept begins with the decorative art of antiquity as "a precious stone having two layers of different colours, in the upper of which a figure is carved in relief, while the lower serves as ground."⁷³ (Fig. 6) This silhouette, conveying the barest outline of a likeness, became a popular decorative item in the 19th century, where it so thoroughly entered popular culture that it gave metaphorical meaning to all things brief and biographical, from theatre performances, literary sketches, and later, to the vignettes of the emerging film art. In film, like this ornamental miniature, cameos are usually small roles that convey the outline of a character, for minutes or even seconds, without fully involving them in the film's plot. For the first half of the twentieth century, the term cameo described brief performances that stood out for their quality; in Edmund Crispin's 1950 crime novel *Frequent Hearses*, set in a London studio, the cameo is a small role by a rising young actress, "something just a little more important than walking on."⁷⁴ By 1956, producer Mike Todd added the dimension of recognition associated with stardom by using it to advertise the small roles in which he had cast actors like Frank Sinatra and Marlene Dietrich. While Todd firmly united the cameo and the celebrity in the popular imagination, he gave name to a phenomenon that was already recognizably present in film culture.

Call it a cameo role, true-life casting, guest appearance or a celebrity flash,⁷⁵ the cinematic history of the cameo role begins with the history of film celebrity. Braudy has traced the growth of the culture of celebrity by looking at how power has been represented in theatre

⁷² Timothy Corrigan, "Film and the Culture of Cult," in *The Cult Film Experience: Beyond All Reason*, ed. J. P. Telotte (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), 33–34.

⁷³ "Cameo, N.," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed February 5, 2014, <http://www.oed.com.proxy2.library.mcgill.ca/view/Entry/26687>.

⁷⁴ Edmund Crispin, *Frequent Hearses* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1987), 34.

⁷⁵ Behlmer and Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood*, 106; Barris, *Hollywood according to Hollywood*, 225.



Figure 6. Roman cameo, 2nd century AD. Bibliotheque nationale de France.

and painting. According to Braudy, modern celebrity, untethered from political or religious power, emerged when power and performance became inseparable, uniting the act of being made visible with power itself. The photographic image, as a semiotic index that provides evidence of the real world it represents, served to strengthen the link between representation and reality, making claims for the power of visibility while remaining rooted in a real world subject. Movie stars owe their fame to the photographic image, both as the medium by which they make their performances visible, but also because of the medium's complex claims to express power, performance, and reality. For Barthes, the specifically cinematic allure of the star is caused by the realization of the essential qualities of a type in the existential qualities of a real person.⁷⁶

The story of film celebrity begins with silent film star Florence Lawrence and her transformation from the anonymous girl in pictures produced by Biograph, the so-called Biograph Girl, to recognizable name, a metamorphosis credited to the publicity genius of her new employer Carl Laemmle, who in 1911 spread rumours of her death and then staged her miraculous reappearance.⁷⁷ Other studios followed suit, transforming their roster of picture players into stables of star personalities. Before the rise of photography, Braudy notes, portraits of famed people had been used not to convey unique features but to emulate the faces of other famous figures, creating a genealogy of greatness; portraying well-known men with the features of Lord Byron was one such established trope.⁷⁸ While advertisements and fan magazines had begun to describe favourite actresses by attributes such as The Girl with the Curls or studio affiliations such as the rotating Biograph Girl,⁷⁹ until cast lists appeared in the 1910s film stars were "anonymous celebrities."⁸⁰ Unlike writers or politicians who were known through deeds, film celebrities of the early silent era did not broadcast their biographies or even their names, but became known initially only by their images.

When studios recognized the allure of their newly minted film stars, suddenly it became as important to groom screen personalities when they were offscreen as when they were in front of the camera. Studio publicists honed the ideal screen star image, which developed from

⁷⁶ Roland Barthes, "The Face of Garbo," in *Mythologies* (New York: Noonday Press, 1972), 56–57.

⁷⁷ P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 82.

⁷⁸ Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown*, image caption.

⁷⁹ Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 25.

⁸⁰ Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 12.

democratic royalty to a more mundane lifestyle in the 1930s, developing the myth of the ordinary star with the singular talent that has, according to Dyer, continued to be the most relevant metaphor to the making of celebrity, even as audiences recognize that the ordinary star is yet another carefully constructed presentation.⁸¹ By the 1930s, fan magazines had begun to make fans savvy to the teams of studio publicists and employees that surrounded these stars, perfecting the projection of their glamorousness.⁸² According to Gamson, the desire to unmask the real person has driven much of the fascination with and demand for celebrities' increasingly intimate revelations. Publicity has struck back, with occasions of "predictable spontaneity"⁸³ through vetted performances, interview locations, and the rehearsed candid reveal of talk show appearances. Well-versed in the tactics of modern publicity, audiences are "neither completely gullible nor completely postmodern, but somewhere in between,"⁸⁴ content to assess the appearances of their favourite celebrity for their distance from the tantalizing hidden self.

These voracious fans were fed on films like Vitagraph's *Making Motion Pictures: A Day in the Vitagraph* studios, a 1908 two-reeler that documents the process of movie-making from writing the scenario to shooting with actors, then follows that document with the film recorded in the preceding shots.⁸⁵ However, scholars trace the first cameo back to the first fiction film that recreates studios representing themselves, the 1912 Vitagraph two-reeler *A Vitagraph Romance* that briefly features Vitagraph studio executives and the Vitagraph Girl as themselves.⁸⁶ These "first" cameos help underscore the evolution of the growing film industry, demonstrating an attempt to fight against the hierarchies of visibility that place actors before the camera and producers behind it. In this case, those behind the scenes are made visible for the benefit of their audiences, both contemporary and present. The fact that scholars like Behlmer and Thomas writing sixty years after the fact can identify these images suggests that, it is obviously easier to identify longstanding executives than local and largely unskilled crewmembers. The stage for the cameo is set, therefore, with the inclusion of real-life personages in fictional environments.

⁸¹ Dyer, *Stars*, 42.

⁸² Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 33.

⁸³ Ibid., 116.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 148.

⁸⁵ Behlmer and Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood*, 1.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 97.

The ability to parse reality and illusion weighs heavily on these Hollywood-set films, which Behlmer and Thomas assert exploded after the appearance of *A Vitagraph Romance*.⁸⁷ These films that exposed the filmmaking industry warned audiences not to be drawn in by the "confusion of reality and cinematic illusion of reality."⁸⁸ The "venerable tradition in which the humor derives from a hayseed's naiveté in his first encounter with the filmic medium"⁸⁹ has been revisited from the very beginnings of the medium, beginning with the apocryphal story of the frightened spectators in front of the filmic train and one-reelers like Porter's *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (1902). Uncle Josh dances and cowers alongside the actors he sees onscreen, unable to distinguish what is happening in his immediate surroundings from what is occurring on the screen and by extension, many months and miles away. This quaint bumpkin, an uninitiated spectator, is reborn consistently onscreen alongside the cameo, offering to the audience the opportunity he has bungled: the ironic potential to recognize a cameo for what and who it is. In *A Vitagraph Romance*, the senator fears for his daughter's life and rushes to find her at the film studio. Chaplin makes the same mistake when he sees Mabel Normand in distress in *A Film Johnnie* (1914). Later films would follow this genre, as in the lost film *Hollywood* (1923), where the heroine seeking stardom in Hollywood fails to recognize star after star she bumps into all over town. The same hayseed, in different clothing but with the same spirit, refuses credit to Red Skelton in *Ocean's 11*, denies Stan Lee admission to a Marvel-brand wedding in *Fantastic Four*, and steals Mike Tyson's tiger in *The Hangover* (2009). The cameo serves as evidence against this naiveté, allowing the audience to assert that they, on the contrary, are no bumpkins. Audiences that recognize the cameo assert that they are not merely being taken for a ride through movieland, but are seizing on the cameo as a moment of documentary space where they can assert their own Bourdieuan cultural competences to distinguish themselves against the poor, unenlightened bumpkin.⁹⁰ Set against the bumpkin, recognition becomes an act of distinction for audiences within the otherwise common experience of mass entertainment.⁹¹ While early cameos were often framed as spontaneous celebrity sightings, even from these early moments audiences

⁸⁷ Ibid., 101.

⁸⁸ Anderson, *In Its Own Image: The Cinematic Vision of Hollywood*, 77.

⁸⁹ Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature: From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985), 32.

⁹⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 2.

⁹¹ Ibid., 176.

practiced their recognition while asserting that they, unlike Uncle Josh, were fully aware of the mediating screen.

While early film cameos often featured glimpses of stars arriving at train stations or leaving the studio gates, emphasizing the spontaneity of the encounter, fans could enter the movie theatre with a clear idea of what roster of stars might appear onscreen. Studio affiliations are at play in even the earliest cameos. According to James Naremore, Chaplin as the Tramp appears in a cameo role in 1916 Broncho Billy movie *His Regeneration*, and "in the same year [Broncho Billy] Anderson reciprocated by doing a walk-on as 'himself' in a Chaplin short," both while at the Essanay Studios.⁹² During his earlier time at Keystone, he and Fatty Arbuckle had traded appearances much the same way.⁹³ Just as Vitagraph naturally called on its own executives and studio to portray the essence of the film industry in their own films, studios would begin to call on their increasing stables of stars to market their films as actor contracts were not merely on a film-by-film or film-per-year basis, but required that actors be available and on set whenever the studios demanded. As Ames writes, "the use of self-referential star cameos to add verisimilitude to the representation of Hollywood ... is especially prevalent in films from the studio days, where contract players could be trotted out en masse for self-promoting films such as *Hollywood Canteen*."⁹⁴ Paramount films showed a Hollywood populated with studio loyalists like Cecil B. DeMille, while MGM showed hopefuls swooning over contract stars like Marion Davies and John Gilbert in *Show People* (1928). The vision of what "candid cameos"⁹⁵ in Hollywood looked like depended on the studios that backed the movie.

The cameo continued in this vein with Michael Todd's 1956 film *Around the World in 80 Days*. If the cameo were meant purely to ensure the continued visibility of a studio's stars, Todd, an independent producer funded by his own fortune, would have had little to gain because his affiliation with the stars in his film was temporary. Yet, Todd, who had a reputation as an extravagant theatre producer with an eye for the marketing gimmick, embraced the cameo head

⁹² James Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 15–16.

⁹³ Harry M. Geduld, *Chapliniana: A Commentary on Charlie Chaplin's 81 Movies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 45.

⁹⁴ Ames, *Movies about the Movies*, 207.

⁹⁵ Barris, *Hollywood according to Hollywood*, 148.

on, proposing a film that was almost entirely composed of cameos. According to his biographer Art Cohn, he brought the term cameo into popular usage, defining it as "a gem carved in celluloid by a star."⁹⁶ While differing from Crispin's usage only half a decade before to define any small role, Todd's film straddled both definitions of the cameo, casting many actors, stars or otherwise, in small vignettes that took place across the world, and then using the star power of a few like Frank Sinatra and Marlene Dietrich to vault the other respectable but hardly stellar actors into the same level of regard. The term cameo, although it may have begun as a small part, was thus elevated by Todd into a type of celebration in keeping with the roles of celebrities as themselves that studios had been using for decades to promote their films. Todd's knack for publicity combined with his supposed evaluation of the marketing potential of his own outrageous life story positioned him to transform the cameo from easy cross-promotion to marketing idea par excellence.⁹⁷ The term grew to encompass roles by actors, directors, and others.

Cameos quickly took on a new association with not only stardom, but intimacy as well. As film studios finally permitted their contractees to appear on the small screen to promote their films, cameos began to appear on television. The intimate space of television added a new dimension to the cameo, presenting not only a candid space but also juxtaposing multiple visual texts from movies to advertising and variety shows to create a complex vision of celebrity. Cameos showed down-to-earth celebrities who were not afraid of a little light self-mockery, while introducing stars to potential audiences through cross-media marketing. By publicly identifying the audience-drawing benefits of the cameo, Todd set the stage for viewers to become wary of its overuse as stars became visible at the expense of performance. The 1970s saw a dearth of cameos, as tastes in realism changed in both film and television, but by the 1990s, cameos reappeared for an audience well-versed in the strategies of celebrity-making. Self-reflexive cameos promised not intimate glimpses of celebrity, but a critique of image-making itself.

On-demand viewing and home video in all its digitally-enabled permutations has transformed the cameo over the last thirty years, as minute details of scenes can be watched, and

⁹⁶ Art Cohn, *The Nine Lives of Michael Todd: The Story of One of the World's Most Fabulous Showmen* (Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2007), 279.

⁹⁷ Michael Todd, Jr and S. T. McCarthy, *A Valuable Property: The Life Story of Michael Todd* (New York: Arbor House Publishing, 1983).

fans devoted to the pursuit of small moments of cinephilia have recognized and fetishized previously unappreciated stretches of celluloid. The visual encyclopedia of recognition has expanded, so that fans can recognize authors, illustrators, and other elements of the moviemaking machine. Sharing on the internet has likewise increased the visibility of these cameos, as fans use video-sharing and forums to demonstrate a deep pool of fan knowledge by discussing and identifying cameos. Cameos, small and large, are circulated as a testament to fan's mastery of pop culture.

As evidence of the explosion of the visual image as an important aspect of identity, the cameo exposes how audiences negotiate images and their relation to reality. Whether audiences and fans can encounter a celebrity's real self or not, they are nonetheless fascinated by how celebrities harness images to create identity. For audiences, cameos and the act of recognition allow the chance to participate in the expansion of a film's meaning outward into the real world by exposing a documentary space. As the nature and function of the cameo has changed over the last century, it has reflected an evolution in who is celebrated and recognized in popular culture, growing from favourite characters to celebrities and their manufactured personalities to stars of sports, politics, and reality TV shows. The cameo reflects the transformation of moviegoing and the visual culture of the cinema as it calls on specialist and repeat viewers to create a relationship to films that is both mass and intimate. The cameo allows and encourages a kind of audience participation across media landscapes, manufacturing the possibility for fan digression and control while ensuring continued and long-term publicity as celebrity images live on outside of the film. Ultimately, the cameo and its reception demonstrate how people negotiate a mass culture that insists that celebrities are real people and that real people can be celebrities. Cameos promise to provide clues for mastering that transformation.

High Profile/Mostly Funny: Chapter by Chapter

In this project, I will begin by examining the historical precedents for the cameo as it emerged in 20th century cinema. Beginning with a history of the portrait, I will explore how portraits have been used to express power, authority and allegiance. Like cameos, portraits depend on the powers of recognition of the viewer to acknowledge the subject depicted. Portraitists have long mixed reality and fiction, placing their subjects within tableaux that tell stories about mythology, religion, and science using visual clues to express layered meanings to

a variety of audiences. Portraiture thus provides a precedent to the cameo's engagement with audiences through the promise of both realism and intimate access, whether defined as 15th century allegory or 19th century photographic document. In particular, the Victorian attitudes towards collecting, nostalgia, and the miniature, created an environment where the mass-produced cameo object became a popular form in decorative art and jewellery. The miniature became a substantial and intimate mark of tribute, setting the stage for the brief filmic cameo. While early cameos such as that of the Vitagraph executives in the 1910s act as tributes that emphasized creators behind the camera, the emergence of actors as movie stars shortly after would ensure that they would be the primary subject of the cameo for decades to come. In this chapter, I examine the historical precedents for the cameo to contextualize its emergence in the early 20th century as a concept linked to picture personalities and the functions of visibility developed by Heinrich.

Turning from audiences, my second chapter will explore the evolution of the cameo under the control of the studio system and after its fall as a marketing technique that harnessed cinephilic viewing. Beginning with the emergence of star cameos as indicators of studio affiliation, I explore the cameo trades in Charlie Chaplin's work at Keystone and Essanay that publicized the sought-after star's affiliation with each studio. Production files and movie reviews for *Hollywood*, *Souls for Sale* (1923), and *Show People* reveal cameos that reflected the consolidation of stars under studio ownership, while speaking to a fan culture established by fan and trade magazines that valued the ability to recognize stars and their stories. The emergence of fan magazines legitimized fan culture while encouraging detailed, cinephilic viewing that focused on extratextual knowledge. Fan appetites for behind-the-scenes visions of Hollywood accounted for the success of these cameo-laden, Hollywood-set films, and the many similar films that followed as autocratic studios used cameos to make their glamorous line-up of stars as visible as possible. As studios declined and their control of stars and their images relaxed, independent producers perceived the value of cameos as a marketing tool. *Around the World in 80 Days*, *Pepe* (1960), and *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1962) essentially took cameos as their subject. While studio ensemble cameos were largely interchangeable, reflecting the aura of stardom without referencing individuals, these latterday cameos directly referred to past roles and current biography. Forgotten stars, revived on television through reruns of their older works, also made appearances in these cameo extravaganzas. Yet cameo spectacles became the

victims of their own success, as once-eager fans were jaded by the constant parade of stars, old and new, presented to pique their interest at the expense of the story world. As audiences became more knowledgeable about stars, their lives, and their personas, the filmic moments that could be counted on to conjure cinephilic responses evolved along with their reserve of knowledge.

In Chapter 3, I examine the question of performance of the self and documentary space in the cameo. Aside from the studio ensemble cameo films, a parallel trend in the cameo of the 1940s and 1950s involved comedians and disruptive, self-reflexive references to Hollywood and its stars. The comedy of Bob Hope and Bing Crosby in particular involved extra-diegetic appearances and cameo trades that poked fun at their acts, their personalities, and their home studio. Disruptive and comedic, these cameos broke down narrative space in a way that encouraged a nonstandard viewing experience and established the cameo as a precursor for cult. The casual, leisurely attitudes that Hope, Crosby, and their colleagues struck in their cameo trades would influence the function of the cameo and its reception by fans. Accompanied by press that revealed to fans the spontaneous and somewhat unserious style of Hope and Crosby and claimed the cameos were unpaid marks of friendship, studio publicists claimed cameos presented performances that were ad-libbed and unorchestrated, and natural. Through a study of Hope and Crosby, I examine the myth of screen acting as a simple act of effortlessly being. While this myth had been overturned by decades of press about hard work in Hollywood, it again raised its head in the 1950s.⁹⁸ As such cameos became common in the 1950s, hand-in-hand with the cameo spectacles, audiences became more knowledgeable about star lifestyles apace, thanks to television and uncensored gossip magazines. When New Hollywood welcomed a new type of realism, audiences became less excited about these supposedly unmediated encounters with quipping celebrities, preferring access in a new kind of documentary space. This chapter explores the transformation of the cameo's claims to naturalism in the 1950s, the cameo's affinity with disruptive comedy, and the cult space it created in classical Hollywood film through an examination of the cameos of Hope and Crosby.

While Ames suggests that in the studio era, writers were so embarrassed by their participation in the mass culture movie machine that they refrained from presenting themselves

⁹⁸ Andrew Klevan, *Film Performance: From Achievement To Appreciation* (London: Wallflower Press, 2005), 105.

on camera, directors seem to have had no such qualms.⁹⁹ In Chapter 4, I examine auteur cameos, primarily focused on the famous cameos of Alfred Hitchcock, who appeared in almost all of the movies he directed. Hitchcock trained his audience to look for his fleeting appearance, employing advertising that exploited his image as part of his brand of mystery that began with the cameos and extending to the Hitchcock empire of books and television shows. Hitchcock's cameos, although present from the early stages of his career, became worthy of note in the mid-1940s as the studios were imploding, limping along during the war towards the anti-trust suits that would destroy their monopolies in 1948. These cameos reaffirm the fan's interest in the film not just as a stage for actors, but as a forum for the visibility of the director. Hitchcock's attention to his own visibility nestled nicely into the auteur-driven conception of film authorship that would drive film criticism for the next several decades. At the same time, it encouraged a game-like engagement with Hitchcock's films, creating the opportunity for fan interaction and acknowledgement of extratextual knowledge that has been the precedent for future tributes made by and to filmmakers. This chapter will be largely focused on examining what I call the celebratory cameo in the context of making visible the largely unseen players in moviemaking, exploring the publicity surrounding Hitchcock's cameos to track their development as auteurist brand. Using a review of the extensive literature on Hitchcock by scholars like D.A. Miller, Thomas Leitch and Maurice Yacowar, which almost inevitably refers to his cameos, as well as the production files for his films, I examine cameos as a participative moment, rewarding attentive viewers while establishing the Hitchcock image that would become the symbol for a media empire. Looking at filmmakers Woody Allen, Martin Scorsese, Quentin Tarantino, and Peter Jackson, as well as author and sometime-screenwriter Charles Bukowski, I reveal how Hitchcock's cameos set a precedent for establishing authorial power in Hollywood cinema.

Chapter 5 turns to look at cameos on television, and the redistribution of both film and television cameos on the internet. The domestic site of the television screen has become an increasingly common place to encounter formerly aloof movie stars. Looking at the history of stars and cameos on television, it is evident that candid cameos owe some of their pretension towards intimacy to the precedents of television performance in the earliest days of the medium. Cameos on television quickly became an important way for stars and studios to market their films, as well as stars from other media like music. Unlike in film, cameos on television also

⁹⁹ Ames, *Movies about the Movies*, 168.

perform a narrative function, bringing conflicts to television series' well-established character systems. Like cinema, television as narrative partakes in what Woloch calls the interplay of character-system and character-space negotiating audience attention between background and foreground characters as minor and major roles.¹⁰⁰ However, the unique duration of the television series, as it extends over many hours and weeks, and its reception in the home as regular domestic entertainment, means that the viewer's relationship to the character-spaces represented on the show is more fully developed than that of the 90-minute movie. Self-parody continues to be a central element of celebrity cameos on television as well as in film, reflecting an integrated media environment where stars, and star self-presentation, are fluid across multiple platforms. Reflecting the interests of a media-savvy viewer, cameos have come to reflect and critique star images and image-making rather than promise unmediated or natural views of unscripted celebrity. Contributing to this fluency in image-making is what Jenkins has identified as dedicated and public participation of fans in forums and video-sharing sites, where they share, identify, and critique cameos as well as their function both within the diegesis and as part of larger narratives of friendship and affiliation within star culture.¹⁰¹ These compilations extend the lifecycle of the cameo beyond the brief duration of the film to incite discussion about the nature of popular culture, while also offering fans the opportunity for public recognition of their knowledge. By examining the history of television cameos and on-demand viewing, I explore the development of the cameo from candid glimpse to critique of celebrity.

Ultimately, this project examines how audiences assess and organize their knowledge about celebrities, and how the notion of celebrity has coloured our concept of identity and achievement in the last century. The changing nature of the cameo helps us explore that meaning in filmic terms as it has grown from relationship of convenience to marketing ploy to narrative device. The cameo, relying on the interplay of recognition and brief duration, creates an encounter for the audience with a celebrity, a person who is both familiar and strange. The film industry may dictate what films are available for viewing, but it nevertheless reflects the desires of audiences as far as those desires determine the studios' abilities to make money. Much of that money has been generated by audience fascination with and loyalty to the brands of individual stars. Cameos are an important part of the marketing for a film, borrowing the clout of stars and

¹⁰⁰ Woloch, *The One vs. the Many*, 14.

¹⁰¹ Jenkins, "Reception Theory and Audience Research: The Mystery of the Vampire's Kiss."

celebrated figures to draw audiences, both niche and popular, to their films, while acknowledging the knowingness of those audiences. Yet audiences themselves can unleash their knowledge to identify cameos of their own depending on who they might recognize in a film. That recognition is contingent, yet it is also largely predictable for a mass audience. For viewers, the cameo creates a cinephilic moment that is ready-made. The cameo insists on the power of celebrity and recognition while calling on audiences to reflect on their own roles as collectors of the details with which they celebrate the famous. Cameos ask us to recognize our moments of recognition, and consider why and how we recognize who we do.

Chapter 1

Worthy of recognition: the cameo as portrait

A cameo is essentially a portrait. When a 15th century donor to a Florentine church sat for a portrait in the guise of a saint to be included alongside the Virgin Mary and Jesus in the church's decorative altarpieces, he was commissioning an artist to demonstrate his power and wealth dressed up as decoration and benevolence. When the executives of the Vitagraph Company, one of the most prolific film producers of the early 20th century, posed in front of their own cameras for a scene in 1912's *A Vitagraph Romance*, a two-reel tale of a runaway daughter made good in the movies, they were likewise making portraits that acknowledged them as both part of the entertainment and its source. While J. Stuart Blackton, Albert E. Smith and William T. Rock were playing the anonymous characters of powerful movie executives in the short film, they were also simultaneously posing for a photographic portrait that would be used to identify them specifically by name in a trade magazine that their production company controlled. Seated in a dark and stolid looking wood-paneled room overstuffed with club chairs and settees, the variously bearded and bespectacled men recline and converse in a staid manner that acts as a counterpoint to the earlier frenetic face-pulling and excited flapping of the young ingenue and her husband, who, as the film's stars, are trying to secure their big break. (Fig. 7) The executives are the vision of respectability; in fact, their scene is so static and so solemnly dark that it stands out from the otherwise busy film narrative and film actors. And yet, conversely, we know effort was made to capture their performance: to light and prepare this office, to make up the faces of the executives so that their features are visible, to turn the camera, to cut the film. Like the patron sitting for his artist, the executives have carefully committed to their presence in the film in return for recognition.

Drawing from life, artists have long sought to make the subjects of their portraits instantly recognizable, whether they are kings, gods, philosophers or friends. How someone is made recognizable has changed. Photography offers one way of accessing the familiar, cinema another. If, as Mathijs suggests, the brief role of the cameo presents a subject who is both



Figure 7. Vitagraph executives play themselves in *A Vitagraph Romance* (1912)

instantly recognizable and publicly known, then the cameo acts as a portrait.¹ However, while kings and gods have a claim to recognizability, the way that the actors, writers, directors, producers and even extras who lay claim to cameos are presented demonstrates how recognizability, and its attendant quality of visibility, changed with the advent of cinema. Multifaceted like the celebrity image, the cameo presents brief snapshots of a recognizable figure across a range of private and public roles, where celebrities and celebrated figures can play themselves, others, and others like them while drawing on references from real and narrative worlds. Ultimately these roles are tied not only to the publicly known and the instantly recognizable, but to the inability of celebrities to shake their real world identity for the purpose of performance. But while cameos are acted portraits, they bear the imprint of the history of portraiture, not only in their form but in the name they carry, the cameo. Like portraits, cameo roles follow in a long line of celebrity representations that call on the visual fluency of the viewer to assert power, authority, and allegiance.

The legacy of the portrait defines the cameo. In fact, what makes the Vitagraph cameo unique, and perhaps what marks it definitively as a cameo role in the eyes of scholars like Anderson and Behlmer and Thomas, is that it exists not only as a cameo in a motion picture film but also as a photographic portrait that was circulated as part of publicity about the Vitagraph Company. This dual usage allows us to make several points about the cameo as a portrait. Part of the reason why this scene stands out is because it is staged like a portrait with all three men stiffly facing the camera rather than as a mobile group scene. And because it is also a portrait used in print, we can infer that in the film, it is likewise asking the viewer to do the same work towards recognition that a portrait commands. While ostensibly other real people may be playing their real world roles in this studio-set film, like the cameraman and director who bob in and out of several scenes, the dual usage of this cameo appearance as a portrait shows that it is clearly not happenstance alone that one might ascribe to the collaborative nature of early film. After all, a film needs bodies for its drama in the same way that a church needs saints for its decoration: the question that is posited to the viewer by both kinds of portrait is, why these bodies? Enlisting the viewer to perform that act of recognition, the cameo as portrait makes itself visible for

¹ Ernest Mathijs, "Cronenberg Connected: Cameo Acting, Cult Stardom, and Supertexts," in *Cult Film Stardom: Offbeat Attractions and Processes of Cultification*, ed. Kate Egan and Sarah Thomas (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 46.

recognition and remembrance. The matching of the Vitagraph portrait in a film suggests that both versions were marked to serve the same purpose, ensuring by the fact of their visibility, the potential for their recognition not only in their lifetime but in ours.

Portraits, and cameos, do not just ask to be recognized. They give their viewers work to do, involving them in the process of recognition in a way that gives them agency. And like portraits, cameos play games with recognition, disrupting expectations as they ask the viewer not only who is recognized but why, linking faces to the source of their power, whether that is wealth and its attendant fame or fame and its attendant wealth. Cameos reinforce visibility, as viewers recognize the faces that stand out from the crowd. Cameos also reveal public personas apart from the characters portrayed in each role. Recognizing a cameo means recognizing a desire to be visible. While visibility once meant political power, as in the case of wealthy Florentines, in the 20th century, visibility is itself a means to the end that is celebrity, and the cameo is one tool in consolidating and reaffirming that power while likewise placing its validation in the hands of the viewer.

A history of the portrait

As an image of a person who is to be recognized, the concept of the cameo has its origins in portraiture. A portrait is made to outlast the sitter; it transforms a momentary reflection into an enduring legacy. For Levinas, the face indicates an encounter with an individual, a not-I who resists possession.² The portrait does the same.³ Portraits attempt to reconcile the individual likeness of a person with a generic type to which they belong. Portraitists, suggests Shearer West, have the task of balancing the images they produce between the idiosyncratic likeness and the ideal.⁴ The poses and trappings of the body belong to that ideal while the body itself belongs to an individual.⁵ In portraiture, "resemblance is the willed connection between the portrait image and the person or persons to whom it refers."⁶ The viewer is thus important in confirming a portrait as having an "acceptable relationship"⁷ between the real world and the representation.

² E. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (New York: Springer, 1979), 197.

³ Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 68.

⁴ Shearer West, *Portraiture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 25.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁶ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

In fact, most viewers will never see the subject of their portrait, so the "impression of likeness is one that comes through the skill of the artist in creating a believable representation."⁸ However, the viewer's expectation of the image to adhere more or less strongly to likeness and ideal, and his ability to read the poses and objects of power, can influence the reading of the sitter's identity. A portrait is a depiction of a person, rather than an inanimate object or an animal,⁹ and it expresses the authority of the subject as a person who is worthy of having his reflection preserved. However, how that authority is most powerfully conveyed is dependent on the context of the artist's visual language and the viewer's visual vocabulary.

It is not the depiction of a face alone that makes a painting a portrait. Unlike studies or landscapes, portraits indicate that they are meant to be recognized. While West does not illuminate what about the portrait begs the viewer to recognize it, Brilliant suggests that the neutral expression defines the portrait. The portrait bears a generic expression in order to convey the essence of a person rather than what could be characterized as fleeting emotion.¹⁰ This lends portraits what Brilliant calls "a formal stiffness, a heightened degree of self-composure"¹¹ to the image that identifies it as a portrait, even when its resemblance is no longer identifiable. West uses a similar argument to suggest that the anonymous *Portrait of a Young Man* by Botticelli can only be a portrait "because of its descriptive specificity and contemporary air,"¹² and Ann Jensen Adams likewise uses her "eye" to parse Dutch *portraits historiés* that depict real people in historical roles from mere history painting.¹³ Advancing on the Barthesian punctum, where the image "has the power of expansion,"¹⁴ adding the memories of the viewer to the extant image, Brilliant suggests that this timeless expression, hinting at the essence, creates a punctum in all portraits. Like the cameo, the portrait has a formal aspect that demands recognition.

Portraits have long been associated with the power of the celebrity. While portraits of mythological or governing figures within typical scenes have existed since classical times,

⁸ West, *Portraiture*, 29.

⁹ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 8.

¹⁰ Ibid., 124.

¹¹ Ibid., 10.

¹² West, *Portraiture*, 27.

¹³ Ann Jensen Adams, *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland: Portraiture and the Production of Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 185.

¹⁴ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida : Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 45.

freestanding portraits of individuals have existed in European art since the 14th century.¹⁵ In the late medieval period, important contemporary celebrities of note, such as royalty or wealthy noblemen, had appeared primarily within religious paintings that they had commissioned to decorate a church or other religious site. These images not only provided a visual record of the generosity and piety of the donor but served as a documentary confirmation of political ties to the powerful Catholic church, and the attendant right to direct clerical appointments that accompanied such donations.¹⁶ Donor portraits pictured the donors in contemporary dress at the margins of the religious scene depicted, usually in miniature.¹⁷ Donors also appeared as witnesses or bystanders to important religious events such as the Crucifixion or the martyrdom of saints.¹⁸ Placed in the background, these portraits affirmed their importance by association with the foundational myths of Christianity while indicating by the disparate size of their portraits that their appearance was only secondary to those of the saints and martyrs. That the donors were only performing a supporting role, albeit one that buttressed the power of the Church, was expressed by the physical scale of the painting. Yet, although reduced, these roles were brought into relief by the composition of the painting, which connected patron and saint across the painting's surface through the meeting of gazes or the direction of hand gestures.¹⁹ Additionally, Jill Burke suggests that Florentine donor portraits of this period create intertextual references to other donations likewise commemorated in altarpieces or other decorative art, making donors recognizable across oeuvres not only because of physical likeness but by portraying them in the same religious roles.²⁰ Small yet expressive of power, donor portraits provide a precedent for attention to detail and context in cameos.

Hand in hand with the donor portrait is what Ann Jensen Adams calls the participant portrait.²¹ In this case, the painter himself appears within the work. Braudy notes the increased importance of the artist as creator of the public image in the Renaissance, to which this trend can

¹⁵ West, *Portraiture*, 139.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁷ Burke, Jill, "Patronage and Identity in Renaissance Florence: The Case of S. Maria a Lecceto," in *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art*, ed. Mary Rogers (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 2000), 52.

¹⁸ West, *Portraiture*, 78.

¹⁹ Adams, *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland*, 174.

²⁰ Burke, Jill, "Patronage and Identity in Renaissance Florence: The Case of S. Maria a Lecceto," 54.

²¹ Adams, *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland*, 174.

be attributed. The appearance of Velasquez looking out from a canvas in the corner of the royal drawing room in *Las Meninas* from 1656 is perhaps the most famous example, alongside that of Jan van Eyck reflected in the mirror behind the married couple in the *Arnolfini Portrait* from 1434. Adams notes these portraits appeared most often in public works, often in *portraits historiés*, scenes that evolved from the donor portraits to seamlessly incorporate biblical and contemporary persons to commemorate real events such as christenings.²² Ultimately, Adams suggests that the artist included himself as a type of testimony "to increase its veracity as an historical event witnessed by the artist."²³ Looking out at the audience, the author offers himself up for recognition.²⁴ In artworks for a public audience who are not necessarily acquainted with the subject, the appearance of the creator gives the audience a link between the depicted image and its depiction. Rather than give the credit for the powerful image to the subject alone, the artist reminds the audience of his presence as author in the transaction. For studio executives hoping to present themselves, the participant portrait was an important precedent.

Whether a resemblance was perceived as good was also dependent on the conventions of the period, and on an audience literate in those conventions, whether they were the characters of biblical stories or the language of flowers. Until the 14th century, identity was not linked inextricably to distinctive facial features, but could be visually represented by symbolic means such as heraldry.²⁵ Drawing on Aristotelian teachings that a person's moral failings are visited as imperfections on the body, Renaissance portraits of those in power whose continued influence depended on political strength rarely displayed anything less than perfection.²⁶ Portraits needed to convey a recognizable image of that person in order to establish the links between the trappings of power and their bearer: the power to commission an image and to circulate that image. What it meant to be recognizable depended entirely on the context of the period in which the portrait was commissioned, and physical features could be deemed secondary to conveying the ideal qualities for which a person was known.²⁷ For example, paintings of Elizabeth I relied on the repetition of elaborate objects to convey her identity yet present a face that is flat and

²² Ibid., 158.

²³ Ibid., 174.

²⁴ Ibid., 161.

²⁵ Stephen Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King: A Prehistory of Portraiture in Late Medieval France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 83.

²⁶ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 38.

²⁷ Ibid., 127.

empty in its vagueness.²⁸ Other personages were depicted in poses or settings common for their type, such as the multiple depictions of Erasmus at his writing.²⁹ In the 20th century, Picasso's famous portrait of Gertrude Stein was based on the stoic stone faces of Iberian statues rather than her own features.³⁰ Yet, lifelikeness was valued as a sign of painters' skill, and good likenesses could reflect on the ability of the Renaissance patron to retain the services of a sought-after portraitist.³¹ The perfection of mirrors during the Enlightenment revolutionized relationships to visual representation, allowing portraitists to not only paint themselves but also encouraging experiments with perspective and vision. As a new standard of verisimilitude, the mirror as metaphor and tool encouraged portraiture to develop away from creating idealized images towards reflecting eccentricities and individual quirks, a movement that was in full storm by the 17th century.³² In the 19th century, an accurate resemblance entailed not only reliable likenesses but quotidian settings like drawing rooms, positioning the informal portrait as best expressing a sitter's identity.³³ While informality was the standard by which likeness was determined, it was no less conventional in how it controlled the expression of sitters' identities.

While the portrait may have been used to establish the authority of individual sitters, portraits were repurposed and assembled to create new meanings for subsequent viewers. Beginning in the 15th century, collectors began to amass single portraits of groups of celebrities.³⁴ Geniuses, political figures, and beautiful women were among the collections of important people that collectors sought to find, even reassigning anonymous portraits to known personages in order to complete their collections. This concept of associating oneself with great personages by owning their images as a testament to the owner's recognition of those images is the precursor of fandom, amassing the images of important persons to the glory of the collector who thus controls the celebrity image. The alignment of the great personality and its maker, which Braudy traces to Renaissance art, emphasizes the generative role that is ascribed to the viewer in assigning celebrity and identity. A Renaissance novelty for paintings that represented two things

²⁸ Ibid., 103.

²⁹ Ibid., 74.

³⁰ Ibid., 158.

³¹ Lorne Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits: European Portrait-Painting in the 14th, 15th, and 16th Centuries* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 159.

³² West, *Portraiture*, 51.

³³ Ibid., 81.

³⁴ Ibid., 44.

at once, such as the famous portraits by Arcimboldi where faces were assembled out of inanimate objects, indicated that the portrait was a site of play for viewers, where resemblance and recognition were dual.³⁵ Late medieval paintings were often inscribed with words and devices that could be deciphered only by intimates and "served as a test of iconographic knowledge, allowing members of a court to gauge each other's degree of access to their lord's identity."³⁶ Painters like Holbein and van Eyck conveyed secret meanings with astrological and alchemical symbols, as well as hidden texts.³⁷ Other recognition games, such as guess-who style games assembled from drawings of important contemporaries, often after extant portraits, shows how official images were repurposed in ways that called on viewers to use the portraits in different ways.³⁸

Many of these uses were made possible by the reproduction of portraits. Portraitists kept copies of their commissions to reproduce them for other parties, where they became part of the workshop's stock.³⁹ Members of the courts had portraits of rulers copied on furniture and personal objects such as fans and game boards, juxtaposing the image of authority with quotidian and even trivial objects. While portraits were usually resurrected because of the status of their sitter, sometimes they were reproduced because they had become anonymous, separated from their contexts altogether. A number of rulers appear in the background of large group painting, featured because their old-fashioned images could be easily copied from the stock of old workshop drawings.⁴⁰ Although this repurposing of portraits is specific to the Renaissance, they demonstrate that from the emergence of the stand-alone portrait, images of authority were incorporated by viewers into their own visual landscapes, occupying personal and playful spaces that belied the portrait's authority. Important faces, worthy of note, appeared not only in authorized images, but were reproduced in unexpected places and ways that undermined the formal roles these sitters were meant to occupy and suggested a temporal ebb and flow to their authority.

³⁵ Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits*, 206.

³⁶ Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King*, 269.

³⁷ West, *Portraiture*, 51.

³⁸ Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits*, 205.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

Cameo as jewellery

A cameo has historically meant a distinct kind of portrait. Dating back to antiquity, the cameo as an art object refers to miniature silhouettes carved in relief into two-toned stone with limited detail, often worn as jewelry.⁴¹ A likeness limited by the material in which it was carved to an "elegant simplification,"⁴² cameos portrayed celebrities and celebrated scenes - classical gods and heroes, exotic rulers, and contemporary monarchs. The cameo is therefore defined by its limitations as a portrait - small, simple, yet nevertheless minutely worked to represent a recognizable figure, even if only upon close inspection. It distills the portrait to the minimal elements needed for recognition. What the cameo as an art object does with form, a cinematic cameo does with duration, representing the public person in a brief flash.

For Susan Stewart, the miniature form presents the opportunity for control. Made distinct from the real world because of their small scale, miniatures exist outside of time and space, belonging to an ideal world framed by our world but apart from it. Because of the relationship that miniature things have to real world referents, even the most fantastical miniature suggests that a larger, real-world analog may, or at least ought to, exist.⁴³ The miniature has the potential to be perfect, at least from the perspective of the viewer, who is made gigantic.⁴⁴ At the same time, the miniature calls attention to itself as an object, because it demands the viewer to consider its context - the context in which it is a miniature thing, and the real world context from which it is miniaturized.⁴⁵ Stewart writes that the miniature "moves towards contextual information and away from narrative."⁴⁶ A miniature demands to be considered as a contained whole as itself. Like the cameo that stands out despite its smallness and simplicity, or, as in the context of acting, its brevity, the miniature stands out in its visibility. It disrupts narrative by making itself visible above and beyond the narrative context, calling upon the viewer to consider its original and its potential contexts. Even more importantly, the miniature purifies its real-world referent by segregating it into a separate context and rendering it tiny, as it "presents a

⁴¹ James David Draper and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), *Cameo Appearances* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 5.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 60.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 71.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 44.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 48.

diminutive and thereby manipulatable version of experience, a version which is domesticated and protected from contamination. It marks the pure body..."⁴⁷ The miniature, although it reminds its viewer of its original context, can be incorporated into the fantasies of its user, reframed within the viewer's own world, opening a doorway to reflection.

Cameos have long been collected, commissioned, and worn by the powerful elite, as both jewellery and devotional objects. Ancient cameos were sought after as historical objects in the Renaissance, and the form saw a swell in popularity beginning in the 19th century as cameos were appropriated to indicate new sources of power, as well as aspirations to its trappings.⁴⁸ In the early 19th century, Napoleon and his court instituted a vogue for the cameo and the wearing of cameo jewellery, featuring multiple cameos of classical and Napoleonic subjects worn as a set, presenting many images of power in a way that made them interchangeable rather than exceptional.⁴⁹ This assembly of many small cameos had historical precedents in an "age-old practice of incorporating cameos into objects of greater size and complexity."⁵⁰ That these cameos were worn on the body indicate how closely identified the wearer was with the small portrait that helped to complete their self-presentation. Displayed together, these cameos provided a multiplicity of references to antique and modern ideals and exemplars of power that surround and include the wearer, as one visage among the idealized many. (Fig. 8) Owing to their size, these collections of cameos were inscrutable to all but the most intimate viewer, requiring a familiarity with the person who was wearing them in order to recognize and assess their subjects. These cameo sets thus enticed a viewer to a closer, intimate encounter with the wearer, and one that associated these miniature images, and what Stewart calls their purity,⁵¹ with the wearer herself.

Cameos followed in the sentimental Victorian trend of wearing "jewellery of remembrance"⁵², of which the miniature was another example. Miniatures, which unlike the cameo were painted rather than carved portraits, were likewise worn on the body as a brooch or a

⁴⁷ Ibid., 69.

⁴⁸ Margaret Cameron Coss Flower, *Victorian Jewellery* (London: Cassell, 1967), 20.

⁴⁹ Draper and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), *Cameo Appearances*, 47.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 11.

⁵¹ Stewart, *On Longing*, 69.

⁵² Flower, *Victorian Jewellery*, 22.



Figure 8. Cameo brooch featuring the likeness of a family member of the original owner. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

bracelet, often in mourning.⁵³ Cameos and miniatures sometimes were fashioned with lockets to hold locks of hair to aid this remembrance.⁵⁴ The strict mourning that Queen Victoria followed for her husband Prince Albert ennobled the passion for remembrance in the Victorian age, but fashion outgrew this obsession as the queen and population aged. Indeed, it seems as if the fashions of that time were themselves associated with death and the macabre. By 1885, cameos, which had been popular since the 1830s, were no longer among the most common pieces of jewellery.⁵⁵ Flower quotes a fashion editorial of the 1880s that called out the dead and abandoned state of the cameo, stating that some wearers had revived "neglected cameos exhumed from jewel-cases" as clasps for gowns.⁵⁶ Even later in 1910, the *Daily Star* in Brooklyn reports that "cameos, those attractive specimens of carved jewelry, are being brought to light by women fortunate enough to possess grandmothers." Cameos were not only jewels, but were linked to the bodies of subjects they represented, either through indexical references such as hair or iconically through representation of their portraits. The concept of the cameo retained these meanings of remembrance, preserving in its filmic guise both the iconic and indexical relationships of the image to the original. By the 20th century, there was something nostalgic about the cameo as well, imbued not only with its own memorializing impulse, but a sentimentality surrounding the impulse itself.

Photography and portraits

Like the mirror in the Renaissance, photography in the 19th century set a new precedent for resemblance and verisimilitude, feeding a Victorian mania for realism and truthfulness that reflected a desire to see objects as they truly were.⁵⁷ Photographs, introduced in 1839, were seen as authorless works, produced by the sun, the sitter, and the photographer,⁵⁸ where the photograph was examined for its subject rather than appreciated as a medium in itself, a habit

⁵³ Jean Arnold, "Cameo Appearances: The Discourse of Jewelry in Middlemarch," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 30, no. 1 (March 2002): 286.

⁵⁴ Flower, *Victorian Jewellery*, 9.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁵⁷ Jennifer Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorians: Photography and the Culture of Realism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 29.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

that, according to Barthes, continues to govern our relationship to photographs.⁵⁹ Whereas painted portraits may ask the viewer to appreciate the skill of the artist, photographs, according to Barthes, command the viewer to observe the subject.⁶⁰ Photographs allowed viewers to study, compare and contrast their subjects at leisure and intensely.⁶¹ However, despite its referential immediacy the photograph is, as West points out, no less composed than the painted portrait.⁶² Yet, Barthes counters, the photograph can never be as entirely composed as the painted portrait, as some of its details escape the control of the photographer.⁶³ For the viewers of the late nineteenth century, this intervening influence was invisible or at least negligible, and contrary to the nature of photography; in the 1860s, the use of photographs in dramatic tableaux composed by Pre-Raphaelite photographers caused an outcry as an abuse of the medium.⁶⁴ Yet, while Barthes concedes that a photograph is only a partial representation of its subject, and therefore can never be an entirely true representation because it records only one "anecdote" of a person's life,⁶⁵ Victorian images were seen to represent a standard that captured essential elements of a person's physiognomy and thus their character.⁶⁶ This perceived transparency encouraged institutional use of portrait photographs alongside exact measurements of body parts to document norms and aberrations in features, eventually resulting in the standard identification portrait photograph that was used in combination with vital statistics to establish legal identity by the end of the 19th century.⁶⁷ This transparency is the ultimate realization of physiologies that accepted outward appearances as the true sign of one's character. If one had seen a person, one could judge and know them, and no medium, not even the presence of the person himself, allowed for better contemplation of his features than the fixed stillness of the photographic portrait. Compared with the properties of the photograph as identified by Barthes, the miniature shares much of the same potential for nostalgia and memory, all under the control of the viewer. The

⁵⁹ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 5.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁶¹ Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorians*, 30.

⁶² West, *Portraiture*, 190.

⁶³ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 30.

⁶⁴ Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorians*, 74.

⁶⁵ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 30.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 66.

⁶⁷ Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorians*, 222.

photograph is a kind of miniature in itself, freezing and transforming people into objects that require a viewer's context to make them come alive.

Photography put the portrait in the hands of the middle and lower classes, allowing them access to their own likenesses as well as the mass-produced likenesses of celebrated political and cultural figures. Following closely on the announcement of the invention of photography in 1839, the initially expensive and tedious process saw innovations that reduced costs by decreasing exposure times and replacing the tintype with glass plates.⁶⁸ While photographic studios were open to the middle classes, its increasing portability allowed itinerant and single-operator photographers to spread the photographic portrait among the lower classes.⁶⁹ Photographs were used to memorialize likenesses of all walks of life. Duplication was another important milestone for the spread of portrait images; until the 1850s, the tintype was a "personal and private keepsake,"⁷⁰ kept behind glass in velvet and leather cases. When the introduction of glass plates into the process made photographs reproducible, wealthy sitters ordered copies in the 1860s, distributing them to friends for albums.⁷¹ Photographic studio portraits of actresses and actors were printed with magazines and sold individually and made available to a wide array of classes, drawing on earlier traditions that had reproduced engraved portraits for mass consumption.⁷² Photographers retained the proceeds of these photographs, while actors were seen to benefit with their increased visibility to potential paying audiences.⁷³ Initially accompanied by biographies, these inexpensive photographs were traded and collected much as the portraits of rulers had been reproduced and flaunted by admiring members of court in the preceding centuries.⁷⁴ As photography progressed to depict mobile subjects and momentary poses, informal representations of people in all classes were taken to new heights, mirroring developments in painting towards informal settings and intimacy.

⁶⁸ Peter Hamilton, Roger Hargreaves, and National Portrait Gallery (Great Britain), *The Beautiful and the Damned: The Creation of Identity in Nineteenth Century Photography* (Burlington, VT: Lund Humphries, 2001), 17.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 32.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 40.

⁷¹ Ibid., 47.

⁷² West, *Portraiture*, 190.

⁷³ Hamilton, Hargreaves, and National Portrait Gallery (Great Britain), *The Beautiful and the Damned*, 46.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 41.

Photography was born amid the cameo fad, providing a much less expensive form of portraiture that worked against the simplification of the cameo form by offering replicas of the living rather than idealized likenesses. In fact, the cameo's mid-19th century heyday mirrors that of the photographic *cartes-de-visite*, which permitted portraits of the self, acquaintances, and the famous to mingle in cherished albums.⁷⁵ As if reflecting this new access to the personal image, the vogue for cameos among wealthy women grew to include not only classical and royal subjects but self-likenesses.⁷⁶ With the advent of early plastics such as celluloid in the 1870s, cameos were mass-produced for middle class audiences, featuring idealized images of an anonymous middle-class woman.⁷⁷ Where women had worn cameos to associate themselves with classical precedents, these cameos represented a different kind of ideal and aspiration to generic respectability. Photographic portraits that mimicked the small, simplified portrait of the cameo would come to bear that name of cameo.⁷⁸ The cameo as an art object thus documents the transformation of celebrity in the years that preceded the film star, as these new technologies of image making and duplication allowed members of the middle class to be celebrated as both collectors and subjects of the art.

With the popularity of the cameo object came the popularity of the cameo as concept, extending beyond its obvious parallels in portrait photography to other media. The term was adapted in the 1850s to mean a brief literary sketch or biography, such as those in *Cameos from English History* that would "give the spirit of real events" and allow its readers to "be struck with characters and scenes presented in some relief."⁷⁹ While this book of cameos is not illustrated, similar biographies, as miniature as their glyphic counterparts, were circulated as an accompaniment for the popular photographic *cartes de visite*. While cameo art objects attested to the physical features of a person or personage, these short biographies conveyed in brief the stories behind the images. The cameo-biography supplemented the cameo-object, providing the information that the memorializing image only alluded to, and assembling a whole that referred one to the other. Cameos were established as fragments to be supplemented with text, images, or (in the case of remembrance jewellery) bodily remains, much in the way that cinematic cameos

⁷⁵ West, *Portraiture*, 190.

⁷⁶ Arnold, "Cameo Appearances," 270.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ "Cameo Photographs," *Syracuse Journal*, November 29, 1946.

⁷⁹ Charlotte Mary Yonge, *Cameos from English History* (Macmillan and Company, 1880).

would call on fans to supplement their brief appearance with information gleaned from their films and fan magazines. A cameo offered a striking proof of identity, if not a complete one.

The photographic portrait set the precedent for the viewer's recognition of the cinematic cameo. The more accessible photographic portrait meant that bourgeois and working class people had a model for seeing representations of themselves, an honour originally reserved for aristocracy. Ordinary faces caught by the camera became a commonplace that could thus be translated to the cinema screen, although unlike the limited access provided to the nobleman's personal portrait, the images of film stars would be available for mass viewing. Intimacy, distance, ordinariness and extraordinariness are all combined in this understanding of the portrait. Photography brought many of the conventions of court painting to a popular audience. Staged photographs that adopted the classical and mythical references of studio painting ensured audiences also had a complex sense of how to look at portraits: as direct representations of self, as allegories of power, as people who were simultaneously one thing and another. While the secret language and the hidden meanings within Renaissance portraits made for the wealthy middle classes were far removed from the audiences of 20th century nickelodeons, they provided a model of special access and intellectualization of images that cinema would draw on as some of its fans matured into cinephiles. Providing visibility that was fleeting rather than fixed, the cinema presented images like photographic portraits that were an invitation to look, to identify, and to recognize their subjects for their persona outside the studio. If the major difference between a portrait on and offscreen was their brevity, the cameo provided the perfect metaphor for the representations cinema offered.

Film Celebrity and Visibility

Who is celebrated and why has changed wildly over the millennia. From the Florentine donor to the successful industrial executive, there is a long chain of reevaluations of power. Leo Braudy discusses the history of famous men as beginning with rulers like Alexander, Caesar, and Charlemagne whose feats were synonymous with the states that they helped found.⁸⁰ With the rise of Christian spirituality in the West, the selflessness of saints, martyrs, and desert-bound hermits became the models for a new intellectual power, inspiring meditative writers like St.

⁸⁰ Mathijs, "Cronenberg Connected: Cameo Acting, Cult Stardom, and Supertexts," 46.

Augustine to praise them in texts that are foundational to Christian thought.⁸¹ Gradually, the heroism of the great personality and the model of the reflective hermit fused in the Renaissance into admiration for the artist and intellectual who helped record and broadcast the might of their rulers, compounding and creating new myths of empire through iconic artist-patron relationships such as Holbein and Henry VIII or Velazquez and Phillip IV.⁸² Braudy emphasizes the role that theatre and acting held in the transfer of importance from the seat of power to its image, as performances in British theatre especially demonstrated that power was constituted purely by its trappings and postures.⁸³ As he writes, "acting took kings and turned them into possibilities that anyone could imitate."⁸⁴ The 18th century audience that emerged from the theatres took these lessons to heart, creating a society that "instead of passively responding to its idols, takes an active role in defining them."⁸⁵ Through the 19th and 20th century, attention to the attitudes and trappings of greatness grew alongside mass culture. For Braudy, in the 20th century "fandom mediates the disparity between the aspirations fostered by the culture and the relatively small increments of personal status possible in a mass society."⁸⁶ The ordinary many lionize the successful, extraordinary few. Film, as the inheritor of the theatre that first exposed greatness as one among many poses a person can adopt, has become a site where the actor is visible in many guises, as both familiar face and removed idol.

While it may have centuries-old precedents, celebrity culture as we know it today emerged with film stars in the 1910s, linking image, persona, and power in a new and powerful way. In the early 20th century, film actors were transient, employed as day players by emerging film companies to work with their permanent cameramen to play in single reel films with simple narratives, filming public celebrations, stage shows, and everyday life.⁸⁷ Audiences watched films that reflected what Miriam Hansen calls a "primitive diversity" of early cinematic viewing positions, troubling the relationship of the film image to the real world and generating pleasure

⁸¹ Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame & Its History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 161, 170, 172.

⁸² Ibid., 285.

⁸³ Ibid., 321.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 335.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 381.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 590.

⁸⁷ Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 30.

through disjunction of fact and fiction.⁸⁸ Whereas early filmmaking was a collaborative partnership where joint responsibility was taken for camera operation, direction, story and acting, in the first decade of the 20th century hierarchies and specializations began to emerge that separated extra from star and director from actor.⁸⁹ As narratives became longer and more complex, actors were hired as stock players for the film companies to draw on, and so appeared interchangeably in roles that ran the gamut from what we would now think as an extra to a featuring role.⁹⁰

Theatrical stardom provided an important precedent for cinematic stars. For deCordova, film celebrity began in 1908 when famous stage stars began to reprise their signature theatrical roles onscreen.⁹¹ While deCordova points out that many of these actors were not necessarily household names, they were presented in advertising to the movie-going public as potentially recognizable.⁹² Recognizing or attempting to recognize these foreign, largely French names, though not necessarily their faces, was set as a mark of Bourdieuvian distinction in the ongoing campaign to make film a bourgeois art rather than a working class entertainment.⁹³ Famous Players, established in 1911, capitalized specifically on this intellectualizing trend, advertising itself as the home of the industry's "best thought and genius."⁹⁴ deCordova suggests that studios tried to extend the value of the name-brand actors they hired from the theatre beyond the productions they were actually in by refusing to release the names of the actors in any one production so that audiences might anticipate their presence in any of the films on offer.⁹⁵ If a star could be in any film, all films would draw equally on the perceived talent of the star. In this way, audiences were being trained to recognize faces, and to look for the famous among the merely onscreen before names were used to signal their presence.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 31.

⁸⁹ Charles Musser, "Preclassical American Cinema: Its Changing Mode of Film Production," in *Silent Film*, ed. Richard Abel (London: Athlone, 1996), 89.

⁹⁰ Anthony Slide and Alan Gevinson, *The Big V: A History of the Vitagraph Company* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1987), 15.

⁹¹ Richard deCordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 34.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Hansen, *Babel and Babylon Spectatorship in American Silent Film*, 66.

⁹⁴ "Famous Players Ad," *Moving Picture World*, June 1916.

⁹⁵ deCordova, *Picture Personalities*, 77.

While theatrical stars were lauded for their talent and performance, film stars had an unusually intimate relationship with the audience. Even before the close-up was introduced, film actors could be seen at a very close proximity on the magnified cinema screen, a proximity unimaginable in the theatre.⁹⁶ This close proximity meant unprecedented confrontation of the audience with the actor's face, and intimate familiarity with their features. These faces were then projected endlessly, playing across screens as their one- or two-reel exploits were presented in looped programs that audiences could see again and again and again for a single admission.⁹⁷ Although they might be looking for legitimate theatre stars, audiences knew these nameless faces like their own. To achieve something like this familiarity, theatre stars like Sarah Bernhardt and Geraldine Farrar had allowed their faces to be distributed in *cartes-de-visites*,⁹⁸ but moviegoing created that intimacy without the intermediary. Cinema multiplied the potential for visibility, not only by making the screen image larger-than-life but by making it accessible simultaneously across town and across the state. Cinema created the potential for visibility for a film actor that far exceeded that of the theatrical actor.

Audiences struck by these faces gave them names based on studio affiliations or popular characters they had played such as the Biograph Girl or Vitagraph Betty, and studios soon followed suit by advertising films based on their inclusion of their trademark actress.⁹⁹ Theatre and vaudeville acts that toured on certain circuits such as Keith's or Belasco theatres were similarly linked to those chains.¹⁰⁰ Producers did not release cast lists, keeping early film stars as "anonymous celebrities"¹⁰¹ whose identities were solely tied to the film company they worked for. Any attractive face could take up the mantle of celebrity simply by being named the company's new star. There were two faces known concurrently as the Biograph Girl, as film producers outbid each other for the favoured but still-anonymous Florence Lawrence and Mary Pickford and those actresses moved from studio to studio. Emphasizing the face as produced by

⁹⁶ Hansen, *Babel and Babylon Spectatorship in American Silent Film*, 35.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 102.

⁹⁸ Hamilton, Hargreaves, and National Portrait Gallery (Great Britain), *The Beautiful and the Damned*, 41.

⁹⁹ Slide and Gevinson, *The Big V*, 55; Richard Abel, "G.M. Anderson: 'Broncho Billy' among the Early 'Picture Personalities,'" in *Flickers of Desire: Movie Stars of the 1910s*, ed. Jennifer M. Bean (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 36.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Abel, *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2005), 355.

¹⁰¹ Graeme Turner, *Understanding Celebrity* (London: SAGE, 2004), 12.

the film company, rather than belonging to a person, the Vitagraph Girl and the Kalem girl were faces without biographies.¹⁰² Soon film companies realized that audiences wanted to know more about the people behind the faces, faces with whom they were as intimately familiar as people a generation before had been with the faces of no one but their own family, altering recognition from the local and the personal to the mass and the public.¹⁰³ This explosion of mass visual culture was unprecedented, leading, as Gamson has suggested to a "publicizing of surfaces".¹⁰⁴ While studios tried to maintain complete control over their stars as product rather than a person, attempting to promote a new hierarchy that ignored the precedent of theatrical celebrity and made faces synonymous with a brand name rather than a personal one, the reality of competition eventually brought this attempt to failure.¹⁰⁵ When Carl Laemmle initiated a press tour that revealed the Biograph Girl as Florence Lawrence in order to make it known that she had moved to his own IMP group, soon to be Universal, in 1910,¹⁰⁶ stars had to be acknowledged not merely as characters in the film but real-life persons as well. Their identities were no longer entirely linked to the studios they worked for and the characters they played. Lists of players began to regularly accompany plot summaries, eventually including images of the stars.¹⁰⁷ Unlike the Bernhardtts and other French names first introduced as stars to film, these stars had simple names like Fatty, Mary, and Mabel.¹⁰⁸ IMP even used a cameo-portrait of Lawrence as their trademark, signaling the precedence of star visibility above all else.¹⁰⁹

The visibility of film stars made them recognizable, and, as Nathalie Heinich writes, it is visibility in which celebrities trade.¹¹⁰ For Heinich, in a visual culture, power and importance is judged by visibility. Visibility and recognizability are two sides of the same coin: being visible is

¹⁰² Marc Norman, *What Happens Next: A History of American Screenwriting* (New York: Crown Archetype, 2008), 26.

¹⁰³ Hansen, *Babel and Babylon Spectatorship in American Silent Film*, 28.

¹⁰⁴ Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 21.

¹⁰⁵ deCordova, *Picture Personalities*, 78.

¹⁰⁶ P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 82.

¹⁰⁷ deCordova, *Picture Personalities*, 52.

¹⁰⁸ Gaylyn Studlar, "The Perils of Pleasure? Fan Magazine Discourse as Women's Commodified Culture in the 1920s," in *Silent Film*, ed. Richard Abel (London: Athlone, 1996), 17.

¹⁰⁹ deCordova, *Picture Personalities*, 52.

¹¹⁰ Nathalie Heinich, *De la visibilité: excellence et singularité en régime médiatique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012), 37.

not simply being seen, but the accumulation of many instances of being seen.¹¹¹ It is the accumulation of visibility that makes a person recognizable. If I see my neighbour once, he is a stranger. But if I see him many times, he becomes familiar to me. That does not, however, make him a celebrity. The second element of Heinrich's visibility as traded in by the celebrity is its inverse relationship to the seer.¹¹² A celebrity is a person visible to many people, fans or otherwise, yet to whom few of those people are visible. Other scholars of celebrity such as Dyer, Gamson, and Marshall have likewise identified this inversion of visibility as defining the allure of the celebrity for the fan. For Dyer, the star is both ordinarily hardworking yet extraordinarily talented; this talent that sets them apart is precisely the talent for being visible.¹¹³ Marshall suggests that the endless visibility of the star allows the fan to assemble a complex if incoherent image of the star that compellingly asks the fan to organize and stabilize that identity. The act of negotiating this relationship of visibility between fan and celebrity is, for Gamson, a key element of the fan's attraction to the celebrity.¹¹⁴ The inequality of this relationship is resolved not simply by making fans visible to celebrities. In fact, Kelly Ferris suggests that many fans, when they experience an actual chance celebrity encounter, may attempt to minimize the extent of the interaction because of its unusual and uncomfortable reversal of visibility and distance.¹¹⁵ Rather than make themselves visible to the object of their interest, fans make the object of their interest more visible, uncovering as many details of the image and its constitution as possible.¹¹⁶ Movie stars became famous simply because they were visible to more fans than any person had ever been before.

The public reaction to Lawrence's dramatic death and rebirth in 1911 testified to her visibility in the eyes of audiences, and is credited as the catalyst for studio support of the transformation of film actors from cast members to marketable personalities.¹¹⁷ The role of the star grew to include performing outside of the film, in events in support of the film and

¹¹¹ Ibid., 49.

¹¹² Ibid., 43.

¹¹³ Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: BFI, 1979), 42.

¹¹⁴ Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 52.

¹¹⁵ Kerry O. Ferris, "Seeing and Being Seen: The Moral Order of Celebrity Sightings," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 33, no. 3 (June 1, 2004): 253.

¹¹⁶ Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 168.

¹¹⁷ Marshall, *Celebrity and Power*, 82.

interviews for the new film fan magazines.¹¹⁸ These fan magazines, directed entirely at fans rather than exhibitors, were themselves overwhelmingly created and edited by studio and distribution groups, and reflected their affiliations by excluding discussion of films produced by rival groups.¹¹⁹ *Motion Picture Story Magazine*, launched in 1911 by one of the owners of Vitagraph, was funded by members of the Motion Picture Patents Company, and *Photoplay* was established in 1910 to promote independent productions.¹²⁰ Both magazines, as their titles suggest, mostly provided short stories that supplemented the scenes onscreen, providing detail both seen and unseen. These magazines grew from detailed retellings of the photoplays currently in theatres to include reviews and articles about celebrities, all within the boundaries of studio affiliation.¹²¹ Yet, Abel insists that the inclusion of full-page photographs of the studios' "picture plays" in *Motion Picture Story* from its inception incited an important shift in the invention of the movie star in 1911.¹²² Rather than promoting the stories their films told, studios began to market the stars their films featured.¹²³ Writing to these magazines, fans were not afraid to ask for the particulars of the faces they were so familiar with from the screen. Writers answered some but not all questions about film stars' private lives, keeping details like marital status from the public.¹²⁴ Studios became more and more involved in promoting the business of star visibility; in 1914 Theda Bara toured the US before she had released "a film of note."¹²⁵ Studios were profitably selling picture personalities as much as pictures. However, the reservations that studios had held in making their stars more important than the productions they were in were realized. Unlike the generic and interchangeable nicknames of a few years earlier, stars now could move from offer to offer and studio to studio while ensuring that their public persona moved studios with them.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 104.

¹¹⁹ Anthony Slide, *Inside the Hollywood Fan Magazine: A History of Star Makers, Fabricators, and Gossip Mongers* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2010).

¹²⁰ Ibid., 6.

¹²¹ Ibid., 4.

¹²² Abel, "G.M. Anderson: 'Broncho Billy' among the Early 'Picture Personalities,'" 33.

¹²³ Jennifer M. Bean, *Flickers of Desire: Movie Stars of the 1910s* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011).

¹²⁴ Studlar, "The Perils of Pleasure? Fan Magazine Discourse as Women's Commodified Culture in the 1920s," 270.

¹²⁵ Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 26.

Early stars were kept largely nondescript, embracing the ordinary within the extraordinary that Dyer suggest draws the adulation of fans. As Abel notes, through the late-1910s they were portrayed as hardworking and independent.¹²⁶ Turner, the Vitagraph Girl, proudly admitted she was a regular jack-of-all-trades behind the scenes.¹²⁷ Even Bara, the famous vamp, distanced herself in fan magazines from the vamp character she portrayed.¹²⁸ While Studlar suggests that Bara represents a shift away from a publicity tactic that equated actors directly with their characters, as if Mary Pickford was Little Mary or Kathlyn Williams was a real life heroine, audiences were well versed in the premise of acting. The blandishment of *Vitagraph Life Portrayals* in 1910 that suggests of their actors, "they act like real people doing what real people do" nevertheless insists on these people as actors, undertaking labour.¹²⁹ Stills from the action accompanied plot summaries in this trade paper before the regular appearance of tiny cameo portraits of those same actors were introduced in 1911 to distinguish actor and character.¹³⁰ (Fig. 9) These cameos appear around the same time that Florence Turner was gaining notoriety as the Vitagraph Girl. If as Braudy suggests, fans of mass culture assert their agency in bestowing notoriety on someone otherwise just like them, these children of immigrants who contributed to the many practical facets of studio labour - sewing costumes, preparing meals, and building sets - were made entirely relatable. However, the collaborative atmosphere these articles describe in 1910 and 1911 was made obsolete by the very articles that describe it. The power of visibility established a hierarchy that placed the pictured above the producer: although exhibitor magazines like *Vitagraph Life Portrayals* included articles by the company's executives and sometime-directors, fan magazines were filled with the particulars of actors and actresses rather than the behind-the-camera producers of the film. Who the public at large valued was defined by visibility. As these personas were built, audiences expected certain people to be increasingly visible, and the studios obliged them.

¹²⁶ Abel, "G.M. Anderson: 'Broncho Billy' among the Early 'Picture Personalities,'" 40.

¹²⁷ Slide and Gevinson, *The Big V*.

¹²⁸ Gaylyn Studlar, "Theda Bara: Orientalism, Sexual Anarchy and the Jewish Star," in *Flickers of Desire Movie Stars of the 1910s*, ed. Jennifer M Bean (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 125, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10589783>.

¹²⁹ Slide, *Inside the Hollywood Fan Magazine*, 60.

¹³⁰ "A Quartette of Vitagraph Players," *Vitagraph Life Portrayals*, July 1911.

THE VITAGRAPH COMPANY OF AMERICA



KATE PRICE



WILLIAM R. DUNN



FLORA FINCH



EDITH HALLEREN

A Quartette of Vitagraph Players

Figure 9. Putting a face to a name in the rebranded *Vitagraph Life Portrayals*, 1911.

Cameos on Stage and On Screen

How then did the term cameo come to be used in the cinema? Beginning in the 1910s, small roles were described as cameos as authors drew on all the connotations of the art-object namesake: the play between background and foreground, the purity of the miniature image, and its true-to-lifeness. Most notably, the phrase "stand out like a cameo" appears occasionally in early newspaper reviews of vaudeville and cinema from the turn of the century to the 1920s to describe distinctive or especially noteworthy performances by individuals within larger acts that offered performers the chance to "cameo" themselves.¹³¹ Small character roles were most often described in this way, like fortunetellers, maids, and worried mothers.¹³² The purity of the miniature was reflected in the term "cameo-like" which could mean the physical perfection of a beautiful "cameo face"¹³³ or a perfect figure like that of swimming star Annette Kellerman, or it could mean being perfectly true to life in a role that was "cameo like in its fidelity,"¹³⁴ or as in the case of Hitchcock's 1928 *Blackmail*, a "clear cameo" of working class London. The term continued throughout the 1950s to indicate small roles in which players distinguished themselves.¹³⁵ From the cameo of antiquity, the idea of the cameo appearance borrows the ability to depict a person with a minimum of detail, as a simple image animated by the knowledge of its historical precedents, as well as its association with a removed yet well-elaborated ideal. Distinctive, perfect, miniature, and yet also true to life, the cameo as it was discussed in the early 20th century adopted a particularly photographic concept of the portrait.

Even while the concept of the movie star was still young, "cameo" was used to signal the presence of a remarkable performance that was at least one half of the hallmark of stardom. (Fig. 10) Identifying actors by name in recognition for their performance, those performances cited as "cameos" in the 1910s and 1920s were marked to recognize and distinguish between the actor and the role. In these cases, we witness actors in small roles being offered up as potential stars by

¹³¹ "Fenwick's Corner," *Oregonian*, May 20, 1906; "Patience," *Variety*, November 5, 1912; "Reviews," *Atlantic News-Telegraph*, October 21, 1916; Fred, "Film Reviews: Playing With Fire," *Variety*, April 28, 1916; O. M. Samuel, "New Orleans," *Variety*, May 5, 1926.

¹³² Walt, "Girl in the Kimono," *Variety*, July 2, 1910; Tbee, "Moving Pictures: WITHIN THE CUP," *Variety*, March 22, 1918; RJ Whitley, "A Talkie Triumph," *Daily Mirror*, June 24, 1929.

¹³³ Sime, "New Acts Next Week: Irene Bercseny," *Variety*, January 9, 1914.

¹³⁴ "Show Reviews: Prospects," *Variety*, October 12, 1920.

¹³⁵ "Age of Innocence," *Variety*, October 23, 1934; "Flying Fortress," *Variety*, July 15, 1942; "For Better, For Worse," *Variety*, October 13, 1954.

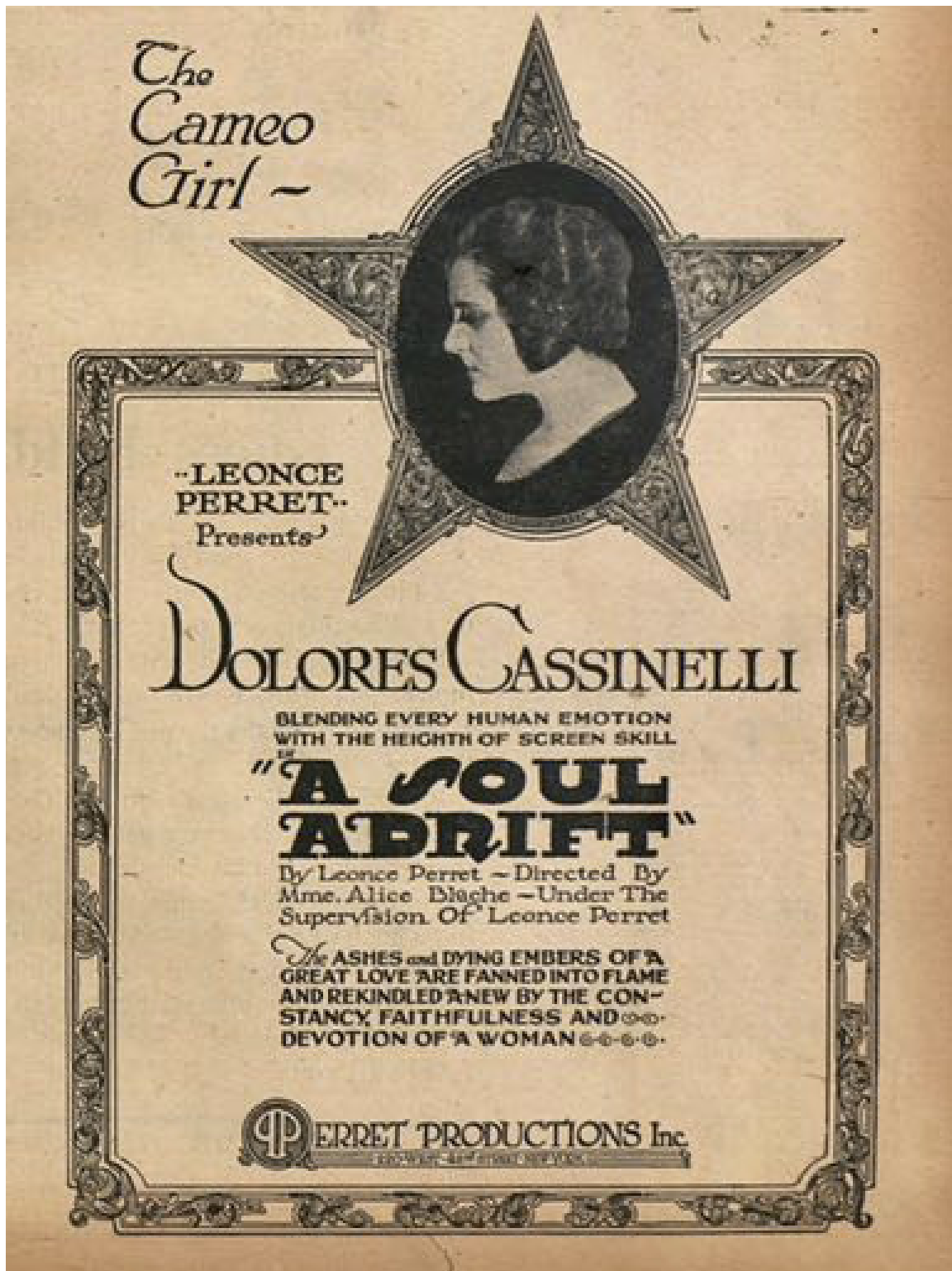


Figure 10. The cameo came to signify stand-out performances, like that of the Cameo Girl in this 1919 ad in *Variety*.

suggesting latent talent or strong effort, identifying the elements of hard work and natural ability that have defined the celebrity persona in the 20th century.¹³⁶ Being recognized for a cameo hints at this potential to be outstanding. In a review of the 1910 play *The Wife Tamers*, the author makes special notice of the actor who "plays the role of the maid with a piquancy and a cleverness that make her work stand out like a cameo."¹³⁷ Remarkd upon as an actor playing a role, and playing it well, the acknowledgement by the reviewer of a "cameo" performance is a step towards building the public persona that was the hallmark of the star. Actors were being noted for reversing the expectations of who stands out in a film as reviewers expressed curiosity about the performer while commending a job well done. The term "cameo" recognized someone who stood out despite their small role, yet who made the viewer aware that there was a person behind the performance. As stars increased their monopoly on audience attention and recognition, stars would eventually become linked with the concept of the cameo. However, these celebrity cameos were so identified because the public persona of the star reflected on the performance rather than performance on the public persona.

While cameos as portraits are sites for memory and reflection, the popularity of the cameo as a motif and metaphor in the earliest years of cinema mean the term carries nostalgia related to the past. In the 1910s and 1920s, short films occasionally referred to themselves as cameos, as in Mutual's 1914 *Cameos of the Yellowstone* or Educational's Cameo Comedies from 1923.¹³⁸ The adoption of this phrase was in line with the new industry's attempts to borrow for itself the classical associations that were nevertheless familiar to a popular audience, a role that the mass-produced decoration with Greco-Roman roots, and its bourgeois cousin the popular biography, filled exactly. As serials fell out of fashion, cameo as a term continued to be associated with individually striking episodes within a larger narrative, sometimes to criticize the kind of disjointed breaks with narrative that Stewart suggests is intrinsic to the miniature and that Eco locates as the site of cult.¹³⁹ While not exclusively devoted to short films, a number of movie palaces in cities from Pittsburgh to San Francisco dating from the mid-1920s were named Kameo

¹³⁶ Dyer, *Stars*, 42.

¹³⁷ Walt, "Out of Town: The Wife Tamers," *Variety*, September 3, 1910.

¹³⁸ Brent E. Walker, *Mack Sennett's Fun Factory: A History and Filmography of His Studio and His Keystone and Mack Sennett Comedies, with Biographies of Players and Personnel* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2013), 563.

¹³⁹ Herb, "Film Reviews: Wild Geese Calling," *Variety*, July 30, 1941.

and Cameo, especially new Universal palaces.¹⁴⁰ However, this name was not given to new theatres after 1928, as the famous Broadway-based Moss's Cameo fell into decline and the Cameo in San Francisco was renamed, suggesting that the name "cameo" quickly became an old-fashioned term as short films and views became less and less a mainstay of popular cinema.¹⁴¹ The idea of the cameo motif, like the forgotten jewels of a half-century earlier, was a relic of early cinema.

Early Cameos: Set Apart by a Portrait

From the anonymous player to millionaire movie star, the second decade of the 20th century witnessed an important change in celebrity culture. While actors like Mary Pickford or Colleen Moore became the most visible celebrities of their time, in the early twentieth century other players in the film industry were making bids for the type of visibility that has since been seen as the sole province of actors. If the modern celebrity is built on the suggestion that stars are just like us, it was perhaps most true in the early days of cinema, when pioneers quickly established themselves as the aristocracy of the new and almost unimaginably profitable industry.¹⁴² But it was not just for movie stars. Photography had created the myth of the authorless image and the labour behind moviemaking was likewise perceived as invisible, suggesting that there was little art to the transformation from idea to film reel. Going Hollywood was not merely a pipe dream for beautiful people, but a reverie that held in its thrall storytellers of all types, hardworking or otherwise. While performers were definitely made the most visible, the fan magazines that emerged in the mid-1910s also profiled directors and writers.¹⁴³ By the end of the decade fan magazines offered not only popularity polls for favourite stars but contests promising contracts for surefire story ideas as well as beguiling faces.¹⁴⁴ Even today, the

¹⁴⁰ "B. S. Moss' Cameo Gets Under Way," *Variety (Archive: 1905-2000)*, December 30, 1921; "Pictures: 'Blood and Sand' Flops in Pittsburgh," *Variety*, September 29, 1922; "San Francisco," *Variety*, October 11, 1923; Chester B. Bahn, "Syracuse, N. Y.," *Variety*, May 10, 1923; "Pictures: Loew's Cameo, Brooklyn," *Variety*, December 3, 1924; "Cameo Theatre," *Highland Democrat*, October 1, 1927.

¹⁴¹ "Pictures: 18 B'way Picture Houses," *Variety*, April 30, 1930; "Hollywood Chatter," *Variety*, April 3, 1929.

¹⁴² Evelyn F. Scott, *Hollywood, When Silents Were Golden*, 1st edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972).

¹⁴³ Slide, *Inside the Hollywood Fan Magazine*, 21.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

embellished biographies of these pioneers are appealingly melodramatic, like that of screenwriter Anita Loos, who apocryphally began her long and successful career in 1912 as a preteen (give or take a decade) sending story ideas to D.W. Griffith.¹⁴⁵ Although stars were definitely the most visible in the marketing of films, writers, directors, and producers were also made the subject of scrutiny.

However, outside the developing star paradigm, certain types of labour were more visible than others. Vitagraph founders Blackton and Smith had gotten their start in cinema as a camera-operator/director pair, and when Vitagraph developed its publicity machine, it acted in favour of making directors and producers visible alongside actors. Adopting the legacy of showmen like Barnum or Belasco, the producer was already recognized as an important figure who outlasted the popularity of that season's assembled acts.¹⁴⁶ Early trade publications suggested a more traditional ascription of visibility and recognition along these lines of power. Before the fan magazines which were so instrumental in consolidating the star's visibility, the industry communiqués of the early 1910s were trade publications distributed to provide information to exhibitors and producers on upcoming releases, new equipment, company mergers, and international acquisitions.¹⁴⁷ From 1912, Vitagraph's exhibitor journal *Vitagraph Life Portrayals* gradually included press announcements and advertising copy about their regular players. This new format that followed the original and much more perfunctory synopses of the *Vitagraph Bulletin* punctuated its pages with anecdotal "Purely Personal Puffs" about the foibles of actors and other studio employees, but also prefaced the publication with a full page of "Heart to Heart Talks" authored by Vitagraph's founder.¹⁴⁸ While exhibitors might be expected to be more interested in the advice of fellow businessmen rather than the gossip on actors, the changing format and cute subheadings suggest that the journal was no longer made purely for reference or reprinting but for browsing by eager fans. *Vitagraph Life Portrayals* distinguished producers as those with agency from actors as those without. Portraits were an important part of the campaign for visibility of offscreen roles. Executives appeared at the front of the magazine with their byline, while the actors were presented in grids of studio portraits in the back. By ascribing to themselves authorship of the production of films, producers and directors sought to make

¹⁴⁵ Scott, *Hollywood, When Silents Were Golden*.

¹⁴⁶ Neil Harris, *Humbug: The Art of P.T. Barnum* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), 141.

¹⁴⁷ *The Big Four Family*, June 1915.

¹⁴⁸ "Purely Personal Puffs," *Vitagraph Bulletin*, August 1915.

themselves as visible as their actors. Including their portraits in print was one way to accomplish this visibility; including their portraits in films, as part of their own Life Portrayals, was another. This style of campaign appeared in other venues. Advertisements and editorials authored by Vitagraph's presidents Blackton and Smith in related publications sponsored by their distribution group likewise featured large portraits of the men as the locus of power. In a full-page 1915 advertisement for Vitagraph's *The Goddess* in the *NY Evening Journal*, Blackton, Smith and director Harry Ince are pictured in large portraits as "the Company producing The Goddess."¹⁴⁹ (Fig. 11) An image of the exterior of the Vitagraph studios is also reproduced, showing the site of their film factory. While the film star may already have been established, the still-young industry was imagining, or perhaps seeking, other ways to curtail costs and promote their films.

Whether as potential employees or as burgeoning fans, moviegoers were curious about film production, and films documenting the process of movie-making even predated the birth of fan magazines. Vitagraph's *Making Motion Pictures: A Day in the Vitagraph Studios*, a 1908 two-reeler that documents the process of movie-making from writing the scenario to shooting with actors, then follows that document with the film recorded in the preceding shots.¹⁵⁰ While this film straddles documentary and fiction, it demonstrates how early film workers likewise straddled many roles, transitioning within a single day from actor to director to grip and costumer and back to actor again. There are many people playing themselves, as film workers in this short film, thus referencing a public persona that exists in the real world. Of course, film's relationship to its referent means that few if any films escape the reference to the real world. For the viewer, film as a medium with an indexical reality represents both what Vivian Sobchack identifies as narrative space that is confined to the screen and documentary space that is contiguous to the viewer's own world.¹⁵¹ Yet none of these films ask the viewer to recognize a public persona, presenting its subjects in long shot that emphasize the collaborative nature of their group work rather than isolating individuals for recognition. Ultimately, these people, although playing themselves, are not made visible for recognition; they are merely documenting.

¹⁴⁹ "The Goddess," *New York Evening Journal*, May 3, 1915.

¹⁵⁰ Rudy Behlmer and Tony Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood: The Movies about the Movies* (Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1975), 1.

¹⁵¹ Vivian Sobchack, "Inscribing Ethical Space: Ten Propositions on Death, Representation, and Documentary," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 9, no. 4 (1984): 294.

**This is the Company
Producing Celestia
called**

The Goddess

JEFFREY BLACKBURN has led his out of make film a great success. The second director, Martin and Charles W. Goldfarb has been chosen. Working has been fast, not even the magic of the Vitaphone, but the quality of the film is such that the public, through the medium of Goldfarb's company, has been.

MAKING no attempt to rival those manufacturers whose habit is to show smashing melodramas, the Vitagraph has become noted for the production of fine, classic, sumptuous dramas.

It was for this reason that the Vitagraph Company was called in to cooperate with the

EVENING JOURNAL

While any comparisons are scarcely expressive enough, it might be illuminating to your mind to classify the Vitagraph Company as the Belasco of the screen. Not content merely with mechanical effects that are sufficient to thrill for the moment and then pass on the instant into forgetting, there is yet, something deeper, something unforgettable, something genuine in every Vitagraph picture.

ALBERT SMITH, treasurer of the Vitagraph organization, personally interested in the most trivial and insignificant details that go to make up his various productions. "The Goddess" was the personal choice of Mr. Smith and his personal triumph as well.

THIS stage is the personal direction of Ralph Felt, who took his players to the frontiers of the nation to produce "The Goddess." Ralph Felt, whose picture is shown at the right, has with a plain face himself, in the very firmness of action, indeed, it is more than mere competence, to produce that history, giving motion pictures their rightful due, will classify him along with the greatest stage manager of all time.

The Goddess Begins **MAY 3rd**
in the Evening Journal

Figure 11. A series of ads for *The Goddess* (1915) in *The New York Evening Journal* culminated in these images of the film's producers and director.

It is because of its dual status as a portrait that scholars identify the appearance of Vitagraph's founders in *A Vitagraph Romance* as the first cameo. Importantly, this cameo also appears in what Behlmer and Thomas identify as the first fiction film that is Hollywood-set (or, technically, as it was shot in that other East Coast hub of production before the exodus to Los Angeles, Brooklyn-set).¹⁵² It is only when this type of film is established as fictional that we can clearly see the cameo at the intersection of public persona and fictional narrative space. Rather than existing purely onscreen, the still of the three executives hob-nobbing in a wood-paneled office was also used in 1916 article in the exhibitor's journal *Moving Picture World* about their status as pioneers.¹⁵³ (Fig. 12) At its release, *Moving Picture World* described *A Vitagraph Romance* as featuring three of the studio's executive members, including Smith, Blackton, and president William T. "Pop" Rock, in roles as the producers of a Vitagraph picture.¹⁵⁴ A backstage romance about a senator's daughter who willfully marries young and then joins the film industry, *A Vitagraph Romance* features Vitagraph's Brooklyn studio as well as studio hands, crew, and otherwise nameless actors milling about the set.¹⁵⁵ While the consensus of Behlmer and Thomas, Anderson and Barris identifies *Vitagraph Romance* as a fiction film, the interplay of documentary and narrative space demonstrates how difficult it is to parse fact and fiction in this era where staff worked in multiple roles. For example, James Young playing the young lover was actually the director of this film, rather than the unidentified yet recurring cameraman-director team he meets at the studio, and the senator was heroine Clara Kimball Young's real-life father. The question of visibility and public persona is relevant in this film. Like *Moving Picture World*, scholars writing about the Hollywood genre mention the executives by name as being those who play themselves in the film.¹⁵⁶ Yet, Vitagraph itself in its monthly publication only states that the actor meets "the heads of the company."¹⁵⁷ That we recognize Blackton, Smith, and Rock relies on the preservation of their portraits and names in other media. They had a visibility that lived on outside of the film. While the cameraman-director duo may also have been

¹⁵² Behlmer and Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood*, 97.

¹⁵³ "Rock, Smith and Blackton Were Pioneer Exhibitors," *Moving Picture World*, July 1916.

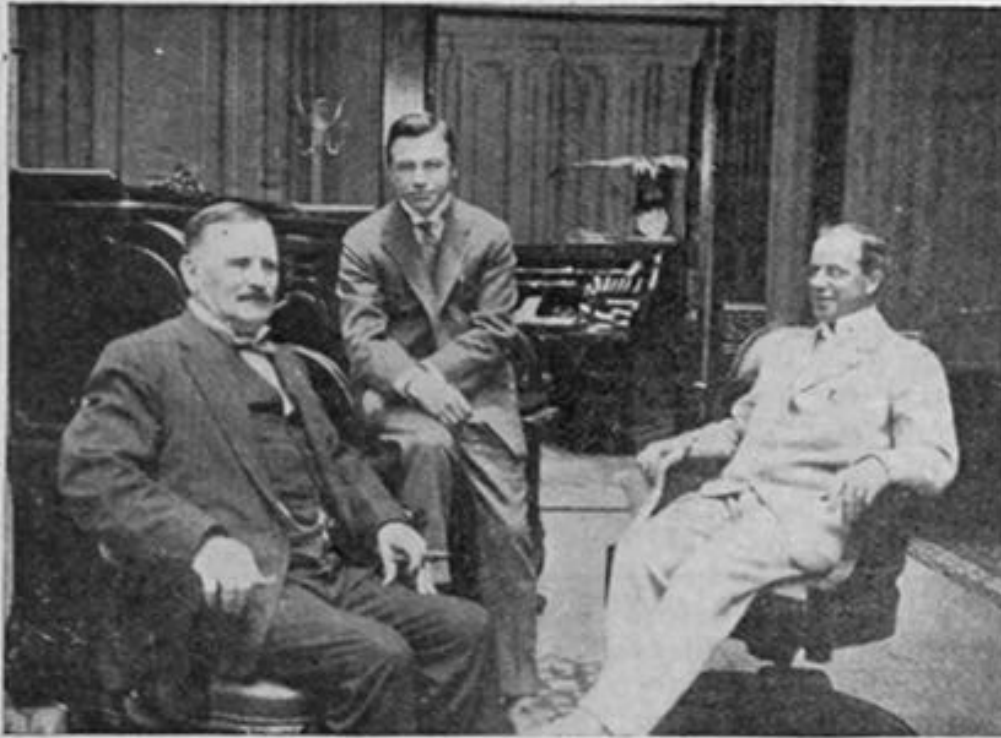
¹⁵⁴ "Comments on the Films: A Vitagraph Romance," *Moving Picture World*, September 18, 1912.

¹⁵⁵ Behlmer and Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood*.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 97; Patrick Donald Anderson, *In Its Own Image: The Cinematic Vision of Hollywood* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), 62; "Comments on the Films: A Vitagraph Romance."

¹⁵⁷ "A Vitagraph Romance," *Vitagraph Life Portrayals*, September 17, 1912.

ONE of the earliest exhibitors of motion pictures was William T. Rock, better known to the trade as "Pop" Rock, who was for years the president of the Vitagraph Company of America, but who has now retired from active participation in the manufacturing business. It was out at his delightful summer home at Oyster Bay, Long



THE ORIGINAL VITAGRAPHERS,
"Pop" Rock, Albert E. Smith and J. Stuart Blackton.

Island, that "Pop" related the story of his beginning in the picture business a few weeks ago to a representative of the Moving Picture World. We relate it here as nearly as possible as he told it.

Figure 12. The portrait appearing in *Moving Picture World* is a still of the executives' cameo in *A Vitagraph Romance*.

reprising their real-life roles, unrecognized, their roles are not cameos. When the three appear together in the scene that would be lifted for their portrait, their limited movement means that viewers have nothing to do but contemplate their images, rather than the temporarily arrested narrative. Although only the keenest fans may have recognized these captains of the film industry, they are presenting images that are synonymous with their public persona as a kind of portrait.

This public persona had been well-curated in the previous decades. *A Vitagraph Romance* was not Blackton and Smith's first bid for visibility. Both men exemplify the entrepreneurial spirit of the early cinema, developing not only successful production companies but distribution networks and their attendant publicity machines. Blackton and Smith had been unsuccessful vaudevillians who nevertheless managed to obtain an Edison camera with which they started their first film company at the end of the 19th century.¹⁵⁸ Shooting as a team, they gradually built up their production company to have its own studio, expanding from a rooftop location in Brooklyn to larger and larger complexes at the outskirts of New York. Vitagraph became one of the most important early film companies, making bids for Pickford, training such stars as Mabel Normand, and founding the formidable independent-busting trust of the Motion Picture Patents Company, until an ill-suited merger and poor management of money drove Vitagraph into bankruptcy in the late 1910s.¹⁵⁹ Despite their rise to industry prominence and wealth, both of these men retained a hands-on role in their filmmaking enterprises, returning periodically to directing after 1910.¹⁶⁰ Photographic portraits of the pair accompanied both advertisements for the films they produced and the regular editorials they published in the publications they founded to publicize their films. Blackton and Smith were powerful men, eager to establish their legacy. Certainly they made a stronger bid than president Rock, who eschewed publication and whose biography is largely lost to time.¹⁶¹ Despite the fact that they were working in what seems like the very early days of filmmaking, by the 1910s they were harnessing the language of nostalgia and memory to discuss their roles as pioneers and old-timers. In 1915, Smith describes himself as an "old fossil" of filmmaking whose stars, employees, and technicians have been stolen from

¹⁵⁸ Slide and Gevinson, *The Big V*, 4.

¹⁵⁹ Slide, *Inside the Hollywood Fan Magazine*, 21.

¹⁶⁰ Slide and Gevinson, *The Big V*, 21.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

him.¹⁶² In 1913, *Moving Picture World* lamented the lack of films by the "old-time Vitagraph Girl" so familiar to the "old-time picturegoer."¹⁶³ Consolidating this power and history in a portrait follows old precedents. Like the cameo jewel, nostalgia and memory are tied to the portraits of stars and public personages in cinema.

Like art historians who claim to be able to see the qualities of a portrait in unrecognizable faces, it is hard not to want to read into this scene something distinctively cameo-like. Like portraits, cameos present their subjects for recognition. Barthes' discusses the photograph's command to the viewer to look, and the cameo offers some of these same qualities. The Vitagraph cameo offers us a narrative break, like Deleuze's time image. While earlier scenes showed Blackton and Smith hiring the young hopefuls, the appearance of all three of these men together after the Vitagraph setting has been well-established with intertitles, extensive views of the studio, and previous scenes in the executive offices is superfluous. As such, there is something undeniably awkward about their scene that cannot be explained by their non-actor status alone; after all, two of the three had been actors in the shuffle of vaudeville and early cinema. For their portrait, they appear in the dark office, in contrast to earlier scenes that show the bustle of large groups of extras and grips in the busy courtyard of the studio, carrying scenery and lining up for roles. They are presenting themselves, like a portrait, to be admired and acknowledged. Like a princess depicted wearing copious amounts of jewels or a merchant portrayed with a globe on his desk, they are not acting powerful, they are merely being powerful. The awkwardness comes from performance. Nacache suggests that film performance is about appearing as close to performing an action without crossing the border into simply doing that action as natural;¹⁶⁴ the three executives fall on the wrong side of that border. On the other hand, Florence Turner's extremely brief cameo, which is also singled out for mention by *Moving Picture World*, is a much better performance: she strides towards the newcomers purposefully, she greets them with open arms and an expression of consternation. She gestures, wrinkles her brow, and laughs. While we linger with the Vitagraph three in their office for almost 30 seconds as they sit, stiffly allowing themselves to be captured, Turner appears for far fewer seconds. However, it is the executives who stand out to Behlmer and Thomas, and not Turner, whose

¹⁶² J. Stuart Blackton, "Heart to Heart Talks," *Vitagraph Bulletin*, August 1915, 4.

¹⁶³ "Auntie's Romance," *Moving Picture World*, July 27, 1912.

¹⁶⁴ Jacqueline Nacache, *L'acteur de cinéma* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2005), 87.

appearance is not mentioned. If they stand out, it is only because of their stiffness: they seem to not belong to the film world that they have created. Whether their scene was ideal as a portrait because of its static framing, or it was static because it was also framed as a portrait, their cameo stands out from the film narrative.

These "first" cameos help underscore the evolution of the growing film industry. While in 1908, roles were less defined - studio owners might work as directors or actors, or a player might work in wardrobe, and actors were not yet credited by name¹⁶⁵ - by 1912, an executive in front of a camera is a statement of tribute, a peek into the studio and behind the screen. By this time, the division between illusion and reality is more strictly if playfully guarded. *Making Motion Pictures* presents its first reel as documentary of what produces the second reel of fiction, firmly dividing what is real and what is not, while the 1912 film intercuts actuality of the studio at work with the fiction of the senator's daughter run amok. For scholars like Anderson and Behlmer, it is obviously easier to identify longstanding executives than local and largely unskilled crewmembers. Yet, just as Blackton and Smith presented their faces in portrait photographs to exhibitors and fans in magazines, here they were presenting their faces in the setting of the films they were making, asking for recognition as their offscreen public personas. Such appearances, relying less on convenience (as in the early film period) and more on establishing the power of visibility, created a precedent for appearances by film authors other than actors in films. Given the history of the portrait and the influence of the businessmen behind the screen, as well as the predilection for showmanship of not only Blackton and Smith but many other production pioneers, it is not surprising that such producers and directors would present themselves for acknowledgement. Florence Turner had already become a star; her appearance in the film studio as a helpful colleague is perhaps less surprising. Alongside their product, these producers struggled to maintain a public persona that if not rivaling at least echoed that of the stars they created.

Making the Cameo Cinematic

While the cameo clearly has its precedents in the fine and decorative arts, how it differs from those precedents is also worthy of note. Unlike the cameo jewel, a cameo role is not a keepsake, although it can nevertheless accumulate memory and provoke study. Instead, the

¹⁶⁵ deCordova, *Picture Personalities*, 41.

cameo is presented in cinematic real-time for the viewer. Writing about cinematic time, Deleuze suggests that some images promote more reflection than others, prompting viewers to reflect on these "time-images" as they exist in the present and the past rather than being propelled through the narrative, a task which falls to the "movement-image."¹⁶⁶ The cameo, which like a portrait breaks with narrative by demanding its recognition and enforcing its visibility, seems a match for the time-image. For Deleuze, the time-image is not stagnant, but allows the viewer to reflect on how the image could and has changed from its past iterations. When dealing with a public persona, this reflection aptly allows the viewer to reflect on the cinematic roles and extra-cinematic details that the viewer recollects. By assembling time-images and movement-images, and with special attention to the interstices between the two, Deleuze is interested in a cinema that reflects the instability of an open, changing real world.¹⁶⁷ For Deleuze, the time-image as an interstice between narrative-driven image sequences represents "a so-called irrational cut which belongs neither to one nor the other, and sets out to be valid for itself."¹⁶⁸ Like the portrait, Deleuze seems to promote a type of cinema that follows Eco's definition of cult, as it should not create a whole with its images, but a somewhat disjointed collection of images that break from and reinstate narrative in terms that favour the spectator's own reflections. For the viewer, these time-images, although they provoke recollection, cannot be possessed in the same way that a portrait or *carte-de-visite* can. The onscreen cameo, until the relatively recent development of home viewing and replay culture, was thus not only a time-image itself, but one that depended on time to be studied and memorialized, reoccurring only once per screening. Even if, as in the early days of continuous running programs, that revelation occurred every hour or so, the encounter was continually marked by its brevity, and by its position within the accumulated images of the film.

Cameo roles, onstage or on film, are larger than life, presenting actors who stand out despite the smallness of their role. Rather than miniature, viewed on a cinema screen, a cameo is gigantic. While the cameos in *A Vitagraph Romance* are not close-ups, composed mostly in medium shots, the close-up would become an important part of the presentation of the cameo, allowing the dual experience of both totality because of its largeness and proximity in the context

¹⁶⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1986), 17.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 179.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 200.

of a detail within the film.¹⁶⁹ Mary Anne Doane notes this contradiction in her examination of the close-up, suggesting, "the confusion, and the apparent collapse of the oppositions between detail and totality, part and whole, microcosm, and macrocosm, the miniature and the gigantic, is crucial to the ideological operation of the close-up, that which makes it one of our most potent memories of the cinema."¹⁷⁰ For Stewart, the gigantic is a grotesque experience where an object can only be observed in parts because of its scale, resulting in "a severing of the synecdoche from the whole."¹⁷¹ On the film screen, the face in a close-up is a synecdoche for the even larger body, or, more abstractly, a metonym for the public persona that shadows the actor.¹⁷² Because the gigantic face presents only a part of the body that suggests a greater whole, it demands supplementary information to supply the pieces of its whole. Fan magazines fulfilled this role, filling the whole out with other images, interviews and biographies, with which the fan could complete the image supplied by the cinematic part. The agency this assembly offers the fan is important: both Marshall and Gamson agree the opportunity for the fan to participate in the construction of the celebrity from incoherent images is key to fandom.¹⁷³ While the viewer can possess the images surrounding the performance with stills ripped from fan magazines or purchased portraits, until relatively recently the sequence of the performance existed exclusively in the movie theatre. Although the miniature can be enveloped by the body, "the gigantic becomes our environment, swallowing us as nature or history swallows us."¹⁷⁴ Its gigantic nature meant that it could not be carried home; instead, the fan had to return to the theatre to see it again and again.

Small roles onscreen, like those onstage, can be easily compared with the miniature in relation to the other supporting and starring roles that surround it in the film. While we can define these small roles by the time they take up on screen, small roles are not simply defined by duration, but by the purpose they serve. Alex Woloch examines the relationship between major and minor roles in literature. For Woloch, small roles present an empty character-space, devoid

¹⁶⁹ Mary Ann Doane, "The Close-Up: Scale and Detail in the Cinema," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 14, no. 3 (2003): 92.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 108.

¹⁷¹ Stewart, *On Longing*, 89.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Marshall, *Celebrity and Power*, 15.

¹⁷⁴ Stewart, *On Longing*, 89.

of history, that provide a stark contrast for the detailed character-space of the major character.¹⁷⁵ The interplay of minor and major character-fields creates a character-system that allows the reader to learn more about the story, as the innocuous minor characters make way for the major characters to fill out the biographies that propel the progress of the story.¹⁷⁶ Cameo roles can be seen as miniatures in that they are minor roles occupying the small character-spaces that supplement the large character-spaces of major roles. They are miniatures within the plot. However, these cameos reverse the character-system that Woloch documents. When actors began standing out like a cameo, they were standing out despite their small roles. This reversal of expectations echoes earlier contradictions of appropriate reflections of power where the patron plays the pauper in a medieval altarpiece or the image of the queen adorns a hairbrush. While not recognized as public personas, an element that Mathijs links to the modern cameo, these actors were nevertheless recognized for their performances as performances, suggesting a burgeoning awareness of the labour behind acting that would characterize fan culture as it emerged in the mid-1910s.

The cameo has a long history. Cameos are first and foremost about recognition. Like portraits, they present their subjects for admiration. Cameos, like portraits, exist within narratives to draw extra-textual references yet also break with that narrative by asking that the subject stand outside of it for admiration. Since the 15th century, true-to-lifeness and accurate representation has been a hallmark of the good portrait, conveying the individual rather than the social type to which they belonged. True-to-lifeness is thus a hallmark of the cameo role as a type of portrait, presenting a person as they really are. Following in the tradition of portraits, cameo jewellery emerged to incorporate the admired subject into the wearer's body or domestic space, bringing the famous into direct contact with the admirer, a relationship that predicted that of fan to celebrity. Cameo jewellery and photography provided intimate access to images of acquaintances and celebrities and upheld the aspirations of portraiture to true-to-lifeness in a way that was perceived as revolutionary. Because of their perceived lack of authorship, photographs presented access to their subject that ascribed some agency of discovery and recognition back onto the viewer. The cameo, as a cinematic portrait that owes its roots to photography, naturally reflects

¹⁷⁵ Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 14.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

this power. Yet, as miniatures, cameos reflect both a supposed true-to-lifeness and an ideal, a mixture of reality that is perfectly attuned to the desired message conveyed by the celebrity image. Answering the question of who is presented for recognition, and for what, is the primary function of portraits, and it is a function that the cameo carries on through the medium of film.

Conclusion

The term cameo continues to be used today to refer to roles that stand out, although how and why these roles are visible has evolved over time. Mathijs' criterion of instant recognition of public persona is, of course, contingent on where and when the audience is doing the recognizing, and of whom. While the term cameo may have originally referred to any role that made a bid for visibility, it has come to refer more specifically to the intersection of narrative and documentary space, where the visibility of the public persona fills out the small character-space of a small role almost completely. Like a merchant dressed up as a martyr in a 17th century Dutch *portrait historié*, the cameo role presents to the viewer a person who is a character both in the story and in the real world. As a kind of portrait, the cameo presents a public personage to the viewer for admiration. In order to recognize that public personage, the viewer may need to be initiated into secret knowledge: for portraits of the 15th century these secrets were court gossip and alchemical symbols; for cameos in the early 20th century they were exhibitor's trade and movie fan magazines. The advent of celebrity culture and the ascendance of Dyer's ordinary star in the early 20th century introduced new heights of visibility to those who previously went uncelebrated. Where once the initiated recognized good performance, soon they began to recognize the history and hierarchy of cinema and Hollywood as a culture in itself.

While the term cameo took on its own meanings in relation to cinema in the early 20th century, many of those elements can be traced back to the cameo as art object. The cameo object is a form of portraiture that reflects its transition into the era of photography, mass culture and mass production. Cinema emerges as one of the inheritors of a culture that valued the qualities of the cameo. Like the cameo object, the cameo role presents the promise of the miniature, of perfection and possession. Because the cameo is rendered in simplified detail yet captures outstanding features in a literal relief of light and shadow, the cameo suggests both instant recognizability and generic type. The cameo was a portrait that could be wholly possessed by the wearer, mimicking the intimacy that fans desired of their stars.

The early Vitagraph cameo, with its direct reflection in portraiture, indicates that cameos, like portraits, attempt to establish power through visibility. A portrait presents its subject for recognition and admiration, but also empowers the viewer for bestowing recognition on the subject. The Vitagraph executives are asking the same of this portrait within a movie. In the context of the period, this can be seen as an attempt to combat the visibility of the newly-powerful stars with visibility of those behind the scenes. It is around this time that the star as a brand name began to quickly supersede that of the studio by whom they were employed, leading to the skyrocketing salaries of screen superstars as they moved from studio to studio and contract to contract. With this portrait, the producers insisted on making their contribution visible alongside that of their stars, standing out for recognition in a way that would be adopted by future moviemakers who were likewise ill content to remain behind the scenes.

When the concept of the cameo was first adopted to describe performance, the outstanding performance meant within the context of the stage and screen. However, as it became paramount for movie stars to stand out outside of their filmic context, cameos came to mean standing out for an extratextual reason beyond the narrative. This precedent had been set by the bids for visibility made by early film pioneers, as they sought to compete with the visibility they had so newly established for movie stars. Ultimately, stars won, but cameos of celebrated figures retain their nod to visibility beyond the hierarchy of the star system. Cameos, like portraits, ask the question, who am I? It is a question that only the initiated viewer can answer. The more viewers became initiated into movie fandom in the early 20th century, the more they delighted in solving the riddle.

Chapter 2

Everybody's in movies, everybody's a star: ensemble cameos in the studio era

Sitting amid a group of stars and starlets in a well-appointed dining room doing duty as the star's commissary in the 1928 movie *Show People*, Marion Davies is treated to a kind of stilted talent show from the most famous stars of the day: Douglas Fairbanks stands up from the table to do a flip and William S. Hart throws out a few lassoes toward the camera. The more decorous celebrities without characteristic gags stare out from along the long narrow table as the camera slowly pans across the group, seated singly as if at the head table of an honouring banquet. The camera stutters along from face to smiling face. Each halt gives the audience the chance to recognize film stars such as Leatrice Joy and Mae Murray, and the intertitles follow to make sure there are no cases of mistaken identity. While Davies doesn't play herself, but Peggy Pepper, aspiring starlet, her famous lunchmates appear as themselves. Why they might be performing for Davies, who is playing a newly risen ingenue on the MGM lot, is only clear in the context of the lavish luncheons that the real Marion Davies was known for serving in the stately dining room of her MGM bungalow, a perk bankrolled by the special funds available to her as the consort of newspaper magnate millionaire William R. Hearst. (Fig. 13) Of course, the luncheon is only a pretense to have the stars performing for the audience, making sure that there is no mistaking them for anyone but their famous selves. Even in these short roles, these celebrities were made to be instantly recognizably, because it was for celebrities that audiences came to see films. While films set on movie studios had featured what we might call cameos from the invention of the movie star, usually they featured stars who were working at a single studio. Davies' assemblage of celebrities from disparate studios has a laboriously presentational style that, while spectacular, is in keeping with the parodic tones of the rest of the film's rags-to-riches Hollywood-set story. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, as studios ceased to command actors, directors, and producers to appear on set at will, the parades of celebrity cameos began to include not only the current film and television stars of the day but some of those same faces of the silent era that had graced Davies' dining room, made biddable and inexpensive by the intervening years of decline. Returned to visibility, they retained some of the striking glamour, or at least the nostalgia for it, that was present in that long-ago luncheon, and for a very cheap price.

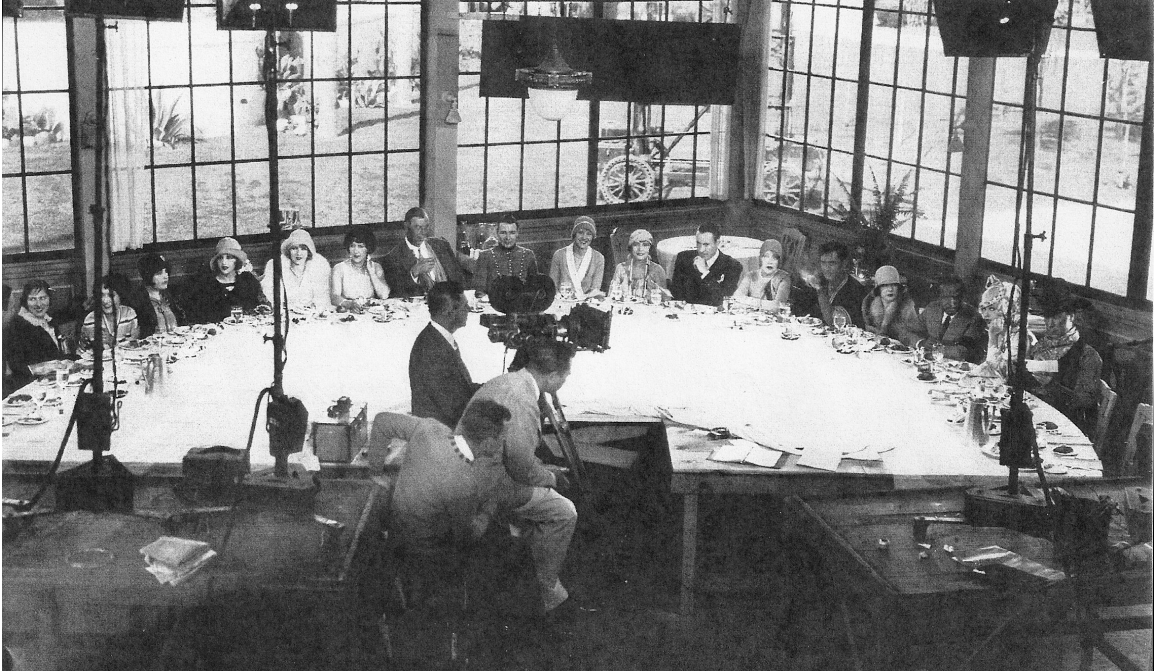


Figure 13. Marion Davies and other famous guests at a working luncheon in *Show People* (1928). Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

In the period from the 1920s to 1950s, cameos reflected the rise and decline of the studio system. Cameos initially advertised studio ownership of a carefully managed hierarchy of stars, both old and new, but gradually grew to reflect a shattered star system and increasingly interchangeable industry affiliations that positioned any and all recognizable faces in cameo roles. The initial surprising appearance of big actors in small roles as early as the 1910s in the case of Chaplin and the Keystone regulars fascinated fans, establishing the cameo as a potentially cinephilic moment that could be exploited by studios to engage audiences. By the end of Hollywood's Golden Age, the brief cameo had become so thoroughly associated with stardom that the label of cameo alone warranted the fame of its player. The elevation of peripheral show business figures playing small roles to the status of star grated on fans for whom the cameo had rewarded their attention to celebrity culture, eventually inciting negative reactions about the cameo as a lazy marketing gimmick. Cameos began by advertising studio affiliations and making use of excess star power, but as studio control of stars past and present and their appearances weakened, other less-remembered actors were used to supplement and ultimately degrade the audience's enchantment with the cameo's cinephilic power.

The earliest cameo of the Vitagraph executives was about publicly claiming authorship and ownership of a film production, and in the 1910s and 1920s cameos continued to be about indicating studio affiliations. Cameos ask for recognition and visibility beyond the norm, so they emerged only after moviemakers were established in distinct roles behind and in front of the camera. While Blackton, Smith, and Rock appeared in front of the camera for recognition of their power within the studio, both real and narrative, making the complementary claim that the studio and its performers, crews and product belonged to them, cameos were often used to illustrate who was owned by the studio. In the 1920s, cameos quickly became importantly tied to publicity, as they showed who was on set at any one time. Feeding fans who clamored for behind the scenes looks, Hollywood-set films such as *Show People* were filled with cameo after cameo, presenting stars, directors and writers for recognition by their audiences, while indicating who worked with whom in Hollywood. Cabals and allegiances were represented through cameos, whether they presented stars-in-training as part of a marketing sweep of several films or established stars who had deigned to make one or two movies on the studio lot that year. Cameos showed who was already on set and who could be summoned to shoot a small part that, although without the prestige of the starring role, nevertheless fulfilled the fan desire for star visibility.

Yet it was not only current stars that studios used to advertise, but old and half-remembered ones. Nostalgia had a strong hold on audiences, reflecting the legacy of the sentimental remembrances of Victorian fashions and values of which the cameo jewel was one symptom. Audiences thrilled to see the return of out-of-the-limelight faces as early as the 1910s. In 1912 Florence Turner was pointed out as the "old-time Vitagraph girl,"¹ while in 1923, a disgraced Fatty Arbuckle appeared as an out-of-work extra in *Hollywood*. Unlike cameos of current stars, who were well profiled and extremely visible, these nostalgic cameos asked viewers to reach back into their memories, although they were heavily abetted by press releases applauding the studio's use of great actors of an earlier age. This tactic can be seen as actively cinephilic moviemaking, embracing a game-like interaction that mimicked the type of interaction found in the contests and quizzes of fan magazines. Cinephilic viewing was thus very early on tied to the cameo. Fans steeped in the short history of the movies were thrilled to see their early heroes and heroines once again onscreen, after a hiatus however brief. Cinema provided an indexical record of times gone by, and so it could show its fans exactly who they were no longer.

As studios lost control of stars, nostalgic cameos engineered for recognition became more and more popular. Whether studios felt responsible for the sometimes ignoble fate of their high-grossing stars of the 1910s and 1920s, these forgotten stars came cheap. As the stable of stars became less and less biddable, faces from the past were available for a pittance. Of course, by the 1950s independent producers had also realized this availability: actors with full character-spaces yet empty pockets who could fill roles and be billed as stars. Independent films such as *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956), *Pepe* (1960), and *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963) unearthed some of these forgotten faces in the name of spectacle, allowing them to be named as stars alongside some of the most famous and greediest stars of the day.

Stars, unhitched from studios and masters of their own production companies, became free to appear in roles of their choosing. The term cameo as introduced in *Around the World* negated difference between stars of yesterday and today, merely asserting that they all stood out in small roles. Cameos were for stars, therefore any cameo players were repeatedly identified to audiences in posters, programs and other publicity as bona-fide stars, regardless of the nuances of the billing they currently commanded in Hollywood. Where studios had guarded their stars to prevent too much visibility, newly freed stars had no such limitations, dropping in for single days

¹ "Aunty's Romance," *Moving Picture World*, July 27, 1912.

or even hours of shooting and collecting, in addition to their official day rate, gifts in kind and reciprocated publicity that made the hassle worthwhile. Cameos broke away from representing studio affiliation, but they were still tied to publicity, for television shows, upcoming movies, or nightclub acts. Audiences, who had demanded nostalgic faces and views of stars off-duty, were jaded - when star billing didn't guarantee anything more than a brief appearance, or any appearance at all, and actors appeared ad nauseum in cameo roles, visibility became over-exposure, and what had seemed like a cute reveal was reviled as a cash grab. Cameos offering Hollywood realism no longer stood out to the audience as worthy of special recognition: there was no cinephilic frisson of discovery. While cameos since the studio days had become more sophisticated in the extent of recognition they demanded and rewarded, the star as actor cameo had become less compelling to fans the more visible it became.

The Celebrity Sighting and the Cameo

The act of recognition that occurs in the cameo mirrors the experience of the celebrity sighting. The chance to witness celebrities in their natural habitat was clearly a draw for those fans who flocked to Hollywood-set films. For Kerry Ferris, the chance to see the celebrity in the flesh creates "the juncture of the strange and the intimate, the ordinary and the extraordinary"² as fans encounter strangers about whom they know intimate details. This para-social knowledge - which exists thanks to the consumption of celebrity gossip in all of its media forms, from spoken word to television special - places the sighting in a unique social space, where the fan is challenged by the etiquette for a situation that is both an encounter with a stranger and close friend.³ The celebrity sighting thus creates a special type of work for the fan. Seers must first recognize the celebrity and categorize him or her appropriately as celebrity, and respond by deciding how to present themselves to the celebrity and thus "create a particular definition of the situation."⁴ Ferris notes that, despite the widespreadness of the celebrity image, "recognition is not automatic."⁵ Instead, the celebrity sighting in its unusualness forces the seer to immediately recategorize the experience, whatever other actions may frame it, from ordinary to extraordinary.

² Kerry O. Ferris, "Seeing and Being Seen: The Moral Order of Celebrity Sightings," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 33, no. 3 (June 1, 2004): 238.

³ Ibid., 242.

⁴ Ibid., 245.

⁵ Ibid.

Often, says Ferris, seers report that they could identify "the more generic category of celebrity"⁶ before they settled on a more specific identity such as Keanu Reeves or Bruce Willis. Rules for celebrity sightings in the everyday orient the seer's reactions from feigned non-recognition to enthusiastic acknowledgement in order to prevent rejection or loss of face.⁷ Because of the prior knowledge of the celebrity, the encounter is neither clearly strange nor intimate, but exists in tension between the two.

Early film fans were enchanted by the seemingly chance encounter of the celebrity sighting. Just as they collected magazines to delve into intimate details of star lives, from which words they lisped to their favourite meals,⁸ they went to the movies to encounter the stars. Cameos doubled up on the kind of personal information that sold popular publications such as *Photoplay*, making the films satisfy desire not only for an escapist story but offering a look at the celebrity's personal life. Even though audiences knew to expect stars in movies, depending on who was billed or even what studio produced the film, audiences nevertheless thrilled at the chance to study their favourite faces. When this expected encounter was paired with the brief appearance of a recognized face, not, as expected, in a starring role where stars belonged, but among the extras that provided the setting for the film, the experience became much more like an actual encounter, both unusual and unsettling. If the fascination with celebrities is a "fascination with a concealed truth"⁹ where fans attempt, as deCordova suggests, to parse screen performance and actor's identity, then cameos of celebrities as themselves offered audiences a view of the celebrity where performance and identity were ostensibly one and the same. Unencumbered with the narrative weight of a large character-space, celebrity cameos, although still acting, were more themselves than when they were someone else.¹⁰ Hollywood-set films were populated with these types of cameos, where stars appear on set and at leisure, and scholars indicate their presence is ostensibly to accurately represent the movie colony.¹¹ Yet, the number of films from

⁶ Ibid., 246.

⁷ Ibid., 256.

⁸ Leo Calvin Rosten, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, the Movie Makers* (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1941), 13.

⁹ Richard deCordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 140.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Christopher Ames, *Movies about the Movies: Hollywood Reflected* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 207.

the 1910s to the present day that represent a perfectly recognizable Hollywood without cameos suggests that cameos are not merely convincing set dressing. Cameos, briefly presenting their subjects to be recognized, call on fan knowledge of the type that moviegoers stored up in spades in the 1920s, while offering the kind of extraordinary experience that makes a moment memorable.

Much like Ferris insists there is an etiquette of avoidance in chance celebrity encounters that respects the boundaries of personal and public interactions, Jan Olsson establishes that by the 1910s there was already a similar etiquette for how to act - or not act - in the face of a motion picture camera encountered in public.¹² Entrepreneurial cameraman-director duos had been popping up in scenic locales and important events for almost 20 years by that point. Olsson asserts that magazines such as *Motion Picture World* spread reports of onlookers who mistook staged heists for real world crimes, or hapless lookalikes who were attacked by audiences to avenge the nefarious deeds of onscreen villains, resulting in the concern of public officials such as Roosevelt that spectators could not tell the difference between onscreen fact and fiction. The existence of an etiquette that required nonchalance in the face of recording equipment, however, suggests that onlookers were more sophisticated than expected, a sophistication they had no doubt developed as audiences. Like celebrity-spotters, those caught on camera accepted their role was in documentary space, rather than in narrative space. Acting like the camera wasn't there was integral. However, even within early cinema, there was a trope of cinematic interaction, identified by Olsson as belonging to the "Buttinski,"¹³ where a spectator insisted on acknowledging the camera with suspicious glares or repeat viewings. Already the etiquette that produced the derision of the buttinski indicates a comfortable acquaintance with the interplay of narrative and documentary space in the cinema, and the divisions of actors and extras. Buttinskis were spectators who became actors as they chose to do something about the camera, much like Chaplin's Tramp in the film *Kid's Auto Race*, while good bystanders were those who accepted they should merely be the background, providing the foil to The Tramp's shenanigans as he refuses to recede into the background.

¹² Jan Olsson, "Screen Bodies and Busybodies: Corporeal Constellations in the Era of Anonymity," *Film History* 25, no. 1–2 (2013): 197.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 192.

The buttinski had a parallel character in the cinema: the bumpkin. Writing about the earliest appearances of self-reflexivity in film, Robert Stam identifies the bumpkin as part of a "venerable tradition in which the humor derives from a hayseed's naiveté in his first encounter with the filmic medium."¹⁴ Where the buttinski did not respect how one should act in front of a camera, the bumpkin did not know how to act in front of the screen. For Stam, the spectator both derides and admires the bumpkin, because while he is on the one hand "so naive as to take image literally for reality,"¹⁵ he also believes in the film as fantasy in a way the savvy spectator cannot. When encountering a cameo, the fantasy of the celebrity encounter and the familiarity with the paradigm of film production conflict within the savvy fan. As models for poor spectatorial behaviour, both bumpkin and buttinski fail to acknowledge the framing that separates performance from reality, a state of confusion that is both ridiculed and secretly desired by the viewer.

Anderson suggests that Hollywood-set films are predicated on this desire, examining the bumpkin's failure to acknowledge cinematic illusion within the context of an increasingly sophisticated Hollywood film industry, while simultaneously exploring fans' "confusion between the screen's image and reality." While the excitement that accompanies a cameo may belong to the fantasies of the bumpkin, the recognition of a celebrity cameo reconfirms the audience's position as savvy viewers. Like privy courtiers who recognize the meanings of symbols that represent the king, audiences who recognize cameos assert their initiation into film fandom, affirming their own Bourdieuan cultural competences to distinguish themselves against the poor, unenlightened hayseed.¹⁶ Audiences that recognize cameos know how to process the intersection of documentary and narrative space, and to interpret cinematic illusion. While the bumpkin of Uncle Josh fell below the basic parameters of film literacy and filmgoing etiquette even at the dawn of moviemaking, a more sophisticated bumpkin continued to present him or herself as a foil for more sophisticated audience practices. Set against the bumpkin, the act of recognition

¹⁴ Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature: From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985), 32.

¹⁵ Ibid., 33.

¹⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 2.

serves as distinction for audiences within the otherwise common experience of mass entertainment.¹⁷

Early cameos and the star brand

While cameos may not occur in Hollywood-set movies for convenience, as Ames writes, "the use of self-referential star cameos to add verisimilitude to the representation of Hollywood... is especially prevalent in films from the studio days, where contract players could be trotted out en masse for self-promoting films."¹⁸ Just like Vitagraph naturally called on its own executives and studio to portray the essence of the film industry in their own films, studios would begin to call on their increasing stables of stars to market their films as actor contracts were not merely on a film by film or film per year basis, but required that actors be available and on set whenever the studios demanded. The vision of what "candid cameos"¹⁹ in Hollywood looked like depended on the studios that backed the movie.

The power of the individual connection to the star that Dyer identifies was harnessed early on by studios as a way of ensuring viewership and generating profits.²⁰ Cameos could not have existed until stars were made distinct from bit players in terms of their billing and publicity that surrounded them, becoming images to be recognized for the biographies that had accompanied them in fan and trade magazines. Early cameos of the owners of Vitagraph, an important early production company, in *A Vitagraph Romance* (1912), straddle the line between the simple convenience of having these ex-actors turned owners fill these roles to save the expense of pulling stock players out of rotation, and on the other hand the desire to present their images for recognition as portraits for adulation.²¹ At the same time, these cameos, which include an appearance by Vitagraph Girl Florence Turner, forged a brand identity for the studio that included the faces of its stars and its authors, reinforcing their value as a group. Similar cameos by newly contracted stars in Keystone and Essanay films reinforced the relationships between star and studio and confirmed which stars found their homes where.

¹⁷ Ibid., 176.

¹⁸ Ames, *Movies about the Movies*, 207.

¹⁹ Alex Barris, *Hollywood according to Hollywood* (South Brunswick, NJ: A.S. Barnes, 1978), 148.

²⁰ Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: BFI, 1979), 21.

²¹ Charles Musser, "Preclassical American Cinema: Its Changing Mode of Film Production," in *Silent Film*, ed. Richard Abel (London: Athlone, 1996), 94.

Key among cameos that indicated studio affiliation was the work of Charlie Chaplin. Chaplin is identified by James Naremore and Harry Geduld as appearing in several early "cameos."²² As an early distinctive star who nevertheless moved studios several times during his early career, Chaplin's cameos indicate which studio he was working at when. Making clear who was producing legitimate Chaplin shorts was not as easy as it might seem. In the mid-1910s, Chaplin imitators were numerous, as studios tried to take advantage of Chaplin-mania that had his face plastered not only in magazines but on goods of every kind.²³ Juvenile Film Corporation even presented a film of child lookalike retreading well-known Chaplin gags.²⁴ Cameos established a visual link between Chaplin and the other well-known members of his current studio. This linkage was established when Chaplin, strictly a star player, appeared in small roles within his colleague's films.

Chaplin's iconic character the Tramp first emerged at Keystone in 1914 in what Naremore calls a candid-camera style appearance, building his performance in *Kid's Auto Race* (1914) from mere curious onlooker in the crowd to spectacularly misbehaved centre of attention.²⁵ Emerging from the conventions of actuality, *Kid's Auto Race* subverts the already established etiquette of the real world encounter with the camera and belies the supposed naturalism of such recordings.²⁶ This double register of the commonplace and unusual, where ordinary subjects are made exemplary thanks to the presence of the camera and its record. Geduld also agrees that *Auto Race* is "one of the first-self-reflexive films in the history of the motion picture" as Chaplin "relegates the event to the inferior status of 'background,'"²⁷ refusing to become part of the organized mass. The Tramp, sighting the camera, initially tries to feign non-recognition, but he gradually progresses to more and more open acknowledgement. When the cameo emerges with Chaplin as its subject, it continues Chaplin's conversation about

²² Harry M Geduld, *Chapliniana: A Commentary on Charlie Chaplin's 81 Movies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 45; James Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 15.

²³ Harry M. Geduld, *Charlie Chaplin's Own Story*, 1st ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 140.

²⁴ "Juvenile Film Corporation Presents Joseph Monahan in His Great Imitation of Charlie Chaplin's Burlesque on Carmen," *Moving Picture World*, June 1916.

²⁵ Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema*, 14.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Geduld, *Chapliniana*, 18.

naturalism and performance by examining the transformation of the real world when its people encounter the camera.

Given his popularity, Chaplin's cameo not only served to remind audiences whose studio he was at, but increased the draw for other films as other stars' movies could become Chaplin films. Beginning at Keystone and then at Essanay, Chaplin traded cameos with his colleagues. At Keystone, stars were not mentioned by name, but that changed with Chaplin's arrival as first he and then others were billed as stars.²⁸ Although Chaplin was a star, he appeared in several small roles or "slight appearances" in films that were vehicles for other stars at his current studio. In *A Film Johnnie* (1914), a Chaplin picture, movie fan Chaplin tries to avenge the abuse of Minta Durfee in a Keystone film by showing up at the studio to rescue her. He is surprised to meet Durfee, Fatty Arbuckle and Mack Sennett at the studio gates, out of makeup and decidedly out of danger. Geduld notes that *A Film Johnnie* marks Chaplin's first lead in a scripted, pre-planned film, where many comedic films were shot without a scenario and completely improvised.²⁹ While on the one hand this means that Chaplin was not merely improvising with whoever was at hand, it also means that this film was crafted by the studio to showcase not only Chaplin but to place him among their other leading actors. In some ways, the scenario apes that of *A Vitagraph Romance*; indeed, the idea of the hayseed who mistakes narrative space for real world space was a running gag in the cinema, beginning with poor Uncle Josh who makes eyes at an onscreen dancing girl then attempts to fight off onscreen attackers.³⁰ Earlier that year, Keystone followed in the footsteps of Vitagraph by producing a behind-the-scenes film called *How Motion Pictures are Made* (1914), which featured the Ince Studios and "typical Keystone buffoonery."³¹ While critics feared that revealing the labour behind the illusion would tarnish the reputation and glamor of the studios,³² *A Film Johnnie* uses the cameo instead to assert the prestige of its own players, as Chaplin, their new star, is shown in awe of Keystone's more established cast. While the cameos in this film are by Durfee, Arbuckle, and Sennett, among other Keystone players, the strategy plays with narrative and documentary space in a way that Geduld identifies as

²⁸ James L. Neibaur, *Early Charlie Chaplin: The Artist as Apprentice at Keystone Studios* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 211.

²⁹ Kevin Brownlow, *The Parade's Gone by* (New York: Knopf, 1968), 272.

³⁰ Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 32.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

³² *Ibid.*

characteristically Chaplinesque in its refusal "to accept cinematic objectivity."³³ The counterpart to this cameo trade at Keystone, where Chaplin appears briefly as a referee to a boxing match Fatty can't possibly win in *The Knockout* (1914), is perhaps more cameo as actor than cameo as celebrity, Chaplin cannot help but stand out as the world's biggest comedy star in a very small role as the chief abider-of-rules and keeper-of-order.

Chaplin established that films were not only about entertainment but about informing a presumably interested audience about his movements within the film industry. His first film for Essanay was what Stam calls a studio tour appropriately titled *His New Job* (1915).³⁴ He soon appeared in another boxing film as a spectator, *His Regeneration* (1915) starring studio owner and cinema's first cowboy star Broncho Billy Anderson.³⁵ Anderson likewise appeared in *The Champion* (1915).³⁶ In the Essanay cameos, both actors appear as little more than extras. Naremore identifies the 1916 reciprocation of cameo roles in two Essanay pictures featuring Chaplin and studio co-owner and star Broncho Billy Anderson as the first self-conscious instance of "true celebrity characters."³⁷ Of course, sometimes these performances were more impromptu: Keaton suggests that he was roped into playing an extra in a Fatty picture for Paramount while out hunting in the Mojave Desert.³⁸ While, Naremore suggests, comedic performance owes its popularity to the disruption of coherence, establishing the difference between narrative and documentary space, drama asks that the suspension of disbelief not be disturbed.³⁹ Sharing the dramatic character-system with a famous comedian taxed the narrative space's claims to verisimilitude. The fact that Anderson welcomed Chaplin into his films despite the narrative perils reinforces the importance of these cameos as a tactic of visibility, insisting on the recognition of their business affiliation.

Chaplin's comedy plays with the boundaries of what Naremore identifies as the frame that separates performance from real life.⁴⁰ The cameo likewise depends upon exploring the

³³ Geduld, *Chapliniana*, 18.

³⁴ Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 78.

³⁵ Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema*, 16; David Robinson, *Chaplin: His Life and Art*, 1st edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985), 137.

³⁶ Geduld, *Chapliniana*, 134.

³⁷ Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema*, 15.

³⁸ Brownlow, *The Parade's Gone by*, 43.

³⁹ Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema*, 77.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

limits of reality and illusion. Rather than merely stand out in these small roles, Chaplin's participation is notable specifically because he could command a much larger role. Chaplin's films, which often play with the apparent objectivity of the cinema, gave rise to one of the earliest associations of the cameo: not just a portrait for recognition, but recognition despite the desire of the narrative space to control its own characters. Chaplin's innovative use of self-reflexivity and his positioning of a recognizable character at the intersection of narrative and documentary space would be a legacy of the cameo beyond his use of it as one of the many ways that cameo roles could stand out to audiences.

Consolidating studio ownership of celebrities

The explosion of Hollywood-set films in the 1920s made the cameo as self a recognizable phenomenon. Hollywood-set films reflected an indefatigable fan interest in celebrity lives and their labour in the movie colony, self-consciously exploring the new industry and its nascent mythology.⁴¹ The sheer mass of print information ensured the visibility of Hollywood celebrities; as Leo Rosten wrote "if four hundred columnists and feature writers were assigned to Detroit or Pittsburgh and were charged with the sole responsibility of writing daily stories about the foibles, diet, and libidinous acrobatics of automobile magnates or steel monarchs, the public would have a different set of stereotypes about these men, and about the circles in which they move."⁴² For many fans, the most authentic star images were those produced by the studios, and so audiences clamored for Hollywood-set films.⁴³

Hollywood-set films provided a basis for the inclusion of cameos of celebrities appearing as themselves, presenting noted personalities from journalists and directors to socialites and actors for recognition. There was much for fans to see, and many faces to recognize. The mass of stars was an important part of the marketing of the film: a proposed trailer for Hollywood-set rags-to-riches tale *Souls for Sale* (1923) promised "the most dazzling cast ever assembled in one picture."⁴⁴ These films, as Anderson suggests, corralled together players already under contract who were "readily available to do the kind of brief walk-on parts these appearances entailed, and

⁴¹ Ames, *Movies about the Movies*, 19.

⁴² Rosten, *Hollywood*, 8.

⁴³ Patrick Donald Anderson, *In Its Own Image: The Cinematic Vision of Hollywood* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), 62.

⁴⁴ Goldwyn Studios, "Special Souls for Sale Trailer," February 23, 1923.

they provided good free publicity (and exposure) for the star, and hence, the studio."⁴⁵ While displaying those on contracts to eager fans, such films also offered studios the chance to establish and consolidate their associations among different actors and social groups, presenting gossip columnists, preachers, and even independent stars such as Mary Pickford for recognition. The brevity of cameos made economical use of the time of in-demand stars, while new stars could be shown hobnobbing with old, establishing who might appear in upcoming features while assuring continuity of star power. *His Regeneration* and *A Film Johnnie* are precursors to this method, using "slight" star appearances within films that were billed as part of the repertoire of another star to advertise studio affiliation. In the 1920s, the same kind of thrilling intersection of cinematic illusion and reality was unleashed in Hollywood-set films that deployed celebrity cameos to increase their visibility. While, as Ames notes, there were many Hollywood-set films released in this decade, only a few used cameos in strikingly large numbers. *Hollywood* (1923), *Souls for Sale* (1923) and *Show People* (1928) are the best examples of this adoption of the cameo in Hollywood-set films.

While nominally cautionary tales inspired or even commissioned to warn audiences about the perils, the Hollywood depicted in these three films is pretty forgiving. Each film tells the story of a young woman, a typical "Hollywood Extra Girl"⁴⁶ who arrives in Hollywood to seek her fortune as a movie actress, with eventual happiness in the movies or otherwise as her reward. As Behlmer and Thomas note, this "very simple but exceptionally effective formula would be repeated with minor variations over and over into the 1940s and beyond."⁴⁷ However, these films "inevitably glamourize the Hollywood they warn against and invite the viewer to identify with the lucky star."⁴⁸ Trying to imitate their success led to a massive influx of vulnerable young women to the movie capital, which although a phenomenon of newly-won autonomy and mobility for women, had serious social consequences.⁴⁹ Thousands who arrived in the city weekly looking for jobs working at even a fraction of the astronomical salaries of up to \$10,000

⁴⁵ Anderson, *In Its Own Image: The Cinematic Vision of Hollywood*, 62.

⁴⁶ Heidi Kenaga, "Promoting Hollywood Extra Girl (1935)," *Screen* 52, no. 1 (March 20, 2011): 78–81.

⁴⁷ Rudy Behlmer and Tony Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood: The Movies about the Movies* (Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1975), 101.

⁴⁸ Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema*, 24.

⁴⁹ Kenaga, "Promoting Hollywood Extra Girl (1935)."

a week that stars commanded found themselves unemployed and destitute.⁵⁰ Movies that showed stars as extras and extras hoping to be stars, campaigns that publicized such a film with claims to show the "dozens of screen celebrities that she meets in her work"⁵¹ could not help but confirm small roles as providing access to glamour.

Hollywood, a lost film from Paramount, follows the story of Angela, a wannabe actress who leaves her backwater town to find fame in Hollywood, chancing upon celebrity after celebrity while accidentally fixing her own family up in the business as they arrived one at a time to save her from Hollywood's corrupting influences. As it was perhaps the earliest major use of cameos, indicating the division of documentary and narrative space was a real concern for those casting this film. Behlmer and Thomas assert that "in order to avoid confusion with the real actors playing themselves, it was decided the leading players in the story would be virtual unknowns."⁵² A New York Times review of *Hollywood*, as the first film to unleash a parade of cameos, explained the cameo phenomenon as a "production in which noted pantomimists appear as the extras," assuring audiences that it "can be seen more than once and enjoyed."⁵³ No doubt the opportunity to recognize scores of celebrities, many of them appearing on screen at the same time, was part of the draw of the film. (It is perhaps for this same reason of their relevance to movie fans of that decade that both *Hollywood* and the extended luncheon scene in *Show People* have not been preserved.)

In Goldwyn's *Souls for Sale*, the heroine Mem escapes a murderous husband and ends up getting a big break when she chances upon a studio crew shooting on location. As Mem soars to success, her biggest problems are the admiration of both her director and her leading man, as well as the skullduggery of her husband, problems resolved during a studio accident where suitable partners are found for everyone. Behlmer and Thomas suggests that the cameos in *Souls for Sale* were an "afterthought" as director Rupert Hughes copied *Hollywood*, resulting in what they suggest are cameos "arbitrarily dragged in by the gross,"⁵⁴ although early story synopses

⁵⁰ Robinson, *Chaplin*, 160; Beth Day Romulo, *This Was Hollywood; an Affectionate History of Filmland's Golden Years*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960), 109.

⁵¹ Goldwyn Studios, "Special Souls for Sale Trailer."

⁵² Behlmer and Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood*, 117.

⁵³ "A Saturnine Svongali.," *The New York Times*, July 30, 1923.

⁵⁴ Behlmer and Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood*, 120.

named stars such as Chaplin and Pickford at the Hollywood soirees where Mem dances the night away.⁵⁵

By the end of the decade, Goldwyn's *Show People* takes the elements of the tale of the overwhelmed movie star wannabe in Hollywood and turns them to parody. Featuring Marion Davies, it shows Peggy Pepper, a Southern belle who finds success first as a comedienne and then as a dramatic actress, eventually abandoning the glamorous company of costars with questionable royal titles to return to her true love, comedy and her comedic partner. This entry, coming at the end of a decade, punctuates the end of the cycle with a transformative satire. *Show People* features many cameos as Peggy aimlessly stumbles into famous actors, writers, and directors, including Davies as herself in a double role. (Fig. 14) Satirical or otherwise, their cameos served much the same purpose: showing audiences the star power that a given studio commanded at any one time, and which fans were clamoring to see.

Films with cameos allow the audience both the fantasy of the manufactured story and the chance to encounter the supposed real persona behind them. Following deCordova, Gamson suggests that fan behaviour is fuelled by fascination with the truth behind the image, as audiences try to piece together as complete an image of the celebrity as possible.⁵⁶ The myth of the ordinary star with the singular talent has, according to Dyer, continued to be relevant to the making of celebrity,⁵⁷ even as audiences recognize that the ordinary star is yet another carefully constructed presentation. Even in carefully stage-managed cameo groups, fans were promised they were seeing beyond the persona to the private image as studios marketed cameos as reflections of star identity rather than roles or labour. Publicity for *Souls for Sale* promises it is a "smashing bit of realism...makes you feel as if you actually knew all those stars. It leads you up to shake hands with them, as it were, and then leads you into their world...And yet it pokes gentle fun at the movies, too, at moments, making them all the more real and delightful."⁵⁸ Realism and celebrity encounters were what cameos promised for fans. The press account of the luncheon that Marion Davies threw for stars before filming the stars' commissary scene in *Show People*

⁵⁵ Rupert Hughes, "Synopsis of Souls for Sale" c 1922, USC Cinematic Arts Collection.

⁵⁶ Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 180.

⁵⁷ Dyer, *Stars*, 42.

⁵⁸ Grace Kingsley, "Film Reveals Studio World: Souls for Sale," *Los Angeles Times*, January 7, 1923.



Figure 14. Peggy Pepper is nonplussed by Marion Davies' cameo role.

suggested the mixing of documentary and narrative space, as if the luncheon perhaps just leisurely continued into the hours of the shoot with the headline "Film stars volunteer aid in Show World."⁵⁹ Whether or not MGM stars such as Eleanor Boardman (who as a new face had played the heroine in *Souls for Sale*) were in fact volunteering their time rather than abiding by the terms of their contract, in fact many of Davies' guests were not studio contractees. Yet process photographs of this same scene shows how much of a production this luncheon was, including an impressive lighting set up that belies the bright windows behind the stars, a massive half-moon table engineered to display the lunching faces to the camera tracking in front of it while placing the people lunching together at opposite ends of the room, and the crew in its unfinished centre surrounded by a mess of papers, tools, and camera equipment.⁶⁰ As a marketing strategy, studios suggested cameos were capturing stars at ease in a documentary space, suggesting real insights into the private lives of stars. At the same time, they were manufactured and managed in the same way as other narrative events within the film.

While the Vitagraph cameos, followed closely by the Chaplin cameo trades, mimicked the formula of the portrait, as cameos became more closely aligned with the marketing strategy of the studio, cameos took on a specific cinematic form. Overdetermination was the first strategy. While Chaplin or Bronco Billy might be readily recognized, studios took steps to ensure that those who they were marketing were recognized by the audience, introducing their name in the intertitles of silent films. In *Souls for Sale*, the titles are expository. When the heroine enters the commissary, a situation that "terrified her to see about her so many famous faces", the heroine "encountered T. Roy Barnes and Zasu Pitts," and then five consecutive titles provide exhaustive identifying lists of 20 names from Kathlyn Williams to Blanche Sweet.⁶¹ (Fig. 15) In *Hollywood*, the cues for celebrity identity were more cleverly incorporated into the narrative, as celebrities or fans greeted the featured celebrity by name in written dialogue, or other props, such as addressed letters, paystubs, dance cards, and even golf scores were featured in close-up to convey the names of those featured celebrities. On the one hand, this need to cue fans for recognition suggests that cameos were not necessarily directly arising out of fan desire to see

⁵⁹ "Film Stars Volunteer Aid in Show World," *Variety*, April 11, 1928.

⁶⁰ Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, "Programme from AMPAS Screening of Show People in Honour of The Artist," 2012, Press Clippings, Margaret Herrick.

⁶¹ Goldwyn Studios, "Title Sheet for *Souls for Sale*," March 10, 1923, 6, USC Cinematic Arts Collection.



Figure 15. Another crowded table of stars at the studio commissary in *Souls for Sale*.

certain stars. Rather, stars were being prodded into visibility by suggesting that they were worth recognizing. Recognition was being mobilized as a strategy for star-making.

Often these celebrities were presented in groups that emphasized their star power rather than their own star personas: lunching at the commissary as in *Show People*, dancing at the Hollywood Hotel as in *Souls for Sale*, loitering at the studio mailboxes as in *Hollywood*. Celebrities were presented as a dazzling mass. The credits for *Souls for Sale*, after listing six principals, reduces the rest to "thirty-five famous stars."⁶² These celebrities were largely interchangeable, as evident from the scripts of *Hollywood*, for example, where Gloria Swanson's role cruising up to an opening in a chauffeured car became Lois Wilson's.⁶³ While Swanson's glamorous worldly image was far from the down-to-earth Lois Wilson, they were scripted to play the exact same scene, each ostensibly as herself.⁶⁴ As a note in the *Hollywood* scenario draft suggests, "almost any stars or directors can be used in these various episodes - unless there is something specially written characteristic of the individual."⁶⁵ Likewise, the early draft of *Souls for Sale* has a theatre scene begin with Al Jolson "or any well-known musical stag."⁶⁶ The identity was not important: what was crucial was the sense of celebrity, ease, and glamour intertwined with only the barest hint of labour and art. The point of the cameos was the mass of star power, rather than the individual and their biography. Gamson suggests that the marketing of the 1920s aimed to present stars as a kind of democratic royalty, untouchable and glamorous, rather than the ordinary joes made good of the late 1930s and 1940s.⁶⁷ In the late 1910s and early 1920s, the ordinary lifestyles stars were supposed to lead were further and further removed by their extreme wealth.⁶⁸ While Hollywood-set movies claimed to make the everyday lives of their stars visible, allowing audiences a closer look, these lives as represented were a far cry from ordinary. Like fan magazines, which balanced the stories of family life and early struggles with

⁶² Goldwyn Studios, "Souls for Sale Silent Cutting Continuity," March 14, 1923, 5, USC Cinematic Arts Collection.

⁶³ "A Saturnine Svongali."

⁶⁴ Paramount, "Hollywood Scenario," n.d., 86, Paramount Pictures Scripts H-677, Margaret Herrick; Paramount, "Hollywood Continuity Script," n.d., 23, Paramount Scripts H-679, Margaret Herrick.

⁶⁵ Paramount, "Hollywood Scenario," 71.

⁶⁶ John Emerson and Anita Loos, "Polly Preferred Screen Adaptation and Continuity," November 15, 1926, 1, *Show People* (1928) S-1123, Margaret Herrick.

⁶⁷ Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 29.

⁶⁸ Dyer, *Stars*, 43.

glamorous images to present a carefully orchestrated view of the celebrity, the cameos that were featured in Hollywood-set films were no closer to exposing real-world lives of stars. Exceptions such as *Hollywood's* ejection of a disgraced Fatty from a casting queue are remarkable enough to deserve special "surprise" mention.⁶⁹ Their interchangeableness suggests these early cameos merely communicated the aura of visibility rather than actual characteristics of public persona.

Despite the fact that changes could and would be made, stars were scripted by name into each film quite early in the process, indicating a pool of stars from which studio writers knew they could draw. For these films, elaborate scenarios were drafted that include painstaking lists of celebrity names. Who was featured depended upon the type of relationship that the studio had with a star. Stars currently on Goldwyn sets in 1923 such as Zasu Pitts and Blanche Sweet, for *Greed* and *In the Palace of the King* respectively, would replace proposed roles for Mary Pickford and Doug Fairbanks, upholding the idea that real-world relationships trumped fiction.⁷⁰ These demonstrate that cameos depended on the relationships that studios could reliably draw on, whether business or social, and served to reinforce these relationships.

Studio affiliations were not the only considerations. *Show People* was a Marion Davies vehicle undertaken by Goldwyn with the financing of her lover, newspaper magnate W.R. Hearst. Davies' unique situations, backed financially by Hearst, created her own production unit under Goldwyn and later MGM. Early drafts of this story from 1926 featured Davies in the role of the benefactress to Peggy Pepper, and was littered with characters from the Hearst empire rather than the studio, including society writer Cholly Knickerbocker and gossip columnist Louella Parsons.⁷¹ The writers knew that they could guarantee the participation of public figures associated with Hearst for the Davies' film. As such, that version of the film documents Hearst's power. The final version, which featured Davies', emphasized the relationships that Davies had secured socially as a hostess with the ear of the Hearst gossip columnists. Other relationships from outside studio confines were reflected in cameos from actors Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin and William S. Hart, who as a result of being executives of their own production

⁶⁹ Anderson, *In Its Own Image: The Cinematic Vision of Hollywood*, 90; "Hollywood - Paramount - Eight Reels," *Motion Picture Daily*, July 14, 1923, Production Clippings, Margaret Herrick.

⁷⁰ Hughes, "Synopsis of Souls for Sale," 6.

⁷¹ Emerson and Loos, "Polly Preferred Screen Adaptation and Continuity," 81.

companies under the UA umbrella, had control of their own appearances.⁷² In fact, Davies' custom-built Hearst-financed and jealously coveted Spanish style bungalow on the Goldwyn lot was regularly used for this and frequently other "lavish luncheons."⁷³ These cameos indicate the burgeoning independence of some stars, liberated from studio control.

An important aspect of the Hollywood-set film's claim to verisimilitude was behind-the-scenes access to studios, sets, and the unseen moviemakers. If actors and actresses were shown at leisure, filmmakers were shown at work. While filmmakers and writers had been visible in fan magazines, movies gave them a chance to be seen in action. In *Hollywood*, Alfred Green and Cecil B. DeMille were shown on set in the middle of shooting. DeMille and his assistant Jeannie Macpherson then reappear in a confrontation with the aspiring starlet's grandmother, who ends up in the DeMille film after all.⁷⁴ With this role, DeMille began a long venerable tradition of cameos that has perhaps contributed to his continued visibility. *Souls for Sale* showed Chaplin, Fred Niblo and Eric von Stroheim directing. Behlmer and Thomas suggest that these directors were in fact filmed in the production of real films: rather than being assembled on set to make a show of directing, they were actually working.⁷⁵ Of course, they are appearing to advertise their films, a fact the intertitles make clear as they name the heroine's supposed extra roles in actual films *Greed* and *The Famous Mrs. Fair* that were currently in production.⁷⁶ In fact, the proposed trailer introduced only a series of directors among the real stars the heroine meets, although Ernest Lubitsch and Marshall Neilan replaced Chaplin.⁷⁷ Directors and their personas were linked with their labour, unlike actors, whose work was intrinsically tied with visibility.

Despite claims to the contrary, cameos were about respecting and emphasizing relationships rather than merely providing realistic interludes for studio-set films. Cameos that were written as tributes could outlive their usefulness as markers of verisimilitude. In *Hollywood*, a note mentions that the role of minister at the Hollywood Bowl's Sunday service should be given to a certain preacher as a "well merited compliment."⁷⁸ When this scene was cut,

⁷² Robinson, *Chaplin*.

⁷³ Marion Davies, *The Times We Had: Life with William Randolph Hearst* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1975), 89.

⁷⁴ Paramount, "Hollywood Scenario," 170.

⁷⁵ Behlmer and Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood*, 119.

⁷⁶ Goldwyn Studios, "Title Sheet for Souls for Sale," 55.

⁷⁷ Goldwyn Studios, "Special Souls for Sale Trailer."

⁷⁸ Paramount, "Hollywood Scenario," 142.

the force of the compliment outweighed the reverend's value as set-dressing. Instead of adding authenticity to the Bowl scene, the reverend appeared, somewhat out of place, in the background in a studio scene, where he was, of course, mentioned by name.⁷⁹ Not just everyone on the studio lot could be written into a cameo, as some potential cameoists preferred to leave visibility to the stars. For example, what began as a role for Lasky in early drafts of *Hollywood* became simply a studio executive in final drafts. While Vitagraph executives may have preened in front of the camera, the extraneous notes included by the *Hollywood* scenario writer belie unease about the inclusion of the head of Paramount in the film. As the note goes, "[Lasky] thinks it is all right if we feel we want to show the mechanics of picture-making in a scene -- in fact, he says that we should not have any rule to go by, but merely keep story value in mind."⁸⁰ In the long run, story value alone did not guarantee Lasky's appearance in front of the camera. Cameos were not purely about verisimilitude, but about demonstrating loyalty, power and allegiance in a visible manner.

In these films of the 1920s, the playful interjection of narrative and documentary space that Chaplin had pioneered became a hallmark of cameos. Where there were cameos, there were bumpkins to misrecognize them. Angela, the heroine straight from the sticks in *Hollywood*, bumbles past a score of celebrities at the Los Angeles train station.⁸¹ In *Show People*, Marion Davies herself as in her quest for fame she pushes past Chaplin himself at a screening of her latest comedy. Each heroine is a fan who is drawn to the movies no doubt because of the images they have seen onscreen and in magazines. Yet they are initially remarkably unsophisticated in their ability to recognize film stars. Unlike Uncle Josh or Chaplin's film johnnie, who confuse narrative space for documentary space by imagining what they see on screen to be real, Angela and Peggy on the other hand fail to recognize the movie idols around them who are drawing on documentary space within the narrative world. While they are prepared to swoon at star characters such as the dashing leading man or the mesmerizing count turned actor, they are less able to immediately recognize stars who do not exist firmly within the film's established character system. Instead of Charlie Chaplin, Peggy sees a kind gentleman in a theatre. Instead of Mae Murray, Angela sees a well-dressed career girl rushing to work. Cameos surprise and confound them. Having outgrown the buffoonery of earlier bumpkins, these clueless ingenues

⁷⁹ Paramount, "Hollywood Continuity Script," 24.

⁸⁰ Paramount, "Hollywood Scenario," 105.

⁸¹ Paramount, "Hollywood Continuity Script."

show audiences in their failure how and when stars can be recognized. Even they can learn; Davies' performance in *Show People* remarks on the scriptedness of the cameo interaction when, in a shot-reverse shot sequence, Davies as Peggy Pepper gives passing screen actress Marion Davies, on her way to a tennis date, a skeptical double take. Naremore identifies this cameo as a moment of sophisticated performance, as narrative and documentary space come up against each other unavoidably.⁸² Notably, Davies is one celebrity that Peggy can easily identify, and from this point on, she is able to recognize other celebrities. Cued in to this new type of role, where narrative space and documentary space collide, and stars surprise the viewer in small roles, Peggy represents not only the success story that fans longed to emulate but a knowing cameo etiquette for the savvy fan.

Sophisticated Viewers and Cinephilic Details

If the bumpkin of the 1910s and 1920s presented a model of film fandom against which savvy viewers could align themselves by properly identifying cameos, the viewer of the 1930s had a different relationship to those same faces of the 1910s and 1920s - a nostalgic one. Films had long appealed to the memories of their fans for stars of yesteryear, steeping themselves in history before it had duly passed. Letters from a representative of former Vitagraph girl Florence Lawrence to Vitagraph in 1914 requested that the company stop referring to her as an old-timer.⁸³ In 1928's *Show People*, Davies is reported to have included key members of Mack Sennett's studio in the slapstick Comet Studios as a tribute to that failing enterprise.⁸⁴ By the 1930s, as many stars had been retired following the transition to sound as studios turned their backs not only on the moral trends of the Roaring Twenties but the astronomical salaries they had committed to dapper actors and brazen actresses who had quickly gone out of fashion, the number of stars under contract in Hollywood shrunk drastically. The mood was sobered, and yet older stars, some less than five years out of the limelight, gained value as nostalgia became an important strategy for the cameo. Although audiences and filmmakers reported being chagrined

⁸² Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema*, 16.

⁸³ E.W. Hammons to Mr. Ratterjohn, "Florence Lawrence," September 28, 1914, GC 1011, Box 2, Folder 14, Seaver Center for Western History Research.

⁸⁴ Behlmer and Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood*, 111; Susan King, "Funny Business," *Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 2012, Production Clippings, Margaret Herrick.

to see fondly remembered works from the 1910s and 1920s through "the eyes of 1935"⁸⁵ or later,⁸⁶ seeing those same actors in new films, especially if only briefly, offered the chance to reflect on those remembered films while positioning them within a more contemporary aesthetic. Cameos became wrapped up with a cinephilia that was tied to the silent cinema.

Twenty years of fan magazines had produced audiences well versed in the workings of the studio system. Fans were proud to demonstrate that they knew how movies were manufactured and stars were built, and fan magazines reflected this consciousness. As active viewers, they were encouraged to be part of the system, participating in contests to pick and choose new stars, film titles and stories. Like spectators who had gone to see the sideshows of P.T. Barnum's circus, these fans were caught up in an operational aesthetic, marveling in how the ruse worked as much as the product itself.⁸⁷ For David Bordwell, this deft allusionism and intertextual fluency was widely apparent in Golden Age cinema; as he suggests "the studio tradition has room for citation, reflexivity, pastiche, parody and all those tactics that have been considered recent inventions."⁸⁸ They were not participating to be fooled, but rather to demonstrate that they appreciated how the system worked to produce the marvels of movie glamour and box office successes.

Cinephilia, as described by Doane, is the love of the detail in cinema, and above all, a detail that is primarily visual. A cinephilic detail "is a love that is attached to the detail, the moment, the trace, the gesture."⁸⁹ For Doane, cinephilia is both unique to the viewer, yet is tied to a unique moment that can conversely only be found within a mass-produced art.⁹⁰ Both intensely personal and generalizable, the cinephilic moment is an "homage to possibility."⁹¹ For Keathley, cinephilia emerges with the New Wave's intensely descriptive personal and subjective accounts of cinematic viewing of American films in the 1940s, encouraged by Bazin's

⁸⁵ William C. Demille, *Hollywood Saga*, 2nd edition (E.P. Dutton & Co., 1939), 134.

⁸⁶ Brownlow, *The Parade's Gone by*, 145.

⁸⁷ Neil Harris, *Humbug: The Art of P.T. Barnum* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), 88.

⁸⁸ David Bordwell, *The Way Hollywood Tells It: Story and Style in Modern Movies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 10.

⁸⁹ Mary Anne Doane, "The Object of Theory," in *Rites of Realism: Essays on Corporeal Cinema*, ed. Ivone Margulies (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 82.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

championing of the spectator's freedom to roam in deep spaces.⁹² Cinephilia's precursor in the 1930s art movement, *photogenie*, was induced solely through remembered images without the additional attention to real-world details captured on film that is the hallmark of cinephilia. However, as Keathley points out, cinephilia is concerned with those moments that reveal "the real shining through deliberate aestheticization."⁹³ While cinephilia may emerge as an object of film study when enshrined in the criticism of the French New Wave, there is no doubt that there is a historical cinephilia among filmgoers who remarked on cinematic details before Truffaut and Godard. Keathley suggests that the cinephilic detail always suggests a hidden offscreen space.⁹⁴ In the case of the cameo, recognition of the portrait pointed to this offscreen space of real world biography that was not only offscreen but extra-narrative, existing in both narrative and documentary space.

A cinephilic response to a detail can override what we know to be true with an experience that claims truth, because it so closely mirrors the visual recall of our own memories. Barthes makes the case that memories and nostalgia are tied to details such as the punctum, which makes of any photograph a personal document.⁹⁵ Memories of people and places are cued by these visual details. For Burgin, a cinephilic detail, because it calls on our attention in a way that mimics how we recall our own memories of everyday life, not only points to offscreen space, but startlingly confirms the contiguity between narrative and documentary space.⁹⁶ Remembered film images mix with and stand in for important images from our real lives, conflating reality and narrative.⁹⁷ Film can stand in for memory, "can itself be akin to memory."⁹⁸ Keathley agrees that "we are often less engaged by an old film's narrative or general aesthetic properties than we are charmed by it as a record of a particular moment."⁹⁹ Film stars of a certain era, with their ubiquitous faces, likewise become tied to memories of a person's real life. While Burgin and

⁹² Christian Keathley, *Cinephilia and History, Or, The Wind in the Trees* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 16,79.

⁹³ Ibid., 100.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 162.

⁹⁵ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida : Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 42.

⁹⁶ Victor Burgin, *The Remembered Film* (London: Reaktion, 2004), 17.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Amelie Hastie, *Cupboards of Curiosity: Women, Recollection, and Film History* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2007), 5.

⁹⁹ Keathley, *Cinephilia and History, Or, The Wind in the Trees*, 116.

Keathley discuss cinephilic details as highly subjective, Burgin admits that the cinephilic detail is a strategy that allows viewers to "customize industrially produced pleasures."¹⁰⁰ With the cameo, filmmakers could harness cinephilic detail, invoking personal memories and nostalgia.

Cinephilic viewing helps transform a role from that of an extra to a cameo. While reviews of Hollywood introduced the celebrity cameo to audiences by comparing them to extras, future publicity campaigns were careful to position cameos as tiny roles rather than mere set dressing. In the 1930s, there were many silent stars who had dropped from minor roles to bit parts on their descent to the low-paid ranks of extra. Yet, as cameos can celebrate recognition of a public persona, depending on an audience's response an actor in the background can seemingly undergo a transformation from small role to cameo. While certain cameos may appear like extras to the uninitiated, an extra is meant only to stand in the background as part of the setting against which the action takes place, away from the centre of the action and attention, as Paul Willemsen suggests.¹⁰¹ As Rosten writes, "extras are important en masse, not as individuals."¹⁰² Yet, when famous star Buster Keaton was cast as a waiter in 1941, it was, by his own admission, because of his familiar face. While extras can be seen as cameoists, character actors rarely are. When a character-actor is recognized, it is not primarily for their persona outside of movies, but for their persona within other movies: the cumulative roles that make a face synonymous with certain attitudes and expectations. Serge Regourd suggests the character actor is representative of the everyman, whereas a cameo serves the opposite function of making specific biographic references.¹⁰³ However those, such as Keaton, who have descended from some stardom to small roles can't quite become character actors, as they bring to each role references to their more illustrious pasts. As Will Straw suggests, they "come already laden with cultish appeal."¹⁰⁴ A cameo is never merely part of the ground, because they are waiting to be recognized as cameos through the audience's cinephilic attention to detail. Because of the pointed address of this cinephilic moment, cameos often do not age well. Old cameos could be lost or forgotten without

¹⁰⁰ Burgin, *The Remembered Film*, 8.

¹⁰¹ Paul Willemsen, "The Figure of the Extra," in *Actors & Extras*, ed. Paul Willemsen and Thomas Trummer (Brussels: Argos Centre for Art and Media, 2009), 9.

¹⁰² Rosten, *Hollywood*, 332.

¹⁰³ Serge Regourd, *Les seconds rôles du cinéma français: grandeur et décadence* (Paris: Archimbaud/Klincksieck, 2010), 78.

¹⁰⁴ W. Straw, "Scales of Presence: Bess Flowers and the Hollywood Extra," *Screen* 52, no. 1 (March 15, 2011): 121–27.

the paratexts that surround them to point them out to future viewers, piquing the cinephilic impulse.

The cameo, because it points only briefly to the narrative, is an ideal cinephilic detail. It asks the viewer to reach back in their memory, and make the connections between real and narrative space, promoting active viewing through reflexivity. While this may permit individual reflection, ultimately it is bounded by the film text. This type of viewing cued fans to be savvy while permitting them to reflect on the film's fantasy. While cameos had been used to display current connections and up and coming stars, they also presented the opportunity to harness audience memory and reflection to imbue the film with greater emotional meaning.

New Nostalgia: Hollywood cameos in the 1930s

In the 1930s, the optimism of Hollywood-set films of the 1920s began to dissipate. Even a film with a suspiciously skeptical title such as *Souls for Sale* was less a story of failure than one of triumphant pluck. The crash had much to do with it: in 1927, 743 feature films were made in Hollywood, while in 1937 only 484 feature pictures were produced.¹⁰⁵ Anderson notes that the initial excitement about making it in Hollywood as a "new gold rush" had begun to settle, as Hollywood itself tried to stem an alarming influx of young hopefuls tracing the cross-country journeys fictionalized in *Show People*, *Hollywood* and *Souls for Sale* in hope of the same results: fame.¹⁰⁶ If *Show People* sowed the first seeds of skepticism, the 1930s continued it. Central Casting tried to dissuade young women from mimicking their onscreen counterparts in the hopes of meeting the new stars of the 1930s on their home turf. Hollywood-set movies reflected the end of this golden age, as tales such as *What Price Hollywood* (1932) and *A Star is Born* (1937) reflected a more mercenary Hollywood that made stars and threw them away. In writing about the production of *A Star is Born*, producer David O. Selznick indicated his desire to show Hollywood without bowdlerizing or idealizing it - to show a true Hollywood.¹⁰⁷ Interestingly, in both films, this was done without recourse to cameos. Hollywood had a history, and while that history could be bittersweet, a new type of cameo emerged not just to present celebrities of the moment for adulation, but to acknowledge the has-beens of Hollywood past. Stars, even half-

¹⁰⁵ Rosten, *Hollywood*, 246.

¹⁰⁶ Anderson, *In Its Own Image: The Cinematic Vision of Hollywood*, 80.

¹⁰⁷ David O Selznick, *Memo from David O. Selznick*. (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 96.

forgotten ones, even if they could no longer carry a film, could be reliably trusted in small roles, like cameos.

Perhaps emulating Poverty Row films that benefited from the wealth of discarded silent stars in the early 1930s, a picture by a Big 5 company such as Paramount's *Hollywood Boulevard* (1936) used a different strategy to bring the sting of the real to these unflattering depictions of Hollywood machinery. *Hollywood Boulevard* presented the swan song of a former silent star deep in alcoholic decline who publishes his memoirs, embroiling his former costars and lovers as well as his daughter, a Hollywood hopeful herself, in romantic and commercial troubles as the past is dredged for excitement. Rather than promoting a current stable of stars, former silent stars in small roles were used to convey a type of pathos. By the 1930s the Hollywood narrative of success and failure had matured and its stars had aged enough to include the cautionary tale of the has-been, some of the already half remembered yet still "familiar to the generation which went to pictures nightly some years back."¹⁰⁸ The cameo and the Hollywood-set film were likewise the subject of this cynical attitude. While *Show People* was hailed in 1928 as offering the "greatest assemblage of talents ever photographed,"¹⁰⁹ the group assembled in *Hollywood Boulevard* was less enthusiastically labeled by *Variety* as "20 former stars who are still interesting to many a picture goer."¹¹⁰ *Variety* sourly makes note of the benefits to exhibitors in "many a sales angle that should appeal to the fans who have a yen for Hollywood info and would like a glimpse of this Bagdad."¹¹¹

These stars were relics not only of another era, but of another mode of celebrity. As Gamson notes, "pushed by the development of sound and film realism...the presentations by the 1930s had become more and more mortal."¹¹² To forge a connection with the masses of moviegoers, film stars were portrayed as ordinary people in extraordinary situations: when not swanning around on set, they cooked their own meals, visited the lunch counter, or played baseball on the lot. At the same time, suggests Gamson, fan magazines had begun to make fans

¹⁰⁸ Anderson, *In Its Own Image: The Cinematic Vision of Hollywood*; "Hollywood Boulevard," *Variety Weekly*, September 23, 1936, Production Clippings, Margaret Herrick.

¹⁰⁹ "Film Stars Volunteer Aid in Show World."

¹¹⁰ "Hollywood Boulevard," *Variety Daily*, July 31, 1936, Production Clippings, Margaret Herrick.

¹¹¹ "Hollywood Boulevard," *Motion Picture Herald*, August 22, 1936, Production Clippings, Margaret Herrick.

¹¹² Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 29.

savvy to the teams of studio publicists and employees that surrounded these stars to perfect the projection of their glamorousness.¹¹³ These cameos were not just about cross promotion, but presented a sophisticated use of cameos to invoke the memories of fans for the recent, carefree past, and even the original cameos of some of these stars made at the height of their fame.

Unlike previous films, the has-beens were hailed as "this picture's dependable interest creating assets."¹¹⁴ Admittedly, film offers a typical shout-out to studio affiliation as the has-been greets Paramount star Gary Cooper at a bar populated by other silent-era stars, naming him, but only by his first name. Elsewhere, the presentation of each star is more subtle than the intertitled introductions in *Show People*, relying purely on audience recall of the old-timers to the point where even *Variety* thought the stars were too difficult to recognize.¹¹⁵ The cameos of fallen stars were not mentioned by name. Instead, they depended on the audience's powers of recognition, which were actively cultivated with promotions for the film such as the "Old Time Stars Recognition Contest."¹¹⁶ While these actors were paid as bit-players, as former stars they were instrumental in the film's marketing. Print ads for *Hollywood Boulevard* in 1936 framed the image of top stars and the title credits with little stars containing the names of the former stars briefly glimpsed in the background.¹¹⁷ (Fig. 16) Press book copy saluted the number of remembered faces in *Hollywood Boulevard*. While left to audience recognition within the film text, these names were frequently mentioned in reviews and press releases, actively encouraging the kind of paratextual relationship to the film that Barbara Klinger associates with cinephilic digression.¹¹⁸

Like many earlier cameos, these roles were written for an interchangeable group of silent stars. Among the "fellow has-beens" who meet the tragic hero at the bar, the script names "three or four actors of former prominence...Such persons as Jack Mulhall, Gaston Glass, Frank Mayo, etc. are recognized."¹¹⁹ Several names of such former stars would be added and dropped to the

¹¹³ Ibid., 33.

¹¹⁴ "Hollywood Boulevard," August 22, 1936.

¹¹⁵ "Hollywood Boulevard," September 23, 1936.

¹¹⁶ Paramount, "Hollywood Boulevard Press Book," n.d., Press Books, Margaret Herrick.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Barbara Klinger, "Digressions at the Cinema: Reception and Mass Culture," *Cinema Journal* 28, no. 4 (1989): 14.

¹¹⁹ Paramount, "Hollywood Boulevard Script," May 8, 1936, A-12, Paramount Scripts 683, Margaret Herrick.

cast list during production. Eventually the roles were filled by romantic leads of the silent era, Creighton Hale, Jack Mulhall, and Frank Mayo, star of *Hollywood*, each of whom who had continued to work on Poverty Row. As Reade remarks, the decline of Mulhall had been documented in the smaller roles and poorer quality productions that he worked on, as he appeared in "more and more lowgrade programmers," making 9 features between 1931 and 1934 that, while maintaining visibility, did so in a way that was "serving only to highlight his outmoded and antiquated screen persona."¹²⁰ Mayo and Hale's filmography follows a similar trajectory. Both actors were visibly declining: decline was part of their public persona. As big studios "were waxing nostalgic over the disappearance of stars from the silent cinema,"¹²¹ the continued visibility of these stars in Poverty Row meant that their reappearance in studio films was all the more poignant. This sophistication points to a viewer who is not only able to recognize, but recognizes other signifiers of the film business: production values, studio affiliations, all of these indicators of star status. Yet, neither was *Hollywood Boulevard* a prestige picture, and cameos came cheap. Selznick referred to the film as "an outstanding failure as a Paramount quickie."¹²²

Hollywood was undergoing a period of transition in the 1930s with respect to its relationship to stars. Perhaps in light of the way that unfashionable stars had been cast off with the excuse of the advent of the sound era, many actors began to demand more power within their products to refuse being in certain studio films, to refuse being traded to other studios for large payments of which they saw minimal amounts, and to escape the claustrophobic hold of the traditional seven-year contract.¹²³ Kemper documents how, with the oversight of a new, semi-independent breed of agents, as early as 1935 many major stars were working in nonexclusive contracts.¹²⁴ The studios faced other challenges in the 1940s, including anti-trust legislation that put an end to block booking that guaranteed the distribution of studio product, good and bad, into studio-controlled theatres, and gave them incentive to "amp up their efforts to establish some

¹²⁰ Robert J. Read, "Uncredited: Jack Mulhall and the Decline of Stardom," *Screen* 52, no. 1 (March 20, 2011): online.

¹²¹ Read, "Uncredited."

¹²² Selznick, *Memo from David O. Selznick.*, 105.

¹²³ Tom Kemper, *Hidden Talent: The Emergence of Hollywood Agents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 41.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 126.



Figure 16. At left, a dozen tiny stars contain the names of cameoists in this lobby card for *Hollywood Boulevard* (1936). MovieStillsDB.

equity in the industry's working conditions."¹²⁵ Stars such as Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra took control of the films they appeared in with shorter contracts and eventually their own production companies under the aegis of larger studios who served as distributors, where they were guaranteed not only their own salaries but the profits from their own films.¹²⁶ Importantly for the cameo trend, these new agent-negotiated contracts also included provisions to avoid overexposure.¹²⁷ Perhaps reflecting this instability, Warners' *Hollywood Hotel* (1937) limited the appearance of celebrity actors to a literal parade of placards that call them out by name in the film's opening, using instead radio hosts, musicians, and writers in its ensemble cameos. Long-time free agents such as Chaplin and De Mille had made it their business to appear in cameos since the 1920s, benefiting from the visibility that these nods to their stardoms offered. Like the financial need of older stars contributed to their presence in cameos, financial and contractual independence was also a limiting factor.

In the 1940s, the last gasp of prestige studio ensemble cameos was completed under the united front of the war effort, as studios such as Paramount, Warners and MGM mobilized their stars in films for the troops that harkened back to the Hollywood-set glamour of the 1920s. In *Follow the Boys* (1944) Eddie Cantor even did a double role as himself and a lookalike GI who ends up embroiled in a show for the troops. Bumpkins such as *Hollywood Canteen* (1944)'s serviceman-on-leave Slim chat with stars Barbara Stanwyck and Jane Wyman "doing their bit to entertain the home front and servicemen based all over the world"¹²⁸ as they wait tables and run through night club acts for the troops. The soldier in question carefully verbally identifies even the most prominent stars by name, with a soft-focus close-up, often set up as a double take on behalf of the poor confused soldier, that establishes the star through their portrait. (Fig. 17) Despite their number, these star roles were interchangeably filled by any star who could sing, dance, and express a little sympathy for the boys over there in each studio's take on the genre. These cameos are barely more than portraits, standing out for recognition but offering a character-space that is only marginally infringed upon by the narrative. Several studios had their own version of this kind of wartime Hollywood-set film, a spectacular send-off for the genre and the last time that bona fide stars could be mobilized en masse at studio command.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 149.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 125.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 124.

¹²⁸ Behlmer and Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood*, 296.



Figure 17. Slim is oblivious to Joan Crawford's charm in *Hollywood Canteen* (1944).

Sunset Boulevard

Sunset Boulevard is perhaps one of the most beloved Hollywood-set films of the 20th century. The story of a declining film star of the 1920s, it owes much of its charm to its careful casting and ingenious mixing of the real and narrative space. Gloria Swanson plays the former silent star who imagines a return from her mansion to the Paramount soundstage under the direction of DeMille. Erich von Stroheim is her former director and husband turned zombie-like butler, and among her friends are the Waxworks, a trio of former silent stars. Grayson Cooke suggests that *Sunset Boulevard* is about the face presented for recognition, "the face presents us with a scenario in which to examine the mechanisms of stardom and highlights the importance of youth and beauty to the star system."¹²⁹ While the main face is Gloria Swanson, the Waxworks likewise present their faces for recognition, comparison, and remembrance. Following Mathijs' definition, and considering the interplay of Woloch's character-space and character-system, the roles of Stroheim and Swanson cannot be considered cameos; as Swanson would lament, in the wake of *Sunset Boulevard*, she was associated more with the foibles of the disturbed, aging Norma Desmond than her own esoteric past and moderately successful present as TV personality and businesswoman.¹³⁰ The roles small enough to maintain their integrity as cameos, however, provide a good cross-section of the type, including celebrities such as DeMille and Keaton as themselves and less well-known yet nevertheless celebrated figures such as songwriters Livingston and Ray singing along to one of their hits during a party held at the lower end of the Hollywood social spectrum.

The film marketed as an insider look - one poster tag line read "Hollywood from the Inside."¹³¹ Fans of the 1920s delighted in unspooling the Hollywood *roman à clef*, and fans of the 1950s were not different. While chroniclers of the film's history claimed that casting the Waxworks was part of Wilder's attempt to introduce "documentary realism," and

¹²⁹ Grayson Cooke, "We Had Faces Then: *Sunset Boulevard* and the Sense of the Spectral," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 26, no. 2 (2009): 89–101.

¹³⁰ Janet M Todd, *Women and Film* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988), 111; Gloria Swanson, *Swanson on Swanson* (New York: Random House, 1980), 4.

¹³¹ Patrice Petro, *Idols of Modernity: Movie Stars of the 1920s* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 19.

"pseudodocumentary illusion,"¹³² Wilder admits to a more fluid adherence to reality by suggesting the Waxworks add "a genuine flavor"¹³³ to the film. Rather than in documentary, its precedents are clearly in the Hollywood-set films of the 1920s and the adoring cameos in which at least Nilsson had actually appeared. Publicity surrounding the cameos pointed to the film's bids for realism, such as the use of real Paramount production stills of Swanson to decorate Norma's home. A 1949 article about DeMille's appearance before the cameras noted that the film had "more realism than is usual."¹³⁴ Audiences and fans of the films were likewise enthralled. Staggs points out that the Waxworks had in fact worked together, while Sikov recounts how DeMille changed his lines to make them more like himself, tying these cameos to the real world once again.¹³⁵ Even stars were not immune to the blending of fact and fiction that *Sunset Boulevard* gave. Nancy Olson, who plays the love interest of Norma's live-in screenwriter in the film, said of Hopper's cameo "she appears in the sequence, but I had a feeling that she would have been there anyway."¹³⁶ The idea that Hopper belonged on set in the way that the Waxworks belonged at Norma's side indicated the way these cameos operated in both documentary and narrative space

While the Waxworks have been written about extensively as exemplars of the nostalgic cameo, a brief look at their form within the movie helps to examine how the cameo was used to play on nostalgia and cinephilic detail. As the narrator, Norma's hapless live-in assistant Joe, introduces her bridge group as The Waxworks, a medium long shot shows a group of stately grey-haired players from behind, seated around the central Norma. (Fig. 18; Fig. 19) Unlike earlier cameos, from *Show People* to *Hollywood Boulevard*, which presented subjects in long shots and primarily groups, the scene breaks to close-ups of the individuals, revealing the Waxworks to be Buster Keaton, former DeMille leading man H.B. Warner and Swedish-born silent star Anna Q. Nilsson, who made her own rounds in Hollywood-set films such as *Inez from*

¹³² Maurice Zolotow, *Billy Wilder in Hollywood* (New York: Putnam, 1977), 169.

¹³³ Gene D Phillips, *Some Like It Wilder: The Life and Controversial Films of Billy Wilder* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 122.

¹³⁴ Phil Koury, "DeMille Takes Direction," *The New York Times*, May 29, 1949.

¹³⁵ Sam Staggs, *Close-up on Sunset Boulevard: Billy Wilder, Norma Desmond, and the Dark Hollywood Dream* (New York: Macmillan, 2003), 117; Ed Sikov, *On Sunset Boulevard: The Life and Times of Billy Wilder* (New York: Hyperion, 1998), 96.

¹³⁶ Staggs, *Close-up on Sunset Boulevard*, 122.



Figure 18. The Waxworks surround Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950)...



Figure 19. ...as their morose faces are revealed one by one.

Hollywood (1924) and *Souls for Sale*. As Joe intones, they were "dim figures you may remember from the silent days."

There were undoubtedly many "dim figures" to choose from at the time, eager for work. The identity of the Waxworks in *Sunset Boulevard* was not integral to the film; the shooting script names the group only as "three actors of her period,"¹³⁷ although other proposed cameos of current figures such as humorist Abe Burrows and columnist Sid Skolsky are mentioned by name.¹³⁸ Many names appeared again and again in small roles of the time. Keaton writes that by 1951 there was new interest in once-forgotten stars, suggesting that "between one thing and another I was pretty much in business as an actor once more,"¹³⁹ not only in movies but television guest appearances. Keaton may have been satisfied, but not all actors were as thrilled with the scraps the studio offered. Both Behlmer and Thomas and Anderson quote the 1951 complaint by Elmo Lincoln, the original Tarzan, when he spoke bitterly about being feted at tributes and premieres for films that followed in the wake of *Sunset Boulevard* to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars of publicity, while even those with dialogue were often paid for at most the day player's rate of less than \$60.¹⁴⁰ Among the Waxworks, Nilsson made \$1000 less than H.B. Warner for the same screen time.¹⁴¹ These former stars knew exactly how they were being used. As Keaton wrote about a cameo as a waiter in a 1940 film, "the producer wanted a familiar face in that little bit and picked mine as the movie face hardest for fans to forget."¹⁴² Warner had found similar character roles in the Capra films of the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁴³ The brevity of the cameo conjured all of the aura of the cinephilic detail, guaranteeing a nostalgic reaction from the audience, and all dividends of a long ago investment in the star persona of a decade or more ago.

Sunset Boulevard reflects a weakened studio system in the type of actors it is content to represent as emblems of cinematic history, allowing other networks to be displayed. While Paramount's publicity for the film prided themselves on returning stars such as Swanson who had

¹³⁷ Billy Wilder, *Sunset Boulevard* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 44.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 61.

¹³⁹ Buster Keaton and Charles Samuels, *My Wonderful World of Slapstick* (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1982), 274.

¹⁴⁰ Behlmer and Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood*, 244.

¹⁴¹ Staggs, *Close-up on Sunset Boulevard*, 72.

¹⁴² Keaton and Samuels, *My Wonderful World of Slapstick*, 260.

¹⁴³ Staggs, *Close-up on Sunset Boulevard*, 116.

excelled under their banner to the limelight, they were just as happy to sing the praises of longtime MGM star and, in more troubled times, employee, Keaton. While it has been reported that Swanson used her personal connections when she "coaxed" DeMille to appear as her former director, DeMille, "the story's one lasting success,"¹⁴⁴ did well by the arrangement.¹⁴⁵ The difference between the cameos of the forgotten and the remembered was marked in the payment of DeMille, who received \$10,000 a day and then demanded a new limousine when additional close-ups were required,¹⁴⁶ while Nilsson received \$200 for her work.¹⁴⁷ While *Sunset Boulevard* referred to networks outside of studio, it was also building intermedial networks. Hopper, who made \$5000, wrote about the shoot in her column,¹⁴⁸ while rival columnist Sid Skolsky gave the film bad reviews after his cameo was cut.¹⁴⁹

Carefully chosen or not, like the fading stars of *Hollywood Boulevard*, the Waxworks' aged faces were important to the publicity of the film: indeed, still photographs of the Swanson with the almost-silent foursome were included in the press book, and their floating heads appeared in some versions of the print ad in miniatures descending in size from the prominent portraits of Swanson to Stroheim through less players.¹⁵⁰ (Fig. 20) *Sunset Boulevard* used the strategy of naming cameos in releases while letting them stand alone in the film, where former silent stars Anna Q. Nilsson, Buster Keaton and H.B. Warner were named in the film only as The Waxworks. DeMille and Hopper insisted on billing above the three characteristically wordless silent stars, although all were credited "as themselves" in ads produced by Paramount. Strangely, Franklyn Farnum, an early two-reeler Western star similarly credited, played the undertaker, a role he did not reprise from real life.¹⁵¹ Obviously, whether Farnum appeared in a fictionalized role or not, he was enough of a kind with the silent stars to be recognized for his public persona rather than the bit part he was cast to play. In the *Sunset Boulevard* program, framed as a gossip magazine, one "item" cited these actors as "stars we all remember, from what seems like a

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 104.

¹⁴⁵ Phillips, *Some Like It Wilder: The Life and Controversial Films of Billy Wilder*, 114.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Staggs, *Close-up on Sunset Boulevard*, 72.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 72, 102.

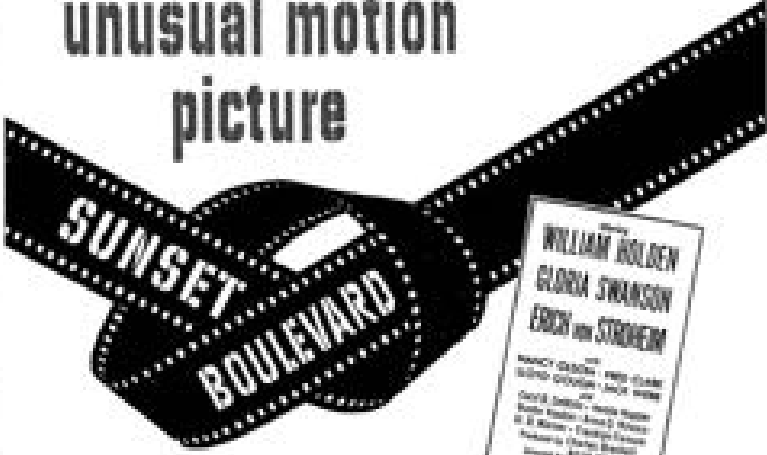
¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 103.

¹⁵⁰ Paramount, *Sunset Boulevard Press Book*, 1950, 14.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 3; Staggs, *Close-up on Sunset Boulevard*, 96.

Paramount Proudly Presents

a most unusual motion picture



SUNSET BOULEVARD

Starring
WILLIAM HOLDEN
GLORIA SWANSON
ERICH VON STROHEIM

With
 NANCY OLSEN • PAUL HENREID
 GEORGE COLEMAN • JANE WARR
 AND
 CECIL B. DEMILLE • HEDDA HOPPER
 BUSTER KEATON • ANNA Q. NILSSON
 H. B. WARNER • CHARLES BRONSON
 Produced by **ALFRED HITCHCOCK**
 Screenplay by **ALFRED HITCHCOCK**
 Story by **ALFRED HITCHCOCK**
 Music by **ALFRED HITCHCOCK**

**A Hollywood Story...
 ...As Only Hollywood Could Bring It To You!**

WILLIAM HOLDEN as.....	YOUNG JOE GILLIS
GLORIA SWANSON as.....	NORMA DESMOND
ERICH VON STROHEIM as.....	MAX VON MAYERLING
Nancy Olsen as.....	Betty Schaefer
Cecil B. DeMille as.....	Cecil B. DeMille
Hedda Hopper as.....	Hedda Hopper
Buster Keaton as.....	Buster Keaton
Anna Q. Nilsson as.....	Anna Q. Nilsson
H. B. Warner as.....	H. B. Warner

3 COLS. x $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 166 \text{ LINES} \dots\dots 498 \text{ LINES} \\ 12 \text{ inches} \dots\dots 36 \text{ inches} \end{array} \right.$

MAT 308

Figure 20. The Waxworks' half-remembered faces feature prominently alongside the film's stars in this ad from the *Sunset Boulevard* press book.

thousand years ago,"¹⁵² and, in a selection of photographs illustrating the film synopsis, a single close-up appears among the group shots. Transformed from the static scene where Keaton breaks the silence with a single word into a portrait, as a cameo so easily is, Buster Keaton's unattributed face is captioned with an echo of the film's script that identifies him only as one of the "dim figures you might remember from *Broken Blossoms* or *Ben Hur*."¹⁵³ While still a portrait, this less obvious nostalgic cameo represents a change in the work of recognition, the level of familiarity with the workings of Hollywood, and the relationship of fans to movie history.

Star studded: the cameo fad

In the 1950s, there were more and more opportunities for forgotten faces to be unearthed and re-recognized. Television made old movies visible again as studios' back catalogues were handed over en masse to studio-owned stations and affiliated networks to fill out empty broadcast time, bringing even the most ephemeral stars such as *King Kong* (1933)'s Fay Wray back into the public eye.¹⁵⁴ *Sunset Boulevard* seemed to mark the end of glamorous, unproblematic cameos, as the cameo transitioned out of the ensemble portrait, at least in the hands of the studio. The film saw a wake of imitators such as *The Star* (1952) starring Bette Davis, and the Judy Garland remake of *A Star is Born* (1954) documenting the decline of stars as a reflection of the decline of the star system. It sparked a "rash" of raw Universal behind-the-scenes pictures such as *Hollywood Story* (1951) with ensemble cameos that featured only the forgotten and the fading.¹⁵⁵ Yet, while stars were no longer "trotted out"¹⁵⁶ by their studios, producers trained in the studio system who operated outside of the newly humbled studios saw a use for the latest nostalgic iteration of the cameo as a reflection of power and influence at a cheap cost.

Cameos were ideal for independent producers who were looking to keep costs low. While many productions would eventually be distributed by major studios, the film's financing was the

¹⁵² Paramount, *Sunset Boulevard Program*, 1950, 4.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁵⁴ Richard Lamparski, *Whatever Became Of...? The Story of What Has Happened to More Famous Personalities* (Crown Publishers, Inc., New York, 1968), 145.

¹⁵⁵ James Robert Parish, Michael R Pitts, and Mank, Gregory W, *Hollywood on Hollywood* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1978), 211.

¹⁵⁶ Behlmer and Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood*, 207.

responsibility of the producer. Divorced from studios as free agents and producers in their own right, stars were mobile and for hire. For established or even declining stars, the investment in publicity had already been made by the studios at the height of their power, and now independent producers could reap the benefits without the high price tag. Cameos were acknowledged as good publicity, as evidenced by their recurrent mention in film press books throughout the 1950s, from Keaton in *Sunset Boulevard* to Chester Conklin in *Son of Paleface* (1952) through to Jimmy Durante in *Pepe* in 1962. As publicity for *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* remarked, the film was "populated with a cast which reads more like the roster of a major studio than the cast of a picture."¹⁵⁷ What's more, stars were willing to appear in cameos, and not just the old-timers. Newly independent stars wanted to promote their own images and collect their own earnings without the input of the studio. Freed from the bonds of studio, in control of their own bookings and their own earnings, the biggest stars made some interesting choices in the 1950s and 1960s in terms of capitalizing on their visibility. Independent producers took advantage of this unstable state of affairs by billing stars, new and old, alongside each other in cameo blockbusters of the 1950s and early 1960s. If there was no need for stars to reflect on the studio, there was the sense they were present to the personal glory of the producers. Mike Todd, George Sidney and Stanley Kramer had seen critical and box office success in theatre and under the studios, and now in their own films "only the big names were invited."¹⁵⁸ Indeed, publicity for a spate of independently-produced films, *Around the World in 80 Days*, *Pepe* and *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, made liberal use of the cameo and adopted the leveling tactic of advertising forgotten stars as if they were current ones.

In the wake of television and loss of studio power, the 1950s saw the emergence of spectacular touring roadshow movies such as DeMille's *The Greatest Show on Earth* (1952) and *Oklahoma!* (1955). These special films toured like a stage production, travelling town to town, commanding special prices and featuring a large fanfare with associated events at each special screening.¹⁵⁹ Vanessa Schwartz positions producer Mike Todd's travelogue *Around the World in 80 Days* within this tradition. Based on the Jules Verne tale of an English gentleman who takes the bet that he can get around the world and back to London in just 80 days, picking up a French

¹⁵⁷ United Artists, *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World 1970 Re-Release Press Book*, 1970, 3.

¹⁵⁸ Donald Spoto, *Stanley Kramer, Film Maker* (New York: Putnam, 1978), 19.

¹⁵⁹ Vanessa R. Schwartz, *It's So French!: Hollywood, Paris, and the Making of Cosmopolitan Film Culture* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2007).

butler, an Indian maharaja and a private detective, the film offered the opportunity to present itself as a travelogue populated with colourful characters, and filmed in a special wide-screen 70mm format called Todd-AO. These small vignettes featured "world-famous faces that peek out everywhere in bit parts."¹⁶⁰ *Around the World* was a spectacle whose note began in production with a cast that grew daily and a budget that doubled to \$6M during production.¹⁶¹ It had its own lavish televised premiere with flowing champagne and live animals, "the last time a network picked up the tab for a publicity party,"¹⁶² a commemorative programme, and copious rounds of publicity that were as much about the exotic locales visited by the crew, and the new ultra-wide screen format, and Todd's Odyssean task of casting the film as the film itself.¹⁶³ Monumentalism would become a common tactic in marketing these films, as the sheer number of stars provided the precedent to beset potential audiences with lists of other amazing expenditures and compendiums.

The term "cinema cameo" was used to refer specifically to the casting of major actors such as Frank Sinatra and Marlene Dietrich in small, non-starring roles, yet also carried the old-fashioned quaintness of two-reelers and grandma's jewellery box that could reflect on the roles taken on by languishing stars with nevertheless recognizable faces such as Buster Keaton and Beatrice Lillie. Todd harnessed the concept of the cameo, adopting the parameters of brevity, recognition, and reversal of the expected division of character-space, he made a lasting impact on the use of the term cameo by insisting that all of his cameos were stars. While until this point the term cameo had been reserved for performances that were outstanding because of their ability to fill small roles with the nuance and authenticity usually reserved for larger ones, these small roles were about harnessing the public personas of Keaton, Lillie, and Sinatra rather than having them develop complex character-spaces within the character-system of the film. Todd's publicity campaign inextricably linked star power and small roles to the word cameo. Every small role in *Around the World* was played by a star, even if in name only, because in press releases and interviews surrounding the film, cameos were linked irrevocably with stars. Todd insisted that if they were playing a cameo, they had to be a star. Todd linked cameos purely with stars in the

¹⁶⁰ "When the World Was Wider," *Life*, October 22, 1956, 81.

¹⁶¹ Art Cohn, *The Nine Lives of Michael Todd: The Story of One of the World's Most Fabulous Showmen* (Kessinger Publishing, 2007), 380.

¹⁶² Louella O Parsons, *Tell It to Louella* (New York: Putnam, 1961), 259.

¹⁶³ Ezra Goodman, "Rounding up Stars in 80 Ways," *Life*, October 22, 1956.

same way that portraits were once purely the province of kings, reinforcing the relationship between visibility and celebrity but using a term and concept that predated his marketing campaign. In this way, the cameo came full circle.

Todd actively cultivated the idea that each role was cast based entirely on the public persona of a star, where "each star fit the part of the story."¹⁶⁴ Todd directed the audience to find the 'real' in the public persona of the celebrity, the public face and attendant biography instantly recognized by fans. Like his insistence on on-location shooting, Todd's cameos were part of his quest to share documentary and narrative space onscreen.¹⁶⁵ In Sinatra's Barbary Coast scene, Marlene Dietrich mashes up some of her most famous caricatures as the saloon girl marooned in the Orient while Sinatra plays the piano and her boyfriend, George Raft, does his best tough guy impression, coin toss included. He has Sinatra play a musician "not because he's Sinatra but because when he sits down at that piano, a bowler on his head and garters on his sleeves, he's for real."¹⁶⁶ Taking up where *Sunset Boulevard* left off, these cameos are not mentioned by name. They are melding the traditional cameo as a stand-out role with the idea of the star cameo, finally fulfilling Mathijs's definition as their universally recognized public persona makes them recognizable despite the narrative space they live in.

Todd's cameo, "a gem carved in celluloid by a star"¹⁶⁷ builds on precedents in film and theatre. There are even more direct linkages: the 1923 film *Souls for Sale* includes in its opening a prominent and lingering close-up of a cameo pin as it is stolen from the hapless heroine on her journey to Los Angeles, a piece referred to as "homely" in the original intertitles.¹⁶⁸ This homely jewel befits the wide-eyed bumpkin the heroine proves herself to be as she stumbles into fame, echoing the cameo's changing position in pop culture from the merely antique to the antiquated. With the decline of the two-reelers sometimes called cameos by the end of the 1920s, the cameo stood for the old and the passé in film form as well as fashion, and, in a few short decades, was resurrected as an emblem of nostalgia and fond remembrance. Show business continued to use the term for small parts, as exemplified in continued use of "stand out like a cameo" in the 1940s, as well as the identification of "cameo roles" in the 1951 British-studio set Crispin novel,

¹⁶⁴ Cohn, *The Nine Lives of Michael Todd*, 379.

¹⁶⁵ Schwartz, *It's So French!*, 171.

¹⁶⁶ Cohn, *The Nine Lives of Michael Todd*, 279.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 379.

¹⁶⁸ Goldwyn Studios, "Souls for Sale Silent Cutting Continuity," 32.

CAMEOS



CHARLES BOYER (*M. Gasse, Clerk, Thomas Cook, Paris*). Born in Figeac just before the turn of the century, Charles Boyer was educated in Paris at the Sorbonne and the Paris Conservatory. He made his stage debut in 1920 in *Jardin des Murcie* and for the next fifteen years his professional activities alternated between the French stage and screen. His Paris plays include *L'Homme Enchaîné* and *Galerie des Glaces Melo*.

In 1935 Mr. Boyer went to Hollywood where he quickly became one of the most popular leading men. Among his more memorable pictures are *Mayerling*, *Back Street*, *Love Affair*, *Algiers*, *Hold Back the Dawn*, *Arch of Triumph*, and *The Earrings of Madame de--*.

He made his Broadway bow in 1948 in *Red Gloves*, has since appeared with the First Drama Quartet in *Don Juan in Hell* and in *Kind Sir*. Boyer has also been seen in many television programs.



JOE E. BROWN (*Station Master, Fort Kearney*). A native of Helgate, Ohio, born in 1892, Brown ran away to join the circus at the age of nine. After playing professional baseball for several seasons, he entered show business in earnest, touring in *Listen, Lester*, then in vaudeville and later starring on Broadway in such productions as *Greenwich Village Follies*, *Betsy Lee* and *Captain Jinks*.

Brown went to Hollywood in 1928 and has been making pictures ever since. For three years he was one of the top ten box-office stars. His movies include *Burlesque*, *On with the Show*, *Hold Everything*, *Elmer the Great*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Daring Young Man* and *Shanghai*.

Desire, *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Adorable Creatures*, *Darling Caroline's Caprice*, *Madame du Barry*, *Nana*, *Lola*, and *The Diary of Major Thompson*.

In 1946 Mlle. Carol appeared on the stage in a French production of *Tobacco Road*.



JOHN CARRADINE (*Colonel Proctor, San Francisco Politico*). A native New Yorker, John Carradine was educated at the Episcopal Academy and Graphic Art School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and at the New York Art School.

His dramatic career began at the age of nineteen in *Camille* at the St. Charles Theater, New Orleans, in 1925. Mr. Carradine then became a marine artist and portrait painter and subsequently a designer for Cecil B. de Mille.

In 1928 he launched his career in Hollywood, and subsequently appeared in the widest span of pictures, from Westerns like *Stagecoach* to musicals like *Alexander's Ragtime Band* and spectacles like *The Ten Commandments*.

Carradine returned to the stage in 1941. He toured with his own Shakespearean repertory company, and in 1946 made his first appearance on Broadway in *The Duchess of Malfi*. His other New York roles included *Voltore* in *Volpone*, *Nyunin* in *The Wedding* and the *Ragpicker* in *The Madwoman of Chaillot*.



CHARLES COBURN (*Clerk, Hong Kong Steamship Office*). Though born in Savannah, Georgia, in 1877, Charles Coburn more often than not has been mistaken for an Englishman. He attributes this to the fact that he received his training in Shakespearean drama and that he made his biggest

Figure 21. The programme for *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956) illustrated the cameo's fusion of ostensible star power and 19th century decorative art.

Frequent Hearses.¹⁶⁹ When producer Mike Todd popularized the term cameo role in 1956, he reunited the industry use of the term "cameo" with the nostalgia recalling the early days of film-going culture in name and form, for the kind of short two-reelers in which his oldest stars appeared. Recalling the early days of film-going culture in name and form, as Schwartz writes, "winking at the early days of the movies" in sequences that homaged the western, the adventure rescue film, and slapstick as well as the inclusion of the Méliès film *A Trip to the Moon* (1902).¹⁷⁰ In fact, the marketing for the film draws explicitly on the associations of cameos with the past, echoing not only on the more recent idiom but the fashions of the 1880s that brought the cameo to popularity. In the commemorative program that accompanies the film's release, all roles are listed alphabetically in the rear of the book, complete with an illustrated portrait in profile and a brief biography that mimics the aesthetic of the cameo in its 19th century incarnation. Indeed, following in the steps of the studios, this film revived a few old-time stars such as Beatrice Lillie and the ever-present Buster Keaton, calling on nostalgic viewing.

The brief vignettes of *Around the World* mean that there were many, many cameo players. As a result, all cameo players were lumped together as being of one order, a fact that did not sit well with current stars who found themselves in parts comparable in size to older has-beens. Lists of cameos were circulated to the press with claims that from Mike Mazurki to Sir Cedric Hardwicke to John Carradine, the cameos featured "44 well known film stars."¹⁷¹ (Fig. 21) The alphabetical programme listing gives some indication of the mixture of stars and plebeians: obscure British stage actors, lesser silent stars, character actors, and major box office draws are all jumbled together democratically. Todd explained away this strategy with the insistence that "only a real top name could afford to take alphabetical billing,"¹⁷² although this would cost him the participation of Maurice Chevalier. MGM refused to release both Elizabeth Taylor and Alec Guinness for cameo roles, fearing that the appearance of these top-billed stars in small roles would undermine their stature. Following the logic that stars played feature roles and extras or character actors played bit parts, MGM did not want to damage their assets by billing them alongside older or little known actors such as Bea Lillie and Sir Cedric. Loaning out stars

¹⁶⁹ Edmund Crispin, *Frequent Hearses* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1987).

¹⁷⁰ Schwartz, *It's So French!*, 176, 181.

¹⁷¹ "Many Film Precedents Set by 'Around the World in 80 Days,'" in *Around the World in 80 Days 1968 Press Book*, 1968, 6.

¹⁷² Cohn, *The Nine Lives of Michael Todd*, 379.

was usually a profitable enterprise, but in this case, Todd's often impoverished production offered the studio a day player's rate, wooing instead the stars themselves with gifts in kind.¹⁷³

Carefully grooming their stars was part of the studio guarantee, whereas these one-off collaborations with independent producers such as Todd did not need to protect or preserve the star as an investment. He was concerned with one-time visibility, and rather than reflecting on the studio brand, he reflected that glory on this film and himself. Studios may well have worried about the damage done to their stars, as the leveling seems to have succeeded almost too well. Schwartz reports the *LA Times* commenting about the ensemble nature of the performance, disappearing into the film "so perfectly do they lend color, vitality, and authenticity to Mr. Todd's mighty spectacle."¹⁷⁴ The biography written with Todd's blessing during this marketing tour crows about how he "sweet-talked the women and fast-talked the men and conned them all"¹⁷⁵ into working for a pittance, an exercise in egotism to which other cameo directors would fall prey. He even joked about taking advantage of an old-time Western star who "so believed the part I just paid him off with a campaign medal."¹⁷⁶ Cameo producers made sure that audiences knew that each star face briefly appearing onscreen, new or old, pointed back to the power of the filmmaker in a way that it had once reflected on the studio.

Around the World in 80 Days was a hit, and the cameo fad was born. Admittedly, cameos were just one part of the film's marketing success: the new super-wide screen Todd AO process, the charismatic Todd's relationship with Elizabeth Taylor and then his astonishing death all helped to keep the film popular as it toured in the years following its production. However, there is no doubt that other films that modeled themselves on *Around the World* took the cameo as the hallmark of its success. Yet there were doubts whether the supposed prestige of the cameo was universally accepted as defined by Todd. Follow-up films took the idea that stars could appear in small roles while still being stars rather than taking the first steps in a slide down the Hollywood hierarchy that had already been completed by Buster Keaton or Joe E. Brown. While Todd cast his roles as written, *Pepe*, a more typical Hollywood-set rags-to-riches story starring Mexican

¹⁷³ Kemper, *Hidden Talent*, 40; David Niven, *The Moon's A Balloon* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972), 334.

¹⁷⁴ Schwartz, *It's So French!*, 173.

¹⁷⁵ Cohn, *The Nine Lives of Michael Todd*, 379.

¹⁷⁶ Michael Todd, Jr and S. T. McCarthy, *A Valuable Property: The Life Story of Michael Todd* (New York: Arbor House Publishing, 1983), 274.

comedian Cantinflas, the valet sidekick from *Around the World*, as a star-blind bumpkin, indicated that "individual stars were approached for specific characterizations created for them in the story."¹⁷⁷ The emphasis on story above cameos set a pattern for marketing to come. *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, a road trip picture that followed a cast of comedians on the hunt for buried treasure, would reassure audiences that, alongside scores of smaller roles by actors of the past "who once shone as bright as the novae"¹⁷⁸ such as Zasu Pitts, Edward Everett Horton and the 3 Stooges, "15 brilliant comedy virtuosos were signed to portray them...no cameos or vignettes these; every one a starring, picture-length characterization."¹⁷⁹ Yet publicity also emphasized the nostalgic cameos as belonging to a comedy paradigm that was antithetical to feature-length narratives, advertising the film as "a resumé of references to the comic tradition" and "an album of comic players...homage to classic American comedy."¹⁸⁰ (Fig. 22) Keaton's *Mad World* cameo as a boat captain was cut down to non-sequitur brevity and, once again, to characteristic silence, but he was featured in many press photos with the cast, including those for scenes in which he did not even appear.¹⁸¹ The final knell for cameo films came in the reception of the star-studded 1965 film *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, where cameos such as that by John Wayne broke with the story in a way that was "shattering and distasteful."¹⁸² In these final iterations, ensemble cameos were seen as drawing attention away from the narrative, switching out character spaces developed within the narrative to the greater good of the story for the ready-made character spaces of public persona and pop culture appeal.

Like earlier Hollywood-set studio films, *Around the World*, *Pepe* and *Mad World* tried to astound with the number of stars in each film. Posters for both films featured large illustrated masses of star caricatures, tumbling over each other in a confusing melée of action.¹⁸³ As with *Around the World's* sets of cameo illustrations, the *Pepe* programme is punctuated by pages of

¹⁷⁷ Columbia Pictures, "Pepe Programme," n.d., 15, Press Books, Margaret Herrick.

¹⁷⁸ "It's a Mad Booklet" (Mar-King Publishing and Novelty Corp., n.d.), Linwood D Gunn Papers, Folder 285, Margaret Herrick.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁸⁰ Spoto, *Stanley Kramer, Film Maker*, 255.

¹⁸¹ "It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World Production Photographs," n.d., Box 66, Envelope 1, MW1392-1444; Box 67, Envelope 2; Box 68, Envelope 3, MWK340-342, Stanley Kramer Files, UCLA Special Collections.

¹⁸² Bosley Crowther, "Screen: 'The Greatest Story Ever Told': Max von Sydow Stars in Biblical Film," *The New York Times*, February 16, 1966.

¹⁸³ "It's a Mad Booklet."

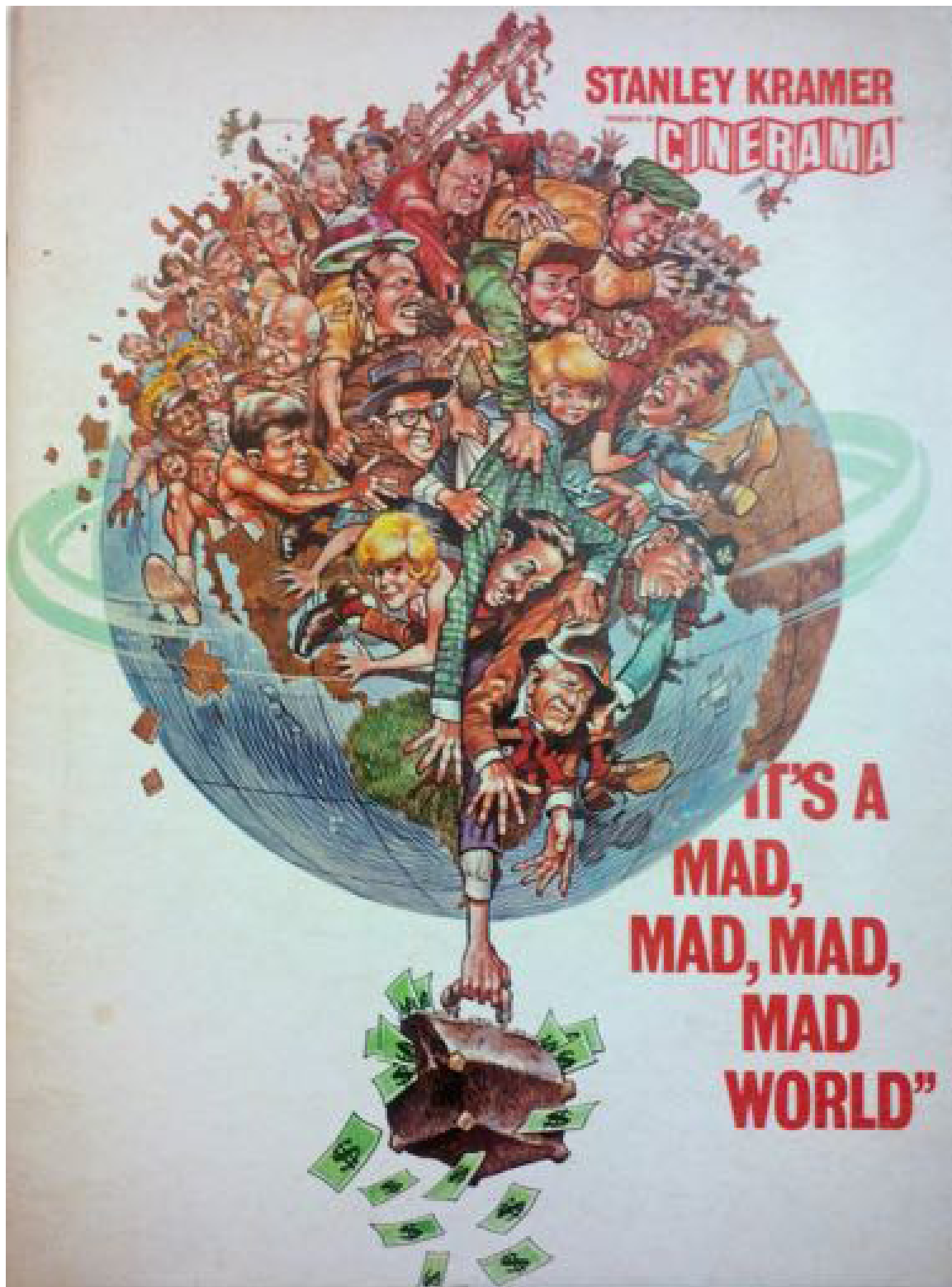


Figure 22. Buster Keaton's face appears alongside both stars and cameoists on the cover of the *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963) programme.

yearbook-style headshots, while those of *Mad World* are laid out in groups of descending size.¹⁸⁴ The number of cameos, made possible by their brevity and the independents' creative system of payment, meant that many stars could be used in a single film. Rather than thrilling at the brief encounter, critics and audiences had turned against the cameo as a simple portrait of their favourite stars. Instead, they saw the brevity and the "surfeit of celebrities"¹⁸⁵ as "embarrassing,"¹⁸⁶ especially when, as with *The Voice of Judy Garland* in *Pepe*, it didn't even guarantee their actual presence in the film. Numbers may have astounded in *Show People*, but by the 1960s there was a glut, lining up the same old-timer faces for a nostalgic appeal that began to harken back not to the ever-more-distant era of the silents, but only as far as the most recent cameo film. Where cameos had fed a desire to see stars in their natural habitat in the 1920s, and thrilled at their return to visibility in the 1940s and 1950s, by the 1960s audiences were increasingly savvy to the manufacture of stardom and the economic conditions driving the appearance of their beloved stars. Audiences were no longer dazzled by stars' visibility, and when cameos entirely overwhelmed a film's narrative, the opportunity to exercise their powers of recognition provided little in the way of cinephilic reflection for fans.

Conclusion

The studio system encouraged cameos that compounded the existence of a network of stars who embodied the studio product. Taking advantage of fan interest in celebrity's real life, studios tried to give audiences a vision of the real-world celebrity alongside fictional stories while reinforcing studio ownership of their personas by showing them together as talented and virtuous groups. As studio ownership of the star persona waned, the studio ceased to be the strongest connection between actors. Turning to other, less expensive sources of revenue, studios rediscovered personalities they had invested in in the silent era as still useful because of their continued visibility. Rather than corralling current stars, nostalgic cameos became part of the cinephilic tactic to encourage and enchant audiences. Unfettered by studio contracts, these bit-players bounced from studio to studio. Still bearing the scars of stardom, actors such as Keaton,

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 31.

¹⁸⁵ Roger Angell, "The Current Cinema: Poor Peon," *The New Yorker*, December 31, 1960, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1960/12/31/poor-peon>.

¹⁸⁶ Philip K. Scheuer, "Cantinflas Carries Heavy 'Pepe' Load: Simple Peon Made Complex by Olla-Podrida of a Show," *Los Angeles Times*, December 28, 1960.

Beatrice Lillie or Maurice Costello reappeared again and again in the 1940s, and, resurrected by television, the 1950s and 1960s. Because they received little money, they could be used to populate a film and its marketing with the star appeal of ensemble cameos without either the control of the 1920s and 1930s or the market price of the current free agents. However, some stars soon followed suit, as they began to appear outside of studio control in independent films, whether to support friends or providing publicity for their own productions, or merely to cash in on their own visibility. The changing types of cameos from the 1920s to the early 1960s reflect a transformation in the relationship of studio to star that highlights the emergence of film nostalgia as a marketing tactic and the reemergence of ensemble cameos outside of the studio system.

Chapter 3

Having too much fun: cameos, comedian comedy, and acting

In 1960, Bing Crosby appeared in a short cameo in the Hollywood-set cameo-filled rags-to-riches film *Pepe*. Driving out of a studio arch reminiscent of the iconic MGM entrance, he is met by the title character, a Mexican peasant played by the popular folk comedian Cantinflas who is adrift in Hollywood in search of his best friend. As Crosby launches into a somewhat lackadaisical medley of his favourite hits while waiting for the porter to bring him his mail, he proceeds to harmonize with Pepe on "South of the Border." (Fig. 23) Despite his ability to pick up on the tune from Crosby's few mumbled lyrics, Pepe has no idea who Crosby is, and he never does figure out, leaving Crosby to drive off mildly perplexed after the comedian eats the tortilla the crooner has signed for him. During the exchange, Crosby informs the porter that he might have a part in his next movie for poor, struggling Bob Hope, the other half of the comedy duo that performed in the *Road* series in the 1940s and 1950s. This seven film series featured Crosby and Hope as vaudevillians traveling the world through a series of mishaps that pitted them against exotic evildoers with designs against their perennial love interest, Dorothy Lamour. The *Road* films pioneered a style of comedy that placed Hollywood as the butt of its own jokes, with specific call-outs of contemporary actors, directors, and producers in gags, wisecracks and a series of prominent cameos. At the same time, this partnership begat a series of cameo trades which resulted in Crosby's appearance in Hope's films in sequences full of mutual derision. Seen as witty and unprecedented insiderisms in the 1940s, by the 1960s they had lost their steam. This Crosby cameo in *Pepe*, which did not include Hope, was panned as one more excessively bad performance in a poor and long-winded film stuffed with lazy cameos. Yet, it has all the ingredients of a successful Crosby cameo of the earlier period: a famous star playing himself in a comedy, inside Hollywood references, the nonchalant air of improvisation, and, of course, a zinger at the expense of Hope. The laid-back air that was cultivated in Crosby cameos in Hope films in the 1950s was lazy and "just plain embarrassing"¹ in the *Pepe* appearance. How did these cameos, which were so enthusiastically received by audiences in the 1940s, go from

¹ Philip K. Scheuer, "Cantinflas Carries Heavy 'Pepe' Load: Simple Peon Made Complex by Olla-Podrida of a Show," *Los Angeles Times*, December 28, 1960.



Figure 23. Bing Crosby sings along with Cantinflas in *Pepe* (1960).

inciting audience to "howls of glee"² to having critics bemoaning another installment of yet more "dreary inside japes"³?

Bob Hope and Bing Crosby used the casual cameo to establish their double act in the 1940s in much the same way that Chaplin and Broncho Billy had traded cameos in the 1910s. However, their partnership exceeded studio bounds, with Crosby appearing in Hope movies made for Goldwyn as well as their home of Paramount. The partnership trumped studio ownership of their comedy act. Later double acts, such as Martin and Lewis and larger groups such as the Rat Pack, emulated these cameo trades, appearing in diegetically disruptive roles that called attention to the partnership and away from the plot. These cameos were all about partnerships, and these partnerships were synonymous with friendships, real or manufactured. Crosby and Hope, a singer and a vaudeville MC turned radio host, were presented in an entertainment context that was only loosely narrative, allowing plenty of room for jokes, gags, and musical acts. Tellingly, Crosby, who had more dramatic ambitions, did not feature Hope in his films; this cameo trade was one way only. As performers rather than actors, their loyalties did not lie with character, especially when they were in the Road series, the films with which they were most closely aligned, an important part of what Seidman calls comedian comedy. Comedian comedies are films built around recognizable comedians who emphasize the film as a performance rather than a narrative, frequently breaking with diegesis in ways that establish the comedian's performance as running counter to classical narrative as well as cultural norms.⁴ Cameos were just one of the ways of not only breaking with the norms of classical Hollywood film, but returning to the comedian's extrafilmic public persona as a performer by calling attention to performance. In the case of Hope and Crosby, these cameos were billed as afterthoughts, inside gags, and jokes at the expense of the director, the production, and, by extension, the studio.

The breaking and disruption of the plot that these cameos undertake exposed them as a potential site for cult reception. Like cinephilia, cult depends on what Corrigan calls the

² "Brunette Funny Bob Hope," *Hollywood Reporter*, February 18, 1947, Production Code Administration Files My Favorite Brunette, Margaret Herrick.

³ Roger Angell, "The Current Cinema: Poor Peon," *The New Yorker*, December 31, 1960, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1960/12/31/poor-peon>.

⁴ Steve Seidman, *Comedian Comedy: A Tradition in Hollywood Film* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1981), 3, 6.

"embracing of public images of private space," but unlike cinephilia, cult emphasizes films that "seem to undermine their own narrative structures,"⁵ allowing audiences to repeat and assimilate the film's nonstandard elements for performative pastiche and parody.⁶ Movies that present disruptive moments ready-made for cinephilic contemplation, such as the cameo, undermine their own structure in this particularly cultish way, reconciling nominally private instances of cinephilia with the public viewing practices that create a cult object. While cinephilia depends on memories of the viewer's private world, cult emphasizes a shared fictional world, where, as Eco writes, "adepts of the sect recognize through each other a shared expertise."⁷ Mathijs identifies the cameo as an ideal site for cult, and the Crosby-Hope trades provide an ideal precedent for disruptive performance that nevertheless has mass appeal. Represented on television, radio and film, Crosby and Hope repeated their gags in a way that prefaced cult awareness.

While these performative cameos were surprising and thrilling in the 1940s, the easygoing attitude professed by these cameos itself was problematic. Crosby, whose singing was characterized as "effortless,"⁸ struggled with public perception of his behaviour as laziness, a stigma that carried through not only to the jokes that Hope made about his partner but the characterizations of the cameo itself. Though audiences may have wanted more Bing, they did not want more of the same. Part of the problem was the question of acting as labour. The ability of the camera to represent documentary space and the resulting, oft-reinforced associations of film acting with the neutral transparency of simply being present meant that the performance of ease was accepted as easy work, or no work at all.⁹ Audiences wanted to see their favourite actors, and the cameo became such an established element of the lowbrow comedy of Bing and Bob that they garnered praise in even the worst reviewed films of their careers.¹⁰ Together, their consummate ordinariness made their desire to do little work for potential pay maximized. The emphasis on their cameos as marks of friendship rather than pure publicity, and the care

⁵ Timothy Corrigan, "Film and the Culture of Cult," in *The Cult Film Experience: Beyond All Reason*, ed. J. P. Telotte (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), 31.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Umberto Eco, "'Casablanca': Cult Movies and Intertextual Collage," *SubStance* 14, no. 2 (1985): 463.

⁸ Walter Raubicheck, "Bing Crosby at Paramount: From Crooner to Actor," in *Going My Way: Bing Crosby and American Culture*, ed. Ruth Prigozy and Walter Raubicheck (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 84.

⁹ James Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 272.

¹⁰ Milty, "Film Reviews: Cancel My Reservation," *Variety*, September 20, 1972.

taken to elide the way such cameoists were remunerated makes clear what elements of the cameo audiences would judge negatively. Those following in the footsteps of Hope and Crosby found that the kind of cameos that had been marketed under the umbrella of friendly impromptu kidding eventually crossed a threshold where they were panned by critics as lazy, easy, and, sometimes, too much fun.¹¹

These casual comedic cameos depended upon their disruptive power to engage audiences eager to participate in the construction and deconstruction of star personas. When they ceased to be groundbreaking, comedic cameos experienced a backlash against the happy-go-lucky lifestyles they supposedly revealed. Freed from the oversight of studios, actors such as Crosby and Frank Sinatra became serial cameoists, driving widespread fatigue with roles that clued-in audiences had recognized as little work for little perks and enormous marketing potential. Bing Crosby succumbed to this criticism in *Pepe*. As I will demonstrate, cameos were seen as symbols of decadence in a filmic landscape that was turning towards new standards of narrative and of acting as the New Hollywood redefined performance and realism in fiction film. Without its claim to insouciant insiderism or the power to disrupt and reveal the Hollywood machine, the cameo had no attraction for savvy audiences.

Performance, naturalism and labour

Film acting has made claims to naturalism since its inception. Wojcik suggests that those claims may have their origins in typecasting, a practice of 19th century theatre wherein actors knew intimately the types in which they specialized.¹² Typecasting assured continued employment for an actor who specialized in certain types.¹³ The early movie colony in Hollywood took advantage of this professional familiarity, recruiting stage actors to bring their types as extras in the off-season.¹⁴ However, by the mid-1920s, extra work was considered as easy labour for the out-of-work and unfit for more serious labour.¹⁵ For many, extra work was

¹¹ A.P. Jacobs to I. Windisch, "Inter Office Memo: Bob Hope Idea," January 10, 1959, Marty Weiser Alias Jesse James 1959 Folder 14, Margaret Herrick; Dick Williams, "It's Cantinflas Who Puts Spark in Long Pepe," *LA Mirror*, December 28, 1961.

¹² Pamela Robertson Wojcik, "Typecasting," *Criticism* 45, no. 2 (2003): 241.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 226.

¹⁴ Denise McKenna, "The Photoplay or the Pickaxe: Extras, Gender, and Labour in Early Hollywood," *Film History: An International Journal* 23, no. 1 (2011): 13.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

the lowest rung on a ladder that they hoped would lead them to stardom, and, at least according to the fan magazines of the day and biographies, narratives of luck and perseverance were all that separated one from the other.¹⁶ When people flocked to Hollywood, it was largely to work as extras, bodies whose simple presence qualified them as performing labour.

The parameters of the labour that actors and especially stars undertake is difficult to define. Unlike extras, stars must regularly attend to the visibility of their persona. Examining this labour, King treats the star as a reflection of the process of commodity creation, where the personal attributes of the star have become openly commodified.¹⁷ While King suggests most workers deny their individuality in order to be viewed simply as interchangeable actors within a system of work, stars are "profiting from the sale of their own personae"¹⁸ where "the biographical resources of the actor are to be mobilized, rather than differentially suppressed."¹⁹ The star is the object of labour, whether surrounded by workers who assist in his commodification by refining his persona based on biographical details, imagined or otherwise, or contributing his own labour to his performance. King notes that, unlike most labour, the star's work can only be done in public; workshops, rehearsals, or other exercises that are truly done in private serve as practice for some future public performance. Yet, King asserts, this labour has no value because audiences hold in highest esteem those performances that appear spontaneous.²⁰ In Turner's analysis, the star occupies a happy medium between individual qualities and the repeatable standard:²¹ while asserting their personas as commodities, celebrities also situate themselves within an existing system of roles. This reproducibility has long been an integral part of acting as profession, as in typecasting. Although Hollywood quickly overthrew this strict division for a constantly rotating cast of performers, stars nevertheless emerged along the lines of old types.²²

The concept of film acting as easy and natural further complicates an understanding of the labour of actors. The belief that film can represent the world as it really is depends on

¹⁶ Ibid., 8.

¹⁷ Barry King, "The Star and the Commodity: Notes towards a Performance Theory of Stardom," *Cultural Studies* 1, no. 2 (1987): 146.

¹⁸ Ibid., 152.

¹⁹ Ibid., 157.

²⁰ Ibid., 153.

²¹ Graeme Turner, *Understanding Celebrity* (London: SAGE, 2004), 37.

²² Wojcik, "Typecasting," 237.

obscuring acting as labour. Marshall suggests that, unlike theatre acting, early film acting was established as effortless and natural rather than rehearsed.²³ While the mannered acting of Lillian Gish or Mary Pickford may seem far removed from effortless to viewers today, as Nacache notes, what is perceived as natural is culturally and historical contingent.²⁴ The star was an everyman whose skills followed from the practice of merely being him- or herself. Marshall concurs with Dyer that "the ordinary elements of the film star are important as a marked entrance point for the audience to play with kinds of identity and identification."²⁵ However, unlike Dyer who insists on extraordinary talent as the defining complement to a star's relatability, for Marshall, the film star as a natural had little to distinguish him from the masses. As he notes, "Because of the sustained focus on external appearance, as opposed to acting ability, the film star appeared to be chosen quite randomly."²⁶ For Klevan, naturalistic acting hides the labour of the actor, instead transferring the audience's attention to the intricacies of the drama, thus creating a situation where "the achievement of the performer and the viewer are united."²⁷ Attention to acting calls attention to what is usually seamless and integrated. When audiences attend to the acting, the film is revealed as a game of pretend at which its actors are playing.²⁸

When cameos shifted away from perpetuating the glamour of early Hollywood, they were responding to the first swells in a "rising economy of realness."²⁹ Celebrities and the studio publicity machines turned away from an ideal image of their selves in an attempt to connect with skeptical audiences who had been cued in by fan magazines to the professional publicists.³⁰ As early as the 1930s, this realness was reflected in both the official and unofficial marketing of celebrity personas, as new stars such as Judy Garland were photographed with baseball bats

²³ P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 87.

²⁴ Jacqueline Nacache, *L'acteur de cinéma* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2005), 56.

²⁵ Marshall, *Celebrity and Power*, 91.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Andrew Klevan, *Film Performance: From Achievement To Appreciation* (London: Wallflower Press, 2005), 7.

²⁸ Ibid., 99.

²⁹ Adrienne Lai, "Glitter and Grain: Aura and Authenticity in the Celebrity Photographs of Juergen Teller," in *Framing Celebrity: New Directions in Celebrity Culture*, ed. Su Holmes and Sean Redmond (New York: Routledge, 2012), 227.

³⁰ Ibid., 215.

rather than in the tennis gear seen in *Show People*,³¹ and more lurid stories replaced innocuous biographical details in fan magazines and their gossip progeny. To make their lifestyles appear more typical, stars asserted their performance as a kind of labour. Dyer and Lusted suggest labour is an important part of the star identity; for these theorists the star owes his appeal to the dual myth of hard work and extraordinary talent.³² While the unique gifts of the star set him above the masses, this hard work is an experience to which ordinary people can relate. Lusted suggests that, in order to reaffirm that portion of their myth that they owe to ordinary labour, stars undermine their own performances by participating in "regular demystification of the process"³³ of entertainment. This revelation of the star's labour can thus be seen as subversive tactic that unites the star with the audience, sharing in the experience of work as they both struggle to believe and make believable the myths that are perpetuated by a dominant ideology.³⁴ At the same time, the unequal relationship between feted celebrity and mass audience is checked by the claim that fame is owed to the audience, asserting audience participation and control.³⁵

In terms of the cameo, the audience's participation in filling out the character-space for the less-than-minor appearance of this recognizable figure allows for shared acknowledgement of audience labour in the creation of stars. While it is never naturalistic, the cameo nevertheless calls on the intersection between narrative and documentary space and exposes film performance as a record of a kind of labour defined most obviously by presence and its visibility. Whether this act of exposure is subversive is open to debate. As Feuer points out, as a strategy against dominant ideologies, diegetic breaks offer limited opportunities for resistance as the audience participates not only in demystification, but continually allows themselves to be reabsorbed back into the narrative.³⁶ This process of de- and re-mystification is characteristic of the Hollywood musicals that Feuer examines, demonstrating an often overlooked between mainstream and dominant cinema modes and so-called subversive techniques. Klinger likewise agrees that the subversiveness of demystification and audience participation is not only limited by a film as

³¹ Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 30.

³² David Lusted, "The Glut of Personality," in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, ed. Christine Gledhill (New York: Routledge, 1991), 251.

³³ *Ibid.*, 253.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 256.

³⁵ Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 35.

³⁶ Jane Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 80.

produced by the studio, but that those acts of subversiveness have long been harnessed by studios in the manufacture of cult.³⁷ This exposure of labour to the audience, and the invitation to offer up their labour, is one of the basic elements of cult appreciations of cinema.

Audience Labour, participation and cult

Cult appreciation, like cinephilia, is concerned with audience reactions to a film. According to Mathijs and Mendik, both cult and cinephilia "challenge traditional forms of liking or disliking films."³⁸ Linked to labour, cult creates work for spectators. Eco writes that cult "provides a completely furnished world so that fans can quote characters and episodes as if they were aspects of the fan's private sectarian world."³⁹ While cinephilia calls on the spectator to infuse the images they see onscreen with their own memories and associations, cult asks audiences to adopt the diegesis into their own creative world. Both cinephilia and cult address documentary space, whether by exporting their own or importing that of the film world. As a technique that exposes performance and labour, cult can feel countercultural and marginal. Although Hills asserts cult presents itself as being "constructed against the tastes and practices of the 'mainstream,'"⁴⁰ like many fan cultures, it is never fully resistant because, as Jenkins points out, the narrative is already determined and "can never fully conform to audience desires."⁴¹ Instead, cult offers sites for "difference in viewing."⁴² As Klinger suggests, cult exists in dialogue with other texts in different media, encouraging intertextuality that shapes reception beyond the limits of the movie.⁴³ Cult allows and encourages audiences to "break, dislocate, and unhinge" elements of the film from their moorings within the diegesis.⁴⁴ Theorists including Elsaesser and Keathley see cult as an outgrowth of cinephilia geared towards the repetition of the unique

³⁷ Barbara Klinger, "Digressions at the Cinema: Reception and Mass Culture," *Cinema Journal* 28, no. 4 (1989): 4.

³⁸ Ernest Mathijs and Xavier Mendik, "Introduction," in *The Cult Film Reader*, ed. Ernest Mathijs and Xavier Mendik (New York: Open University Press/McGraw-Hill Education, 2008), 6.

³⁹ Eco, "Casablanca," 462.

⁴⁰ Matthew Hills, *Fan Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 99.

⁴¹ Henry Jenkins, "Reception Theory and Audience Research: The Mystery of the Vampire's Kiss," in *Reinventing Film Studies*, ed. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (London: Arnold, 2000), <http://web.mit.edu/cms/People/henry3/vampkiss.html>.

⁴² Klinger, "Digressions at the Cinema," 16.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁴ Eco, "Casablanca," 463.

moment for multiple audiences at multiple times.⁴⁵ Cameos exist at this intersection of cinephilia and cult.

Cameos create breaks in diegesis that allow audiences to participate in cult appreciation. Mathijs asserts that, as one might expect with its connotations of documentary and narrative space and its opportunities for audience labour, the cameo has "high cult potential," especially when it is recurring, presenting a "cult supertext stretched across films."⁴⁶ Indeed, the cameo fulfills the requirements for cult in a way that suggests it has not only mirrored but encouraged cult reception. The cameo is like cult intrinsically intertextual, drawing on other texts, including movies as well as the press produced by studios and fan publications, to allow the audience to fill out the cameoist's character-space. In fact, the cameo was first established through metatexts that commented on the film, such as reviews and publicity that notified audiences of the stars they were about to see in publicity campaigns from *Hollywood Boulevard* to *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*.⁴⁷ Cameos demanded the response of recognition from the audience, encouraging their participation in becoming adept fans. Encouraging audiences to work along with them, cameos helped create the conditions for cult appreciation.

A Friendship unit: selling comedy duos with a casual cameo

Cult films are often comedic films, and cameos in comedies are especially cultish. If cult is bumpy and unhinged, then comedy is a natural home for cult, especially the disruptive comedian comedy in which cameos abound. Steve Seidman posits the comedian comedy as a genre that centres on an "already recognizable performer with a clearly defined extrafictional personality"⁴⁸ who appears within a fictional universe in which he must confront and attempt to adhere to social norms and boundaries. Drawing from the off-screen star persona of the comedian, comedian comedies owe more to the non-narrative comedy routines of vaudeville

⁴⁵ Thomas Elsaesser, "Cinephilia or the Uses of Disenchantment," in *Cinephilia: Movies, Love and Memory*, ed. Marijke de Valck and Malte Hagener (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), 38.

⁴⁶ Mathijs and Mendik, "Introduction," 144.

⁴⁷ Paramount, "Hollywood Boulevard Press Book," n.d., Press Books, Margaret Herrick; "It's a Mad Booklet" (Mar-King Publishing and Novelty Corp., n.d.), Linwood D Gunn Papers, Folder 285, Margaret Herrick.

⁴⁸ Seidman, *Comedian Comedy*, 2.

than classical narrative film, and they largely abandon causal motivation.⁴⁹ Comedian comedies unite both performing and acting, a dichotomy that Nacache establishes based on whether or not the actors in a diegesis address themselves to the audience or work to construct a fictional world that excludes them.⁵⁰ Indeed, comedian comedies reflect the performing codes of early cinema, based on isolated jokes and the jolt of the cinema of attractions.⁵¹ Comedian comedies are perfect sites for the cameo and its disruptive power, thriving on the art of distraction as they play with the norms that would make their star the centre of attention, cueing audiences to watch the background for comedic details.⁵² In the history of this genre, one can read the perils of disrupting narrative that the cameo too would come up against; Krutnik and Neale note that comedian comedies experienced a crash after their anarchic zenith in the 1930s when they were characterized as lazy in comparison to the more genteel narrative comedies.⁵³ Just as questions of class and labour figured into the reception of such comedies, they would also figure in the development of the cameo. Comedian comedies were seen as clowning, the antithesis of work. The cameos that comedian comedies encouraged as part of their strategy of playing with extra-diegetic and extra-textual elements, as well as upholding the partnerships that comedians brought from other media such as vaudeville and broadcast, would carry on this struggle. Within comedian comedies, the cameo explored anti-narrative and extra-diegetic impulses to communicate the studio and performance affiliations that were the message of cameos.

Perhaps the best known comedian comedies of the 1940s and 1950s are those of Bob Hope, especially when he was partnered with Bing Crosby in the *Road* series. The first in this series was Paramount's *Road to Singapore* in 1940, with the seventh and final installment *Road to Hong Kong* produced in 1962 by United Artists in association with the two stars. The series followed Crosby and Hope as two vaudeville entertainers who found themselves down on their luck in various parts of the globe from and invariably dug themselves even deeper by attempting to rescue a wealthy woman, usually played by Dorothy Lamour, from thugs of various kinds. As entertainers, they played characters not that far removed from their star personas as laid-back

⁴⁹ Frank Krutnik and Steve Neale, *Popular Film and Television Comedy* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 31.

⁵⁰ Nacache, *L'acteur de cinéma*, 14.

⁵¹ Krutnik and Neale, *Popular Film and Television Comedy*, 16; Kristine Brunovska Karnick and Henry Jenkins, *Classical Hollywood Comedy* (Routledge, 2013), 157.

⁵² Karnick and Jenkins, *Classical Hollywood Comedy*, 85.

⁵³ Krutnik and Neale, *Popular Film and Television Comedy*, 131.

crooner and neurotic lothario respectively, and their dialogue was peppered with jokes not only about their own achievements (Academy Awards) or lack thereof (Academy Awards) but Hollywood quips of all kinds, from name-checking off-duty star eatery the Brown Derby in *Road to Bali* (1952) to calling out the politics of billing order in *Road to Hong Kong* (1962). (Fig. 24) Crosby and Hope were among the top box office earners of the 1940s, and both were signed to Paramount, the studio behind almost all of the series. Not only their style was edgy. They were also on the forefront of star autonomy from studios in the 1940s. Beginning with their second picture together, both Crosby and Hope had special contracts that allowed limited non-exclusivity, including the right to make another picture outside of Paramount in the 1940s.⁵⁴ Following the success of the *Road* movies, Hope and Crosby used this option to make their fifth movie together, *Road to Rio*, in 1947, benefitting from Paramount as co-producers rather than employees.⁵⁵

As performers, both Hope and Crosby came from a milieu outside of cinema. Their performances were heavily influenced by the platforms of radio and vaudeville where they had found their start. Hope in particular persisted with the style of direct address to the audience that had been a hallmark of the vaudeville performance.⁵⁶ Vaudeville had provided non-narrative variety entertainment, where performance was more important than character.⁵⁷ Krutnik suggests this anti-narrative impulse was dominant well into the 1950s in the comedies made by double-acts such as Hope and Crosby and the duo of straight-man crooner Dean Martin and zany Jerry Lewis, where the film parodied "a legitimate linking structure for a variegated entertainment spectacle."⁵⁸ Hope's trademark radio patter not only involved jokes about the stars and their private lives, introducing unusually prescient commentary on the real world as recognized by the audience,⁵⁹ but he frequently laughed at his own jokes, a move that biographer Quirk suggests encouraged an empathic relationship to the audience, "winking at the audience, as if to tell them

⁵⁴ Leo Calvin Rosten, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, the Movie Makers* (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1941), 80.

⁵⁵ Thomas F. Brady, "Unemployment Rises as Production Drops -- Roosevelt Kin Approve Films," *New York Times*, February 23, 1947.

⁵⁶ Krutnik and Neale, *Popular Film and Television Comedy*, 187.

⁵⁷ Karnick and Jenkins, *Classical Hollywood Comedy*, 154.

⁵⁸ Frank Krutnik, "A Spanner in the Works? Genre, Narrative, and the Hollywood Comedian," in *Classical Hollywood Comedy*, ed. Kristine Brunovska Karnick and Henry Jenkins (New York: Routledge, 1995), 30.

⁵⁹ Richard Zoglin, *Hope: Entertainer of the Century* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 7.

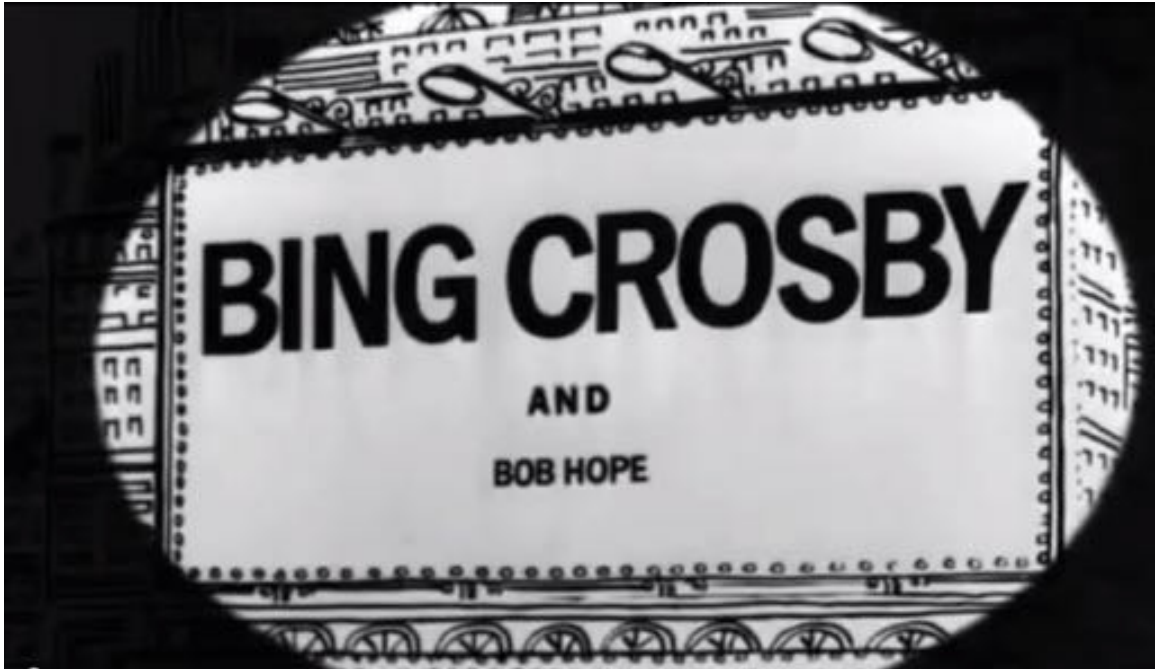


Figure 24. Typical Hope-Crosby ribbing in the title credits for *The Road to Hong Kong* (1962).

he was enjoying it as much as they."⁶⁰ Rather than creating a character who wisecracked about his imaginary life, Hope ribbed the celebrities that he and audiences knew.⁶¹ In the 1940s, Hope was edgy, and his jokes were thought by many reviewers to make too many clever references to Hollywood insiders. Critics worried that the "close-in satire on Hollywood itself" was "likely to miss with Mr. and Mrs. Average Audience."⁶² Irreverent and contemporary, his jokes about Hollywood movie stars and their private lives helped establish the trajectory for a new kind of comedy, delivered in a spontaneous style. As comedian comedies, Hope's movies were written around this style of direct address and interaction with real world Hollywood as the audience knew it. In filmic terms, the direct address was translated into camera asides, but also diegetic rupture.⁶³ Cameos were the perfect extension of this style into the visual language of film, presenting the real life stars that Hope was poking fun at as not only visible but visibly complicit in the comedic reframing of their persona undertaken by Hope and his audience.

If audiences loved them, it may have been because Hope and Crosby were opening up their performances to cult appreciation. The combination of direct address and frequent industry jokes emphasized Hope and Crosby not only as film insiders, but as appreciative spectators, name-checking contemporary culture to demonstrate to the audience that they were not only movie stars but movie fans.⁶⁴ In *Road to Rio*, the pair even actively engage in cult spectatorship during a screening onboard the ship that is carrying them to South America. There, they encourage Dorothy Lamour to attend not to the main action in the movie screened as the ship's entertainment but rather to the extras, among whom can be spotted the slumming duo in what are ostensibly their own cameos as moonlighting musicians. As in musicals, which confuse the production and consumption of entertainment, Crosby and Hope revealed the labour behind the film throughout the series, making references to the terms of their contracts, frequently chastising the studio they were working for, and taking every opportunity to illustrate that their

⁶⁰ Lawrence J. Quirk, *Bob Hope: The Road Well-Traveled* (New York: Applause Books, 2000), 29.

⁶¹ Zoglin, *Hope*, 7.

⁶² "Bing, Bob, Dottie Doughtily Cruise to Rio," *LA Times*, January 1, 1948.

⁶³ Ethan de Seife, *Tashlinesque: The Hollywood Comedies of Frank Tashlin* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2012), 70.

⁶⁴ Steven Cohan, "Almost Like Being at Home: Showbiz Culture and Hollywood Road Trips in the 1940s and 1950s," in *The Road Movie Book*, ed. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (New York: Routledge, 1997), 134.

far-flung locations were nothing more than studio soundstages. In *Road to Hong Kong*, they cry out for special effects to get them out of sticky situations, or even out of conspicuous clothes; in *Road to Utopia* (1946) they wax poetic about the famous Paramount mountain. They were undertaking the labour of skeptical spectators, who wanted to see through the images. In their performances, Hope and Crosby continually acknowledged the spectator. While "most actors must act unaware of the spectators in movies",⁶⁵ Hope and Crosby constantly referred to the audience, their performance, and the Hollywood movie industry. Their movies were "shot through with references to other movies (and to themselves *as* movies)." ⁶⁶ Although Hollywood reviewers were themselves unconvinced that fans could have absorbed all of the details that they had been throwing at them enough to have a real familiarity with Hollywood, Crosby, Hope, and their writers, were sure that audiences were interested in behind the scenes and beyond. Instead of leaving audiences to pick apart the production themselves, Crosby and Hope participated in the action, doing some of the work to make their inside jokes more accessible.

While their performances assured audiences that Crosby and Hope were laughing along with spectators at the Hollywood machine, their publicists were quick to confirm to audiences that the curtain was well and truly pulled back to reveal the industry at its most vulnerable. To do this, they made an effort to broadcast that while the sets were manufactured, and the plots pre-written, the laughs were real and the jokes spontaneous. Critics claiming to have made visits to the studio breathlessly reported the fun the two had on set,⁶⁷ perpetuating the story of Crosby and Hope as inveterate ad-libbers.⁶⁸ Clearly these ad-libs were among the stories circulated by Paramount publicists. Seidman has noted that the comedian comedy relies on not only the recognizability of the comedian persona on and offscreen, but the assurance that the comedian's comedic energy is not only part of his public persona but his private persona as well.⁶⁹ The appeals to documentary space in the comedian comedy are meant to confirm for the audience that the comedian's impulse for zaniness has been harnessed by the studio for the audience's

⁶⁵ Seidman, *Comedian Comedy*, 17.

⁶⁶ David Bordwell, *The Way Hollywood Tells It: Story and Style in Modern Movies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 8.

⁶⁷ Neil Rau, "Visiting the Studios: Funniest Crosby and Hope Clowning Never Screened," *Los Angeles Examiner*, May 18, 1952; Paul Minoff, "The World Is Their Oyster," *Cue*, December 6, 1952.

⁶⁸ Quirk, *Bob Hope*, 127.

⁶⁹ Seidman, *Comedian Comedy*, 64.

viewing pleasure, and that only barely.⁷⁰ Comedians are meant to be funny rather than act funny, which is why in the comedian comedy they can only play themselves. The power to ad-lib, or be naturally funny, was important to the marketing of the comedian and his films. On the other hand, Hope was known for having one of the biggest crews of gag writers who produced his syndicated columns, memoirs, and his jokes for all of his many media.⁷¹ As Seife notes, "Though Hope's delivery is such that these lines sound like they could be improvised, his words appear verbatim in the final draft of the film's screenplay."⁷² Even the Crosby and Hope feud was manufactured by Paramount writers after earlier feuding comedians, and others have suggested that the friendship that underscored the rivalry was manufactured as well.⁷³ The indivisibility of their real and onscreen personas was important for the Crosby and Hope movies, yet at the same time, that reality had to be uniquely tied to their extraordinary talent as comedians. Even at the time, the *New York Times* suggested that this clowning was subject to financial concerns, noting that on *Road to Rio*, the first film in which Crosby and Hope arranged for profit-sharing with Paramount by co-producing it themselves, the clowning was much less rampant.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, this promise of spontaneity and real-life kidding was part of the legacy of Crosby and Hope bequeathed on cameos and their origin myths.

The Big Ones Don't Even Act: the Cameo and the Anti-Narrative Impulse

The *Road* films were the original substance of the Crosby-Hope partnership, but their union grew to have significance beyond the series as it was promoted not only in other media such as radio and print, but in other movies as well through cameos. While Hope never appeared in any Crosby movies (although Lamour does turn up among a large group in a rather small airplane to sing along with Bing in *Here Comes the Groom*), Crosby was a fixture in Hope films, making six appearances in total beginning in the 1940s. His association with Hope continued even after the *Road* partnership dissolved, with Crosby making his last cameo, laughing helplessly as Hope goes to his presumed execution in 1972's *Cancel My Reservation*. (This is the

⁷⁰ Ibid., 48.

⁷¹ Zoglin, *Hope*, 130.

⁷² Seife, *Tashlinesque*, 85.

⁷³ Cohan, "Almost Like Being at Home: Showbiz Culture and Hollywood Road Trips in the 1940s and 1950s," 101.

⁷⁴ Brady, "Unemployment Rises as Production Drops -- Roosevelt Kin Approve Films."



Figure 25. Hope asks Crosby for a light in *My Favorite Blonde* (1942).

third Hope execution scene in which Bing's cameo is invoked.) These cameos were not identified as such until 1959's *Alias Jesse James*, three years after Todd had established the links between cameos, celebrities, and small roles. The comedic playfulness of Crosby's appearances would come to be as influential on the model of the cameo as Todd's definition of the concept, which preserved the laudatory lineage of star appearances as seen in *Show People* or *Sunset Boulevard*. The first Hope film that Crosby appears in, dating to the time of their second film in the *Road* series, 1942's *Road to Morocco*, was *My Favorite Blonde*, a chase film where Hope is a suspected murderer. Dragging Madeleine Carroll along with him, he ends up at a union picnic, where he asks a bystander for a light. That bystander turns out to be Bing Crosby, a fact that Hope's character first recognizes and then rejects in a protracted double take. (Fig. 25) Just like a spectator, Hope enacts the recognition of his partner, who appeared without introduction in keeping with the increasing dependence on audience powers of recognition to identify stars seen at that time in Hollywood-set films. Crosby's cameo, and Bob's ability to recognize him, indicate a willingness to disrupt the diegesis of the comedy film, transforming it into a characteristic comedian comedy.

The cameos continued. Crosby drops in as a fellow swashbuckler who swoops in to take Bob's girl in the finale of *The Princess and the Pirate* (1944), a foiled executioner in *My Favorite Brunette* (1947), a purported "character actor" in *Son of Paleface* (1956), and a sharpshooter in *Alias Jesse James* (1959), ending with *Cancel My Reservation* (1972). Although the cameos may have been initiated to promote the films the duo made together, their growth as a signature of the pair clearly influenced the makeup of those very films in the late 1940s, as the *Road to Rio* (1947) and *Road to Bali* featured increasing numbers of cameos by other actors. Owing to the precedents set by the Crosby trade, cameos became an important signifier of the *Road* series' brand of inside Hollywood joke. Even when Crosby was absent, his visibility is invoked: Hope is warned that the rifles of a shooting squad will make what is described as a "bing" sound in *Monsieur Beaucaire*, leading Hope to some snide wordplay and his typical camera aside, while Bing's hit songs are the subject of jokes in *They Got Me Covered* (1943), *Where There's Life* (1947) and *Caught in the Draft* (1941).⁷⁵ As Hope says to the audience as Crosby croons over the radio in *They Got Me Covered*, "That guy keeps haunting me." These

⁷⁵ Seidman, *Comedian Comedy*, 42.

hauntings are like invisible cameos, carrying "the residue of various film roles."⁷⁶ Crosby's cameos were such a part of Hope's comedic identity that in *Son of Paleface*, he begins the film by mentioning that "this old character actor" will not be appearing. However, this voiceover accompanies a cutaway from the opening action at turn-of-the-century Yale to an image of Bing himself driving nonchalantly in a modern car, foiling Hope's attempt at mastering the situation. (Fig. 26) Cameos continually evade Hope's control: they are made to appear impromptu and unauthorized, exemplifying the feud between the two as Crosby appears taunting Hope in moments of failure or attempting to upset Hope's success. Yet, behind the aura of impromptu ribbing promoted in the film's uneasy documentary space was an extra-filmic narrative of mischievous cooperation. In the press book for *My Favorite Blonde* (1942), the first Crosby cameo was characterized as having its origins in a gag where Hope tried to sneak him on set under the director's nose, a joke which the director turned on the duo by putting Bing to work.

Each cameo by Crosby in a Hope movie served to remind the viewer of the team of Hope and Crosby, and their *Road* series.⁷⁷ Partnerships, new and lasting, were represented by cameos that kept each half visible to audiences as a pair. In this way, cameos worked as usual in the marketing of a studio product. When the two appeared together in a cameo in Cecil B. DeMille's *The Greatest Show on Earth* in 1952, they were watching Dorothy Lamour, their regular *Road* costar. However, the Crosby-Hope pairing was more important than promoting studio affiliation, instead reflecting on the partnership itself as a media phenomenon that extended to other media and to other studios. In 1944's *The Princess and the Pirate*, a film produced by Goldwyn and Hope's one freelance film for that year as permitted in his contract, Crosby appeared in a cameo, despite the fact that it was not only a production outside of Paramount, but one that was not directly benefitting from promoting the Paramount-produced *Road* movies.⁷⁸ What makes this cameo a particular punchline is not only that Crosby appears in a Hope film, but that Crosby appears in a Goldwyn picture. As if to underscore this cross-studio appearance, Hope sets up the cameo by pointing out that Crosby is a bit player from Paramount, ending with the line, "This is the last picture I do for Goldwyn!" This was already the second Crosby-Hope cameo, yet in a special letter to critics, Goldwyn's publicist begged reviewers to keep this cameo a secret from

⁷⁶ Ibid., 48.

⁷⁷ Cohan, "Almost Like Being at Home: Showbiz Culture and Hollywood Road Trips in the 1940s and 1950s," 118.

⁷⁸ Zoglin, *Hope*, 195.



Figure 26. Crosby as an "old character actor" in this driving cameo from *Son of Paleface* (1952).

audiences by refraining from mentioning it in their columns.⁷⁹ Crosby's extra-studio appearance, given the preponderance of Bing cameos in Hope films to that date, is only particularly surprising if one knows how jealously studios guarded their actors, a knowledge that the audiences were cued in to with Hope's line, but which draws on a familiarity with the trials of the industry in which they must have already been well-versed. A cameo that plays to the understanding of not only the attributes of a star persona, but its boundaries as made up by the conditions of a film's production acknowledges a rather sophisticated audience. Although ultimately this cameo occurred in the name of visibility for the duo, who were only really free agents outside of the Paramount machine for a single film (or rather, a single major role) a year, it allowed Crosby and Hope to assert that they were their own men to the industry-savvy audience. While still confined to limiting contracts in the 1940s, nevertheless they were publicly weaning themselves and their personas from the studio system.

The diegetic disruptiveness of the comedian comedy developed in the Hope-Crosby cameo trades. In *My Favorite Blonde*, the first trade, the Crosby cameo was written into the script very late, appearing nowhere in the shooting script that was finalized a month before he appeared before the cameras.⁸⁰ Unlike many later cameos, his cameo was shot during regular production rather than after the main production was completed. Because Crosby was fully incorporated into the scene, appearing in a long shot that includes not only images of the milling extras but other components of the union hall set, he had to appear during shooting. Even so, the cameo was completed in less than an hour of shooting time. Two versions of the scene were shot: one with Bing and one without.⁸¹ It is clear that the sense of disruption that the cameo would create was minimalized. Like earlier Hollywood-set cameos, where stars appeared in settings that were at least somewhat diegetically appropriate for them to be recognized in, this cameo presents a break with that logic. Many reviewers explained the scene in great detail to make sense for the

⁷⁹ George Glass to Reviewers, "From George Glass for Samuel Goldwyn to Reviewers," n.d., Production Clippings, Margaret Herrick.

⁸⁰ Don Hartman, Frank Butler, and Paramount, "My Favorite Blonde Shooting Script," November 10, 1941, Paramount Production Records My Favorite Blonde Folder 967, Margaret Herrick; Paramount, "My Favorite Blonde Script Supervisor's Notes," January 5, 1942, Paramount Production Files My Favorite Blonde Folder 8, Margaret Herrick.

⁸¹ Paramount Pictures Corporation, "My Favorite Blonde Script Supervisor's Notes," January 5, 1942, Paramount Production Files My Favorite Blonde Folder 8, Margaret Herrick.

audience of Crosby's unprecedented kind of role.⁸² Writing about Crosby's follow up cameo in *My Favorite Brunette* one reviewer provided a shot-by-shot account of the exchange to try to explain the laugh produced by the intersection of narrative and documentary space to his readers.⁸³ Other writers seemed pretty clear about what was meant by the cameo. As *Variety* noted "Hope's impatient executioner turns out to be - you guessed it - Bing Crosby."⁸⁴ If Hope and Crosby were enacting participative and disruptive modes of cult spectatorship, the transformation in the comedic stakes from the bumpkin Hope, who fails to recognize Crosby in *My Favorite Blonde*, to the cued-in Bob who is hyper-sensitive to Bing's presence in all succeeding films, emphasizes a changed way in which audiences saw themselves and their knowledge of stars. Audiences were tuned in to the diegetic disruption.

Cameos in the Crosby-Hope genre became increasingly anti-narrative. These cameos made full use of its diegetic disruption, not only for disruptive comedic effect, but to make production more efficient. Later cameos would make it easier for actors to report for shooting at any time convenient to them, using cutaways, reaction shots, and the ubiquitous driving sequence to create loosely diegetic scenarios that could be assembled using rear projection and other process shots after production had wrapped. They were shot as process shots, for example, with rear projection in a car that allowed these shots to be cut into almost any scene with the use of some location footage thrown up on standing transportation sets. Crosby appeared in just such a cameo in *Son of Paleface*, where he is driving a car, while *Mad World* opted to show both Jack Benny and Jerry Lewis in driving sequences that could otherwise be intercut into the main action, and that took little more than a half-hour of the star's time on set.⁸⁵ When Bob and Bing appear in the Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis comedy *Scared Stiff* in 1953, it is in a final cut-away to a previously unseen dungeon. (Fig. 27) Likewise, Martin and Lewis appear in *Road to Bali* in a silhouetted dream sequence that could have been shot anywhere. In *Alias Jesse James*, most of the cameos were shot in the post-production period. The non-sequitur or disjointed effect of

⁸² Wolfe Kaufman, "Bob Hope's at His Best in My Favorite Blonde," *Chicago Sun*, June 20, 1942.

⁸³ Redd Kann, "My Favorite Brunette," *Motion Picture Daily*, February 18, 1947.

⁸⁴ "My Favorite Brunette," *Variety Weekly*, February 19, 1947.

⁸⁵ Stanley Kramer Productions, "Daily Production Report," October 29, 1962, Stanley Kramer Box 62 Folder Mad World Production Reports Pre-Production, UCLA Special Collections; Eugene H. Frank to Stanley Kramer, "Re: Jerry Lewis," October 26, 1962, Stanley Kramer Box 61 Folder 4, UCLA Special Collections.



Figure 27. Crosby and Hope get the last laugh with their closing cameo in Martin and Lewis's *Scared Stiff* (1953).

cameos, as well as the close-up reveal that disguises incongruous settings, can thus be considered as a style informed by the conditions of its productions. These cameos not only shattered the diegesis of the film, but they made use of the film as an assemblage of fragments for their aesthetics.

Hope may have been the driving comedic force behind the *Road* movies, but his partnership with Crosby had particular influence on the character of their performance, and the cameos with which their partnership was promoted. In the 1940s, Crosby's persona was of the effortless crooner, whose public image was perpetually casual. The images that circulated of Crosby showed him dressed down and off-duty at the racetrack or with his family.⁸⁶ As Raubichek points out, Crosby's image was so laid-back that Paramount felt the need to produce a campaign emphasizing his hard-working nature in anticipation of 1944's *Going My Way*, a drama for which he eventually won an Oscar for his role as an offbeat priest.⁸⁷ Crosby had been named as "the laziest man in Hollywood" in the preceding years, and his somewhat sleepy delivery as well as his style of crooning made his acting seem almost damnably effortless.⁸⁸ This assessment of his performance style persists: Cohan writes that Crosby's delivery in the *Road* series is "a performance so low-key it barely seems like he is acting."⁸⁹ Crosby's and Hope performances were publicized off-the-cuff-and impromptu, drawing on their individual reputations for casual performance and direct address. For this reason, the type of cameos that Crosby presented were taken as advertised: as two jokers playing around on set, as their publicists made sure they were known to do. Improvisation and ad-libbing were an important part of the Crosby and Hope identity, and as the cameos became their trademark, the cameo became stamped with their brand of playful and effortless disruption.

Cameos, of course, did appear to be easy. Certainly it was easy work in terms of time demanded: Dorothy Lamour recounts how much she liked working on wartime roll-call productions such as *Stage Door Canteen* (1943), where "you came in, did your cameo, and

⁸⁶ Gary Giddins, "Introduction," in *Going My Way: Bing Crosby and American Culture*, ed. Walter Raubichek and Ruth Prigozy (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 5.

⁸⁷ Raubichek, "Bing Crosby at Paramount: From Crooner to Actor," 84.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁸⁹ Cohan, "Almost Like Being at Home: Showbiz Culture and Hollywood Road Trips in the 1940s and 1950s," 118.

left."⁹⁰ For stars, there was none of the waiting that defined extra work.⁹¹ Once the cameo's disruptive nature was established, such roles became less and less demanding in terms of time dedicated on set, often shot after production was completed in process shots or tightly framed close-ups. On the other hand, the casual, easy-going relationships which Crosby and Hope had established as a representation of their working life meant that cameos were recounted as spontaneous, and, because they were as effortless as the comedians' own personalities, as easy as breathing. How hard was it to stand up and be visible as yourself? In the early days of the Hope and Crosby cameo trades, the emphasis was on the humbleness of the actor descended to a small part.

As performance, the Crosby-Hope cameo trades appealed to the audience's appetite for access to star's lives beyond classical narratives. The competition and petty ribbing may have seemed out of place for the biggest box office draws of the 1940s and 1950s: certainly it didn't belong to the gracious Bette Davis or even Humphrey Bogart, but the laid-back nonchalance with which they purported to joke about not only their contracts but their status as labour established Hope and Crosby as ordinary workers underneath all that extraordinary talent. Especially within the comedian comedy, the cameo exposes some of the contradictions between documentary and narrative space to the audience in a way that, like the polished backstage musical, invokes the film set as a work environment while concealing all but the most casual labour.⁹² The archetype of the ordinary star with the singular talent has, according to Dyer, continued to be relevant to the making of celebrity,⁹³ even as audiences recognize that the ordinary star is yet another carefully constructed presentation. The desire to unmask the real person has driven much of the fascination with and demand for celebrities' increasingly intimate revelations. The Crosby-Hope cameo trades prefigure the tactics of "predictable spontaneity"⁹⁴ that are part of the visibility favoured by celebrities in supposedly candid environments such as interviews and talk shows. Yet, preserving the comedian comedy's "myth of the spontaneous

⁹⁰ Dorothy Lamour, *My Side of the Road* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980), 120.

⁹¹ McKenna, "The Photoplay or the Pickaxe," 8.

⁹² Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical*, 11.

⁹³ Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: BFI, 1979), 42.

⁹⁴ Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 116.

clown,"⁹⁵ they conversely strove to show that their talent made their labour carefree and that the work of performance was not just easy but effortless.

Cameos on the Road

In the *Road* movies, cameos helped preserve the insider perspective and reinforced extra-filmic relationships. Humphrey Bogart, Bob Crosby, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, Jane Russell and Jerry Colonna appeared in the films in cameos. These cameos disrupted the diegesis, consciously bringing in extradiegetic references to showbiz in a way that nostalgic cameos only hinted at. With the exception of Bogart, who appeared not in person but rather in a clip from *The African Queen* (1951) that was cut into the footage of a jungle-weary Crosby and Hope in Bali, these were all artists with whom the duo worked on other films and broadcasts. Russell appeared as Hope's romantic interest in the *Paleface* comedy-westerns, while Jerry Colonna was a longtime fixture of Hope's radio and television broadcasts who appeared in several *Road* movies. Each of these cameos presented a diegetic break. Jane Russell is summoned in saloon-girl attire from a snake-charming basket in *Road to Bali*. Jerry Colonna appears in a "wild spot" as the leader of a cavalry troop in *Road to Rio*, where scenes of him riding at full speed in an anonymous wilderness and with an unclear purpose were intercut with the main action. Bob Crosby's appearance, where he turns up in the bush among the wandering Crosby and Hope in *Road to Bali*, suddenly shooting a gun at Crosby's say-so, who explains "I promised him a shot in the film," presents perhaps the most disregard for the film's narrative. The same film contains a Martin and Lewis cameo where they intrude on the dreams of Dorothy Lamour, a "contractually agreed" favor returned by Crosby and Hope in their own Paramount buddy comedy, *Scared Stiff* (1953).⁹⁶ Other planned cameos were likewise narratively disruptive and exclusively extra-textually relevant: real-life upstart Sinatra stealing Crosby's limelight on the Brazil-bound ship in *Road to Rio*, or William Holden reprising his Asia-set roles of the 1950s in *The Road to Hong Kong*. Even so, the disruptive effects of the Crosby cameos were minimized up until the end of the 1950s, as he appeared mostly in the ending or at the very beginning.

⁹⁵ Seidman, *Comedian Comedy*, 48.

⁹⁶ Shawn Levy, *King of Comedy: The Life and Art of Jerry Lewis* (New York: St Martins Press, 1997), 153, <https://www.amazon.com/King-Comedy-Life-Jerry-Lewis/dp/0312168780>.

Historically, comedy has been considered a low art concerned with the interactions of ordinary class. For Neale and Krutnik, comedy is "founded on the transgression of decorum and verisimilitude, on deviations from any social or aesthetic rule, norm, model, convention or law."⁹⁷ According to this view, comedy shows deviation from the norm, and revels in failure to adhere to the conventions of social interaction. Comedian comedies achieve this subversion through direct address. Aesthetically, the cameo acts out against the norms of classical Hollywood, while playing out some of the internal contradictions of that form. These disruptions demonstrate the manufactured nature of the conventions of decorum and verisimilitude first in Hollywood, whether it means using sets that make one place appear to be another or performances that profess one person as someone totally different, and by extension in the larger world. The cameo makes us laugh by illustrating our devotion to a film's narrative space and its conventions. When Bing's brother Bob strolls across the sound-stage version of the tropics in *Road to Bali*, and claims he has dropped by simply to be visible, his appearance is funny, but not merely because Bob Crosby isn't supposed to be wandering around in the jungle, but because of course there is no reason why he can't be there except the boundaries of the narrative's laws of decorum and verisimilitude. Cameos can activate audience attention to the conventions of classical cinema to humorous effect.

While reviewers were excited to see nostalgic or glamorous cameos, not everyone liked the incorporation of cameos in the *Road* series' brand of comedian comedy. Variety claimed that "guest star appearances...serve no other purpose than to get a laugh,"⁹⁸ while others warned that gags about Hollywood have a "strong local appeal that may puzzle the cowpokes on the Wyoming range."⁹⁹ Disruptive cameos were dismissed as "sudden irrelevant appearances."¹⁰⁰ What exasperates many of these reviewers, but drove audiences wild, were exactly the intertextual strategies of convergence that allow audiences to participate as viewers. As one reviewer wrote,

"if at some far future date historians should unearth a time-capsule containing this most recent of the Crosby-Hope junkets they would probably be able to make neither head nor

⁹⁷ Krutnik and Neale, *Popular Film and Television Comedy*, 86.

⁹⁸ "Film Reviews: Road to Bali," *Variety*, November 19, 1952.

⁹⁹ David Bongard, "Road to Bali," *LA Daily News*, December 26, 1952.

¹⁰⁰ Margaret Hartford, "Hope, Crosby, Lamour Cutting Capers Again in 'Road' Film," *Hollywood Citizen-News*, December 26, 1952.

tail of it, for that genial duo deals in an increasingly more rarefied form of strictly contemporary humor...numerous lines and situations whose full enjoyment requires a knowledge of the pair's past pictures, off-screen activities, professional rivals, the personnel and format of their respective radio shows, and various other related subjects."¹⁰¹

Irreverent cameos by the likes of Bob Crosby and Jane Russell were an extension of the "gaggery"¹⁰² that Hope and Crosby films traded in, and required a complicit viewer who was fluent in the "strictly contemporary."¹⁰³ While to reviewers these were sloppy performances whose flat characters relied on star personas that they acknowledged were "so familiar to the audience that they automatically evoke a fuller image than the screen presents,"¹⁰⁴ to audiences the chance to fill in the character was itself a participative thrill. As a critic at the *New Yorker* had to concede, such cameos "obviously struck the audience as hilarious."¹⁰⁵ These cameos fit securely into the genre of comedian comedy, referring to the recognizable persona of the comedian and his cohorts outside of the film.

Trades and Tag Teams: Establishing an Entertainment Network

Cameos helped establish Crosby and Hope as a unit soon after their initial appearance as a duo in 1940, and their performances within the comedian comedy genre established them as men who couldn't help but be themselves. The cameos not only shared in but helped establish their reputation as kidders on and off-set, bolstered by accompanying press releases that insisted the cameos were set up on the fly, taking advantage of good friends who happened to be on the lot. In this way, the logic of convenience by which early cameos were assembled, by now transparent to viewers who had become increasingly savvy about the business of film production, became a part of the marketing of each film. However, instead of assembling those who were present on set by order of the studio or by deference to social obligations, the cameos that were arranged for Hope's movies represented friendship groups that were also entertainment units on radio, movies, and later television. Hope's cameo trades of the 1950s and 1960s included Jack

¹⁰¹ "Films: Road to Rio," *America*, January 10, 1948.

¹⁰² "Road to Rio," *Film Daily*, November 18, 1946, Press Clippings - Road to Rio, Margaret Herrick.

¹⁰³ "Films: Road to Rio."

¹⁰⁴ Bongard, "Road to Bali."

¹⁰⁵ "The Princess and the Pirate," *The New Yorker*, February 17, 1945.

Benny, Vincent Price, and Cecil DeMille, and he was scheduled to do walk-ons on *Gunsmoke* (1955-75) and *Tales of Wells Fargo* (1957-62) alongside the Western TV stars who appeared in *Alias Jesse James*.¹⁰⁶ Jerry Colonna, a recurring and not-entirely-photogenic performer on his radio show since the mid-1930s who would be carried with the Hope entourage into television, had repeat cameos in Hope's films. Colonna's inclusion indicates the triumph of Hope's personal magnetism over studio dictat, whose doubts were expressed in his removal from secondary billing.¹⁰⁷ This narrative of personal power was continued in the story of Hope's role in Crosby's supposedly impromptu appearance in *My Favorite Blonde*. In a planned article from 1959 about the Hope cameo tradition's latest iteration in *Alias Jesse James* to be titled "Friendship in Show Business," Paramount publicity agents suggested Hope discuss how these cameos were done completely free of charge for old friends. Even some of the cameos mentioned in the draft seem more imagined than real, creating a pedigree of cameos from Bogey to Sinatra to Crosby, all done for free and out of the goodness of their hearts. In the *Son of Paleface* pressbook, it was mentioned as a point of pride that "one of the highest paid figures in the entertainment world" was "playing a bit part so small that any self-respecting extra from Central Casting would turn up his nose at it."¹⁰⁸ Publicity surrounding these cameos emphasized that personal kidding rather than contractual obligations steered these events.

Asserting that these cameos were unplanned, not only in terms of the production but in terms of the budget, publicists spread the fiction that these small roles were uncompensated. No friendship it seemed was stronger than the friendship in which money was not an issue. As the *Life* article draft erroneously states, "All the western guys in *Alias Jesse James* were happy to do this for nothing. It all started way back in the early days of talkies when Hope got Bogart to do a guest spot for nothing in his movie then Crosby, then Jack Benny then Jerry Lewis, etc."¹⁰⁹ This is almost certainly untrue. Not only does the Bogart cameo date only to 1952 with *Road to Bali*, but while Gary Cooper shot *Alias Jesse James* with no reported compensation, many of the other

¹⁰⁶ Paramount, "Projected Outline on *Alias Jesse James*," November 1958, 3, Marty Weiser *Alias Jesse James* 1959 Folder 14, Margaret Herrick.

¹⁰⁷ Paramount, "Road to Rio Main Title Billing Corrected," March 19, 1947, Paramount Pictures Production Records Road to Rio Billing #1, Margaret Herrick.

¹⁰⁸ Paramount, "My Favorite Blonde Has Surprise in Store (Advance Feature)," *My Favorite Blonde Press Book*, 1943, 25.

¹⁰⁹ Jacobs to Windisch, "Inter Office Memo: Bob Hope Idea."

actors received other guarantees that made the small amount of work profitable.¹¹⁰ When Todd offered cars, jewellery, and paintings to the cameoists in *Around the World*, he was following a tradition of gifts in kind, tax-deductible presents, and marketing trades that had perhaps begun with Hope. Dorothy Lamour was content to appear in Crosby's *Here Comes the Groom* (1951) in the type of small part she had rejected in the final *Road* movie as "only a cameo...a couple of pages of dialogue that an extra could have handled"¹¹¹ because "the money was certainly right."¹¹² Biographer Marx recounts that Bing asked for \$25,000 for the *My Favorite Brunette* cameo, an amount that came out of co-producer Hope's pocket, and became a tax deduction for Crosby when he donated it to his alma mater. To be fair, in some situations it does seem that Hope was promoting his own associates at the expense of the studio: for example, Paramount's producers were somewhat unconvinced that Jerry Colonna should be paid \$7500 for his single day of work on *Road to Rio*, where his previous work at Disney had been at a rate of only \$2500 a day.¹¹³ Whether or not performers were compensated, these cameos were marketed entirely as visible declarations of friendship and support, made without the usual contractual and financial considerations. Unlike the studios, who could be confident in their control of actors on salary, buddies and partners did not ask each other for cash.

The Hope-Crosby cameo trades in the 1940s and 1950s strongly influenced the general function of cameos in film. While they existed alongside the developing nostalgic cameo, and perhaps influenced the explosion of ensemble cameo movies in the 1950s and 1960s, they carved a comedic niche for the cameo that not only called on documentary space to supplement narrative but that entirely broke with it. The comedian comedy around which Hope and Crosby wove their cameos in both solo projects and the *Road* movies set a precedent for cameos as not just recognizable, but as being fragments that stand outside of the diegesis. Likewise, the projection of an easy-going and spontaneous performance style reflected on the reception of the cameo. Because this is how they were marketed, these comedian cameos of the 1940s and 1950s were seen as informal trades among friends. Where Todd boasted about the small pay for which

¹¹⁰ Paramount, "Alias Jesse James Production Call Sheet," October 29, 1958, Paramount Pictures Production Records Folder 58, Margaret Herrick.

¹¹¹ Lamour, *My Side of the Road*, 197.

¹¹² Ibid., 140.

¹¹³ Paramount, "Authorization for Engagement of Artists by BC Enterprises, Inc. and Hope Enterprises Inc. - Jerry Colonna," February 25, 1947, Paramount Pictures Production Records Road to Rio Billing #1, Margaret Herrick.

stars appeared in his cameo-filled *Around the World in 80 Days* in 1956 and the two following years of the film's promotion, Hope followed suit by claiming his friends did it all for nothing in 1959. Yet, while Todd emphasized the perfectness of the characters for his roles, Hope's friends were cast, or rather happened to waltz over to the set, merely because they were friends. These cameos were not so much about skill, but about spontaneity, luck, chance, and most of all, about happy-go-lucky paling around.

Natural born enthusiasm: following in the footsteps of Hope and Crosby

As another entertainment unit who doubled as friendship group, the Rat Pack found the cameo a useful technique for reinforcing their image. In the final moments of their last pairing in *Road to Hong Kong*, where Bing and Bob ended up moonside with Joan Collins, Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin drop in with cocktail shaker in hand to whisk her away. The girl-chasing Hope and Crosby had met their match in "the Italians," as they were referred to in this cameo. Where Crosby and Hope had left off in the mid-1950s with their previous *Road* film, Sinatra and his Rat Pack had picked up with their series of films starring their favourite friends. Sinatra and Crosby had their own crooner rivalry as the young buck and the old standby that played out on their television specials of the 1950s.¹¹⁴ Martin had previously trod the same diegetically disruptive territory as Crosby and Hope in the hit madcap comedian comedies he made during his partnership with Jerry Lewis.¹¹⁵ As a duo, Martin and Lewis eschewed cameo appearances in their own films, except at the behest of Hope and Crosby, perhaps because cameos were such a Hope-Crosby signature during the height of the duo's popularity from 1948 to 1956. When Martin graduated to the Rat Pack, however, cameos became part of the group's visual vocabulary, both in their own co-produced films which included guest stars by stars big and small and in their solo work, such as Martin in Sinatra's *Come Blow Your Horn* (1963). The Rat Pack, as a friendship group in which hedonism and ease was the unifying factor, adopted all of the friendly spontaneity established by Crosby and Hope as integral to the cameo without the complete disruptiveness of the comedian comedy. Yet, without the framework of the comedian comedy genre, these cameos tread a fine line between lazy and likeness.

¹¹⁴ Samuel L. Chell, "Rivalries: The Mutual Mentoring of Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra," in *Going My Way: Bing Crosby and American Culture*, ed. Ruth Prigozy and Walter Raubicheck (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 118.

¹¹⁵ Seidman, *Comedian Comedy*, 23.

Ocean's 11 was the first of the Rat Pack series of films made in the 1960s. These films were coproduced by the major Rat Pack players, a group of actors and performers that included Martin and Sammy Davis, Jr. as its core members and was centred around Frank Sinatra and his nightclub acts at the Sands in Las Vegas, a casino in which he was a part owner.¹¹⁶ The Rat Pack was known for celebrating post-war hedonism and masculine freedom, and their act made sure that audience knew that they were having a good time as expressed through sexual innuendo and playful drunkenness.¹¹⁷ The Rat Pack films were mythologized as an extension of that carousing lifestyle, a star-studded free for all that included Rat Pack members playing former Army buddies who band together to rob a Vegas casino, for more or less altruistic reasons. Sinatra was the ringleader, Martin was a lounge singer, and other Rat Pack members and hangers-on appeared throughout the film. Like the Hope-Crosby films, press coverage of the event emphasized that pranks abounded on set.¹¹⁸ As one critic suggested at the time of the film's release, their "natural born enthusiasm carried over into the making of the film. At one point Dean asked Frank, 'You will give me a chance to read the script before we're done shooting it, won't you?'" Other contemporary accounts asserted that the actors wrote their own jokes.¹¹⁹ The film was perceived as fast and easy, "an insider's joke"¹²⁰ or "a genial group effort by a bunch of real-life pals,"¹²¹ and the "most expensive home movie ever."¹²² Yet, at least one of those writing for the audience for *Ocean's 11* clearly expected viewers to have a more tempered view of what is and is not impromptu; rather than being as dazzled as reporters witnessing Hope and Crosby quips of over a decade before, one reviewer slyly referred to the writers who crafted these "spontaneous-sounding ad-libs."¹²³ The movie was framed as a marriage of convenience, where the group needed to be in Vegas to fulfill their nightclub obligations, so the film was set where

¹¹⁶ Chris Rojek, *Frank Sinatra* (Cambridge, MA: Polity, 2004), 50.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹¹⁸ Mike Weatherford, *Cult Vegas: The Weirdest! The Wildest! The Swingin'est Town on Earth* (Las Vegas: Huntington Press, 2001), 24.

¹¹⁹ Philip K. Scheuer, "Las Vegas Swarms with Movie Stars: Heist Like Military Operation in Sinatra's 'Ocean's Eleven'," *Los Angeles Times*, February 2, 1960.

¹²⁰ Richard Griffiths, "'Ocean's 11' Fails to Awe N.Y. Critics," *LA Times*, August 30, 1960.

¹²¹ "Palship," *Newsweek*, August 8, 1960.

¹²² Bob Thomas, "Ocean's 11 Film Begun By Lawford," *Los Angeles Mirror*, January 18, 1960.

¹²³ Philip K. Scheuer, "Sinatra Premieres 'Ocean's Eleven': Las Vegas Hotels Host Stars; Film Enjoyable, Slow-Starting," *Los Angeles Times*, August 5, 1960.

they were working. However, the workload of shows and filming was serious.¹²⁴ Sinatra adopted the Crosby stance towards acting, with a "cavalier 'natural' air, seldom bothering to suffer more than two takes of a scene."¹²⁵ But, amid a sudden glut of cameo films and actors playing themselves, these efforts to define larger roles based purely on star persona in the Hope and Crosby model were poorly received. A mere six years later in 1966, *Ocean's 11's* debut on television touted Sinatra and his rat pack as the farthest thing from hip, sneering at the days "when they thought they were of national importance."¹²⁶ While the main roles belong to core Rat Pack members, more peripherally associated performers such as Shirley MacLaine and Vegas regular Red Skelton appear in pure cameos.¹²⁷ A role for sometime-Rat Packer Tony Curtis was also publicized, but did not materialize. In fact, the cameos flipped among a few actors. As the producer, Sinatra's contract allowed him to cast the minor roles with whomever he wanted without approval from Warners, the major studio attached to the film's distribution.¹²⁸ Friends were included, but big names were also important. Like in the Hope and Crosby trades, cameos were clearly as much business as friendship. Both of these unflattering cameos, picturing MacLaine as a drunk who doesn't want to be left out of the picture and Skelton as a gambler who tries to throw his fame around at the casino, adopted the sparring attitude of the Hope cameo trades. These had begun as bit roles such as Dealer, Client, and Drunk Girl that were then expanded around a star performer.¹²⁹ The unflattering nature of the Skelton and MacLaine cameos indicate that the desirability of being associated with the Rat Pack aura had overtaken any remaining considerations of propriety once mandated by studio contracts. In fact, once MacLaine was cast in the part, Drunk Girl became sexier, bawdier, and, with the addition of her final line "This is where you leave me, huh?" suddenly surprised that she was not included in the rest of the film. A far cry from the virtuous, waitressing Barbara Stanwyck in *Hollywood Canteen* or Kim Novak, who cheerfully allows herself to be mistaken for a shopgirl in *Pepe*,

¹²⁴ Rojek, *Frank Sinatra*, 147.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 32.

¹²⁶ "TV Preview: Sinatra's 'Rat Pack' in 'Ocean's 11'," *Hartford Courant*, June 9, 1966.

¹²⁷ Weatherford, *Cult Vegas*, 11; Rojek, *Frank Sinatra*, 136.

¹²⁸ "Agreement Between Dorchester Productions and Warner Bros.," November 8, 1957, Ocean's Eleven Legal Folder 63, Margaret Herrick.

¹²⁹ "Ocean's Eleven Script Revision Final," February 16, 1960, 113, Scripts AMPAS Unpublished, Margaret Herrick; "Ocean's Eleven Script," January 4, 1960, 79, Lewis Milestone Ocean's Eleven Script Folder 60, Margaret Herrick; *ibid.*, 113.

Shirley appears in a cameo that demonstrates the absence of typical studio protection in her acceptance of a bit part, but, linked by the cameo's legacy to her public persona, shows a vulgar and vulnerable side of the star. While *Ocean's 11* was largely seen as self-serving and forgettable, driving audience ennui at the concept of stars playing stars, nevertheless, it adopted a subtly new stance towards the cameo's kind of disruptiveness.

Taking it too easy: a cameo backlash

Films such as *Pepe*, *Mad World* and *Greatest Story Ever Told* were the victims of a palpable cameo backlash that began in the 1960s. While critics reviewing *Road* films of the 1940s had objected to the cameo's disruptive power, by the 1960s they objected to the cameo as a tired tool of star visibility. Cameo trades were seen as excessive; Crosby's "just plain embarrassing"¹³⁰ appearance in *Pepe* was Crosby's third cameo of 1960, including cameos in *Alias Jesse James* and the Marilyn Monroe film *Let's Make Love* (1960) alongside Milton Berle as a coach for the hapless Yves Montand. At the root of this rejection of the cameo was a question about acting as labour. Merely being oneself was no longer considered much of a performance, especially when the powers of recognition were little rewarded, and the disruptive poke at the industry was purely for the financial benefit of the actor rather than the participative recognition of the audience. Both nostalgic and casual cameos suggested parity between star persona and onscreen character that means that these performances were not so much labour as an expression of an innate, ineffable quality. The cameo leaned on exposing the extraordinary talent of the star, because the half-hour that actors put in on the set for each cameo was in no way representative of the ordinary. Not even the aspirational attitudes for luxury and ease that Crosby and Hope and the Rat Pack expressed could escape the fact that cameos made acting look easy. If Crosby and Hope had set out to position themselves as fans of the industry kidding along with the spectator in a cult appreciation that was public and shared, by the end of the run of the *Road* series, audiences were beginning to want more from their cameos, and from their actors. Hope and Crosby had suggested that acting wasn't real labour, but that it came from pure talent. Reviews of *Ocean's 11* showed that audiences were questioning how real the talent was, too.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Scheuer, "Cantinflas Carries Heavy 'Pepe' Load."

¹³¹ Griffiths, "'Ocean's 11' Fails to Awe N.Y. Critics"; Scheuer, "Sinatra Premieres 'Ocean's Eleven'."

When cameos were presenting neither labour nor talent, fans became disenchanted with the so-called insider view they presented. In the 1930s, publicists had turned away from the glamorous langour of stars who lived in castles and ancient estates to cultivate a more down-to-earth image, but the cameo in the wake of Hope and Crosby created an image that perhaps claimed to reveal too much about the practical side of Hollywood, exposing considerations such as contractual obligations and marketing strategies as part of their humour. At the same time, Crosby and Hope and the Rat Pack embraced the hedonism that, though tempered with a manic energy, was nevertheless divorced from ordinary life. As these stars moved into demanding careers that spanned many media and a nonstop schedule of tapings, shoots, and live performances, they nevertheless cultivated an aura of "easy living."¹³² To supplement this impression, the comedian comedy genre in which many of these cameos appeared created an environment where comedy was shown to be purely the product of talent rather than effort, where guys who couldn't help themselves from wisecracking at trolley conductors or rolling down the stairs at cocktail parties were merely enlisted as comedians by the studios.¹³³ Yet, the kind of hypermasculine comedy duos that cameos were used to market in the 1950s meant that cameos were employed as the punchline for put-downs and rivalries.¹³⁴ While Fuchs suggests this dynamic is aimed at countering perceived homoeroticism, in broader terms these tactics questioned even the talent part of the equation. The fiercely jeering comedic cameos that Hope and his cohorts adopted in the late 1950s purported to present stars in their most basic form without either talent or hard work. In this case, cameos were called on to show audiences what, according to Dyer, they least wanted to see. Although cameos were carefully orchestrated, the marketing that portrayed them as happenstance occurrences made them seem opportunistic. Without an image to cultivate that was separate from the personal self, the star was not seen as performing the work that was integral to celebrity. Audiences who had seen cameos as a cue to unravel the mythmaking behind the celebrity persona were left with little to do. Cameos purported to strip away the mystery to leave nothing for the truth detective to solve.

In this way, film acting fell prey to its own myths. The access to documentary space that the cameo offered had been marketed as its strength, but as the vogue for film acting developed

¹³² Rojek, *Frank Sinatra*, 26.

¹³³ Seidman, *Comedian Comedy*, 48.

¹³⁴ Cynthia J. Fuchs, "The Buddy Politic," in *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*, ed. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (New York: Routledge, 1993), 198.

towards the public rigors of Method acting in the 1950s, simply being a natural was no longer seen as naturalistic enough. Method involved strict attention to the body and its actions, the antithesis of the kind of impulsive, intuitive acting that Eisenstein imagined with typage.¹³⁵ The recognition of acting as the intuitive product of talent was the key to its allure for Hollywood hopefuls, and actors of the early period seemed hell bent on presenting their labour as effortless, especially when it involved cameos. Cameos had adapted to a paradigm of performance that emphasized that stars already are their characters, identifying such performances as outstanding. After all, the term cameo had first appeared to acknowledge performances of this kind. Biographies of Keaton paid perhaps more attention to his involvement in bridge than necessary, inevitably comparing his real life to the *Sunset* appearance.¹³⁶ On the other hand, Method emphasized the work required to embody the character from within to achieve a perfect correspondence between actor and character, a style that, as Nacache points out, purportedly breaks with yet is curiously sympathetic to logic the studio system brought to its star system.¹³⁷ Labour rather than effortlessness is perhaps the greatest distinction between the two. As Method acting grew in importance, the stage was set for a cameo backlash.

The negative reaction that followed from the cameo fad in the 1950s was palpable. What had been a more intimate kind of visibility in the 1940s began to be perceived as undisciplined and somewhat cynical. The freshness of the Crosby appearances had long worn off, and reviewers were happy to point out what they saw as sloppy work or transparent marketing attempts. Cameos were seen as "box office bait."¹³⁸ One reviewer of *Ocean's 11* snarkily noted the cameo of "Shirley MacLaine in an unpublicized appearance that will be well-publicized"¹³⁹ and indeed the self-produced Rat Pack films were "designed to maximize financial independence"¹⁴⁰ of its stars. While audiences were on the one hand eager for improvisational qualities in their actors that allowed them to see through the star persona, they were no longer convinced that cameos provided access to anything other than the manufactured star persona.

¹³⁵ Nacache, *L'acteur de cinéma*, 116, 37.

¹³⁶ Tom Dardis and Buster Keaton, *Keaton: The Man Who Wouldn't Lie Down* (New York: Limelight Editions, 2004), 260.

¹³⁷ Nacache, *L'acteur de cinéma*, 119.

¹³⁸ James Robert Parish, Michael R Pitts, and Mank, Gregory W, *Hollywood on Hollywood* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1978), 211.

¹³⁹ "Milestone Picture Is Funny and Flip," *Hollywood Reporter*, August 8, 1960.

¹⁴⁰ Rojek, *Frank Sinatra*, 138.

What had begun as a way of activating cult appreciation and participative viewing was no longer effective or enticing, as the idea that films such as *Ocean's 11* were "the most expensive home movie ever" dwelled not on the idea of actors at leisure but the extraordinary expense. Others perceived the cameo as an act of convenience. As Niven claimed about the making of *Around the World in 80 Days*, the period of cameo casting, sometimes completed only hours before shooting, "was not improvisation but facile opportunism"¹⁴¹ based on availability and willingness to act at the Todd price. Todd bragged in *Life* that Sinatra was paid off with a Thunderbird and \$100 for 2 days work, joking that the amount was a little more than the union minimum because "it's good for their egos to get over the day-player's contract pay."¹⁴² Hoping to emphasize what little pay the stars received in order to spread the kind of goodwill that Hope's publicists tried to harness in his 1959 *Life* proposal, Todd instead exposed to audiences just what went into cameos, and they noticed.

Cameo compensation

While in the first half of the century it was studios who saw the financial benefits of using salary stars as often as possible, stars who had control of their own appearances likewise saw the cameo as a way to maximize their earnings. Despite the fact that stars hung their hats on the idea that other stars wanted to appear with them for the sake of friendship, cameos were carefully remunerated during this period. Some of the most frequent cameoists were people who controlled their own image through their own production companies, such as Frank Sinatra, who couldn't say no to a cameo in the 1950s. Obviously, cameos were sometimes undertaken as ways to be paid creatively and in kind without having the studio or tax authorities take a cut of the profits, with cars, plane and event tickets, jewellery and art objects.¹⁴³ The cameo fad also served the creative accounting of many newly independent stars. The trade that Todd offered for the cameoists was likely unflattering - most stars received the minimum day player's rate of around \$100 and a car or a painting their choice, a gift in kind that the studio couldn't easily take its cut of.¹⁴⁴ This practice of paying off cameos with nominal sums equivalent to union mandated rates and more substantial gifts would continue in *Pepe*, where Maurice Chevalier received a vacation

¹⁴¹ David Niven, *The Moon's A Balloon* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972), 284.

¹⁴² Ezra Goodman, "Rounding up Stars in 80 Ways," *Life*, October 22, 1956, 89.

¹⁴³ Niven, *The Moon's A Balloon*, 284.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 283.



Figure 28. Another driving cameo featuring Jerry Lewis in *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963).

in Las Vegas for his time. For *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, a private box at the Dodgers stadium was given to Carl Reiner and a publicity exchange such as director Stanley Kramer's appearance on Jerry Lewis's talk show was traded for Lewis's half-hour of work as the Mean Man.¹⁴⁵ (Fig. 28) George Sidney did a similar trade with Donna Reed's *Pepe* cameo by appearing on her TV show. Even in *The List of Adrian Messenger* (1963), which featured what are arguably cameos by five stars, Robert Mitchum was forced by his production company to refuse the offer of payment in the form of a gift of a painting.¹⁴⁶ This gift, offered with instructions to be donated to a museum, would have served as a deductible, his biographer claims, much in the same way the Crosby donated his payments for his *Hope* cameos.¹⁴⁷ On the other hand, David Niven claims that in *Around the World in 80 Days* the "older and fading stars who could use the cash"¹⁴⁸ were paid generously. Audiences were more than aware of this kind of dealing: a 1962 article published around the time of the release of the final *Road* film provided a typology of small roles and detailed the pay received by cameoists, more or less accurately, as Todd's gift to Noel Coward of a Bonnard, for example, became the slightly more sensational Picasso.¹⁴⁹ There was also the beginning of cameo regulars - Jimmy Durante, for example, appears in *Mad World* too, while Frank Sinatra, present in *Around the World* and *Pepe*, sat it out. Given the fact that publicists had associated free cameos with freewheeling cameos, the gradual revelation that these were paid appearances was not to be taken lightly by audiences.

As a result, in the 1960s, cameos were pointed out as signs of rampant commercialism and cynical marketing. *The Mirror* claimed the *Pepe* cameos from 1960 were advertising, pure and simple, writing "many cameo bits are little more than meaningless walk-ons and some no more than out-and-out-plugs, such as Donna Reed's promotion for her TV show, the front marquee and casino of the Sands in Las Vegas, and the promotion of Acapulco's plush spas."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Arthur Harvey and ABC to Stanley Kramer, "Re: Jerry Lewis Show," November 8, 1963, Stanley Kramer Box 64 Folder TV Shows Miscellaneous Mad World SEK, UCLA Special Collections; Lynn Stalmaster and Stalmaster-Lister Company, "Contract Request," June 13, 1962, Stanley Kramer Box 61 Folder 5 Actors Weekly Contracts, UCLA Special Collections.

¹⁴⁶ Robert Mitchum to John Huston, September 21, 1962, John Huston Folder 266 List of Adrian Messenger correspondence, Margaret Herrick.

¹⁴⁷ Mike Tomkies, *The Robert Mitchum Story*, 1st edition (Ballantine Books, 1973), 194.

¹⁴⁸ Niven, *The Moon's A Balloon*, 283.

¹⁴⁹ Bob Thomas, "Many Ask For Cameo Roles," *Daytona Beach Morning Journal*, October 27, 1962.

¹⁵⁰ Williams, "It's Cantinflas Who Puts Spark in Long Pepe."

On the other hand, the cameos in *Mad World* in 1963 were regaled as "bits that rise high in comic stature."¹⁵¹ These cameos were not free from their own cynical manufacture, as the cameo for Jerry Lewis, for example, was originally scripted for what *Mad World* writer William Rose noted should be "some comedian who's so busy he can only give you one shot, you know, Jack Paar, somebody like that."¹⁵² However, while Donna Reed in *Pepe* is interrupted on the way to work on her show, as she sweetly informs us, Jerry Lewis in *Mad World* is playing the typical Lewis madcap character, squealing and making funny faces. Rather than tell us he is Jerry, or promise he is Jerry, he is acting as Jerry. His diegetic disruption is appropriate because it is what he does best: comedy. Donna Reed's performance neither plays with the limits of star persona nor presents any participative pay-off: she is present merely to be recognized in a kind of cameo that was no longer stand-out. Beginning as a mark of verisimilitude, the disruptiveness of the cameo had come to be its most important attribute.

The dismissal of Bing Crosby's "embarrassing" cameo in *Pepe* can likewise be seen as a reflection of the growing expectation of disruption, especially in comparison to the earlier excitement at his cameo trades. While Crosby's brief sing-along appeared alongside *Pepe's* other such disappointingly misleading credits as *The Voice of Judy Garland*, his performance can't be said to be any smaller or less taxing than his appearance as a wordless driver in *Son of Paleface*. Nor was this the first time Crosby's name was used to market movies he was barely in: while Crosby was never credited in the Hope films, he was definitely not absent from their marketing, even in his miniscule parts. *Pepe*, playing the bumpkin, doesn't recognize Crosby or his famous song. Unlike previous bumpkins, he is too painfully unaware of pop culture for audiences to even have the pleasure of defining themselves against him as knowing fans enacting cult appreciation. Like Reed's cameo, Crosby's appearance is only minimally disruptive, abandoning the breaks with the conventions of filmmaking that Crosby's cameos had had when paired with Hope's commentary, or even the disruptive jolt of *Lamour's* coincidental appearance on Crosby's plane. Clearly, cameos were at their best when they were disruptive of the diegesis, coming to heads with narrative norms in a way that made them funny.

¹⁵¹ Archer Winsten, "'A Mad World' at Warner's Cinema," *New York Post*, November 19, 1963.

¹⁵² William Rose and Tania Rose, "It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World First Draft Screenplay," n.d., Scripts AMPAS Unpublished, Margaret Herrick.

Bad or bumpy: cameos, comedy, and the New Hollywood

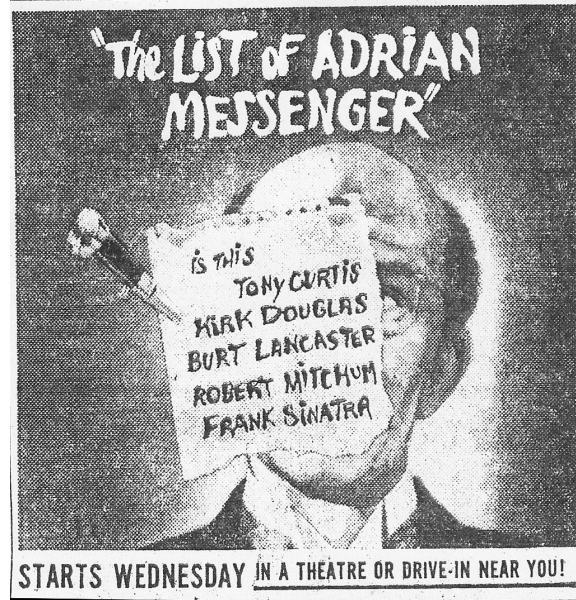
Mathijs asserts that cult films are often bad films, with bumpy plots comprised of cult moments that are the result of accident and coincidence.¹⁵³ Cameos, as they break with diegesis in favour of visibility, are consciously "bumpy",¹⁵⁴ creating the possibility of making a film bad. Increasingly savvy viewers, conditioned to be participative when it came to cameo, either reacting with cinephilic reverie or active cult responses, were uninterested by the lackluster cameos in *Pepe* and other ensemble cameo films. There was not enough for viewers to do. Fully aware that the carefree and spontaneous attitudes that Crosby and Hope had appeared to embody in the 1940s were manufactured, the increasingly low-key cameos that they accepted, as the inheritors of this appearance of improvisation that was leaning more and more towards naturalism, were not well-received. Such cameos came to be seen as lazy, both on behalf of marketers and of stars who could be doing roles that stood out for better reasons than mere celebrity. While Crosby's studied casualness had been a trademark of his star persona, when this attitude was adopted by other cameos and cameoists, such roles were seen as sly actorly shirking of the work of performance in favour of the simple act of being famous. Yet, just as Bing and Bob had delighted viewers by acknowledging the supposed shortcuts they were taking, audiences wanted some acknowledgement of their achievement as recognizers of cameos. A film such as *The List of Adrian Messenger* could be seen as a response to this, where viewers were enlisted to recognize disguised actors who were ostensibly playing small roles. The failure of the film is perhaps owing to its inability to adhere to its own guarantee, as the famous actors, such as Frank Sinatra, did not even play the small roles to which they attached their faces in a final credit-sequence unmasking. (Fig. 29, Fig. 30) While reviewers were delighted with the resurrection of old stars in the 1930s, by 1963, reviews of *Mad World* indicate fatigue with the sheer number of cameos that tried to trade visibility and the privilege of celebrity encounter for plot and story.¹⁵⁵

How audiences learned about celebrity's private lives changed drastically in the 1950s. Where cameos made visible the butts of wisecracks and gossip tales spread on radio and newspapers, television of course changed where audiences got their information about celebrities, and how. The advent of the television talk show was an important step for

¹⁵³ Mathijs and Mendik, "Introduction," 2.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 7.

¹⁵⁵ Bosley Crowther, "Wild Comedy About the Pursuit of Money: 'A Mad, Mad World' Opens at Warner," *New York Times*, November 19, 1963.



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Figures 29 (top) and 30. Newspaper ads for *The List of Adrian Messenger* and *Mad World* promised challenges to fan's powers of recognition but didn't always deliver.

revelations, as more and more personal questions were answered about the celebrity persona. While cameos may have responded to the breakdown of the studio system with unchecked numbers of appearances, freedom to appear in small roles, and unflattering images, how movies looked real was also important. New Hollywood films of the 1970s such as *The Godfather* represented a break with the orchestrated studio projects of the first half of the 20th century, and heralded the domination of naturalistic styles such as Method acting that linked emotional depth to corporeal expressiveness.¹⁵⁶ Method acting was a public phenomenon: even Marilyn Monroe got in on the act, studying at the mecca of Method, the Actor's Studio.¹⁵⁷ Although cameos had found a home in comedy, these new movements in performance meant audiences took notice of acting as labour in a new way, in drama and otherwise. If actors could just be themselves on television, then movies were the place for something else.

If the influence of comedian comedies meant the cameo was identified with spontaneity at its best and laziness at its worst, it also proved that the diegetic disruption of the cameo belongs to the comedy in way that it does not in the drama. The litmus test for celebrity cameos in drama was *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965), where the diegetic disruption was "shattering"¹⁵⁸; in comedian comedy, it found its natural home. *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, the story of Christ's crucifixion, an example of a narrative where one would think the character spaces are so deeply inhabited by centuries of tradition that not even the brief star power of John Wayne can overcome them, succumbed to criticism of the "conscious intermingling of theatrical personalities with sincere dramatic intentions." These cameos were seen as interruptions, when "right at a point of piercing anguish, up pops the brawny John Wayne in the costume of a Roman centurion. Inevitably, viewers whisper, 'That's John Wayne!'"¹⁵⁹ Dramas couldn't hold the diegetic disruption that was now implicit within the cameo. Instead, in comedy they found their natural home.

While comedy would continue to be the home for the cameo, transformations in other genres also affected its trajectory. What it meant to be oneself onscreen changed in the 1960s, as

¹⁵⁶ Nacache, *L'acteur de cinéma*, 116.

¹⁵⁷ James Morrison, *Hollywood Reborn: Movie Stars of the 1970s* (Rutgers University Press, 2010), 16.

¹⁵⁸ Bosley Crowther, "Screen: 'The Greatest Story Ever Told': Max von Sydow Stars in Biblical Film," *The New York Times*, February 16, 1966.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

the Production Code loosened restrictions around depictions of violence and sexuality with the release of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966)¹⁶⁰ Many directors of the "roadshow blockbuster era" in which the cameo film had had its heyday were retiring, as well as the old studio producers.¹⁶¹ In the 1970s, there was a spate of Hollywood-set dramas glaringly without cameos, such as *Gable and Lombard* (1976) and *The Day of the Locust* (1975), while cameos were revived to bolster lackluster spoof comedies such as *Won Ton Ton, the Dog who saved Hollywood* (1976). Films of the New Hollywood evoked nostalgia through a new kind of realism and naturalism in acting, as exemplified by the growing public and professional interest in method acting.¹⁶² Realism was not exemplified by witnesses of the past; instead, movies in the 1970s were marketed to a younger demographic who were less interested in nostalgic cameos or their parents' heroes.¹⁶³ Just like studio affiliations before them, unserious friendship groups such as the Rat Pack and comedy duos of Hope and Crosby's ilk were being left behind by celebrities who were invested in expressing their performances as labour. Television appearances and talk shows had overtaken the cameo's claims to reveal to the audience the celebrity as he really was in the flesh. Cameos needed to promise to surprise and engage the audience by disrupting classical Hollywood forms and the boundaries of star persona before they could again be perceived as exciting challenges to the audience's powers of recognition.

Conclusion

The cameo found its best home in the comedian comedy, developing as a disruptive and anti-narrative element that engaged and acknowledged spectators as active participants. Complementing the more laudatory celebrity cameos that were identified with the term beginning in the 1950s, disruptive comedian cameos developed in parallel to the more staid cameos that commemorated the star system. Because the paradigm of the comedian cameo emphasized the innate talent and untamed explosively comedic persona of the comedian, the cameos that appeared alongside the comedian also gained this aura of natural ease. Spontaneity

¹⁶⁰ Peter Krämer, *The New Hollywood: From Bonnie and Clyde to Star Wars* (London: Wallflower, 2005), 47.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 81.

¹⁶² Christopher Ames, *Movies about the Movies: Hollywood Reflected* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 12.

¹⁶³ Krämer, *The New Hollywood*, 38.

and improvisation were valued as testaments to a comedian's talent, and the appearance of cameos was used to harness not only the references to show business and its stars that were an important part of the comedian comedy, but to express the informal and immediate relationship that the comedian had with his talent and theirs. Within the comedian comedy, the cameo became associated with off-the-cuff appearances that informally represented the alliances of show business units both within the studio and, as they extended beyond the studio's power into other media and other financial support, the relationships of stars to each other. Cameos sold friendships above and beyond studio affiliations, emphasizing a camaraderie that surrounded movie-making as an industry while expressing the importance of networks beyond the studio's sphere of influence. Cameos were a way of conveying the supposedly real-life enjoyment that stars had with each other: pranks and inside jokes that were revealed to the audience, or at least planted for the audience to discover. The groups that embraced the cameo, whether they were duos such as Crosby and Hope or Martin and Lewis, or larger networks such as the Rat Pack, used cameos to convey their friendship as signs of loyalty within otherwise hedonistic lifestyles. Carefree or not, these star personas emphasized their talent while suggesting that they were a little short on the hard work.

Cameos were the ultimate realization of talent without labour: appearing onscreen as themselves, dressed down from the glamorous or bathetic reveals of silent star cameos, they were ostensibly being their wisecracking, smooth selves. Of course, this elision of their labour had repercussions, as cameos became seen as increasingly cheap and lazy just as audiences were becoming jaded with the inside references in which comedian comedies dealt. Without either a stand out performance nor a special connection to the star persona, these latter-day cameos of the 1960s were disappointing to audiences who had been permitted to delve increasingly deeper into star identities as new kinds of publicity such as talk shows emerged in a post-studio system industry. Like early audiences who had quickly discovered the existence of publicists controlling the images of studio contractees, audiences in the 1960s were aware of new trends in acting styles. As new styles of acting and narrative realism triumphed, the kind of documentary space that cameos were offering appeared all the more artificial to filmgoers who had been introduced to cult appreciation and participative viewing in the cameo's disruptive role in the comedian comedy. When they failed to promote active viewing, cameos became no fun at all.

Chapter 4

Author signature: the celebratory cameo and the all-knowing creator

"Don't forget this man," the announcer for the theatrical trailer for Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945) admonishes, his voiceover accompanying the image of a busy hotel lobby caught in freeze-frame as a number of men in hats and suits emerge from a crammed elevator. The frame shows a jumble of bodies and moustached faces, catching the two men at the front of the crowd as they exit, one in a dark suit and smoking a cigar, already heading offscreen from centre frame, and the second one just caught in focus, wearing a lighter suit and a similar hat. (Fig. 31) Which one should we remember and which one should we forget? The man we should be paying attention to, of course, is Alfred Hitchcock, the dark-suited man, as the announcer tells us, "who has plenty to do with the terrifying mystery" of the movie to come, yet who is already leaving the scene as quickly as he arrived. While the attention of the trailer quickly turns to the invisible producer, David O. Selznick, the scene nevertheless begins with the image of Hitchcock as arresting hook. The director cameos of Hitchcock are an important part of the history of the cameo role, occurring as they do in each of his many films. These brief appearances of Hitchcock as an extra in his own movies are an example of a recurring type, and maybe even the archetype, of the cameo, where the author delivers his signature. Like the Renaissance artist appearing in his portraits of the powerful, or even the Vitagraph team of the early 20th century, Hitchcock is presenting for recognition his role in image-making. As an artist-cameo, Hitchcock's cameos made a powerful bid for the importance of the director, not only establishing his visibility but consolidating his reputation as a director in control of the minutiae of his filmmaking. As miniature roles, the cameo confirmed to his breathless critics that Hitchcock's hand was visible in even the tiniest details.

Before Hitchcock, recognizable director cameos in films of their own making are few and far between. Other than directors doubling as actors in the very early cinema, King Vidor appeared in his own show *Show People* in 1929, and Chaplin played a brief cameo in *A Woman in Paris* in 1923. DeMille was a regular in other people's films. However, Hitchcock made himself visible and recognizable in his own films, where the name, the image, and the film product under his aegis were linked together from a very early point in his career. The cameo had no small hand in consolidating this reputation, and establishing his recognition. In fact, the



Figure 31. Hitchcock in the background of *Spellbound* (1945).

cameos in which Hitchcock indulged from his first films as a director were the model for the famous introductory skits that accompanied his television series of the 1950s and 1960s. The ever-present Hitchcock image, combined with his insistence in his press that he had a creative hand in all aspects of his films, was used to illustrate his presence. Like stars who did not belong in small roles, directors did not belong in the background. Appearing as an extra, or in small comedic bits, Hitchcock confirmed his presence not only in front of the camera, but behind it at any given moment, in establishing shots that could have been handled by a second-unit, but instead bear his imprint. The director cameo as a sign of unusual attention to detail is thus a signature of authorial control.

While Hitchcock's cameos may have tried to assert his visibility as the primary creative force of the film, and set the tone for other directors establishing themselves as auteurs, other behind-the-scenes roles also stood up in that period to be celebrated as authors. In the 1950s, as filmmaking established itself as an art worthy of contemplation, there were new reasons to take credit. Writers of scripts and music occasionally appeared in cameos that identified them within their work, such as Ray Evans and Jay Livingston in *Sunset Boulevard* or screenwriter Buck Henry in *The Graduate* (1967). Directors such as Hitchcock, Cecil DeMille and Otto Preminger showed their hand not only by presenting their own image to be lauded but enveloping other famous figures within a world of their own invention such as Woody Allen conjuring Marshall McLuhan in *Annie Hall* (1977) or Martin Scorsese offering up the real boxer Jake LaMotta beside his fictionalized self in *Raging Bull* (1980). Some of these appearances truly blend into the background, visible only to expert audiences. These cameos of celebrated figures who are otherwise not widely known, or celebratory cameos, have a cultish appeal. Celebratory cameos, unlike celebrity cameos, feature figures that are not necessarily immediately or broadly recognizable, but are nevertheless worthy of tribute. Rather than presenting already-visible celebrities, these cameos celebrate less visible groups, such as authors, directors, benefactors, muses, parents, or even old friends. Celebratory cameos divide the audience into two groups: the privileged insiders who can recognize the little-seen honoree, and those without the fan knowledge necessary to recognize the celebrated figure as more than an extra.

Celebratory cameos challenge the audience to recognize them, creating a game of recognition. While Hitchcock's cameos may have become the most recognizable element of his films, a fact that movie critics such as Richard Corliss and Gene Siskel mourned as becoming the

focus of his films, they fit squarely into Hitchcock's fondness for games, from his oft quoted wordplay and puns to his predilection for publicity schemes that involved him in whodunnits and disguises.¹ Cameos were not the only games that Hitchcock played with the details of his films, but they are perhaps the least cryptic. Though regularly deciphered, recognition of cameos continues to be a secret handshake of the cinephile. Hitchcock's cameos made the director extremely visible as the author of his films, but by the end of his career, this signature often seemed to overshadow the films themselves in reviews and studio publicity. No director has recreated the cameo in quite the way that Hitchcock used it, nor invited the masses into his gaming in such a public way. Following his precedent, it has become an undeniable sign of authorial authority clearly planted by filmmakers mimicking the master, and sought out in turn by those filmgoers seeking to play along with their favorite directors.

Auteur Theory and the Importance of the Author

Auteur theory as explicated by Andre Bazin in the 1940s secured the prominence of the director in intellectual assessments of the cinema, but the cult of director-heroes including Griffith, DeMille, Eisenstein, and Hitchcock that he praises and critiques had been established before even the emergence of the star system. DeMille and Griffith formed a film system wherein directors helmed their own autonomous production units, while Hitchcock and von Stroheim emerged within a growing central-producer system, where directors and teams were corralled by powerful producers controlling the flow of funds and personnel to make movies happen.² The importance of the director did not diminish. For Bazin, the director was the inheritor of the artist, conveying a world that owed its realism to the photographic image, yet was nevertheless imbued with the worldview of the director.³ In his formulation, the directors who most clearly embodied these abilities of the author made use of the realist properties of the

¹ Richard Corliss, "Let Us Not Praise Famous Men," *New Times Magazine*, April 16, 1976, Hitchcock Folder 222 Family Plot reviews 1976, Margaret Herrick; Gene Siskel, "The Movies: Topaz," *Chicago Tribune*, January 19, 1970, Hitchcock Folder 797 Topaz (reviews), Margaret Herrick.

² Beth Day Romulo, *This Was Hollywood; an Affectionate History of Filmland's Golden Years*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960), 208; Mark A. Vieira, *Irving Thalberg: Boy Wonder to Producer Prince* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

³ Andre Bazin, *What Is Cinema?*, trans. Hugh Gray, 4th edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968), 11.

photographic images rather than the "tricks of montage."⁴ Above all, Bazin asserted that these directors allowed an ambiguity to flourish within their films that promoted an "active mental attitude on the part of the spectator."⁵ Bazin's colleagues at the influential film magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma* used his observations to propose the *politique des auteurs*, a manifesto that identified the director as a film author who controlled all creative aspects of film production from script to mise-en-scene.⁶ The film produced by these auteurs was uniquely inflected by their hand alone, as if a reflection of their vision. Francois Truffaut, the champion of the *politique des auteurs* in the 1950s and 1960s, held up Hitchcock as an example of the kind of controlled and complete authorship that the filmmakers of the New Wave sought to emulate.⁷ Hitchcock has continued to be admired for his efforts to establish his films as the product of his sole unique authorship, and his cameos have played an important role in that campaign.⁸

Like artist portraits of the Renaissance or the Vitagraph cameos of the 1910s, directors cameos reveal their role in the making of the image as a sign of power. Director cameos were a signature of sorts, establishing visibility for the otherwise largely invisible behind-the-scenes role. Unlike actor-directors who played larger roles in their own films, the director cameo is purely about the signature.⁹ The consensus that these cameos are attributable to a signature draws on the precedent of artist-portraits in painting. Like these early examples, director cameos compete with the established intertwined systems of power and visibility, wresting attention away from actors and celebrities to assert an alternate visible locus of creative power. As Stam writes, "filmmakers have the perennial choice of revealing or concealing the effects by which they create illusions."¹⁰ Director cameos privilege directors as the creative authority behind the filmmaking, because they are often the sole creator behind the filmic illusion who appears for

⁴ Ibid., 29.

⁵ Ibid., 35.

⁶ Michel Marie, *The French New Wave: An Artistic School*, trans. Richard Neupert (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 72.

⁷ John Orr, *Hitchcock and Twentieth-Century Cinema* (London: Wallflower Press, 2005), 57.

⁸ Tom Cohen and Tom Cohen, *Hitchcock's Cryptonymies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 6.

⁹ Thomas M Leitch, *Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), 4.

¹⁰ Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature: From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985), 126.

recognition. When other authors such as screenwriters or composers appear for recognition, the authorial signature is refocused or dissipated.

Hitchcock's cameos, which appeared as early as his first thriller *The Lodger* (1926), are perhaps the most celebrated. The genealogy of Hitchcock's cameos has been linked to Chaplin's "flash appearances" in 1923's *Woman in Paris*,¹¹ while other cameos contemporary to Hitchcock's first appearance come from more experimental European art cinema, such as the work of Luis Bunuel and Abel Gance.¹² Championed by critics such as Truffaut, and bolstered by "his roost atop the pantheon of American auteurs,"¹³ Hitchcock established a vogue for the director cameo as a sign of authorial control that would influence American directors emerging in the shadow of the New Wave as the New Hollywood, so that "in the seventies, indeed, such signatures became almost *de rigueur*."¹⁴

The strength of these claims to authority is dependent on the extent of their visibility in popular culture and the audience's powers of recognition. The choice to insert a director cameo often goes hand in hand with other campaigns of visibility. Directors are much less identifiable than actors for whom visibility is a profession. As such, directorial cameos do not necessarily call attention to themselves as a diegetic break, in instances such as Hitchcock's appearance among extras as in *Spellbound*, or simply falling short of celebrity visibility as when Terrence Malick rings the doorbell in *Badlands* (1973). Identifying directors can be a challenge, enticing the viewers into a game. Like games, they challenge passive viewers to demonstrate active mastery.¹⁵ This mastery is dependent on knowledge of cinema that extends beyond its most visible stars and may include attention to other, subcultural metatexts such as fan magazines and

¹¹ Robert E. Kapsis, *Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation* (University of Chicago Press, 1992), 21.

¹² Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 130; Kevin Brownlow, *The Parade's Gone by* (New York: Knopf, 1968), 529.

¹³ Thomas M Leitch, "Hitchcock and His Writers," in *Authorship in Film Adaptation*, ed. Jack Boozer (Berkeley: University of Texas Press, 2009), 74.

¹⁴ Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 130.

¹⁵ Chris Crawford, *The Art of Computer Game Design* (New York: Osborne/McGraw-Hill, 1984), 99; Stephen Kline, Nick Dyer-Witheford, and Greig De Peuter, *Digital Play the Interaction of Technology, Culture, and Marketing* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 14.

websites.¹⁶ In some cases, especially in that of directors such as Malick or Cronenberg who work independently or outside of the mainstream, they require special knowledge of a person who is largely invisible in popular culture. As independents, such directors are often seen as eschewing the industrial prerogatives that could distance their films from the personal creative vision that is the quintessential goal of the auteur.¹⁷ While stylistic or thematic trends found in those works can be debated, the cameo is an established way of making the authorial signature undeniably visible in what Mathijs calls "active auteuring,"¹⁸ binding together a director's body of work as a continuous supertext.¹⁹ While authors use the cameo to signal their mastery, viewers who recognize this signature can also lay public claim to an element of distinction. Just as scholars and critics delight in sharing Hitchcock sightings, Mathijs recounts identifying other Cronenberg initiates in the theatre based on their knowing laughter upon his cameo appearance.²⁰ As Leitch suggests, solving Hitchcock's puzzles is not only about proving that one is privy to knowledge about the director, but that the spectator can think like the film's author, Hitchcock.²¹ The discerning eye that uncovers celebratory cameos hidden like extras in the background is a specialist eye. Celebratory cameos are not for every audience, but they are evidence of the director's presence signaled for those in the know.

Hitchcock in his own image

Hitchcock was an unusually visible director, presenting an image that was tailored for recognizability, from his habitual sober suit to his "carefully designed"²² speeches. Even before he established his "trademark of a tiny personal appearance,"²³ his body was used as a stamp of authorship, extending to his first use of a sketch of his profile as a signature in the 1920s. (Fig.

¹⁶ Ernest Mathijs, "Cronenberg Connected: Cameo Acting, Cult Stardom, and Supertexts," in *Cult Film Stardom: Offbeat Attractions and Processes of Cultification*, ed. Kate Egan and Sarah Thomas (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 147.

¹⁷ Marie, *The French New Wave*, 76.

¹⁸ Mathijs, "Cronenberg Connected: Cameo Acting, Cult Stardom, and Supertexts," 147.

¹⁹ Ibid., 144.

²⁰ Ibid., 149.

²¹ D.A Miller, "Hitchcock's Understyle: A Too-Close View of Rope," *Representations*, no. 121 (2013): 26.

²² PR, Universal to Fred Thomas, Rank Organization, "Re: Speeches," June 29, 1966, Hitchcock Folder 935, Torn Curtain - speeches, Margaret Herrick.

²³ Donald Spoto, *The Dark Side Of Genius: The Life Of Alfred Hitchcock* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1999), 95.

32) This signature would be his for the rest of his life, adopted with some modification across his multimedia empire of mystery magazines and television series.²⁴ His biographers attribute to him a preternatural campaign for visibility dating back to those days when he was first using this caricature, where he actively pursued name recognition to guarantee his continued desirability.²⁵ It was in his twenties that he was first hailed as a great director with the success of his third film, and first thriller, *The Lodger*, in 1926. While he has a brief appearance in that film, *The Lodger*, his cameos were first noted by the contemporary press in a longer, slightly comedic sequence in *Blackmail* (1929), where he is annoyed by a small boy on a train as he reads his newspaper. From the commentary on the cameos, it is clear that Hitchcock had already emerged as a public and visible figure.²⁶ In the 1930s, Hitchcock appeared intermittently as an extra in his own films, loitering in crowd scenes, with his scenes becoming more visible and more remarked upon following his move to Hollywood in the 1940s. This visibility only increased with his television series in the 1950s, which began with a brief introduction and conclusion from Hitchcock. By the late 1970s, Hitchcock would become "the most universally recognized man in the world."²⁷ He appeared in cameos in many of his 53 films, ranging from barely distinguishable walk-ons to incongruous comedic bit parts that paired him with nurses, infants, and double basses.

In the 1960s, Hitchcock was firmly inducted by Truffaut and Robin Wood as an auteur working within the commercial milieu of Hollywood.²⁸ More than almost any auteur, Hitchcock has been treated like a sole author, a reputation which he courted.²⁹ He and his cameos were beloved by the New Wave; Resnais even featured a Hitchcock "cameo" in cardboard form in his impeccable art film *Last Year at Marienbad*.³⁰ Identifying an auteur requires attention to thematic and stylistic consistency as a kind of signature that is nevertheless not unfailingly

²⁴ John Russell Taylor, *Hitch: The Life and Times of Alfred Hitchcock* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 230.

²⁵ Spoto, *The Dark Side Of Genius*, 95.

²⁶ Taylor, *Hitch*, 102.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁸ François Truffaut and Alfred Hitchcock, *Hitchcock*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967); Robin Wood, *Hitchcock's Films Revisited* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

²⁹ Robert E Kapsis, "Reputation Building and the Film Art World: The Case of Alfred Hitchcock," *TSQ Sociological Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (1989): 15–35.

³⁰ Orr, *Hitchcock and Twentieth-Century Cinema*, 133.

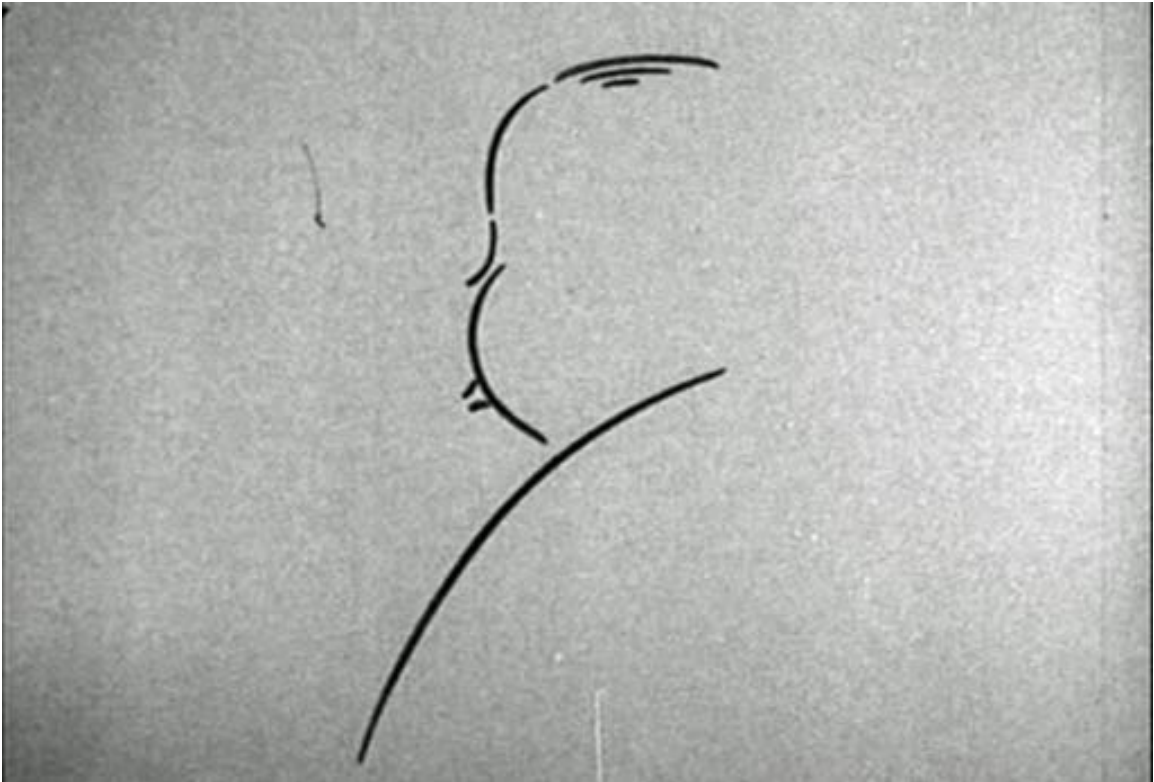


Figure 32. The sketched profile that opened *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (1955-1962).

present in his work.³¹ Hitchcock's cameos provided that kind of consistency, just as Cronenberg's cameos create a supertext. When the cameos are invoked by scholars such as Bellour, Miller, or Leitch, they are used as proof of the auteurist nature of Hitchcock's works, and assigned a level of meaning in keeping with the idea of the auteur's complete control of his oeuvre.³² On the other hand, for Wood, Durgnat and Kapsis and their respective works on Hitchcock as a master who outgrew Hollywood, the cameos are ignored as belonging irredeemably to Hitchcock the entertainer rather than Hitchcock the artist.³³ Even Leitch, who sets out to explore the cameo specifically as a method to "advertise their director's shaping intelligence"³⁴ in his book *Find the Director*, all but ignores the cameos once he begins a thematic exploration of play in Hitchcock's narratives. Indeed, the broad humour of the most visible of Hitchcock's cameos links them more strongly with the comedic cameos in Hope films rather than the realist pretensions of Truffaut or Resnais. Although his influences may have been the inscribed bodies of Chaplin and Lang, it was only on his move in the 1940s to Hollywood where cameos were a part of a vernacular and often comedic tradition that Hitchcock's cameos were publicized as a marketing tactic and came to regularly adopt the middlebrow wit that was so appealing to mass audiences. Hitchcock's cameos, despite being a signature of the personal creative control that would gain him champions in the international art cinema, owed their visibility to his employment within the Hollywood industry.

Like all cameos, Hitchcock's appearances introduce his public persona into the diegetic world, presenting him variously as a gourmand in *Lifeboat* (1944), a dog lover in *The Birds* (1963), and a bridge player in *Strangers on a Train* rather than the omniscient director of auteur theory. The question of where he belongs in the diegesis is what drives the disruptive pleasure of cameos, and Hitchcock is no exception.³⁵ Miller suggests that Hitchcock the celebrity is recognized in *Strangers on a Train* by the tennis star protagonist; certainly he would have been

³¹ Andrew Sarris, "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 563.

³² Raymond Bellour, "Hitchcock, The Enunciator," *Camera Obscura* 1, no. 2 (September 21, 1977): 67–92; Leitch, *Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games*; Miller D.A., "Hitchcock's Hidden Pictures," *Crit. Inq. Critical Inquiry* 37, no. 1 (2010): 106–30.

³³ Wood, *Hitchcock's Films Revisited*, 62.

³⁴ Leitch, *Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games*, 36.

³⁵ Miller D.A., "Hitchcock's Hidden Pictures."

visible to the tennis star's companion, the murderer Bruno, who happens to be reading one of Hitchcock's mystery anthologies.³⁶ Yet, as Cohen and Leitch have pointed out, many of Hitchcock's cameos often ostensibly put him at the mercy of his fictional world rather than in control of it. (Fig. 33; Fig. 34) Cohen characterizes Hitchcock as a kind of modern-day bumpkin, unaware of the highly dangerous situations into which he has naively blundered, "a figure on the margin of the fictional world."³⁷ Although he does remain a marginal background figure in *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* (1941), *Psycho* (1960), or *Frenzy* (1972), he is often caught up in the business of performance that borders on the slapstick, whether expressing indignation at being shut out of a bus in *North by Northwest* or jumping out of a wheelchair in *Topaz* (1969). These performances do not present a glimpse of a purportedly candid Hitchcock, as in the case of DeMille on set in *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942) or Crosby demonstrating how to croon in *Let's Make Love*. Whereas DeMille and later Scorsese appear alongside cameras in directorial poses of control in many of their cameos, references within the cameos to Hitchcock as director have been deciphered by scholars only when submitted to the kind of study that Miller calls "too-close reading."³⁸ Instead, the cameos demonstrate the author's power to play whatever role he chooses, writing himself in only to take himself out again just as quickly. As Cohan writes, "here is the one figure who is not an actor,"³⁹ yet he insists on taking that role too. Rather than weighed down with meaning, they are playful, emphasizing his ability to intertwine both documentary and narrative space.

Hitchcock's fondness for games is well documented, and they were a recurring theme in publicity for his films. In 1943 he "directed" a *Look* "Photocrime" editorial in which pictorial clues in a series of photographic illustrations revealed a murderer to the canny reader.⁴⁰ To publicize *Torn Curtain* (1966) twenty years later, he proposed a similar photo editorial where he would play all the characters in a murder investigation, acting out a riddle that the public could solve, or working in various trades while recording in candid camera style the reactions of all

³⁶ Ibid., 107.

³⁷ Leitch, *Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games*, 5.

³⁸ Miller D.A, "Hitchcock's Hidden Pictures."

³⁹ Cohen and Cohen, *Hitchcock's Cryptonymies*, 242.

⁴⁰ Look, "Look Photocrime: The Murder of Monty Woolley Directed by Alfred Hitchcock," c 1943, Hitchcock Folder 353, Margaret Herrick.



Figure 33. Hitchcock is a marginal figure in *Foreign Correspondent* (1940)...



Figure 34. ...but he is unmistakable in *Strangers on a Train* (1951).

involved.⁴¹ Michael Cowan has suggested that film magazines used similar pictorial games of identification to condition viewers to pay attention to the star as a cinephilic detail, encouraging the development of a community of knowledgeable fans.⁴² The game of seeking out Hitchcock's onscreen image conditioned fans in much the same way with Hitchcock in the role of star, and was positioned by critics as "a regular game played by devoted fans to watch for a brief glimpse of his august bulk at some unexpected point."⁴³

Despite its seemingly lack of exclusivity, the invitation to play along with Hitchcock's cameos has been irresistible to critics and scholars. Any discussion of the complete cameos demonstrates an intimacy with the canon that was perhaps more meaningful before the advent of home screening and replay culture. Yacowar, despite the fact that his 1977 book *Hitchcock's British Films* is focused entirely on Hitchcock's pre-1939 work, appends a career-spanning catalogue of "Hitchcock's Appearances" broken down into emblematic meanings and signs of the maker.⁴⁴ Bellour, in a list of cameos from *Hitchcock the Enunciator* that reads like notes from whose fragments he hasn't entirely extracted satisfactory meaning, examines how a selection of cameos reveals Hitchcock's intentions for each character whose path he very nearly crosses.⁴⁵ For Bellour, Miller and Cohen, Hitchcock is seen as the man behind the curtain, planting cinematic clues of his mastery as he creates the "secret writing systems that traverse this work."⁴⁶ As a counter-example to this adulation of the all-seeing auteur, Naremore in his study of performance remarks on Cary Grant's socks in *North by Northwest* (1959) that "...had Hitchcock been a novelist, he never would have mentioned socks. They are present in the film because Thornhill is represented by a costumed actor."⁴⁷ For those engaged in Miller's "too-close reading," the arguments for his attention to detail mount to suggest that film direction offers Hitchcock even more control, as he conjures for the eye those things that are elided for brevity's sake in a novel. In his lost cameo in *Rich and Strange* (1931), Hitchcock placed himself

⁴¹ Alfred Hitchcock and Ernest Lehman, "Transcript of Tapes," November 2, 1973, Hitchcock Folder 138 Family Plot - script 1973, Margaret Herrick.

⁴² Michael Cowan, "Learning to Love the Movies: Puzzles, Participation, and Cinephilia in Interwar European Film Magazines," *Film History: An International Journal* 27, no. 4 (2015): 11.

⁴³ "Face to Face with Alfred Hitchcock," *Hollywood Studio*, January 1970.

⁴⁴ Maurice Yacowar, *Hitchcock's British Films* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010).

⁴⁵ Bellour, "Hitchcock, The Enunciator."

⁴⁶ Cohen and Cohen, *Hitchcock's Cryptonymies*, xi.

⁴⁷ James Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 214.

explicitly in the role of the interceding author written into the book as the nameless novelist who cannot believe his characters' claims.⁴⁸ Indeed the game can be expanded almost infinitely because there is no clear definition between what he intended and what merely occurred, the blurring of documentary and narrative space to create endless probabilities that can be argued for and against, supplemented by the logic of the punctum when necessary.

The compelling nature of Hitchcock's invitation to play along is evident in the excitement of the scholars themselves as they set about revealing the master's riddles only to offer their solutions. Hills suggests that scholars and fans overlap in their attitudes and pursuits, and nowhere is that more clear than in studies of Hitchcock.⁴⁹ Bellour thrills about his discovery in the cameo of *I Confess* (1953), "Again master at the game, Hitchcock passes across the screen, in a now famous image, silhouetted against the sky at the top of the steps (count them almost thirty-nine!)."⁵⁰ More pensively, Cohen suggests that Hitchcock goads the viewer with visual and memory games, offering up riddles as early as his first thriller, *The Lodger*, with such cues as "what does it mean to lodge, and what, if anything, does the term have to do with ledgers or the logos and number?"⁵¹ Miller points out the return of the diet drug which Hitchcock advertises in his newspaper-ad cameo in *Lifeboat* in a flashing neon sign outside the apartment where *Rope* (1948) unfolds, but also dwells on the graphic riddles posed by the marks of a dolly on the apartment's carpet.⁵² Some of these unveilings are convincing: if Hitchcock presented his own image in each of his films, why not present other signs of his influence, from having his hero mistake the name of a spymaster for his own acronym "A-H" in *The 39 Steps* (1935)⁵³ to the "beloved brandy that appears, like his own cameo, in fifty-one of his fifty-three films"?⁵⁴ In *Find the Director and other Hitchcock Games*, Leitch alone denies the cameo's thematic or aesthetic importance to situate it as a game undertaken purely for pleasure, treating the cameos "as moves in a game of hide and go seek."⁵⁵ When Hitchcock began his cameos, most cameos were announced within the film for proper identification; his appearances created the game of find-

⁴⁸ Charles Barr, *English Hitchcock* (Moffat, UK: Cameron and Hollis, 1999), 122.

⁴⁹ Matthew Hills, *Fan Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2003), xvii.

⁵⁰ Bellour, "Hitchcock, The Enunciator," 73.

⁵¹ Cohen and Cohen, *Hitchcock's Cryptonymies*, 26.

⁵² Miller, "Hitchcock's Understyle."

⁵³ Cohen and Cohen, *Hitchcock's Cryptonymies*, 134.

⁵⁴ Spoto, *The Dark Side Of Genius*, 267.

⁵⁵ Leitch, *Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games*, 8.



Figure 35. Hitchcock advertises "Reduco" in the classifieds section in *Lifeboat* (1944).



Figure 36. Hitchcock's cameo in *North by Northwest* (1959).

the-director. (Fig 35; Fig 36) For Leitch, Hitchcock's cameos encourage a disruptive dialectic equivalent to the opening up of documentary space that Sobchack identifies within narrative, introducing a "non-diegetic figure into the story without stepping unambiguously outside the frame of the diegesis."⁵⁶ Yet it is from the intentional quality of the cameos that the purposefulness of these flourishes can be extrapolated, making the cameos the most vital evidence of a game that is engaging the viewer. As Miller writes, "the recognized style is so because it courts recognizability and flatters recognition."⁵⁷ In recognition, one becomes like Hitchcock.

The convincing way in which Hitchcock's films can be read as games speaks to the perceived extent of his controlling hand in all aspects of cinema. His authorial control was legendary even in his time; as one reviewer wrote, "He's known to plot his movies down to the last frame."⁵⁸ Kapsis suggests that widespread anecdotes of the autocratic author were part of a concerted effort to establish Hitchcock as an auteur, an argument that many authors support.⁵⁹ Hitchcock's ethic became ideology in the hands of critics such as Truffaut, who extracted from Hitchcock the mantra, "For better or for worse, I must do the whole thing myself."⁶⁰ By the end of his career, buoyed by the politics of the French critics and his own press, the tales of Hitchcock's desire for absolute control reached mythological proportions.⁶¹ His disdain for actors, his distrust of writers and his dislike for improvisation were subjects he frequently expounded upon.⁶² From his first years in Hollywood, his determination to recreate his precisely-plotted frames led to shoots that went expensively past schedule.⁶³ His exacting visual demands drove him to insist on directing or at least attending the shoots of his own second units on films such as *North by Northwest* or *The Paradine Case* (1947) where he traveled to England to

⁵⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁷ Miller, "Hitchcock's Understyle," 5.

⁵⁸ John Coleman, "Seeing Red," *New Statesman*, July 10, 1964, Hitchcock Folder 479 Marnie (pub. - TV), Margaret Herrick.

⁵⁹ Barr, *English Hitchcock*, 12; Bill Krohn, *Hitchcock At Work*, New edition (London: Phaidon Press, 2003).

⁶⁰ Truffaut and Hitchcock, *Hitchcock*, 319.

⁶¹ Kapsis, *Hitchcock*.

⁶² Universal Studios Press Department, "Transcript of Closed Circuit Press Conference at NBC (Richard Schickel Interviews), NBC Studios, Burbank," March 23, 1976, 31, 37, Hitchcock Folder 200 Family Plot Hitchcock, Alfred 1973-1977 (publicity), Margaret Herrick; Leitch, "Hitchcock and His Writers," 81.

⁶³ Taylor, *Hitch*, 294.

stipulate the relative colour-value of the steam in a busy train station.⁶⁴ Hitchcock was known to involve himself in the script's creation in ways that ranged from supervision and the delivery of copious notes to the obsessive one-on-one writer's conference of his later years.⁶⁵ As Charles Bennett, who adapted *The 39 Steps* among other Hitchcock productions of the 1930s and 1940s said about the ultimate attribution of credit, "It always has to be Hitch."⁶⁶ Yet, despite his insistence that Hitchcock derided his work as an author, Bennett himself appeared as a "companion"⁶⁷ to Hitchcock in his cameo in *The 39 Steps*. It speaks to the strength of the Hitchcock myth, as well as the role of visibility in the cameo's function, that this cameo had to be "revealed many years later"⁶⁸ to Bennett's biographer.⁶⁹ While scholars working against purely auteurist critique have suggested that his ability to consistently assemble brilliant production teams was Hitchcock's greatest achievement,⁷⁰ the popular and scholarly attention to Hitchcock's cameos alone suggests that he triumphed as the author worthy of being recognized. Whether or not Bennett appears, cameos and their attendant recognition were overwhelmingly reserved for Hitchcock alone.

The cameo presents Hitchcock's body as tool and proof of his authorship. Bellour suggests that the cameo serves just this purpose of "authorial signature"⁷¹, and Hitchcock appears in places that indicate his enunciative power of the progress of the narrative, holding all the cards as in *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), or exiting to allow characters to enter important narrative sites as in *Marnie*, *The Birds*, or *Strangers on a Train*.⁷² (Fig. 37) Bellour represents Hitchcock's cameos as acknowledging the camera as the representative of his point-of-view, looking back at

⁶⁴ Alfred J. Hitchcock, "The Paradine Case London & Cumberland Locations," May 18, 1946, Folder 558 The Paradine Case Miscellaneous, Margaret Herrick; Krohn, *Hitchcock At Work*, 16; MGM, "North by Northwest Shooting Schedule Revised," August 18, 1954, Hitchcock Folder 547 North by Northwest schedule, Margaret Herrick.

⁶⁵ Spoto, *The Dark Side Of Genius*, 324.

⁶⁶ Patrick McGilligan, *Backstory: Interviews with Screenwriters of Hollywood's Golden Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 30.

⁶⁷ Barr, *English Hitchcock*, 235.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ John Belton, "Charles Bennett and the Typical Hitchcock Scenario," *Film History* 9, no. 3 (1997): 320.

⁷⁰ Tony Lee Moral, *Hitchcock and the Making of Marnie* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002), xv; Leitch, "Hitchcock and His Writers," 81.

⁷¹ Bellour, "Hitchcock, The Enunciator," 73.

⁷² Ibid., 78.



Figure 37. Hitchcock responded to fan requests for more information about his dogs' appearance in this cameo from *The Birds* (1963).

the camera "whose inscription he duplicates."⁷³ Miller, on the other hand, suggests that the cameo shows Hitchcock infiltrating the lives of his characters, demonstrating physical as well as emotional proximity to their stories.⁷⁴ Many scholars suggest that Hitchcock's cameos point to important details that are otherwise imperceptible.⁷⁵ Hitchcock certainly was no stranger to using his body and his image in publicity, playing the sober deadpan on television, in interviews and events, or even disguising himself as other characters. Kapsis even suggests that Hitchcock promoted stories about his enormous girth in the American press in the 1930s to attract the attention of Hollywood studios.⁷⁶ These "ridiculous stunts"⁷⁷ included floating a wax effigy of himself in the Thames for the *Frenzy* trailer, playing a slightly batty twin brother in some introductions to the television series, or dressing as a woman for the cover of 1964's *Holiday*.⁷⁸ Indeed, Hitchcock participated in the fictional lives of his characters in quite intimate ways. Hitchcock traced out the flight path of his defecting protagonists in *Torn Curtain* by taking a series of flights from Sweden into East Berlin during the height of the Cold War.⁷⁹ He even completed a trailer for *Frenzy* which showed him buying a red necktie which he insisted was to be used to strangle a woman to death in the manner of the film's antagonist.⁸⁰ While usually the cameo is the intrusion of the extradiegetic, in this case it seems that Hitchcock was perfectly willing to have his films intrude on his own sense of person.

Early Hitch Cameos

Hitchcock established his brand early on in his career. Perhaps foreshadowing his use of the cameo, even his first film in 1926 began, audaciously, with an image of his autograph.⁸¹ The press for *The Lodger*, released when his first directing credit was only eleven months behind

⁷³ Ibid., 73.

⁷⁴ Miller D.A, "Hitchcock's Hidden Pictures."

⁷⁵ Ibid.; Cohen and Cohen, *Hitchcock's Cryptonymies*; Yacowar, *Hitchcock's British Films*; Krohn, *Hitchcock At Work*, 37.

⁷⁶ Kapsis, *Hitchcock*, 20.

⁷⁷ Taylor, *Hitch*, 308.

⁷⁸ John D. Weaver, "The Man Behind the Body," *Holiday*, September 1964; Bob Faber, "Regular Trailer Revised," December 3, 1971, Hitchcock Folder 267 *Frenzy* Script 1971-1972, Margaret Herrick; Andrew A. Erish, "Reclaiming Alfred Hitchcock Presents," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 26, no. 5 (October 13, 2009): 385-92.

⁷⁹ Truffaut and Hitchcock, *Hitchcock*, 309.

⁸⁰ Leitch, *Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games*, 5.

⁸¹ Barr, *English Hitchcock*, 27.

him, predicted a future "when, as is surely coming, Alfred Hitchcock's name looms large on screens, programs, and advertisement instead of that of the star artists."⁸² While Kapsis demonstrates that Hitchcock was following in the steps of continental and American directors such as Lang, Murnau, and Griffith,⁸³ such a strategy represented "the first time in British film history that the director received even greater press than his stars."⁸⁴ Hitchcock courted such press from the beginning of his career; in 1925, Hitchcock made a speech to the British Film Society about the importance of establishing the director brand.⁸⁵ He approved of the "self-promotional flair"⁸⁶ of directors such as DeMille, citing him at this time as a model for the visible director.⁸⁷ While DeMille would go on to embrace cameos as part of his own successful quest for continued visibility in film and radio,⁸⁸ he appeared only in the films of other directors, and always identified by name. Hitchcock's cameos from their inception are unusually invisible for someone with the goal of recognition, beginning with his two appearances as an extra in *The Lodger* in a crowd scene and seen from behind as newspapers are rolled through the press at the printer. Although it is convenient to have the first cameo appear in what Hitchcock identified at Truffaut's urging as "the first true 'Hitchcock movie',"⁸⁹ they do not obviously present him for recognition, nor were they recognized in the press. Hitchcock suggested that these cameos were "strictly utilitarian; we had to fill the screen."⁹⁰ Nevertheless, as an extension of the Hitchcock strategy to be the most visible element of his films, the cameo puts to use the techniques of visibility most readily available to him in a way that would be developed throughout his career as a game not only of showing but of hiding as well.

Hitchcock's next cameo was in *Blackmail*, and included an attention-grabbing struggle with a little boy that borders on slapstick; as Spoto writes, he is "visible, just, in *The Lodger*, but in *Blackmail* he makes a characteristic gag appearance which more or less requires him to be

⁸² "The Films: Good Things of the Week," *The Star*, January 19, 1927, Hitchcock Folder 1621 Scrapbooks, Margaret Herrick.

⁸³ Kapsis, *Hitchcock*, 17.

⁸⁴ Spoto, *The Dark Side Of Genius*, 95.

⁸⁵ Spoto, *The Dark Side Of Genius*.

⁸⁶ Scott Simmon, "Cecil B. DeMille's Hollywood," *Film Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (2006): 189.

⁸⁷ Spoto, *The Dark Side Of Genius*, 73.

⁸⁸ Simmon, "Cecil B. DeMille's Hollywood," 189.

⁸⁹ Truffaut and Hitchcock, *Hitchcock*, 43.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

recognized."⁹¹ Yet even the writer who delicately pointed out this early appearance felt the need to respect it as a secret whose appearance should not be too easily revealed, dancing around the fact with the closing statement "if the gentleman who has his hat knocked over his eyes by a precocious infant in the tube train scene is not 'A.H.," it must be his double."⁹² Of the many clippings preserved in Hitchcock's scrapbooks, this mention from a trade paper is the only one that identifies his cameo, and, although to be fair there were no more outbursts of this kind of physical comedy in Hitchcock's films, there is no mention of the cameos again until *The Lady Vanishes* in 1938. In fact, despite the impression conveyed by scholars such as Leitch that Hitchcock appears in "celebrated cameo appearances in virtually all of his films,"⁹³ Hitchcock makes only four or five cameos during the early period of his first 17 films, and doesn't begin his celebrated run of cameos until his move to America to film *Rebecca* in 1940. Curiously enough, most of those early cameos are from the thriller films most commonly associated with Hitchcock's later work rather than his early romantic comedies, dramas or even musicals. These identified cameos also appear in what Yacowar identifies as Hitchcock's most frequently screened early films.⁹⁴ That Hitchcock happened to sign those films which would fit most easily into the genre and themes which would define him as an auteur either strenuously affirms that theory, or suggests that perhaps other Hitchcock appearances have been overlooked or lost to the wear and tear of almost a century. Hitchcock himself identifies in a cameo in another well-regarded film, *Rich and Strange*, which as yet has not been uncovered.⁹⁵

Clearly the cameo had captured the imagination of David O. Selznick, the *Gone With the Wind* producer who brought Hitchcock to America, and his publicists. Beginning with *Rebecca* Hitchcock's name became increasingly associated with the films he made, receiving above-the-title billing upon his move to America.⁹⁶ While the Hitchcock image was first used in a trailer in his last British film, *Jamaica Inn* (1939), by his second US production, the cameo began to trickle more regularly into reviews. The press campaign for *Foreign Correspondent* (1940)

⁹¹ Taylor, *Hitch*, 102.

⁹² "Blackmail," *Daily Film Renter*, June 24, 1929, Hitchcock Folder 1617 Scrapbooks, Margaret Herrick.

⁹³ Leitch, *Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games*, 2.

⁹⁴ Yacowar, *Hitchcock's British Films*, 1.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁹⁶ Taylor, *Hitch*, 198.

focused on exploring the "Hitchcock cult,"⁹⁷ and, as apparent from its frequent appearance in reviews of the time, obviously discussed the cameo as part of the director's "unmistakable stamp."⁹⁸ The filming of an alternate cameo was used as a publicity stunt for *Life* magazine in *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*.⁹⁹ The cameo itself was used in the trailer for 1944's *Lifeboat*, yet even that film, which presented a return to the kind of visual gag of over a decade previous with a before-and-after photograph of Hitchcock advertising a miracle slimming drug in a newspaper onboard the castaways' raft was not overwhelmingly called attention to, even when reviewers pointed out other minute "touches of artificiality."¹⁰⁰ As Leitch points out, "the audience was expected by this point now not only to be familiar with Hitchcock's profile but to be interested in its changing shape as personal revelation."¹⁰¹ While Leitch suggests that Hitchcock's American films of the 1940s were much less whimsical and more staid than his British offerings, the extent to which whimsy was allowed free reign in the cameo demonstrates that this route to undermining classical narrative was encouraged.¹⁰² After all, unlike other reflections of Hitchcock's wit that could be jarring with classical composition, Hitchcock's appearances were gently disruptive, asserting that "the movie they are watching is only a movie, but this realization will not break the movie's spell."¹⁰³

Surrounded: Multimedia Hitchcock and The Cameos

In fact, while most writers take the point of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (1955-62) and their characteristic introductions as the moment at which America became familiar with the Hitchcock image,¹⁰⁴ it seems as though the cameo and its attendant publicity in fact created the context for these witty intros. Publicity materials such as the trailer for *Spellbound* in 1945,

⁹⁷ Rose Pelswick, "McCrea-Day Picture Presented at the Rivoli," *New York Journal and American*, August 28, 1940, Hitchcock Folder 1623 Scrapbooks, Margaret Herrick.

⁹⁸ Bosley Crowther, "The Screen: Foreign Correspondent," *The New York Times*, August 28, 1940, Hitchcock Folder 1623 Scrapbooks, Margaret Herrick; "New Hitchcock Film Thriller of the Year," *New York World Telegram*, August 28, 1940, Hitchcock Folder 1623 Scrapbooks, Margaret Herrick.

⁹⁹ Krohn, *Hitchcock At Work*, 34.

¹⁰⁰ Archer Winsten, "Alfred Hitchcock's 'Lifeboat' Opens at the Astor Theatre," *New York Post*, January 13, 1944, Hitchcock Folder 1622 Scrapbooks, Margaret Herrick.

¹⁰¹ Leitch, *Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games*, 3.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 107.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

repeatedly asserted Hitchcock as a star who audiences could and should recognize and remember. The cameo with which the trailer begins was not highlighting a new feature, but an acknowledgement of this type of appearance as part of the director's long-standing "traditional whimsy."¹⁰⁵ Lobby cards for *Spellbound* featured ads touting the film "You would see it just to see its two brilliant stars...and here are all three!" featuring an illustration of Hitchcock between Ingrid Bergman and Gregory Peck.¹⁰⁶ The Hitchcock persona that seems built around the anthology television format of the mid-1950s had already emerged.¹⁰⁷ In fact, the initial script for the *Spellbound* trailer had a dry introduction from the director reminiscent of the form that would be perfected for the introduction *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, beginning with the ubiquitous "I'm Alfred Hitchcock."¹⁰⁸

The ubiquitous television appearance built on the challenges to studio authority and classical narrative that was common not only in Hitchcock's work but that of fellow television star Bob Hope. Like many shows in the popular anthology format hosted by film celebrities, each episode began with Hitch's "cynical comments on the story to be shown and even - something totally taboo at the time on television -saying slighting things about the sponsor."¹⁰⁹ By 1956, one year after the launch of his series, Hitchcock hosted a television variety show with Doris Day to promote *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956) and talked freely about his cameos, saying "I manage to sneak into one scene in each picture. People call it my trademark. And I'm just ham enough to get a kick out of it."¹¹⁰ Rather than suggesting the cameo as act of mastery, here Hitchcock sided with the popular evaluation of the cameo in the 1950s as an anti-diegetic act completed at the expense of studio norms, "sneaking" into his own pictures. (Fig. 37; Fig. 38) Hitchcock's cameos were fun. This slighting attitude was in keeping with Hope's attacks on Paramount, emphasizing the disruptive powers of the director above and beyond the studio that

¹⁰⁵ "Hitchcock's Hand Steers Lifeboat Safely Through Film's Troubled Sea," *Newsweek*, January 17, 1944, Hitchcock Folder 1622 Mr and Mrs Smith Scrapbook, Margaret Herrick.

¹⁰⁶ "'You Would See It Just to See Its Two Brilliant Stars' advertisement," December 1941, Hitchcock Folder 656 Suspicion (misc) Lobby Reproductions for theaters, Margaret Herrick.

¹⁰⁷ Erish, "Reclaiming Alfred Hitchcock Presents."

¹⁰⁸ Mel Dinelli, "Trailer Material for *Spellbound*," September 3, 1945, Hitchcock Folder 650 *Spellbound* (script), Margaret Herrick.

¹⁰⁹ Taylor, *Hitch*, 230.

¹¹⁰ "American Heart Fund 'Close to Your Heart' 15-Minute Transcribed Program by American Heart Association," February 1, 1956, Hitchcock Folder 394 *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, Margaret Herrick.



Figure 38. Even Hitchcock's back was familiar to audiences, as in this cameo from *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956)...

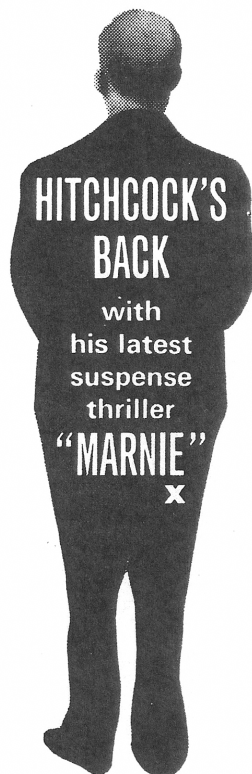


Figure 39. ...and this cameo-driven familiarity with his body was used to advertise his films, as in this newspaper ad for *Marnie* (1964).

housed him. Drawing further parallels with Hope's brash visible style of self-promotion, with his move to Universal, Hitchcock's picture joined that of Hope in pride of place in the studio's commissary, the only director to be so made visible.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, television had an immediate effect on his visibility, and his cameos as well. 1956's *The Wrong Man* presented the true story of a man mistakenly accused of a robbery in the style of documentary reenactment, a decision that garnered it much praise among the *Cahiers* critics, using actual locations and presenting real-life participants throughout its construction.¹¹² Although Hitchcock shot a cameo for this film "he decided to suppress that in the name of total credibility,"¹¹³ choosing instead to appear in an introductory speech reminiscent of his television series, where he emphasized the film's adherence to the facts. The distinct way in which this cameo is relegated to a thoroughly extradiegetic sequence in this film calls into relief the playfulness of his disruptive presence within the diegesis his other films. The cameo maintained its importance even in this new medium. The television shows, like the mystery books that also bore his name, were a secondary part of his oeuvre: after all, he did not direct many of them, and his introduction seems to have been the larger part of his involvement.¹¹⁴ Yet, he did intend to cameo in some of the shows, having the show's producer seek out background and busy situations where that could "conceal" him in the crowd.¹¹⁵ In fact, Hitchcock consolidated his film and television work, as in the case of *Psycho*, where he used his television crew to shoot the film and scheduled his on-set appearances for cameos and trailers at the same time as his television introductions.¹¹⁶ Trailers, cameos and introductions were all of a piece in establishing the Hitchcock visibility, and the illusion of control even where his influence was much reduced. As he said in the radio spot for that film, "I'm Alfred Hitchcock. I am the same Alfred Hitchcock you saw on television last Sunday evening. I shall return next Sunday. Now that I am also on

¹¹¹ Weaver, "The Man Behind the Body," 64.

¹¹² Orr, *Hitchcock and Twentieth-Century Cinema*, 47.

¹¹³ Taylor, *Hitch*, 309.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 229.

¹¹⁵ Joan Harrison and Shamley Productions to Alfred Hitchcock, March 18, 1958, Hitchcock Folder 1274 Alfred Hitchcock Presents (correspondence), Margaret Herrick.

¹¹⁶ Erish, "Reclaiming Alfred Hitchcock Presents"; Revue Studios, "Daily Production Report Revue Studios Psycho," January 28, 1960, Hitchcock Folder 601 Psycho (prod.), Margaret Herrick; Revue Studios, "Revue Advance Schedule," November 30, 1959, Hitchcock Folder 600 Psycho (prod.), Margaret Herrick.

radio do you have the uneasy feeling that you're surrounded? You are."¹¹⁷ When *Holiday* asserted in 1964 that Hitchcock was "the only motion-picture director who is recognized wherever he goes,"¹¹⁸ the author blamed this turn of events on his cameos.

Hitchcock's cameos are surprisingly heterogeneous, and this formal inconsistency argues against their thematic importance. The roles vacillated between exposure and concealment throughout his career, with comedic flashes such as the clockmaker in *Rear Window* (1954) or the fleeting passerby outside an office window in *Psycho*. The extended sequence in *Blackmail*, for example, was followed by a walk-on in *Easy Virtue* (1928); the almost-unrecognizable Hitchcock in the background of *Rebecca* (1940) is matched with the lingering newspaper ad in *Lifeboat*. The height of his exposure came in *Torn Curtain*, where Hitchcock not only performed a small vignette with an uncomfortable infant, but his appearance was accompanied by the tune used to introduce his television series. Yet for 1972's follow-up cameo in *Frenzy*, he is hidden among the crowd of the film's opening. If Hitchcock's cameos were not only a signature but a clue within the film to moments of great importance as Cohen suggests, this plotting was not necessarily determined in advance. The cameos are rarely mentioned in shooting scripts, except when a clean office copy has clearly been reproduced at a later date from the finished product, as in the case of *Lifeboat*.¹¹⁹ Although the *Lifeboat* cameo in a newspaper ad must have involved some advance planning, in-depth studies of the production of his films show no evidence of concerted pre-production attention towards the cameo except, for example, when the shooting of the cameo was part of a publicity campaign in *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*.¹²⁰ The unusual *Lifeboat* cameo was also used in the trailer as part of the film's publicity. In preparation for shooting *Marnie*, Hitchcock coached title lead Tippi Hedren extensively on her passage through the hotel corridor where Bellour's favourite and most enunciative cameo occurs, yet never mentioned the

¹¹⁷ "Psycho Lobby/Radio Spots," n.d., Hitchcock Folder 101 The Birds - radio spots 1963, Margaret Herrick.

¹¹⁸ Weaver, "The Man Behind the Body."

¹¹⁹ Jo Swerling, "Lifeboat Screenplay Revised Final," July 29, 1943, Hitchcock Folder 353 Lifeboat, Margaret Herrick.

¹²⁰ Moral, *Hitchcock and the Making of Marnie*; Walter Raubicheck and Walter Srebnick, *Scripting Hitchcock Psycho, the Birds, and Marnie* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2011); Krohn, *Hitchcock At Work*, 34.

intersection with his own role.¹²¹ Another of Hitchcock's notes prepared by his assistant suggests adding the elaborate cameo with distressed baby in *Torn Curtain* to the script a few days before shooting began.¹²² The cameo was conceived even later in *Topaz*, as evident in the penned query "Hitch's shot?" in margins of his assistant's copy of the film's shooting script.¹²³ This handwritten addendum to an already-finalized script suggest a late, tentative addition, and a moveable one. In this way, the cameos bolster arguments that Hitchcock's legendary planning was used as the basis for a surprising amount of improvisation which included the cameo.¹²⁴

Hitchcock described the cameo to Truffaut as a "superstition,"¹²⁵ one to which he often seemed to only grudgingly adhere when bolstered by the intervention of his assistants. Hitchcock was sometimes dismissive of the cameos, stating in 1950 that "I don't like these small appearances,"¹²⁶ elsewhere in 1956 he conceded that he enjoyed them.¹²⁷ In certain films, he seems to have been very concerned with the details of the cameo's composition. Hitchcock planned his appearance in *Strangers on a Train* in three separate scenes in the film, two of which were eventually shot. The insertion of the distinctive double-bass appearance eventually required a re-shoot in studio of several sequences of the opening scene that had already been captured on location in Connecticut.¹²⁸ This reworking of the cameo is so unusual that it almost seems a pretext for the kind of expensive reshoot that made studios apprehensive about Hitchcock pictures;¹²⁹ elsewhere, he seems less patient with the necessity of committing his image to film. In *North by Northwest*, Hitchcock's near miss with a city bus, so dear to Yacowar as an emblem of Hitchcock's control, was completed in a single take that was marked by the script supervisor

¹²¹ Tippi Hedren and Alfred Hitchcock, "Marnie Tapes Transcript Conversation Tippi Hedren, Hitchcock Tape 1," October 23, 1963, 2, Hitchcock Folder 458 T. Hedren, Margaret Herrick.

¹²² Alfred Hitchcock and Peggy Robertson, "Mr. Hitchcock's Notes on Screenplay Dated Sept 27 1965," October 12, 1965, 1, Hitchcock Folder 651 *Torn Curtain* (script), Margaret Herrick.

¹²³ Samuel Taylor, "Topaz First-Draft Screenplay with Changes up to Feb 11 1969, Peggy Robertson's Script," n.d., 63, Hitchcock Folder 692, Margaret Herrick.

¹²⁴ Leitch, "Hitchcock and His Writers," 79.

¹²⁵ Truffaut and Hitchcock, *Hitchcock*, 61.

¹²⁶ Spoto, *The Dark Side Of Genius*, 534.

¹²⁷ "American Heart Fund 'Close to Your Heart' 15-Minute Transcribed Program by American Heart Association."

¹²⁸ Krohn, *Hitchcock At Work*, 123.

¹²⁹ Leonard J. Leff, *Hitchcock and Selznick: The Rich and Strange Collaboration of Alfred Hitchcock and David O. Selznick in Hollywood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 92.

as unusable because of poor lighting, and even then was reshot twice with an extra in the role.¹³⁰ Hitchcock in fact cut himself out of *Topaz* and *The Wrong Man* (1956), only to be reinstated in the former by his concerned team who were worried about "Mr. Hitchcock's appearance."¹³¹ The cameos were often composed in process shots as was typical of the period,¹³² but Hitchcock also appeared in a surprising number of on-location cameos in crowd scenes where his appearance was not merely a simple afterthought. In the case of *North by Northwest*, the cameo is not only on location but appears to coincide with what had been slated as second-unit shoots, transforming them into first-unit with the appearance of the director.¹³³ In his on-location cameo in Morocco from *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, Hitchcock's appearance in the background of this brief establishing shot, where much of the rest of the sequence had to be reconstructed in a Hollywood studio owing to difficult shooting conditions among frenzied crowds of extras, attests to his penchant for courting complexity in production.¹³⁴ Despite his claims in the 1960s that the cameos were "a rather troublesome gag,"¹³⁵ fan requests for information on his cameos in the case of *Psycho* and *The Birds* received answers drafted in the first person, where other inquiries received curt formulaic replies from his secretary.¹³⁶ His decade-long commitment to the television introductions and the increasing use of his persona for radio spots and trailers in the 1960s suggest that he saw their utility as part of the growing Hitchcock trademark, a brand that his team was careful to protect.

Hitchcock's visibility grew in the 1950s and 1960s, but its character changed. Kapsis notes that in the 1960s Hitchcock was courting identification with the art house, going so far as to have publicists for *The Birds* discretely pay for a tributary monograph and a retrospective of

¹³⁰ "Daily Scene Report North by Northwest," September 4, 1959, Hitchcock Folder 531, Margaret Herrick.

¹³¹ Peggy Robertson, "Mr. Hitchcock's Secret Cuts," July 7, 1969, Hitchcock Folder 738 *Topaz* (cutting), Margaret Herrick.

¹³² Paramount, "First Unit Shooting Schedule To Catch a Thief," June 7, 1954, Hitchcock Folder 63 *To Catch a Thief* (production), Margaret Herrick.

¹³³ MGM, "North by Northwest Shooting Schedule Revised"; "Continuity Notes Into Thin Air," May 20, 1955, Hitchcock Folder 374 *Man Who Knew Too Much*, Margaret Herrick.

¹³⁴ "Continuity Notes Into Thin Air," sc 86; "Shooting Schedule Studio Portion Only," June 29, 1955, sc 87, Hitchcock Folder 396 *The Man Who Knew Too much*, Margaret Herrick.

¹³⁵ Truffaut and Hitchcock, *Hitchcock*, 61.

¹³⁶ Suzanne Gauthier to Patrick G. Busch, August 15, 1963, Hitchcock Folder 51 *The Birds* - fan queries 1963, Margaret Herrick; Alfred J. Hitchcock to Mrs. Samuel Hart, Jr., August 25, 1960, Hitchcock Folder 592 *Psycho* Fan Mail, Margaret Herrick.

his work produced by the Museum of Modern Art in New York.¹³⁷ The mildly anti-establishment wit that Hitchcock had with the television introductions was increasingly adopted in press for his films. For *Torn Curtain* in 1966, Hitchcock's typical radio spots played with the recognizable elements of marketing jargon in the way that he had played with publicity over his obesity in the 1940s: "I have three messages to deliver to males fourteen to eighteen, nineteen to 29, and 30 and over."¹³⁸ Hitchcock's films saw little critical success following the release of *The Birds*, but reviewers overwhelmingly came to dwell on the cameos as the triumph of style over substance, dismissed as one of "the little effects he likes so much."¹³⁹ As a trademark the cameo began to overwhelm his visibility as director; as one reviewer wrote, his films are identifiable "because you spotted his familiar silhouette in one of the scenes, and not because *Family Plot* has any of the skillful storytelling or moral ambiguity associated with the Master of Suspense."¹⁴⁰ Hitchcock's silhouette had been inserted into press advertisements for his films with predictable regularity since *North by Northwest*, but what had begun with comical juxtaposition of his silhouette alongside the small figures of his beleaguered stars became increasingly ridiculous throughout the 1960s, as birds nested on his head or he pulled back offending curtains.¹⁴¹ For his final film *Family Plot* (1976), the key marketing image for the campaign was Hitchcock's head encased in a crystal ball.¹⁴² (Fig. 40) Hitchcock's image, made famous by the cameo, had outlived its associations with mastery.

In his later films, the cameos became one of the defining modes in which audiences related to Hitchcock films. Even as he was trying to become nominated to the film canon, the cameos became a vernacular way to understand Hitchcock that limited that ascension. As a result, despite the regular reference to them in the press of the time, their presence in scholarly discussions of Hitchcock is limited. Kapsis barely mentions them when describing his movement from mass entertainer to art film master. Miller, Cohen, and Leitch, writing about Hitchcock's

¹³⁷ Kapsis, "Reputation Building and the Film Art World," 24.


¹³⁸ "Torn Curtain 1 Minute Radio Spot #1," n.d., Hitchcock Folder 911 Torn Curtain (post production), Margaret Herrick.

¹³⁹ Monroe Freedman, "Topaz," *The Nation*, January 12, 1970, Hitchcock Folder 797 Topaz (reviews), Margaret Herrick.

¹⁴⁰ Corliss, "Let Us Not Praise Famous Men."

¹⁴¹ "North by Northwest Ad.," *Variety*, July 24, 1959, Hitchcock Folder 545 North by Northwest (publicity), Margaret Herrick.

¹⁴² Universal Studios, "Family Plot Brochure," 1976, Hitchcock Folder 218 Family Plot - publicity 1976, Margaret Herrick.



From the
devious mind of
Alfred Hitchcock,
a diabolically
entertaining
motion picture.

There's no body **in the family plot.**

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S
FAMILY PLOT *You must see it twice!*

starring
KAREN BLACK • BRUCE DERN • BARBARA HARRIS • WILLIAM DEVANE
Music by JOHN WILLIAMS • Screenplay by ERNEST LEHMAN • From the novel "THE RAINBIRD PATTERN"
by VICTOR CANNING • Directed by ALFRED HITCHCOCK • A UNIVERSAL PICTURE • TECHNICOLOR®

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<small>PLATT THEATRE</small> CENTURY PLAZA 1 —Century City 553-4291 ALHAMBRA —Alhambra 289-3861	EASTLAND #2 —West Covina 331-9944	AMERICANA CINEMA #2 —Panorama City 893-6441

Figure 40. The creative inclusion of Hitchcock's body as signature reaches ridiculous heights in this ad for *Family Plot* (1972).

games include the cameo only as a gateway to more complicated rituals of misdirection, while Yacowar quarantines his obsession in the book's appendices. Even given the sheer volume of writing on Hitchcock, the cameos are too accessible to be worthy of mastery. Within the attempts to gain high culture legitimacy in his own lifestyle, the cameos as celebrity culture dogged him; one writer described an uneventful appearance at a convocation where he was given a doctorate by contextualizing it "as if he were making a cameo appearance in one of his own movies."¹⁴³ Like the actors whose visibility he had so long emulated, he had become inseparable from his film roles. A Lincoln Center film gala in 1974 included a programme about "The Screen Cameos," as did a 1976 tribute at Universal.¹⁴⁴ The game was all that was left, and it was a game that everyone was playing.

Celebratory Cameos in Hitchcock's Wake: Proof of Authorship

The Hitchcock cameo set a precedent that was acted upon in the 1970s. A new generation of American directors steeped in the study of film history and theory created elaborate textual references not only to the art cinema and the highly regarded filmmakers of the New Wave, but also to Hitchcock who they had admired. Hitchcock was emblematic of the "tradition" of director cameos, and the directors of the New Hollywood followed in his wake. Francis Ford Coppola appeared in *Apocalypse Now*. Roman Polanski played a bit part in *Chinatown*. Terrence Malick knocked on a door in *Badlands*. "Scorsese Out-Hitches 'Hitch'!" was the verdict in a review of *Taxi Driver* (1976), recounting Scorsese's cameos in each of his films. Yet unlike Hitchcock, for whom the cameo became as defining an element of his oeuvre as its style and themes, these directors did not adhere religiously to the cameo doctrine. Other films by these directors, such as *The Godfather* or Polanski's *The Tenant* (1976), appear to contain no authorial appearances, although critics stand ready to spot as yet undiscovered cameos.¹⁴⁵ As in the case of Hitchcock, it was in the best-regarded films of their early careers that cameos were to be found. While press surrounding Hitchcock's cameos only grew as the Hitchcock brand became tied to the Hitchcock

¹⁴³ Guy Flatley, "I Tried to Be Discrete with That Nude Corpse," *The New York Times*, June 22, 1972, Hitchcock Folder 313 Frenzy Publicity, Margaret Herrick.

¹⁴⁴ Truffaut and Hitchcock, *Hitchcock*, 345; PR, MCA to Frank Wright, MCA, "Interoffice Memorandum: Reel of Mr. Hitchcock's Appearances in 9 Motion Pictures," May 14, 1976, Hitchcock Folder 1456 General (A Hitchcock - misc), Margaret Herrick.

¹⁴⁵ Philip French, "The 10 Best Movie Cameos," *The Guardian*, July 25, 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2010/jul/25/philip-french-10-best-movie-cameos>.

body by design, after the initial nods of their early films, little press was dedicated to the directors' cameos. While Scorsese appeared prominently in *Taxi Driver* as noted, and many of his films after, his cameos are rarely mentioned in reviews of his films.¹⁴⁶ Likewise, the popular press called attention to Polanski's role in *Chinatown* (1974) but not to subsequent appearances.¹⁴⁷ Although Mathijs has called attention to Cronenberg's cameos, he points out it was only in an obscure fan magazine that the appearance was signaled. Given the way in which the cameo "superstition" dogged Hitchcock while making him one of the most visible directors of the twentieth century, succeeding filmmakers inspired by the auteurist model have been less dogmatic about any cameo appearances. Sacrificing visibility, their cameos don't merely succumb to precedent, expectation, and the allure of ready-made publicity. More marginal than Hitchcock, they are less constrained by the parameters of the trademark appearance. Auteurs or otherwise, many directors continue to use the cameo to pay tribute to the concept of authorship as both fans and successors to the master.

Of the New Hollywood group, Scorsese seems to have adopted the most Hitchcock-like approach to cameo, joining the game when he shows up directing a nightclub's spotlights in *After Hours* (1985) and a television show in *The King of Comedy* (1983) or appears as a photographer in *Age of Innocence* (1994) and *Hugo* (2011). (Fig. 41) Like Coppola's cameo as a documentary director in *Apocalypse Now* (1979), or the DeMille appearances of a few decades earlier, these appearances often explicitly reference Scorsese's responsibilities as director. Scorsese, who began his filmmaking career at New York University at the moment when the French critics

¹⁴⁶ Vincent Canby, "Review/Film: The Age of Innocence; Grand Passions and Good Manners," *The New York Times*, September 17, 1993, sec. Movies, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/09/17/movies/review-film-the-age-of-innocence-grand-passions-and-good-manners.html>; Manohla Dargis, "Martin Scorsese's 'Hugo,' With Ben Kingsley and Sacha Baron Cohen," *The New York Times*, November 22, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/23/movies/martin-scorseses-hugo-with-ben-kingsley-and-sacha-baron-cohen-review.html>; Vincent Canby, "After Hours (1985)," *The New York Times*, September 13, 1985, <http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9C07E7DD153AF930A2575AC0A963948260>; Vincent Canby, "Mean Streets (1973)," *The New York Times*, October 3, 1973, <http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=EE05E7DF1739E56EBC4B53DFB6678388669EDE>.

¹⁴⁷ Vincent Canby, "Chinatown (1974)," *The New York Times*, June 21, 1974, <http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=EE05E7DF1739E460BC4951DFB066838F669EDE>.



Figure 41. Martin Scorsese has appeared twice in his own films in cameos as a photographer. This one is in *Hugo* (2011).

were at the peak of their American influence, has characterized his work as homage to filmmakers who came before him, including Hitchcock.¹⁴⁸ Yet, although Scorsese appears in many of his films, there are many in which he does not, appearing obliquely in voice recordings, references to his past films, or other clues that are reminiscent of Hitchcockian games. It is hard not to see Hitchcock's initials in *After Hours*, which Scorsese asserts is his take on the Hitchcockian chase film;¹⁴⁹ elsewhere, Scorsese claims to have hidden thousands of "Xs" in *The Departed* (2006) in reference to Howard Hawks' *Scarface* (1932).¹⁵⁰ Hitchcock stepped back from the blatant self-aggrandizement of DeMille, whose name and image always appeared hand-in-hand, often in reference to projects coming soon to a theatre near you, appearing on the set of his *Samson and Delilah* (1949) in *Sunset Boulevard* or name-dropping *The Greatest Show on Earth* with a sandwich board in *Son of Paleface*. Scorsese retreats even more until he actively seems to hide. Although his cameos are a part of Scorsese's oeuvre, they are not tied to the circulation of his visibility as they are for Hitchcock. Whether he is as well-known as Hitchcock is difficult to say, but certainly he is less recognizable. Yet, like the Cronenberg cameos that Mathijs is so pleased to point out, Scorsese cameos truly separate the fan from the regular film-going audience with their pretense to recognition.

Like Hitchcock, Scorsese vacillates between visible cameos and barely appearing as an extra. Sometimes they are so brief they seem impossible to find, as attested by blurry fan screenshots of arms hanging from truck windows or figures moving across the screen that are labeled Scorsese cameos.¹⁵¹ Often these attributed cameos can only have been confirmed from other clues, such as the closing title credit to Scorsese's dog who appears briefly in *The Color of Money* (1986) in the company of a man walking very quickly through a casino.¹⁵² Appearances like this blink-and-you-miss-it supposed cameo exhibit enough anonymity that whether they are meant to be recognized by anyone is open to question. For Scorsese's early films before the days of home screenings and replay culture, only someone with the kind of obsessive repetition that

¹⁴⁸ Richard Schickel, *Conversations with Scorsese*, Updated, Expanded ed. edition (New York: Knopf, 2013), 157.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 237.

¹⁵¹ Erik Davis, "See Every Martin Scorsese Cameo, from 'Boxcar Bertha' to 'The Wolf of Wall Street,'" *Movies.com*, January 28, 2014, <http://www.movies.com/movie-news/martin-scorsese-cameos/14777?wssac=164&wssaffid=news>.

¹⁵² Ibid.

adherents of the New Wave claimed marked their cinephilic viewing practice could have recognized him.¹⁵³ Perhaps a modest man does not imagine that kind of future for his work, but maybe someone aspiring to the title of auteur does. By 1986, home viewing was a reality, and that closing credit, such as the fan magazine that pointed Mathijs in Cronenberg's direction, could be read as a clue for viewers playing a cinematic game started by Hitchcock. While Hitchcock reserved cameos for himself, Scorsese presented multiple cameos in his films, including his screenwriters and the regular appearance of his father and mother. Playing a bartender in *The Color of Money*, Charles Scorsese interrupts a series of two-shots of the protagonists at his bar whose awkward framing can only be accounted for by the need to feature Scorsese, Sr., centre frame. By allowing his parents the more leisurely visibility that Hitchcock typically reserved for himself, Scorsese's homage extends as he has said not only to his influences but to his literal parentage.¹⁵⁴ Like other directors appearing in cameos in their movies, Scorsese consciously introduces more complex layers of recognition into the Hitchcock game.

Directors continue to appear in cinematic cameos, often in contexts that specifically reference cinephilic viewing. Sometimes directors appear in single cameos, but it is only when cameos are repeated over a series of films that they are transformed into cultish signals to the active viewer.¹⁵⁵ Just as the repetition of themes and style signals a director as an auteur, repetition makes the cameo more meaningful as a game for the audience. Directors of horror, a genre that thrives on social and generic disruption, seem in particular to have gravitated to the cameo as signature, perhaps in direct homage to Hitchcock. Since his horror films of the 1980s, Peter Jackson has appeared as an extra in almost every one of his films, often disguised behind elaborate costumes and makeup. Rather than thwarting recognition, however, these disguised cameos can be seen as a challenge aimed at a particular viewing audience. Fans of the science fiction and fantasy genres in which Jackson primarily works, most famously directing the *Lord of the Rings* (2001-2015) films, operate within a community of interactivity, seeking out such details with the intent of identifying and compiling details that can be creatively repurposed into

¹⁵³ Christian Keathley, *Cinephilia and History, Or, The Wind in the Trees* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 7.

¹⁵⁴ Schickel, *Conversations with Scorsese*, 144.

¹⁵⁵ Mathijs, "Cronenberg Connected: Cameo Acting, Cult Stardom, and Supertexts," 148.

their own fan narratives.¹⁵⁶ The intersection of documentary space in which Jackson is a dwarf or a monster is one such alternative narrative, identifying Jackson not only as a director, but as a fan working within fan modes of appreciation. Where fans of science fiction create an intertextual connection to the objects of their interest by "speaking of characters as if they had an existence apart from their textual manifestations,"¹⁵⁷ Jackson goes beyond that engagement by actually inserting himself within the text. Entering into the text more fully than most fans can ever hope to, he emerges from the real existence of documentary space into the fantasy of the textual world. Like Hitchcock, Jackson uses the cameo to assert his control over multiple roles in the film's creation, as he takes responsibility for dominant and alternative fan narratives at once. Much of the attention to Jackson's cameos emerges from online communities of fans, and is evident from online entertainment blogs and news aggregators.¹⁵⁸

Quentin Tarantino's cameos likewise indicate fandom while asserting mastery of the medium. Tarantino's films call upon a "transhistorical cinematic mythology,"¹⁵⁹ containing encyclopedic references to film texts both cult and classic. Although Tarantino appears in his films in lengthy roles that would seem to overtake the character-space allotted the cameo, his cameos purely serve the purpose of evangelizing his brash personality. Like Hitchcock, his appearances are used to publicize his films as all-Tarantino projects.¹⁶⁰ While Scorsese's appearance in *Taxi Driver* as a vengeful husband is so nuanced with diegetic character that it is

¹⁵⁶ Henry Jenkins, "Reception Theory and Audience Research: The Mystery of the Vampire's Kiss," in *Reinventing Film Studies*, ed. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (London: Arnold, 2000), <http://web.mit.edu/cms/People/henry3/vampkiss.html>.

¹⁵⁷ Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 18.

¹⁵⁸ "Peter Jackson Reveals His Unrecognizable Cameo in 'The Hobbit,'" *Ace Showbiz*, December 15, 2012, <http://www.aceshowbiz.com/news/view/00056384.html>; "Peter Jackson Dishes on Stephen Colbert's 'Hobbit' Cameo," *Entertain This!*, December 17, 2014, <http://entertainthis.usatoday.com/2014/12/17/peter-jackson-dishes-on-stephen-colberts-hobbit-cameo/>; *Peter Jackson Movie Cameos*, 2009, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvgwXAkylt8&feature=youtube_gdata_player; Jennifer Brayton, "Fic Frodo Slash Frodo: Fandoms and The Lord of the Rings," in *From Hobbits to Hollywood Essays on Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings*, ed. Peter Jackson, Ernest Mathijs, and Murray Pomerance (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), 143.

¹⁵⁹ Caetlin Benson-Allott, "Grindhouse: An Experiment in the Death of Cinema," *Film Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (2008): 20.

¹⁶⁰ Alice Vincent and Tristram Fane Saunders, "Quentin Tarantino: His 10 Best Cameo Roles," *The Telegraph*, December 10, 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/film/hateful-eight/quentin-tarantino-best-cameo-roles/>.

more bit part than cameo, Tarantino's small roles are disruptive, demanding attention that creates a "ripple in the narrative flow."¹⁶¹ Like Hitchcock, Tarantino's roles run the gamut from the background work of the scalped Nazi in *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) to the long-winded Australian with the attention-grabbing accent in *Django Unchained* (2012). And, like Hitchcock, because Tarantino has established himself for recognition as the actor/director/producer/writer "post-auteur"¹⁶² hybrid, he positions himself as worthy of recognition. Of course, Tarantino lays the clues for find-the-director on other levels as well, like both Scorsese and Hitchcock leaving the marks of his influence via other technologies that are all but invisible, such as the answering machine recording in *Jackie Brown*. The references in his films to both classic and forgotten moments in film history offers up games galore for those who wish to measure themselves against his wealth of cinephilic knowledge.¹⁶³ At the same time, by playing characters he wrote for himself, Tarantino appears to plan his cameos into his films in a way that is more in line with actor-directors such as Woody Allen than the apparently spontaneous personal appearances of Scorsese and Hitchcock.

If the director cameo in Hitchcock's wake signals the transformation from fan to master, cameos can also be used to represent the director's god-like ability to conjure an important personage. Woody Allen is an example of an actor/writer/director who has cast himself as the star of his own films, and used the power of conjuring up other real-world people of import to demonstrate his prowess. Perhaps the most well-known cameo in this vein is Marshall McLuhan in *Annie Hall*, who appears to bolster Allen's reputation by taking his side in an argument in a movie theatre queue. Where the mass of stars in Todd and Kramer's cameo-rich films reflected their ability to command the Hollywood system in a way that had once been restricted to studios and their megalomaniac producers, Allen also invited celebrities to appear in his films in cameos. However, he courted highbrow cultural celebrities such as philosopher McLuhan or musician Itzhak Perlman for their approval and participation, and the distinction they lend to those who

¹⁶¹ Yacowar, *Hitchcock's British Films*, 217.

¹⁶² "Watching Movies With Quentin Tarantino," *The New York Times*, September 15, 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/09/15/arts/15WATC.html>.

¹⁶³ Joshua Wucher, "'Let's Get Into Character': Role-Playing in Quentin Tarantino's Postmodern Sandbox," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 48, no. 6 (December 1, 2015): 1287–1305.

like Allen can recognize their position in culture.¹⁶⁴ Unlike director cameos, these small roles did not necessarily have to be a particular personage; in fact, Allen had hoped to get Fellini "or whatever director we get"¹⁶⁵ to appear in McLuhan's stead to discuss the film that those waiting in line were about to see. These celebratory cameos are signifiers of a certain cultural capital commanded by the director, an effect magnified because Allen in his unique role as actor-director can literally make them appear on command. Likewise, Scorsese conjured figures from his own preferred cultural milieu, featuring New Wave musicians such as Iggy Pop and The Clash in *The Color of Money* and *The King of Comedy*. In 2014, Jackson welcomed comedian Stephen Colbert on set to film as a dwarf half-hidden in crowded candle-lit cavern in *The Hobbit*, a fact that Colbert publicized on his talk show during the lead up to the film's release.¹⁶⁶ The ability to incorporate celebrities into their films celebrates both filmmaker and cameoist as, if not friends, then sharing in a mutual appreciation at each other's level of distinction.

While director cameos expose the director as author, other potential authors appear less frequently. The prevalence of the director even before the birth of auteur theory is evident when one considers the shocking invisibility of the writer cameo, for example. If the director established himself as at the heart of the film's creation early on, underneath him, as one screenwriter accounted, "there were layers and layers and the lowest layer was the writer."¹⁶⁷ As Ames writes, "writers themselves often viewed their lot so negatively or with such embarrassment that they were unlikely to portray themselves in film scripts."¹⁶⁸ Because authors were less visible, when they did lobby to appear, their very presence needed to be accounted for. In the 1923 *Hollywood* script, the unidentified writer indicates that among the listed stars appearing in cameos were "Tom Geraghty, Frank Condon (authors)" who are credited with the story.¹⁶⁹ Whether or not this is an instance of an author writing himself into the script, without the kind of visibility that accompanied fellow cameoist Pola Negri or even "Dinky Dean," they

¹⁶⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 16.

¹⁶⁵ Woody Allen, "Annie Hall Script," n.d., 19, AMPAS Script Collection, Margaret Herrick.

¹⁶⁶ "Peter Jackson Dishes on Stephen Colbert's 'Hobbit' Cameo."

¹⁶⁷ McGilligan, *Backstory*, 205.

¹⁶⁸ Christopher Ames, *Movies about the Movies: Hollywood Reflected* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 165.

¹⁶⁹ Paramount, "Hollywood Continuity Script," n.d., 20, Paramount Scripts H-679, Margaret Herrick.

needed to justify their inclusion. With the advent of sound, scenarists became screenwriters and their stock gradually began to climb.¹⁷⁰ Though screenwriting underwent a renaissance of reputation with the reevaluation of the art cinema in the 1960s, writers continued to be underappreciated.¹⁷¹ However, writers never came to consistently make cameos. Their claim to authorship can sometimes be shaky; the politics of writing meant that multiple writers would work on any one project from conception to shooting.¹⁷² Even those identified as auteurs within the studio system such as Wilder and Hecht may have worked on a script almost unrecognizable from that which was finally produced. Additionally, writers often sought to hide rather than acclaim their credits in the cameo-laden films of the studio era, as those films that reflected a glamourized industry reality such as backstage musicals were seen as "bad credits."¹⁷³ No doubt drawing from the idea that nothing could be more naturally easy than actors playing themselves, these kind of stories were contemptuously deemed too facile to need a real writer to create them. Although writers may not have belonged on set in the way actors and directors do, they could have been accommodated in the process shots that so many cameos used. Writers presented an alternative author who rivaled the directors' control as auteur, and as an auteur, Hitchcock was famously dismissive of their role.¹⁷⁴

If the director has control of what is visible to the audience, then interest in the cameos of alternative authors on whom a director may or may not confer visibility in the future, either through collaboration or simply with cameos, is understandably weak. Their potential visibility is limited, as is the scope of the game that can be played by seeking them out. Rather than puzzling at the absence of author cameos, perhaps more unexpected is the absence of producer cameos, such as that established by the Vitagraph executives. In some cases, patterns of alternative author cameos have been established, is in the case of comic book writer Stan Lee, who appears in all of the film adaptations of Marvel comics, whether authored by him or otherwise. Lee is perhaps the truest inheritor of the Hitchcock style cameo, as his roles are often comedic refusals to acknowledge his importance, as when as a wedding guest celebrating of one of the characters he

¹⁷⁰ Evelyn F. Scott, *Hollywood, When Silents Were Golden*, 1st edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972).

¹⁷¹ Leitch, "Hitchcock and His Writers," 79.

¹⁷² Moral, *Hitchcock and the Making of Marnie*, 110.

¹⁷³ McGilligan, *Backstory*, 165.

¹⁷⁴ Leitch, "Hitchcock and His Writers," 81.

created in *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer* (2004) he rebuts a doorman who refuses him entry with disbelief, stating, "Don't you know who I am?" Another kind of established alternative author whose cameo has been established alongside the director is the real-life witness. People such as the falsely accused Manny Balestrero in *The Wrong Man*, Fast Eddie Felson in *The Hustler* or even writer Cheryl Strayed in *Wild* (2013) appear, if marginally, in the stories of their lives. Unlike directorial cameos, these tributes to the real world acknowledge not the way those real stories have been transformed through cinema, but how they preserve an intersection of documentary space upon which the rest of the film's diegesis is defined. Consultant cameos are another extension of this function: those who are the experts on the subject at hand appear in small cameos in biographical films such as *A Beautiful Mind* (2001) or *The Iron Lady* (2012), at a remove from the original subject.¹⁷⁵ Their presence not only acknowledges documentary space, but suggests their blessing and authorization. Cameos of this nature fail to create a supertext across films like a director cameo but nevertheless reference documentary space. *The Color of Money* is an exercise in these celebratory cameos, as it is not only a sequel to *The Hustler*, which featured several cameos of real pool players, but it repeats the technique of that film with the cameo appearances of contemporary pool champions. By establishing the parameters of who is celebrated as an author, these cameos become part of a larger game.

One particular celebratory cameo that straddles that of writer and witness is that of Charles Bukowski in *Barfly*, a script he penned for Barbet Schroeder. Bukowski, who grew from underground poet to cult figure with his semi-autobiographical stories about being a hard-up drunk in an unlovable Los Angeles, already recognized the power of his ravaged face as a visual testament to his stories of decades-long alcoholism. Interviewed in *Rolling Stone* in 1976, he echoes Didi-Huberman's opinions on the reflective power of the photographic face,¹⁷⁶ saying "I know the face is helping to sell books now...The face on that cover is so horrific and pasty and completely gone beyond the barrier that it makes people stop and wanna find out what the hell

¹⁷⁵ Tim Walker, "Meryl Streep Film The Iron Lady Is Criticised by Margaret Thatcher's Biographer," *The Telegraph*, December 16, 2011, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/film-news/8959033/Meryl-Streep-film-The-Iron-Lady-is-criticised-by-Margaret-Thatchers-biographer.html>.

¹⁷⁶ Georges Didi-Huberman, *Peuples exposés, peuples figurants* (Paris: les Éditions de Minuit, 2012), 54.

kinda madman this guy is."¹⁷⁷ Appearing in the background of the bar where the anti-hero makes his home, Bukowski is little more than an extra. Yet the production history of the film emphasizes the importance ascribed to Bukowski's role as author of the film, with Schroeder claiming in the film's press book that he wanted to make a film that was as much a product of the famed writer as possible.¹⁷⁸ In this case, Bukowski is not merely the writer, or the face who attests to a film's truth, but also the real-world referent conjured up by director Schroeder, and the source. Like so many cameos of this kind, Bukowski's appearance was publicized in press stills for the film, yet for the uninitiated his appearance is almost invisible. (Fig. 42) In *Hollywood*, his fictionalized account of the making of the film, Bukowski claims that he ad-libbed a fantastic trick of long-distance beer-spitting during the filming that was cut out of the film as too attention-getting, much to his chagrin.¹⁷⁹ For the author, the attention lavished on the somewhat vapid actors and withheld from him as the creator was characterized as a constant injustice during the making of the film. As Bukowski mourned, "The writer made their hearts beat, gave them words to speak, made them live or die, anything he wanted. And where was the writer? Whoever photographed the writer?"¹⁸⁰ The brief cameo seemed an ignoble tribute to someone such as Bukowski who was unfamiliar with cinematic language and conventions.

It is hard to underestimate the influence replay culture has had on director cameos. The opportunity to watch and rewatch scenes frame by frame has been marked as changing the nature of cinephilia, transforming games of memory to opportunities for obsessive reading.¹⁸¹ Certainly replay culture has influenced not only what cameos are identified, but also the extent to which they can be appreciated as games. Hitchcock's cameos were particularly vulnerable to memory. During a 1976 screening of cameos organized by Universal, Hitchcock's appearance as a clock repairman in *Rear Window* had to be omitted due to ongoing legal trouble about the rights to the film.¹⁸² Bellour, writing about Hitchcock's cameos in 1977, confessed it had been over ten years

¹⁷⁷ Glenn Esterly, "Buk: The Pock-Marked Poetry of Charles Bukowski," *Rolling Stone*, June 17, 1976, 33.

¹⁷⁸ Cannon Films, "Barfly Press Kit," n.d., 7, Charles Bukowski Papers, Barfly, Box 9, USC Special Collections.

¹⁷⁹ Charles Bukowski, *Hollywood* (Santa Rosa: Ecco, 1989), 214.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁸¹ Victor Burgin, *The Remembered Film* (London: Reaktion, 2004), 8.

¹⁸² PR, MCA to Frank Wright, MCA, "Interoffice Memorandum: Reel of Mr. Hitchcock's Appearances in 9 Motion Pictures"; Taylor, *Hitch*, 222.



Figure 42. Bukowski sits down the bar from Faye Dunaway in *Barfly* (1987).

since he had seen *Rope*, and that he was writing about the film from memory.¹⁸³ Many authors who discussed the cameos had not had the benefit of recent screenings of the films. Leitch, in 1991, noted that Truffaut and Yacowar disagreed over the appearance of a cameo in *Rope*, and suggested yet another possibility: that Hitchcock seated himself in the background of the rather small apartment set dressed up as one of the very few elderly supporting actors, the famous Sir Cecil Hardwicke.¹⁸⁴ (Fig. 43; Fig. 44) That Leitch could make such a ridiculous suggestion emphasizes how much the identification of the cameo was a game of memory invested with a bit of bluffing that tested the limits of probability, and how deeply the introduction of home viewing changed the rules. In 1993, archival research into production records combined with the benefits of the freeze-frame exposed a bizarre, otherwise "unreadable" cameo in *Saboteur* (1942) where Hitchcock is purportedly using sign language to pick up his secretary.¹⁸⁵ Those films caught in limbo for decades such as *Rear Window*, *Rope*, and *Under Capricorn* (1949) now join the rest of Hitchcock's work on DVD. It is into this environment of replay culture that Miller's too-close reading is born. When Yacowar presented his catalogue of cameos, his reading of the early films was restricted to those cameos that Truffaut identified in his special screenings of the films when preparing to interview Hitchcock, and mentions almost exclusively those cameos that Truffaut inquired about. A cursory search of YouTube turns up several compilations of every cameo ever, from his often-discussed appearance in a newsroom in *The Lodger* to the walk-on in the easily overlooked romantic comedy from 1928, *Easy Virtue*.¹⁸⁶ While Leitch was no doubt mistaken in his identification of Hitchcock masquerading as Sir Cecil Hardwicke in *Rope*, sometimes it is difficult to ascertain what the limits of the game are. How can one definitively say that the motionless blue blob atop the steps of the Australian Government House in *Under Capricorn*, which circulates in my library on a Korean DVD version with substandard definition, is Hitchcock? The game of recognition continues to drive paranoid readings of Hitchcock's films

¹⁸³ Bellour, "Hitchcock, The Enunciator," 73.

¹⁸⁴ Leitch, *Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games*, 3.

¹⁸⁵ Krohn, *Hitchcock At Work*, 48.

¹⁸⁶ "Alfred Hitchcock's Movie Cameos," *Listal*, accessed April 3, 2014, <http://www.listal.com/list/hitchcocks-cameos>; Will Erickson, *Every Hitchcock Cameo Ever* (YouTube, 2012), http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okLiLsncyi0&feature=youtube_gdata_player; Morgan T. Rhys, *Every Alfred Hitchcock Cameo* (YouTube), accessed September 9, 2014, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_YbaOkiMiRQ.



Figure 43. The much-discussed *Rope* (1948) cameo: is it Hitchcock or isn't it?



Figure 44. Another cameo contender from *Rope*: is the red light in the background illuminating Hitchcock's famous profile?

circulating them in formats that he never imagined. YouTubers have manipulated his films to point out exactly where he can be recognized, using digitally-enabled masks and drawn-on arrows to point out his purported form among many others. The same care has been taken with compilations of the cameos of Scorsese, Tarantino, and Jackson, as well as the celebratory cameos incurred by Allen, with omissions and new claims for the provenance of unidentifiable extras.¹⁸⁷ Some of these determined cameos seem to fall within the parameters of "overknowing"¹⁸⁸ that Ferguson identifies as a pitfall of Miller's "too-close reading," as we ascribe to the master what may or may not be there, but can almost never be confirmed or denied. The game continues.

Conclusion

Unlike the cameos of the famous and the forgotten, director cameos involve audiences in a game of recognition that encourages audiences to acknowledge authors who are otherwise largely invisible. While director cameos may not have begun with Hitchcock, he adopted the cameo as a part of his campaign for recognition unlike any other director. The game of hide-and-seek that Hitchcock encouraged his audiences to play is the primary way in which director cameos continue to be used to indicate authorial signature. However, while used to communicate auteurist control of the filmmaking process, Hitchcock's cameo itself, like his films, was enshrined by the filmmakers with which he surrounded himself, apart from the more serious thematic and aesthetic considerations with which Hitchcock preoccupied himself. The success of Hitchcock's campaign for recognition can be seen as having its culmination with his anthology television series' of the 1950s and 1960s, which built on the visibility his image had developed through his use of cameos in his films. The cameos are not a product of his visibility as a pop culture icon, but an important tool in building that recognition. The Hitchcock game even overshadowed the Hitchcock style, as critics assessed later films with appreciation for the cameo if not the film as a whole. Directors following in his footsteps have adopted his methods of promoting recognition, but also, building on his reputation as one of the great auteurs, as the mark of authorial control. As Hitchcock publicly declaimed the ways in which he felt obliged to

¹⁸⁷ "Peter Jackson Dishes on Stephen Colbert's 'Hobbit' Cameo."

¹⁸⁸ Frances Ferguson, "Now It's Personal: D. A. Miller and Too-Close Reading," *Critical Inquiry* 41, no. 3 (March 1, 2015): 535.

the superstition of the cameo, and to the demands of the game's players, auteurist directors following in his footsteps have adopted a much less rigid cameo ritual. They have used other forms of tribute to draw attention to their purported power to determine who and who is not in front of the camera, using hidden disruptions to intimate the ways in which they are in control of filmic worlds. Unlike Hitchcock's cameos, which called on the attention of the movie-going masses, these cameos are aimed at audiences who are already invested in the auteurist assessments of a film's production, looking out for signs of his mastery that have been planted for the players of his game alone.

Chapter 5

Cameos at home: from television to the internet

Gossip about cameos, their origins, appearances, and production history abounds on the internet. One much-circulated story is about a mid-nineties cameo trade between two stars, one from television and one from film. In 2000, television actor Matthew Perry from the hit NBC comedy *Friends* (1994-2004) appeared in *The Whole Nine Yards* alongside Bruce Willis, while that same year action-star Willis appeared alongside Perry on *Friends* as a new love interest for the cast.¹ (Fig. 45) In an interview with Willis that coincided with the film's release, *People* magazine published an account that claimed the cameo was "just for fun."² In the decade since, blogs and aggregators of varying repute from CNN to *The Daily Beast* have recirculated this story on the internet, and, as with much gossip, it has taken on new twists and turns in the retelling. Most often this story is now framed as a wager where an apparently not-inconsiderable payday for the cameo was at stake, as Willis had agreed to forfeit his fee for appearing on Perry's television show if the *The Whole Nine Yards* was not the highest-grossing movie during the weekend of its release.³ Whether this speculation is true or not, the Willis-Perry cameo trade demonstrates a marketing tactic familiar from the cameo's heyday in the 1950s as cross-promotion of media products and the potentially revealing disruption of celebrity casting. In the case of Willis, television's small screen made him a fish out of water in a guest star role that, while significant, is narratively unimportant in the scheme of the *Friends* decade-long narrative arc and attendant character system. However, unlike the cameo trades of Hope and Crosby or Sinatra and his pals, this example has circulated on the internet long after its air-date as the subject of repeated scrutiny. Unlike the supertext surrounding a collection of Hitchcock's cameos, this single instance of a cameo has been brought up again and again by fans and media outlets alike, as it is discussed on social media site *reddit*, aggregated by *The Daily Beast* as one

¹ Michael Lembeck, "The One Where Ross Meets Elizabeth's Dad," *Friends*, April 27, 2000.

² Karen S. Schneider, "Gathering No Moss," *People*, May 15, 2000.

³ Nikki Dowling, "The Wonderful World of Celebrity Bets," *CNN*, October 12, 2009, <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/SHOWBIZ/10/21/frisky.world.celeb.bets/>; "Nate Silver, Joe Scarborough Bet on Election & More Wild Wagers (Photos)," *The Daily Beast*, November 4, 2012, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/galleries/2012/11/04/nate-silver-joe-scarborough-bet-on-election-more-wild-wagers-photos.html>.



Figure 45. Bruce Willis appears on *Friends* (1994-2004).

of the "Wildest Celebrity Wagers," and replayed thousands of times in several different 30-second video clips on YouTube.⁴ The Perry-Willis cameo trade has taken on a life of its own.

While such attention to an individual cameo was possible pre-internet, for example, in retrospective accounts of Hitchcock that delighted in pointing out his appearances, the cameo and its collection has been greatly enabled by the internet. Cameos migrated from the movie theatre to the television screen, where the viewing environment became increasingly individualized as technological advances in television broadcasting, home viewing and the internet allowed repeated access to a growing number of movies and television shows at home and on-demand. Cameos circulate on the internet as a media artifact ideal for endless collecting and sharing. Stories that would have existed only in the brief rounds of publicity that accompanied a film's release find new life on internet aggregators of pop culture trivia. Online aggregators revel in enumerating cameos from film and television alike, in lists such as "The Complete History of Guest Stars on The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" or "Top 10 Movie Cameos," usually accompanied with a film still, or more likely, a computer-enabled screen grab of the cameo itself.⁵ The disruptive elements that make cameos ideal for cult reception lend themselves to this kind of repurposing on the internet, as moments that stand apart from the original narrative are completely cut away from it as still images. On the internet, whether as stills or video clips, these cameos often circulate directly alongside extratextual information about their creation, offering audiences familiar with star images the chance to uncover more information. The Perry-Willis cameo trade shows how many of these stories, while gathering momentum in a new medium, echo the claims made about cameo extravaganzas of the 1960s: trades done for friendship, in tribute, for free, and in fun.

In movies, the cameo fulfills the desire of producers and stars to affirm their status through visibility and of fans to eagerly to affirm that recognition. It seems only natural that television, from its origins in the 1950s, would follow suit. Although television has a vastly different mode of reception and distribution from cinema, centered on presentation in the private

⁴ "Nate Silver, Joe Scarborough Bet on Election & More Wild Wagers (Photos)"; "Best Cameo Appearance in a Tv Series?," *Reddit*, December 7, 2015,

https://www.reddit.com/r/television/comments/2oib51/best_cameo_appearance_in_a_tv_series/.

⁵ "The Complete History of Guest Stars on 'The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air,'" *Complex CA*, accessed April 11, 2016, <http://ca.complex.com/music/2012/09/the-complete-history-of-guest-stars-on-the-fresh-prince-of-bel-air/>; WatchMojo, *Top 10 Epic Movie Cameos* (YouTube, 2013), http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-IstfVHLJw&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

sphere of the home, both are nevertheless visual media that because of their similarity as entertainment have historically competed for audience attention. Very early on, television adopted many of the same marketing strategies as film studios to draw attention to their programs. In the 1950s, cameos were in heavy use in movies, and they quickly became adopted into television's visual lexicon. As the rise of both Hitchcock and Hope as cameoists have shown, film and television worked together to make cameos a recognized trope. As a phenomenon to increase visibility and recognition, the cameo is not medium specific, and easily found a home on TV.

The cameo on television has its own history that bears examination. Much as movie cameos in the 1950s offered glimpses of a star in an attempt to make movies special in the post-studio television era, television began in the 1950s with a similar strategy of casting movie stars in small roles. The TV cameo emerged from the intimacy afforded by live performances and home viewing. The precedents of early television performance continue to be reflected in the reception of the television cameo as an intimate, spontaneous, self-reflexive, surprising and often disruptive glimpse of a celebrity persona. These traits of the television cameo can be traced through key developments in television from the 1950s, as the emerging television industry negotiated the role of movie stars on television as stars, characters, and advertisers. Benefitting from the precedents for unpredictability set by television's history of live performances and offcasting, as well as the flow of programming that Raymond Williams describes as routinely juxtaposing narrative and documentary space,⁶ celebrities on television presented yet another side of their persona for inspection by the curious viewer.

The hierarchy of stardom has influenced what kind of stars have appeared on television. As star-studded anthology dramas became less common, expensive movie stars retreated from television in the early 1960s. Guest star roles within fictional narratives were instead filled by aspiring stars from other media, such as musicians who reflected the interests of the desirable youth market. In the 1970s, a reappraisal of the desires of television viewers that resulted in network sitcoms emphasizing the changing work and home life of Americans meant their narratives were rarely troubled by famous faces. As a result, cameos ebbed once again, only to return as the inheritor of self-reflexivity and narrative complexity in the 1990s and 2000s. As

⁶ Raymond Williams, *Television Technology and Cultural Form* (New York: Routledge, 2003), <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=182593>.

older cameo-laden series were rebroadcast to fill in the 24-hour schedule of the increasingly dense multichannel spectrum, and old cameos were repackaged as trivia worthy of note on both accompanying television programs and video special features, the cameo as both self-reflexive disruption, and ham-fisted promotional tactic, became a subject of ironic commentary and imitation. The birth of the internet as site for fan discussion and video sharing provided the opportunity for cameos to be collected, compared and discussed, assuming a new prominence as they are subjected to the scrutiny of endless replay. In the early 21st century, the reimagined cameo reflects movie stars who have long since mastered the performance conventions of television, and savvy viewers who are no longer fooled by the intimate glimpses afforded by the cameo's production. Insulated by the promise that cameos never present celebrities as they really are, the cameo instead offers the recognizing viewer the sense of complicity, as the celebrity is in on the joke of his self-presentation. While television cameos in the 1950s awed at-home viewers by presenting movie stars in homes and living rooms where they were rarely expected to be, cameos in the 2000s circulate freely and achronologically on television, movies and the internet, presenting these brief glimpses for endless inspection. As a forum for replay in dialogue with cinema and television, the internet has established the cameo's prominence in pop culture.

Stars on the small screen in the 1950s

In the US, television viewing has been in competition with filmgoing since shortly after networks began regular daytime broadcasts in 1948.⁷ Television quickly became part of the daily routine, especially of women working in the home as it took over from radio to locate entertainment within the domestic sphere.⁸ As Amanda Lotz points out, because television was not pay-per-use, it quickly acquired a vast audience. However, television viewers paid in different ways, for the set, the service, and then as the consumers of goods for which they were the targets of televised advertising.⁹ Television encouraged a domestic viewing space that required networks to determine not merely what stars viewers wanted to see, but who they wanted to see in their own home. There were other considerations as the landscape of television

⁷ Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 76.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹ Amanda D. Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized, Second Edition*, 2nd ed. edition (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 32.

programming was developed to create television that was neither too distracting to women engaged in domestic labour, nor so engrossing that it made children into passive zombies.¹⁰ As networks experimented with different formats in the 1950s, they determined that ordinary, domestic figures and the routine of regular watching were what kept families in front of the television screen rather than in their local movie theatre.¹¹ Home viewing was valued for its predictable schedule, characters, and narrative arc.

While the movie business was a major precedent, many television stars initially came from the radio. Like radio, television programs were sponsored by oft-mentioned corporations that sold products such as cigarettes or cosmetics.¹² The variety show format borrowed from radio was initially the most common type of television programming, where a host featured many different acts that included guest stars of varied brilliance.¹³ While radio traded on their relationships with the studio, featuring variety shows led by well-known performers as well as broadcasting radio adaptations of popular movies, the film studios were on unfriendly terms with television.¹⁴ Fears of overexposure meant movie stars were largely forbidden to appear, with an exception for walk-ons that promoted a newly-released film.¹⁵ With a nod to the visual requirements of television, networks sought out hosts such as Milton Berle, whose past in vaudeville had equipped him with a routine heavily based in slapstick that had not translated well to radio, yet would be ideal for television.¹⁶ Berle's early "vaudeo"¹⁷ show *Texaco Star Theatre*, a visual or video version of the radio variety show, itself derived from vaudeville, featured multiple acts and "narrative non-continuity" that would be the standard for other similar

¹⁰ Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 88.

¹¹ Christine Becker, "Televising Film Stardom in the 1950s," *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* 46, no. 2 (2005): 9.

¹² Mann, Denise, "The Spectacularization of Television in Early Variety Shows," in *Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer*, ed. Lynn Spigel and Denise Mann (Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 1992), 55.

¹³ Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 80.

¹⁴ Christine Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small: Hollywood Film Stars on 1950s Television* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2009), 191.

¹⁵ Susan Murray, *Hitch Your Antenna to the Stars: Early Television and Broadcast Stardom* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 43.

¹⁶ Murray, Susan, "Lessons From Uncle Miltie: Ethnic Masculinity and Early Television's Vaudeo Star," in *Small Screens, Big Ideas: Television in the 1950s*, ed. Janet Thumin (London: I.B.Tauris, 2002), 69.

¹⁷ Murray, Susan, "Lessons From Uncle Miltie: Ethnic Masculinity and Early Television's Vaudeo Star."

entertainers such as Jack Benny.¹⁸ Along with the variety format came vaudeville's legacy of self-reflexivity, as hosts acknowledged the artificiality of the sponsor arrangement.¹⁹ Denise Mann has shown that Merle and Benny established their exclusion from the glamorous world of stardom with routines where they coveted the success of other stars, or expressed self-doubt that revealed ordinary fears with self-deprecating statements about letting the sponsors down. This ironic distance between star and stardom helped create an environment where hosts could be trusted by audiences as go-betweens with the advertisers.²⁰ Benny in particular disparaged the sponsors in a bid to permit "viewers to feel as if they had been let in on a joke while at the same time allowing them to take that joke seriously."²¹ The perceived freedom of hosts to speak honestly about their sponsors softened the commercial message, and established the intimate address of television.

The vaudeo fad did not last long, although other forms became its inheritors. As viewing became more widespread in the early 1950s, Murray suggests that the disruptive self-reflexivity and ethnic humour of New York-based Yiddish comedians such as Benny and Berle was not perceived to translate well to an increasingly national audience, especially when the content was largely ad-libbed.²² Networks sought to supplement the unpredictable variety show with the sitcom, a narrative form aimed at women and focused on supposedly naturalistic depictions of domestic life.²³ These naturalistic depictions led to sitcoms that purported to parallel the real lives of families such as the Nelsons in *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* (1952-1966) or the Ricardos in *I Love Lucy* (1951-1957). Coverage of the shows was thick with statements about how authentically these soundstage representations of their lives mimicked their at-home behaviours.²⁴ The regular cast of sitcoms were seen as a way to keep costs low; as Spigel writes, they were "cheaper than guest stars."²⁵ The aggressively self-mocking self-reflexivity of vaudeo had made hosts trustworthy spokespeople, and naturalism took up that banner. Combining the

¹⁸ Ibid., 71.

¹⁹ Mann, Denise, "The Spectacularization of Television in Early Variety Shows," 55.

²⁰ Ibid., 53.

²¹ Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 165.

²² Murray, Susan, "Lessons From Uncle Miltie: Ethnic Masculinity and Early Television's Vaudeo Star," 76.

²³ Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 153.

²⁴ Ibid., 157.

²⁵ Ibid., 156.

two, early sitcoms reflected the identity of their leads by casting them as performers. Like Hollywood-set films that presented Hollywood stars for promotional purposes, these sitcoms could thus portray other off-duty performers, as well as provide the framework for variety-show-like performances. The intense schedule required for recurring roles on television, as well as the complete ownership of the image that sponsors placed on television actors meant that movie actors on contract could simply not be a part of the regular cast.²⁶ However, they could appear as the friends and acquaintances of their sitcom colleagues. Such appearances not only benefited their studio's most recent film, but exposed the star's persona to the more candid environment of the sitcom.

In her examination of movie stars on television in the 1950s, Christine Becker shows how movie stars distanced themselves from inapproachable glamour via television. Movie stars countered a backlash against lavish lifestyles described in the newly liberated gossip magazines of the 1960s with press that described them as homebodies and housewives, offering cameo roles as supporting evidence.²⁷ When *I Love Lucy* moved to Hollywood for a season in 1955, movie stars such as John Wayne and Charles Boyer regularly appeared as normal folks at the mercy of rabid fans that included Lucy herself.²⁸ (Fig. 46) At the same time, adopting the self-mockery of Benny, Berle, and their TV successors such as Bob Hope, stars used cameos to advertise from an ironic distance. The *I Love Lucy* cameos, for example, featured a parade of stars with upcoming MGM releases.²⁹ As Becker writes, by "knowingly mocking their constructed star images and the essence of fandom, they came across as down-to-earth, unpretentious people, presumably further endearing themselves to audiences as consequence."³⁰ Like film cameos, these television roles were used to market other films produced by the same production company, but by appearing on television, they addressed their audiences in an intimate and purportedly authentic space yet nevertheless ironic space.

Becker suggests that stars were more likely to appear in another television genre borrowed from radio, the anthology program. *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (1955-65) is one such

²⁶ Murray, *Hitch Your Antenna to the Stars*.

²⁷ Mann, Denise, "The Spectacularization of Television in Early Variety Shows," 48.

²⁸ Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small*, 174; James V. Kern, "Lucy and John Wayne," *I Love Lucy*, October 10, 1955; James V. Kern, "Lucy Meets Charles Boyer," *I Love Lucy*, March 5, 1956.

²⁹ Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small*, 233.

³⁰ Becker, "Televising Film Stardom in the 1950s," 15.



Figure 46. Lucy gets herself in trouble with John Wayne on *I Love Lucy* (1951-57)

anthology series: in an episode introduced briefly by a recognizable movie star, a revolving cast told a brand new hour-long story from start to finish once a week or month. On radio, these prestige productions had featured anonymous players, but on the visual medium of television, highly visible movie stars presented an unusual draw.³¹ Stars appeared in these one-off casts and served as hosts of eponymous shows such as *The Barbara Stanwyck Show* (1960-61) or foursome David Niven, Dick Powell, Charles Boyer and Ida Lupino of *Four Star Playhouse* (1952-56).³² Many movie stars embraced the anthology drama because of its limited time commitment, especially once taping became the standard toward the end of the decade. Others saw creative potential in the early medium's liveness.³³ Becker notes that one-off spectaculars and anthology television provided the opportunity for off-casting for famous stars whose star image had calcified around them in the movies, such as Jimmy Stewart,³⁴ while also offering them "prestige, prominence, and only periodic commitment."³⁵ Many stars freed from studio contracts and working on a single, sometimes self-produced package-film basis saw television as a new venue in which to operate as entrepreneurs, producing anthologies for sale to networks.³⁶ In the late 1950s, as television became an established medium, the salaries offered to stars on variety shows were also much higher, having grown from \$2000 in 1951 to reaching \$100,000 per episode.³⁷

Nevertheless, there was a concrete divide between movie star and television star. Like the studios, television also mined the past for its stars. Becker suggests that television's attempt to present many of these aging stars or character actors as top-tier talent had a lasting effect on the television star's position in the star hierarchy."³⁸ To counteract this impression, older stars were presented as legends or educators for younger stars. Susan Holmes demonstrates this strategy in her close examination of an appearance by Joan Crawford on a British variety show in 1956 where the star's responses to questions about her on-set relationship with a younger costar frame

³¹ Murray, *Hitch Your Antenna to the Stars*, 13.

³² Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small*, 56.

³³ *Ibid.*, 216.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 222; Murray, *Hitch Your Antenna to the Stars*, 103.

³⁸ Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small*, 9.

her as one such role model.³⁹ Movie stars who were seen on television feared that they would be grouped with the has-beens.⁴⁰ In turn, advertising for television programs emphasized quality of performance and story above and beyond star power.⁴¹ Authenticity became a watchword for television, as a "value superior to the quality of constructed glamour."⁴² Television soon had its own constellation of actors, who, though without the lasting name recognition that movie stars of the period command today, embodied performance styles that were tailored to the small screen with its emphasis on the intimate close-up.⁴³ While these television stars may have been recognizable in their own right, they had succeeded perhaps too well at adapting to the domestic setting of the television where they conversely owed their very popularity to their relatable lack of constructed glamour. Yet, because of this transparency, they likewise lack the extraordinariness that Dyer asserts sets film stars apart, failing to inspire the compulsion to compare and contrast the constructed persona that drives the fan. Television personalities remained subordinated to the hierarchy that placed the film star at its pinnacle.

From Guest Stars to Cameos

Cameos on television take advantage of the television series' extended character system to introduce performances that are often longer than their movie counterparts. Because of the entrenched character spaces of recurring characters in a television series, even an episode-long supporting performance cannot be disqualified as a cameo. Big stars can be absorbed into little roles on television thanks to the labyrinthine character system of a series. Series, as Raymond Williams points out, feature a continuity of characters in different stories each week, while serials present continuity of action through a long running story.⁴⁴ Unlike films, series and serials take as their premise the continued exploration of what Matt Hills calls hyperdiegesis, "a vast and detailed narrative space, only a fraction of which is every directly seen or encountered

³⁹ Susan Holmes, "'As They Really Are, and in Close-Up': Film Stars on 1950s British Television," *Screen* 42, no. 2 (June 20, 2001): 177.

⁴⁰ Becker, "Televising Film Stardom in the 1950s," 5.

⁴¹ Gary Edgerton, "High Concept, Small Screen: Reperceiving the Industrial and Stylistic Origins of the American Made-for-TV Movie," in *Connections: A Broadcast History Reader*, ed. Michelle Hilmes (Belmont, CA: Thomas/Wadsworth, 2003), 218.

⁴² Becker, "Televising Film Stardom in the 1950s," 9.

⁴³ Edgerton, "High Concept, Small Screen," 219.

⁴⁴ Williams, *Television Technology and Cultural Form*, 56.

within the text."⁴⁵ The endlessly unfolding hyperdiegesis can be expanded in series and serials to build a complex character system populated mostly by minor character-spaces but anchored by a few major characters.

The cameo is uniquely suited to the series. Cameos are rare in soap operas, the most common example of a serial in twentieth century television,⁴⁶ because, as daytime fare aimed at women, their narratives are meant to be easy to follow and therefore avoid disruption.⁴⁷ Anthology programs were also unlikely sites for cameos, because, as neither series nor serials, they had a character system that functioned like a film with each episode featuring new characters and a stand-alone diegesis unrelated to stories that came before, as in the case of *Playhouse 90* or *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. Character spaces failed to expand with each episode, and any cameos would need to be as brief as their filmic counterparts so as not to overwhelm the nascent character-system. Variety shows regularly featured celebrity guests, yet lacked any kind of hyperdiegesis. Only series such as the sitcom had a character-system complex enough to carry the intrusion of cameos without distracting from the plot while embracing the disruptive comedic tactics in which the cameo shares. The established character system of conniving Lucy and exasperated Ricky in *I Love Lucy* can handle the interloping of film heartthrob Bill Holden, just as, decades later, the jealous Ross is not overshadowed by the intrusion of Bruce Willis on *Friends*.⁴⁸ In fact, Greg Smith suggests that guest stars are integral to the long-running sitcom.⁴⁹ The character space that television stars build during their tenure on a series can be so well-rounded that it overshadows the star persona; television actors are often better known by their character names, and it is in this guise they appear in crossover episodes or spinoffs.⁵⁰ While viewers enjoyed the regular appearance of familiar faces from within a well-worn character system, new character spaces are needed to create "more plot than a small group of core characters can dependably produce."⁵¹ Guest stars allow regular cast members to be presented

⁴⁵ Matthew Hills, *Fan Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 104.

⁴⁶ Dean J. DeFino, *The HBO Effect* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 110.

⁴⁷ Greg M. Smith, *Beautiful TV: The Art and Argument of Ally McBeal* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 146.

⁴⁸ Michael Lembeck, "The One with Two Parts: Part 2," *Friends*, February 23, 1995.

⁴⁹ Smith, *Beautiful TV*, 146.

⁵⁰ Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small*, 30.

⁵¹ Smith, *Beautiful TV*, 146.

with new problems, and react in new ways, revealing an ever-deepening character space.⁵² Cameos could serve an important narrative function in the sitcom by providing a foil against which recurring characters came into conflict.

The form of television accounted for other differences in the star cameo on TV. With the explosion in television in the early 1950s, viewers were accosted with narrative, both fictional and documentary, for hours each day. As Williams writes in 1974, "drama as an experience is now an intrinsic part of everyday life."⁵³ Williams suggested that flow was the central experience of "watching television,"⁵⁴ where audiences were not interested so much in individual programs, but in the experience of watching a stream of images from commercials to news to drama. This flow, as images were affected by those preceding and following, created a continuous experience of narrative.⁵⁵ As Lotz points out, Williams' flow is an experience of television that predates control devices such as home taping, remote control, or modern video-on-demand, which have worked together to create a customizable televisual experience. Flow is a concept that is nevertheless valuable when discussing stars on television. While many texts exist around a film in other media, films are not placed in context with each other in the way that flow allows television images to be juxtaposed. If we consider television as a narrative text, then the experience of watching television allows stars to be linked intratextually to other images from talk shows and commercials. Televisual flow helped to destabilize the star image in the 1950s through this juxtaposition, as older stars appeared on talk shows alongside their much younger selves in rerun movies, or a guest appearance in an anthology series.⁵⁶ The assembled nature of star identities, and their contradictions and continuities became much more visible through the flow of television than in the discrete units of cinema.

The opposition between glamorous movie star and ordinary familiar television personality is an established dichotomy in studies of television.⁵⁷ As a visual medium, television allowed viewers to observe stars in a way that radio could not. Where the casual cameos that Hope and Sinatra had welcomed in their films ostensibly revealed the person behind the actor,

⁵² Ibid., 171.

⁵³ Williams, *Television Technology and Cultural Form*, 53.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 96.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 56.

⁵⁶ Becker, "Televising Film Stardom in the 1950s," 11.

⁵⁷ James Bennett, "The Television Personality System: Televisual Stardom Revisited after Film Theory," *Screen* 49, no. 1 (2008): 32.

much of television programming, especially that migrated directly from radio, explicitly made the real star its subject. Variety shows, although fewer in number, continued to be popular, and by the end of the decade, drew bona fide stars such as Marilyn Monroe and Jimmy Stewart as studios lost control over their stars and, just as they had reversed initial opposition to radio before, embraced television as a site for marketing their stars' films.⁵⁸ As Holmes points out, in the 1950s, the experience of performing for the multiple cameras and live audiences of a television studio was new to even the most practiced movie star.⁵⁹ Unlike in radio, whose star-studded variety programs at least claimed to broadcast from stages and nightclubs such the imaginary Orchid Room of Louella Parsons' famous *Hollywood Hotel* (1935-38) radio program, on many of the television variety shows that were the precursor to talk shows, stars were presented in consciously informal environments, which like the sitcom, featured sets that borrowed sofas, armchairs, and the ubiquitous ashtray from the living room.⁶⁰ In this ostensibly documentary space, the brief glimpses of the real star that movie cameos supposedly authorized became the subject of a more extended scrutiny by the television viewer.

While enabling close and intimate observation of movie stars, television also provided incentive for the savvy viewer to collect and retain fan knowledge. Pitting ordinary contestants against panels of stars, a whole genre of game shows "rewarded contestants for their knowledge of star psychology and their ability to put it to use."⁶¹ In the mid-1950s, *Personality Puzzle* (1953) challenged contestants to identify celebrities based on biographical trivia while *Masquerade Party* (1952-60) offered up the ridiculously-costumed star himself as an additional, televisual clue.⁶² While celebrities appeared on television in these reality environments, either revealing details or asking audiences to remember them, they also appeared in a multitude of other contexts linked through the structure of flow.⁶³ Ordinary people and stars were presented as interchangeable in series such as *This is Your Life* (1952-61), which assembled the biography of its weekly subject through surprise interviews with people from his or her past, and alternated

⁵⁸ Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small*, 27.

⁵⁹ Holmes, "As They Really Are, and in Close-Up," 185.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁶¹ Mary Desjardins, "Maureen O'Hara's 'Confidential' Life: Recycling Stars through Gossip and Moral Biography," in *Small Screens, Big Ideas: Television in the 1950s*, ed. Janet Thumin (London: I.B.Tauris, 2002), 120.

⁶² Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small*, 44.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 11.

between ordinary and star subjects.⁶⁴ Subjected to the same conditions as ordinary people while documented in similar reactions of surprise, celebrities and their reactions could be judged and affirmed as authentic as, "caught off-guard, they seemed as vulnerable and ordinary as anyone discovering they are on national television."⁶⁵ Television provided new opportunities for the viewer to view the star image as an assemblage of constituent parts experienced through flow, enticing audiences to sift through the views of celebrity and assess their authenticity as truth detectives. At the same time, the cameo fatigue of the 1960s seen in reaction to celebrity cameos in films such as *The Greatest Story Ever Told* and *Pepe* is perhaps more understandable given the increasing number of perspectives on celebrity provided by the competing medium of television.

Courting Youth Audiences in the 1960s with Musical Cameos

While television courted movie stars with increasing intensity in the 1950s, that decade saw the high point of their participation in television programming. In fact, stars began to disappear from television again in the early 1960s following a shift from New York studios to Hollywood that placed television production under the indirect control of film studios.⁶⁶ While this shift was initially undertaken to take advantage of Hollywood's existing infrastructure of sets, studios, and skilled workers, including actors, it had the effect of reinforcing the segmentation between movie and television stars. Those studios that had promised cheap productions to the networks used casting to differentiate between the economical television and prestige film products.⁶⁷ The benefits of off-casting and live television available in television's more experimental early stages were no longer on offer. Rather than an exciting new medium for performers, the budget-conscious television programs became associated with lowbrow fare, where the much-maligned wasteland of lazy programming was matched by the "sloppy aesthetics of television watching."⁶⁸ Just as soap operas aimed for the viewership of the distracted housewife, the rest of the household's viewers were believed to be too distracted by

⁶⁴ Desjardins, "Maureen O'Hara's 'Confidential' Life: Recycling Stars through Gossip and Moral Biography," 120.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small*, 231.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 202.

⁶⁸ Barbara Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies, and the Home* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 4.

food, games, or family members to concentrate on complex narratives. The quiz show scandals in the mid-1950s, where sponsors were revealed to have influenced the outcome of these games in keeping with audience sympathies or to maintain suspense over several shows, undermined both audience's faith in authenticity, and stars' willingness to participate in this genre.⁶⁹ Many movie stars, who had been attracted by rising paychecks from television, were too expensive for this new profit model, and the star-studded musical spectacles that were a monthly occurrence on television in the late 1950s had not proved to attract any more viewers than the regular, weekly sitcom fare, despite their higher price tag.⁷⁰ Briefly ushered in to television, movie stars were on their way out again.

Questions of prestige and profit separated movie stars from television stars in the 1960s. While movie stars were less likely to perform starring roles in televised dramas, this did not exclude them from smaller roles and cameos. Small appearances from single, mostly second-tier stars were an affordable alternative to cost-conscious production companies. Comedic series such as *Gilligan's Island* (1964-67) and *Batman* (1966-68) featured guest appearances with almost every episode, many of these drawn from the pool of older stars and character actors. *Batman*, for example, began its run of guest stars with the aging Jerry Lewis as himself, and later featured failing director Otto Preminger as Mr. Freeze.⁷¹ (Fig. 47) While these remembered faces were sure to draw recognition from viewers, as in films, they were increasingly irrelevant to the largely teenage audience of baby boomers. Appealing to younger viewers was a growing concern. Teen characters saw increased attention in long-running sitcoms such as *Ozzie and Harriet*, where Ricky Nelson emerged as a singing star.⁷² Perhaps owing to this early success, music and musical performers were seen as one of the keys to television's younger audiences.⁷³ Just as short appearances from movie stars had been used to market movies in the 1950s, cameos from musical acts were injected into hundreds of sitcoms from the 1960, from *The Flintstones* (1960-66) to *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965-70). While the idea of tailoring television shows to one demographic or another was largely anathema to networks who wanted to appeal to as many

⁶⁹ Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized, Second Edition*, 162.

⁷⁰ Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small*, 216.

⁷¹ George Waggner, "Green Ice," *Batman*, November 9, 1966; "Hi Diddle Riddle," *Batman*, January 12, 1966.

⁷² Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 178.

⁷³ George Plasketes, *B-Sides, Undercurrents and Overtones: Peripheries to Popular in Music, 1960 to the Present* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013), 137.



Figure 47. Singing duo Chad and Jeremy at the mercy of Catwoman on *Batman* (1965-67).

potential viewers as possible,⁷⁴ cameos allowed for segments of an episode to acknowledge the desires of the youth market.

Musical acts, both local and otherwise, used the cameo in the 1960s as a platform for potential visibility akin to the variety show, where one remarkable appearance had the potential to make stars recognizable. Like Hollywood stars seen in their natural habitat on studio lots, musicians often appeared in the background in bar or nightclub settings.⁷⁵ However, just as some early talk shows established casual codes for guest interviews with sets reminiscent of home interiors,⁷⁶ some sitcom episodes featured an intimate living-room performance for a number of marginally appreciative spectators, such as The Seeds' "psychedelic freak out"⁷⁷ on *The Mothers-in-Law* (1967-69) in 1968 or singer-songwriter Harry Nilsson's "low-key"⁷⁸ crooning in *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* (1968-70) in the same year. Unlike variety show performances, frequently cable-free electric guitars and poor lip-synching suggest the promise of a live musical performance was less important than the unusual opportunity to see the musician interacting with the quotidian environment of the sitcom. While some TV appearances featured established stars Neil Diamond on detective series *Mannix* (1967-75) in 1967,⁷⁹ or the not-exactly youth-oriented Sammy Davis Jr. on teen-centric *The Patty Duke Show* (1965-68) in 1965,⁸⁰ in keeping with the cost-cutting impulses of the television production of the time, many of these cameos featured emerging Los Angeles musicians such as The Standells' stint on *The Munsters* (1964-66) in 1965.⁸¹

Like cameos that interchangeably cast stars for their aura of star power rather than their specific star persona, many of these groups seem to stand in for the icons of contemporary music rather than being representative of current fame. Sometimes these representations were conscious: on the "Far Out Munsters" episode, The Standells played Beatles' hit *I Wanna Hold*

⁷⁴ Roberta Pearson, "Star Trek and Cult Television," in *Television as Digital Media*, ed. James Bennett and Niki Strange (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2011), 119.

⁷⁵ Plasketes, *B-Sides, Undercurrents and Overtones*, 137.

⁷⁶ Holmes, "As They Really Are, and in Close-Up," 171.

⁷⁷ Plasketes, *B-Sides, Undercurrents and Overtones*, 138.

⁷⁸ Alyn Shipton, *Nilsson: The Life of a Singer-Songwriter* (New York: OUP USA, 2013), 92.

⁷⁹ John Meredyth Lucas, "The Many Deaths of Saint Christopher," *Mannix*, October 7, 1967.

⁸⁰ Richard Kinon, "Will the Real Sammy Davis Please Hang Up?," *The Patty Duke Show*, March 3, 1965.

⁸¹ Plasketes, *B-Sides, Undercurrents and Overtones*, 137.

Your Hand.⁸² Yet unlike the introduction of ingenue Eleanor White among a bevy of famous stars in 1938's *Hollywood Boulevard*, there is no aura of glamour to borrow from; instead, on television it is entirely the potential for visibility that counts. All the same, these musician cameos were often reduced to musical performance and little else. While the prevalence of music-focused television shows such as *The Monkees* (1966-68) and *The Partridge Family* (1970-74) demonstrate cooperation between the music and television industries in the late 1960s, cameos by musical acts were undoubtedly another cross-promotion tactic. Harry Nilsson, for example, was advised to do such personal appearances by his record company in order to publicize his latest album.⁸³ Networks did not seem concerned about presenting the same cameos as their competitors, or keeping the references in-house, as overexposure was not a concern when sales were made by endless repetition of the same hits on the radio. Singing duo Chad and Jeremy, with several sporadic hits under their belt by 1965, for example, appeared not only in variety shows but in the final seasons of both CBS's *The Dick Van Dyke Show* (1961-66)⁸⁴ and ABC's *The Patty Duke Show*⁸⁵ on consecutive Wednesday episodes in January 1965, and again on both *Batman* and western series *Laredo* (1965-67) in 1966.⁸⁶

The brief interlude of the musician cameos was used as a strategy to broaden viewership, briefly acknowledging the youth audience while still acknowledging the dominant interest of older viewers. A balance between the two was difficult to meet. Even as tactics aimed at the youth market, many musician cameos were alarmingly off-key: Sammy Davis Jr. seems very out of place as the talk of a junior prom on *The Patty Duke Show* in 1965, especially when he was joined by a surprisingly aged Peter Lawford. Chad and Jeremy were the subject of several notices in *Variety* about attempts to develop television programs around them, not only because of their youth appeal, but for a wider audience as traditional "pop artists to appeal beyond the teen scene."⁸⁷ Just as film studios looked to television to test and groom potential stars in the 1950s, guest star roles were often used to test potential recurring roles.⁸⁸ The kind of shows

⁸² Joseph Pevney, "Far Out Munsters," *The Munsters*, March 18, 1965.

⁸³ Shipton, *Nilsson*, 71.

⁸⁴ Jerry Paris, "The Redcoats Are Coming," *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, February 10, 1965.

⁸⁵ Bill Colleran, "Patty Pits Wits, Two Brits Hits," *The Patty Duke Show*, February 17, 1965.

⁸⁶ James B. Clark, "The Cat's Meow," *Batman*, December 14, 1966.

⁸⁷ "Radio-Television: Chad & Jeremy Figure In Spinoff of 'Laredo,'" *Variety*, December 8, 1965.

⁸⁸ Smith, *Beautiful TV*, 147.

developed for the duo reflect the desire to combine the interests of older and younger viewers as both the tired Western genre and the edgy comedy of *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* (1967-69) were invoked.⁸⁹ Cameos seem to have provided a happy compromise. Many of these cameos appeared on sitcoms such as *The Mothers-in-Law* that took the older generation's conflict with the values of the coming-of-age baby boomers as the subject of their comedy. The onscreen reaction to these living room performances often pitted young against old as the centuries-old ghost of the *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* expressed his displeasure with Nilsson through otherworldly tempests while the eponymous *Mothers-in-Law* are made "gassy" by the musicians. (Fig. 48; Fig. 49) Even as cameos seemed to be increasingly youth-oriented, young audiences continued to feel overlooked by television narratives, disheartened by censorship, and disillusioned by the commercialism that was an integral part of television's mission.⁹⁰ The neutered cameo, bracketed by the approval of older characters, and limited by a song's performance, hardly offered promised disruption. Functional uses of the cameo as a strategy for testing future stars or marketing upcoming singles was similarly likely to raise the hackles of the consumption-wary youth generation.⁹¹ Cameos sequestered youth subjects in a space that had been carved out as brief and extradiegetic, while what growing numbers of the audience wanted was more narrative inclusion.

Reruns, replay and reflexivity: the cameo in the multichannel era

By the end of the 1960s, television sitcoms were seen as cheaply made, crassly commercial and out of touch with popular needs, a state of affairs that community groups campaigned to rectify and regulators blamed on the conditions of television production.⁹² During the early 1970s, new financial interest and syndication or fin-syn laws for television in the US were aimed at curtailing some of the excessive demands networks had placed on studios to produce inexpensive television while demanding the profits made when those shows were sold

⁸⁹ Pearson, "Star Trek and Cult Television," 118.

⁹⁰ Aniko Bodroghkozy, *Groove Tube: Sixties Television and the Youth Rebellion* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 47.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Megan Mullen, *Television in the Multichannel Age: A Brief History of Cable Television*, (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 7.



Figure 48. Harry Nilsson is unwelcome in the living room of his hosts *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* (1968-70)...



Figure 49. ...while The Seeds are even more out of place on the living room set of *The Mothers-in-Law* (1967-69).

into syndication as reruns.⁹³ Networks had outsourced production from the early 1950s when it became clear that the additional cost of television production meant that the radio model of sponsorship would not allow networks to finance new television shows.⁹⁴ According to Lotz, networks demanded a share of syndication profits from the production companies who made and retained the rights to the series they produced. This stranglehold on production had hurt independent producers who could not afford to give up the profits recouped in syndication, given that most programs were initially sold at a loss to the networks.⁹⁵ Eventually only established studios, who had other revenue streams from the film business, as well as the existing infrastructure and vaults of supplementary footage, could reliably afford to shoulder the costs when a series was not popular enough to reach syndication.⁹⁶ As a result, producers made multiple programs as cheaply as possible in order to increase the chance of earning an ever-reduced share of syndication. Fin-syn regulations were supposed to encourage independent producers to take the time and money to produce quality shows that thus would be more likely to reach syndication and ensure a return on a more considerable investment.⁹⁷ At the same time, groups advocated for increased emphasis on community and special-interest television ushered in the Blue Sky period at the end of the 1960s, where American legislators sought to protect and improve the kind of television programming available to audiences.⁹⁸ Television was championed as a potential site for education and discussion on relevant social issues. Quality TV was supposed to meet this challenge, addressing important issues of the time such as women in the workplace and issues of race and class.⁹⁹ Shows such as *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (1970-77), about a single woman working in network television, and its spinoffs were exemplary of this approach to television programming, and kept cameos largely within the extended family of crossovers or mainstream and medium-appropriate figures such as Walter Cronkite.¹⁰⁰ Maturing

⁹³ Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*, Second Edition, 82.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 156.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 83.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 85.

⁹⁷ Phil Williams, "Feeding Off the Past: The Evolution of the Television Rerun," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 240.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 235; DeFino, *The HBO Effect*, 32.

⁹⁹ DeFino, *The HBO Effect*, 9.

¹⁰⁰ George Plasketes, *B-Sides, Undercurrents and Overtones: Peripheries to Popular in Music, 1960 to the Present* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013), 168; Jay Sandrich, "Ted Baxter Meets Walter Cronkite," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, February 9, 1974.

audiences and an emphasis on naturalistic settings mean that cameos by "pop rock guest stars"¹⁰¹ diminished in the 1970s. The 1980s saw an emphasis on hour-long dramas and police procedurals such as *Hill Street Blues* (1981-87) and *LA Law* (1986-94) rather than sitcoms, where quality television emphasized multi-episode story arcs that were not conducive to the comedic disruption of the cameo.¹⁰²

New cameos may not have been seen with great regularity on television in the 1970s and early 1980s, but old cameos began to resurface in the form of reruns and video releases. Reruns had been a regular fixture of television since 1950 when, in a bid to compete with studio offerings, independent producers encouraged networks to broadcast their shows in multiple programming slots.¹⁰³ Television fed off movie studio vaults of old films, recycling old movies, and eventually, old television series to fill "low-rated fringe time hours."¹⁰⁴ As Derek Kompare has shown, reruns were central to television programming in the 1970s and 1980s, as the explosion of new cable channels, local cable turned superstations via satellite link, and new 24-hour schedules meant that programming was needed to fill dead time cheaply.¹⁰⁵ More and more, public domain or unwanted material from cast-off film and television archives filled this void.¹⁰⁶ Specialty cable channels repackaged sitcoms and films with broadcast introductions or compilation programs that provided commentary from stars, scholars, or experts on the film or clips to be seen.¹⁰⁷ Such commentaries culminated in metatexts such as *Mystery Science Theatre 3000* (1988-1999), which superimposed the silhouetted heads of 3 commenters over the featured film as if seen from the back of a movie theatre. These metatexts entreated viewers to see otherwise discarded works as historically important documents, activating them as "television heritage,"¹⁰⁸ and participate in cult viewing guided by intertextual knowledge of their production. Cable networks such as AMC, originally known as American Movie Classics,

¹⁰¹ Plasketes, *B-Sides, Undercurrents and Overtones*, 168.

¹⁰² Williams, "Feeding Off the Past," 243; DeFino, *The HBO Effect*, 9.

¹⁰³ Williams, "Feeding Off the Past," 243.

¹⁰⁴ Derek Kompare, "I've Seen This One Before: The Construction of 'Classic TV' on Cable Television," in *Small Screens, Big Ideas: Television in the 1950s*, ed. Janet Thumin (London: I.B.Tauris, 2002), 21.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁰⁶ Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex*, 83.

¹⁰⁷ Kompare, "I've Seen This One Before: The Construction of 'Classic TV' on Cable Television," 21.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

founded in 1984, and TCM, or Turner Classic Movies, which followed a decade later in 1994, employed elderly movie stars such as Debbie Reynolds and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. as hosts commenting on films drawn from the dregs of forgotten archival holdings that were often only tangentially related to those that had made them famous.¹⁰⁹ Beginning in 1985, Nickelodeon's *Nick at Nite*, which featured marathon showings of entire seasons of series, also compiled clips from old sitcoms such as *The Dick Van Dyke Show* thematically, accompanying documentary evidence from episodes dealing with new technology or social mores with wry commentary.¹¹⁰ These commentaries provoked viewers to interact with media on television in cultish ways that emphasized the overlooked detail and the forgotten form, embracing "television minutiae" through "close, intensive, and repeat viewing"¹¹¹ Among the commentaries, hosts pointed out cameos that were otherwise invisible, such as the appearance of Dick Van Dyke's personal assistant in a handful of episodes over the show's six seasons, made all the more visible when condensed into a week's worth of viewing.¹¹² New viewing techniques made cameos stand out to be recognized in a way they had not been before.

What could be seen on television in the home in the early 1980s was not only governed by specialty channels. The introduction of the VCR and the ability to view taped media on demand made movie collecting a mainstream phenomenon but also reinstated home viewing as a highbrow experience.¹¹³ Although 16mm films were available to the serious collector before the advent of home tapes, the home theater was more easily adapted to watching films on a television equipped with a VCR.¹¹⁴ As Lotz writes, the VCR meant that "'watching television' became acceptable to those who previously denigrated the device once it could be used to screen the works of master filmmakers."¹¹⁵ As home viewing became a site of "aristocratic engagement,"¹¹⁶ the cinephile's special relationship to film and memory that had been so tied to the theatrical viewing experience could be transferred to the home. For the cinephile, Burgin

¹⁰⁹ Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex*, 83.

¹¹⁰ Mullen, *Television in the Multichannel Age*, 155.

¹¹¹ Kompare, "I've Seen This One Before: The Construction of 'Classic TV' on Cable Television," 30.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Lucas Hilderbrand, *Inherent Vice: Bootleg Histories of Videotape and Copyright* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 62.

¹¹⁴ Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex*, 40.

¹¹⁵ Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized, Second Edition*, 50.

¹¹⁶ Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex*, 34.

suggests, the "VCR allows such symptomatic freedoms as the *repetition* of a favourite sequence, or *fixation* upon an obsessional image."¹¹⁷ Just as the attentive, detail-oriented viewing that had been the hallmark of the cinephile had already been embraced by cable television to package reruns and old movies as historical and highbrow content, home video also courted the cinephile. Supplementing these "obsessional images" with as much detail as possible, interviews, theatrical trailers, behind-the-scenes footage and audio content aimed at collectors were included on video releases as special features, packaging the film together with its production history.¹¹⁸ By providing fans with the context surrounding the films they watched, special features deepened the potential for mastery of the subject that Klinger has suggested fans crave as a mark of distinction.¹¹⁹ Such collecting and rewatching focused around the discovery of detail made cameos more visible as well. Prior to home video, many fans made audio recordings of their favourite programs, a method of collecting which privileged narrative over image, and would have rendered the cameo invisible.¹²⁰ Purchased recordings and home taping meant that movies and television could be watched not only outside of the theatre, but again and again as the viewer took control of his viewing. As I have pointed out, many latter-day rediscoveries of Hitchcock cameos were enabled by home viewing technology that allowed the viewer to endlessly revisit murky scenes to look for familiar faces. Cameos became more visible on television when enabled by the VCR to be captured, compiled, and collected, and replayed at the viewer's whim.

The impact of subscription cable channels such as HBO brought a new era of competition to the television landscape in the 1980s. HBO, and its imitators, benefited from subscribers who paid directly for the service, rather than relying on the approval of advertisers for their programming.¹²¹ The initial cost of setting up satellite-enabled channels, as well as restrictions on the film content that they could broadcast, meant that inexpensive documentary-based reality television and sports programming was a mainstay of their programming for decades.¹²² Yet, when HBO and Showtime went into production for themselves in the 1980s, they had unusual creative freedom. DeFino points to the ground-breaking experience of disruptive self-reflexive

¹¹⁷ Victor Burgin, *The Remembered Film* (London: Reaktion, 2004), 10.

¹¹⁸ Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex*, 74.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹²⁰ Elizabeth Evans, *Transmedia Television: Audiences, New Media, and Daily Life* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2011), 44.

¹²¹ Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized, Second Edition*, 217.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 160.

comedy in Showtime's Hollywood-set sitcom *It's Garry Shandling's Show* (1986-90) and HBO's follow-up featuring Shandling as a late-night TV host on *The Larry Sanders Show* (1992-98).¹²³ Yet self-reflexivity is as old as television itself: much of television has presented backstage narratives, from *I Love Lucy* to *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. However, Defino claims that in this new kind of backstage sitcom emerging in the late 1980s, even the promised glimpses of celebrity personas were undermined by artifice, with "many of the cameos conveying a pervading sense of randomness that undermined believability even within a comic context."¹²⁴ This randomness was created by Shandling's ironic performance style which emphasized the cameo as a break from the show's already shaky diegesis. Each cameo on *Shandling's Show* began with Shandling answering the door on his sitcom set, introducing the intruder to the studio audience with a smug "Hey, everybody!" Shandling refused the sitcom's conventions of naturalism and authenticity, acknowledging that cameos were no less constructed than the sitcom's makeshift set.

When stars could be seen elsewhere on television in talk shows, rerun movies, music videos, and even emerging reality television, the cameo offered nothing special, and Shandling underscored that fact. Unlike Lucy, Patty, or Robin, who were invariably driven to distraction by the proximity of a famous face in the 1950s and 1960s, Shandling appeared fatigued by celebrity as he suffered through the awkward attention of each cameoist from Gilda Radner to Tom Petty. Guest stars in the past had episodes built around them; for example, Brits Chad and Jeremy popped in on thematically-named if narratively incohesive "The Redcoats are Coming" on *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, while Nilsson's episode of *The Ghost & Mrs. Muir* was "The Music Maker." However, *Shandling's Show* pointed to the constructedness of cameos by refusing to naturalize them within the narrative. Television had long positioned itself against insincere film publicity and opened up intimate depictions of its subjects to careful scrutiny, embracing disruptive cameos that displaced the glamour of the movies into the domestic setting of television.¹²⁵ However, in the *Shandling* universe, stars were no longer special or worthy of note, and their cameos were just another part of the Hollywood machine. Shandling's mid-1990s HBO comedy *The Larry Sanders Show*, set backstage at a talk show, used the weekly cameo of a

¹²³ DeFino, *The HBO Effect*, 82.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 137.

¹²⁵ Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small*, 9.

famous guest to reveal not their normalcy but larger-than-life lifestyles that included Playboy centrefolds and invitations to the White House as merely part of an average day's work. The semi-famous Sanders's jealousy for these celebrity heavyweights was driven by the fact that he craved the opportunities for visibility that they treated as simply normal.¹²⁶ Exploring and exposing the inauthenticity of the cameo became its newest function in the coming decades, serving to make the tired cameo relevant again.

Cameos to the rescue: networks need viewers

In the 1990s, stars once again came to the rescue of beleaguered networks. Movie stars had eased viewers into television viewing in the 1950s, while musical groups had enticed younger viewers in the 1960s. In the late 1960s, fin-syn regulations that severed financial links between networks and producers of television had curtailed the kind of cross-media promotion for which cameos had once been useful. Of course, in the intervening decades, studios and networks inched back into cooperation as buyouts and mergers often placed them in different branches of the same huge corporations. Networks may not have eschewed cameos in the decades before the 1990s, but the number of highly promoted television cameos in the celebrity-saturated end of the twentieth century certainly made it a prominent part of television viewing. With hundreds of channels to choose from by the early 1990s, television programs needed to work for audiences; as Lotz writes, "content must do more than appear 'on television' to distinguish itself as having cultural relevance, because what appears on television might be seen by just a few viewers"¹²⁷ In this narrowcast environment, where specialty channels outnumbered the formerly dominant networks, television as no longer a mass medium, but a viewing experience aimed at multiple niche audiences.¹²⁸ Networks battled narrowcasting by enticing regular viewers with "phenomenal television" that was heavily marketed in multiple environments.¹²⁹

Cameos were used as a part of the marketing tactic to broaden the narrowcast environment. Cameos appeared in premieres or season finales, as well as during the sweeps

¹²⁶ Todd Holland, "Broadcast Nudes," *The Larry Sanders Show* (HBO, August 4, 1993); Todd Holland, "The Mr. Sharon Stone Show," *The Larry Sanders Show* (HBO, August 10, 1994).

¹²⁷ Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized, Second Edition*, 38.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

period that were used to determine ratings, a factor which allowed advertisers to determine how many viewers their ads were actually reaching.¹³⁰ They often appeared at the end of episodes, using heavy promotion of the star appearance to entice new viewers from other niche markets to hang on until the last moment. Music-loving baby boomers had to sit through the latest frivolous exploits of Gen-Xers *Dharma & Greg* (1997-2002) for a glimpse of Bob Dylan in "Play Lady Play," for example.¹³¹ As in response to the star-studded cameo films of the 1960s, critics expressed predictably negative reactions to this "cameo-at-all-costs"¹³² strategy as marketing at the expense of narrative. While often well-advertised cameos simply dispatched with surprise in exchange for the chance to observe the star in a new environment, as when an inter-network George Clooney cameo on *Friends* simply transferred the handsome *ER* (1994-2009) doctor to the *Friends* set, others such as affable game-show host Alex Trebek as a mysterious suited man in *The X-Files* (1993-2002) accounted for the loss of intimacy by revealing a dark side to the celebrity persona.¹³³ HBO negotiated the cameo particularly well, providing cameos in a self-reflexive environment such as *The Larry Sanders Show*, *Entourage* (2004-11), *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (2000-11) which avoided this charge of making story secondary by making the cameo, and its reversal of expectations, not only the subject of the show itself but practically a house style.

Television cameos in the 1990s reflect highly integrated entertainment industry spanning music, film, and television. Yet despite this integration, the sheer number of media platforms and often unstable mergers and buyouts created an environment where there was no simple imperative for related companies or networks to cross-market media products through cameos. For example, politician Jesse Jackson was one of the first cameoists on *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* (1990-96) in 1990,¹³⁴ concurrent with the launch of his own talk show under the same production company, but Oprah and Jay Leno, each with shows from rival networks and producers also appeared in cameos during November sweeps.¹³⁵ (Fig. 50) Cameos by these

¹³⁰ Plasketes, *B-Sides, Undercurrents and Overtones*, 142.

¹³¹ Robert Berlinger, "Play Lady Play," *Dharma and Greg*, October 12, 1999.

¹³² Plasketes, *B-Sides, Undercurrents and Overtones*, 142.

¹³³ Rob Bowman, "Jose Chung's 'From Outer Space,'" *The X-Files*, April 12, 1996.

¹³⁴ Shelley Jensen, "Hare Today...," *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, April 8, 1996.

¹³⁵ "The Complete History of Guest Stars on 'The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air'"; Werner Walian, "I, Stank Hole in One," *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, May 6, 1996; Shelley Jensen, "A Night at the Oprah," *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, November 9, 1992.



Figure 50. Oprah on the set of *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, or vice versa, in 1992.

television personalities in which they are presented as part of the media landscape that is integral to establishing contiguity with the viewer's world, not only acknowledge their influence, but consolidates their visibility as indispensable parts of real life. Personal narratives also seem to have trumped industrial loyalties in the name of visibility in the case of superstar Brad Pitt's appearance as a Thanksgiving guest on the sitcom *Friends*¹³⁶ on the eve of the release of *Ocean's Eleven* (2001). This November appearance of the celebrity couple of Pitt and his wife *Friends*' star Jennifer Aniston together as enemies on the show was no doubt meant to spike ratings on the NBC sitcom while providing publicity for the upcoming 20th Century Fox film. While the end of fin-syn in the 1990s may have encouraged networks to purchase from their own studios, stifling creativity due to lack of competition, cooperation between rival corporations in search of visibility was also still evident.¹³⁷ These cameos reflect that there was no simple model of affiliation to media corporations that governed who would be made visible and where.

Older television stars have a unique place on television. While the appearance of older stars and character actors in nostalgic cameos was a worn tactic in the 1960s, older stars have been largely overlooked for cameos since that period as the audience for films has gotten younger.¹³⁸ Television cameos continue to embrace nostalgia. Plasketes notes how cameos in the 1990s mostly featured baby boomer stars, such as Mick Jagger in *The Simpsons* (1989-) and Bob Dylan in *Dharma & Greg*.¹³⁹ *The Brady Bunch* (1969-74) mom Florence Henderson is one such forgotten star with an afterlife in cameos, with appearances on *It's Garry Shandling's Show*, backstage television comedy *30 Rock* (2006-13) and cartoon *The Cleveland Show* (2009-2013) to name a few.¹⁴⁰ *Batman's* Adam West is another, who, despite a long-running role on the animated *Family Guy* (1999-) as inept bureaucrat Mayor West, is also a cameo regular on sitcoms *King of Queens* (1998-2007) and nerd-oriented *The Big Bang Theory* (2007-).¹⁴¹ On the other hand, television stars in movies are often reduced to appearances on diegetic television

¹³⁶ Gary Halvorson, "The One with the Rumor," *Friends*, November 22, 2001.

¹³⁷ Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*, Second Edition, 87.

¹³⁸ DeFino, *The HBO Effect*, 63.

¹³⁹ Plasketes, *B-Sides, Undercurrents and Overtones*, 148.

¹⁴⁰ Linda Mendoza, "My Whole Life Is Thunder," *30 Rock* (NBC, December 6, 2012); Alan Rafkin, "The Schumakers Go to Hollywood," *It's Garry Shandling's Show*, November 20, 1987; Steve Robertson, "The Men in Me," *The Cleveland Show*, March 25, 2012.

¹⁴¹ Rob Schiller, "Shear Torture," *King of Queens*, October 24, 2005; Mark Cendrowski, "The Celebration Experimentation," *The Big Bang Theory*, February 25, 2016.

screens, such as host Jay Leno on a mock version of *The Tonight Show* (1992-2014) joking about the subject of political satire in *Wag the Dog* (1997) or Larry King ending *Enemy of the State* (1998) as the hero watches *Larry King Live* (1985-2010). Because these talk show hosts normally operate in the documentary space of a talk show, their commentaries on diegetic events such as presidential infidelities or surveillance scandals, framed in the domestic television screen, contribute verisimilitude to the diegesis of a film. Viewing a star in the familiar environs of a setting that is closely united with a domestic space is a celebrity encounter that still entices viewers despite claims to the contrary.

Mocking Celebrity Culture

Television in the 21st century has been able to entice movie stars to return to the medium. In the late 1990s, subscription cable courted producers with a limited but standout record of series such as *The Larry Sanders Show* and *Sex and the City* (1998-2004) with few checks on language or sexual content. Instated as autocratic, auteurist showrunners, these television producers would come to embody the moniker of quality television in the early 2000s with complex, serialized narratives that demand extended concentration.¹⁴² Indeed, successful series such as *Game of Thrones* (2011-) and *The Sopranos* (1999-2007) find their greatest profitability in the sale of DVD collections; these series have season-long narratives and extended character systems, emphasizing detail-oriented viewing and "complexity of plot and narrative unavailable to the shorter form feature film."¹⁴³ At the same time, viewers continue to diversify their viewing experiences on mobile, internet-connected devices enabling on-demand viewing that bears little resemblance to the television and its model of flow.¹⁴⁴ In the wake of this new stream of storytelling, the network year, where a number of new shows are premiered at the end of the summer following intensive, restricted development periods and rigid shooting schedules, has given way to year-round scheduling.¹⁴⁵ The 22-episode season schedule that has been the network norm since the early 1990s has been abandoned by cable channels in favour of twelve or

¹⁴² Brett Martin, *Difficult Men: Behind the Scenes of a Creative Revolution: From The Sopranos and The Wire to Mad Men and Breaking Bad* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 252.

¹⁴³ DeFino, *The HBO Effect*, 8.

¹⁴⁴ Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*, Second Edition, 28.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.

even eight-episode story arcs.¹⁴⁶ While on the one hand, this break with a calendar has encouraged a "constant habit of viewing,"¹⁴⁷ as with anthology series in the 1950s, the moveable schedule and much-reduced commitment of time as well as the return of closed-ended series, not to mention the creative potential of these kind of narrative structures, has once again made television a desirable place for actors wary of overexposure or exposure in a lowbrow environment thought to be beneath a real star.

Cameos continue to be used to test potential cast members on television. Networks have drawn increasingly from the ranks of those who are more firmly established within the movie-making A-List, such as Alec Baldwin in *30 Rock*, while cable channels HBO and FX have drawn top-tier stars Brad Pitt and Glenn Close. Each of these actors made their initial appearances as stars on television in cameos in the early 2000s: Pitt and Baldwin both made *Friends*' appearances as potential love interests and Glenn Close had a cameo on *The West Wing* (1999-2006).¹⁴⁸ While Close, who is known for theatre as much as movies, may have been wooed as a highbrow "dream name" for *The Shield's* (2002-8) producers at FX, she was approachable because of her cameo.¹⁴⁹ Chloe Sevigny, regarded as an indie darling for her work in edgy independent films, went from cameoist on queer-friendly sitcom *Will & Grace* (1998-2004) to regular as a Mormon bigamist on HBO's *Big Love* (2006-11). Movie stars are appearing with frequency on television again, and not only in cameos. Stars who appear on television are often, as with Pitt or Close, in roles that require us to deal with a series' worth of character space that overtakes their star persona. While Colin Farrell and Matthew McConaughey appeared on closed-ended subscription cable drama *True Detective* (2014-), Christina Ricci and Parker Posey appeared in recurring comedic roles on basic cable on AMC and CBS. The failure of television to procure personalities with the distinction of movie stars serves to reinforce the quality of these newly star-approved television productions, as the formerly hard division between the star hierarchies lends distinction to those instances in which movie stars now appear on television as recurring characters. As migration of actors between television and movie productions has

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 102.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 105.

¹⁴⁸ Gary Halvorson, "The One in Massapequa," *Friends*, March 28, 2002; Jessica Yu, "The Supremes," *The West Wing*, March 24, 2004.

¹⁴⁹ Martin, *Difficult Men*, 227.



Figure 51. Despite her glamorous appearance, Sharon Stone is too down-to-earth for talk show host Larry Sanders on *The Larry Sanders Show* (1992-98).

become more fluid, celebrated movie actors have made the gradual transition to television through small roles. The cameo provides a gateway to the television experience.

The boundaries of celebrity are increasingly defined by visibility, while visibility is available to many on television. As John Ellis points out, the experience of being filmed, a rare experience when television was first begun, has become a commonplace of 21st century experience.¹⁵⁰ Audiences have first-hand experience of the modes of performance as actors in front of a camera. In this environment, cameos cannot promise the access they once did. While celebrities since Hope and Crosby have been undermining their star images to make themselves more ordinary, such a reveal has been so thoroughly absorbed into the cameo's function that it offers little to the viewer. The ubiquity of television cameos on network television in the 1990s made the claims that celebrities were people just like us, just as the rise in reality programming made ordinary people celebrities and promised little of the unknown for either the eager fan or curious viewer. The idea that a cameo is other than a performance, or that a movie star or ordinary person would not be fluent in its codes, is unthinkable. As a result, rather than cameos that present stars as people just like us, cameos often reveal stars as horrifyingly different. This trend is more visible on cable, where the trend towards less-censored language and storylines makes such roles more common than network television. In the mid-1990s, HBO's *The Larry Sanders Show* redeemed those celebrity faults revealed through cameos by comparing them with the invariably worse traits of antihero Larry Sanders, and subsequent Hollywood-set cable shows from many of the same writers featuring similar antiheroes have followed suit. (Fig. 51) In more recent years, HBO's *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (2000-) and FX's *Louie* (2010-) have used the creative freedom and uncensored language of these platforms to showcase celebrities as liars and egoists such as Michael J. Fox explaining away his bad behaviour as the symptoms of Parkinson's or Robin Williams putting down another comic.¹⁵¹ Top tier stars whose forays beyond cinema have usually taken them to the highbrow forum of the theatre are also increasingly willing to appear in such polar offcasting, such as a potty-mouthed Kate Winslet on *Extras* (2005-7).¹⁵² (Fig. 52) Such supposedly intimate views of the famous as cheap, rude,

¹⁵⁰ John Ellis, "New Responses to Fake Footage," in *Relocating Television: Television in the Digital Context*, ed. Jostein Gripsrud (New York: Routledge, 2010), 186.

¹⁵¹ Alec Berg, "Larry vs. Michael J. Fox," *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, September 11, 2011; Louis C.K., "Barney/Never," *Louie* (HBO, August 2, 2012).

¹⁵² Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant, "Kate Winslet," *Extras*, August 4, 2005.



Figure 52. Kate Winslet talks dirty behind the scenes in the backstage comedy *Extras* (2005-7).

insensitive, and egotistical are tempered by the knowledge that the cameo is a performance like any other, rewarding instead the viewer who recognizes that cameos are just another performance among many.

Rather than celebrating celebrities, cameos on television are increasingly used to mock celebrity culture. Skepticism about celebrity images, especially those marketed by film publicists, has been part of television's strategy for winning viewers since the 1950s. Yet, celebrity images, constantly exposed on the internet, have seemingly little left to admit to, except the process of construction itself. In the 2008 appearance of Coldplay singer Chris Martin on TV industry comedy *Extras*, the episode follows the showrunner's horror as the producers insist that Martin inexplicably serenade a shift of factory workers to promote his new album.¹⁵³ The recent appearance of minor celebrity and former witness Kato Kaelin "from the OJ trial" as a rodeo entertainer in Zach Galifianakis's TV series, *Baskets* (2016), mocks manufactured celebrity of another kind.¹⁵⁴ Just as the multichannel revolution has opened up television to movie stars by creating an outlet for the detailed mise-en-scenes of quality television, it has also lifted ordinary people to its heights as many more channels fill up the bulk of their time with cheap reality programming from news to game shows. Both question why viewers celebrate visibility, creating comedy as they disrupt the conventions surrounding who is worthy of recognition.

Comparing Cameos: Sharing on the internet

Reflecting the increasingly random nature of celebrity, the replay-enabled television environment, the growth of detailed mise-en-scenes in complex, big-budget productions, and the possibility of stars appearing on television sometimes in invisible roles have made cameos the subject of a new kind of game. If Ben Affleck could appear on *Curb Your Enthusiasm* as little more than an extra in a background shot, eager viewers were all the more likely to assume that a policeman on whom the camera lingered imperceptibly on the season finale of *Homeland* (2011-) could be Matt Damon. (Careful frame-by-frame examination enabled by Netflix helps to ascertain that this claim is unlikely.) The potential cameo was discussed by fans on internet

¹⁵³ Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant, "Chris Martin," *Extras*, October 5, 2006.

¹⁵⁴ Jonathan Krisel, "Renoir," *Baskets*, January 21, 2016.



Figure 53. Is this an uncredited Matt Damon cameo in *Homeland* (2011-)?

message board reddit.¹⁵⁵ (Fig. 53) Bolstered by the fact that Damon had already been identified on the internet several years earlier as someone whose cameos were unpredictable "random onscreen favours for friends"¹⁵⁶ as part of a regular series on cameos on the blog of specialty channel IFC. IFC posted this account of Matt Damon's cameos to coincide with the theatrical release of the company's co-production of *Che* (2008), which had featured Damon's most recent small role. This web of activity online shows how the cameo contributes to ancillary content supplementing the often indivisible environment of television shows and movies. Online debate, such as that around Damon, is common, as online message boards are used to "pick away at the ambiguities"¹⁵⁷ in a constant manner no longer regulated by the initial broadcasts or theatrical releases.¹⁵⁸ Television has a much larger audience on the internet than for its initial broadcast, whether through an on-demand service or broken down into clips on YouTube.¹⁵⁹ The cameo, as a disruptive, extradiegetic moment, already fragmented from the film as a cult artifact, is uniquely suited to this environment.

Clips of cameos are readily available thanks to the digitization of home viewing. The transition from the use of analog VHS tapes to digital media since the introduction and widespread adoption of DVDs in 1997 has made cameos increasingly accessible, and visible. In the 1980s, while existing alongside VHS, the digital laserdisc format had been aimed at collectors and cinephiles who sought unique and detailed home viewing experiences.¹⁶⁰ Laserdisc did not have the popularity of the DVD, but for collectors, its infinite repeatability without the worn, "bootleg" aesthetics of much-watched tape, and its affordances for special features, especially audio commentaries that could be played as alternate tracks, made them

¹⁵⁵ "I See You There Matt Damon, Hiding in Plain Sight," *Reddit*, January 18, 2012, https://www.reddit.com/r/homeland/comments/olosx/i_see_you_there_matt_damon_hiding_in_plain_sight/; Jethro Nededog, "'Homeland' Finale: It's a Battle of Wills for Carrie and Brody (Video)," *The Hollywood Reporter*, December 18, 2011, <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/live-feed/showtime-homeland-finale-recap-275147>; David Steinberg, "Officer Krupke," *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (HBO, November 8, 2009); Michael Cuesta, "Marine One," *Homeland* (Showtime, December 18, 2011).

¹⁵⁶ Stephen Saito, "The Curious Cameography of Matt Damon," *IFC*, January 8, 2009, <http://2009/01/the-curious-cameography-of-mat>.

¹⁵⁷ Suzanne Scott, "Battlestar Galactica Fans and Ancillary Content," in *How To Watch Television*, ed. Ethan Thompson and Jason Mittell (New York: NYU Press, 2013), 322.

¹⁵⁸ Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex*, 72.

¹⁵⁹ Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized, Second Edition*, 63.

¹⁶⁰ Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex*, 68.

uniquely popular.¹⁶¹ Just as trivia was used as original content to establish second-rate films as classics, special features helped to establish films as a collectable package available for ownership.¹⁶² The DVD extra inherited these affordances, but for a wider audience. The growth of replay culture, where media products are continually repackaged with regularly revised sets of ancillary media such as director, actor, or scholarly commentaries as extras, encourages access not to the film, but the trivia that surrounds it.¹⁶³ Klinger suggests the DVD extra, along with the popularity of the DVD in the early 2000s, has secured trivia as "a prime feature of film culture,"¹⁶⁴ as the special feature reached new complexity in a digital medium. Warner Bros. advertised its Archive Collection DVD release of television series *Tarzan* (1966-68) on YouTube by listing, alongside a brief description of the series' narrative, the cameo appearances by Ethel Merman and The Supremes.¹⁶⁵ Like the introductions that accompanied old movies or TV shows on specialty TV channels, special features explore production history, inside jokes, and, of course, cameos. The DVD audio commentary for *Hot Fuzz* (2007) reveals disguised cameos from Cate Blanchett and Peter Jackson, while the Criterion release of Robert Altman's Hollywood-set *The Player* (1992) has an interactive special feature identifying the film's many famous cameoists. While Jenkins suggests that fans use mastery of trivia as a platform from which to renegotiate their consumption of mass entertainment, for Klinger fan knowledge is only "a traffic in trivia created by various culture industries, both authorized and policed."¹⁶⁶ Klinger has suggested that films and television series that can make claims about complexity are perceived as infinitely rewatchable by home viewers.¹⁶⁷ This market is increasingly important, as even high-budget television series can make back their entire expenditure with a single day of sales of home viewing media.¹⁶⁸ The cameo as a kind of trivia has been harnessed as a justification for repeat viewing.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 69.

¹⁶² Ibid., 62.

¹⁶³ Barbara Klinger, "Becoming Cult: The Big Lebowski, Replay Culture and Male Fans," *Screen* 51, no. 1 (March 20, 2010): 1–20.

¹⁶⁴ Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex*, 61.

¹⁶⁵ warnerarchive, *Tarzan: The Complete Second Season (Preview Clip)*, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_F5kVa2QWY.

¹⁶⁶ Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex*, 74.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 159.

¹⁶⁸ DeFino, *The HBO Effect*, 126.

Cameos have found a new home as digital content circulated on the internet. Fan culture has a unique relationship with the internet as what Jodi Dean calls an "imaginary site of action and belonging"¹⁶⁹ where largely invisible subcultures have reached out to each other through listservs and message boards to communicate about their fan object and create a shared, niche cultural space.¹⁷⁰ Fan cultures have embraced the internet as a way to share knowledge, but also to harness that knowledge to create new cultural products such as fan fiction or video compilations created through digital manipulation of existing movies or television shows.¹⁷¹ Inexpensive or free video editing software, and the availability of already-digitized media has made compilation videos one of the most common formats on video sharing site YouTube.¹⁷² Because the clips are brief, they are rarely the focus of the attentions of copyright owners who routinely pull bootleg content from YouTube.¹⁷³ Cameo clips are uniquely suited to this environment, and indeed cameo clips circulate on YouTube, as Plasketes writes, like the "underground circulation of rare recorded performances."¹⁷⁴ Edited clips of cameos can be as short as a single cameo; however, usually they are strung together in a thematic compilation based on either the subject, the originating film, or the genre. Completism, a trait which Klinger identifies with replay culture, drives fans to compile every cameo by repeat cameoists such as Scorsese, Jackson or Stan Lee, or even mogul Donald Trump, or every cameo in a certain film or television show such as Hollywood-set *Entourage*.¹⁷⁵ Some of these cameos are used to make arguments: the best cameo in *The Expendables* (2010), or on *Friends*.¹⁷⁶ Videos depicting the

¹⁶⁹ Jodi Dean, "Communicative Capitalism: Circulation and the Foreclosure of Politics," *Cultural Politics* 1, no. 1 (March 2005): 67.

¹⁷⁰ Hills, *Fan Cultures*, 142.

¹⁷¹ Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (NYU Press, 2006), 114.

¹⁷² Louisa Stein, "Gossip Girl: Transmedia Technologies," in *How To Watch Television*, ed. Ethan Thompson and Jason Mittell (New York: NYU Press, 2013), 342.

¹⁷³ Lucas Hilderbrand, "Youtube: Where Cultural Memory and Copyright Converge," *Film Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (2007): 48–57.

¹⁷⁴ Plasketes, *B-Sides, Undercurrents and Overtones*, 147.

¹⁷⁵ CH2, *Every Donald Trump Cameo Ever*, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yosAVMB47-Y>; Slate Magazine, *Every Single Entourage Cameo*, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jteNDkI2WqY>.

¹⁷⁶ *The Expendables - Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Bruce Willis - Best Scene Ever*, 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrMmiUSVRRI&feature=youtube_gdata_player; Ono Ramirez, *TOP 20 Guest Stars in Friends*, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GbOUIFa87g>.

same subjects compete based on quality or completeness, as the compilation allows a customizable participation in the creative process of production, emulating, as Klinger suggests, the power of the original producer. Gurevitch has suggested that the phenomenon of web-enabled video clip circulation as a major site of audience reception has influenced film editing, as movies are tailored for their ultimate destination on internet platforms, where they enter the popular culture broken up into abbreviated lengths that are ideal for internet viewing.¹⁷⁷ While Gurevitch says this development harkens back to Gunning's early cinema of attractions, cameos are in fact ready-made to serve as "digital attractions."¹⁷⁸ Yet while cameos function extradiegetically, they are nevertheless steeped in an accumulated, intertextual context of film stardom that belies the simple appeal that Gurevitch attaches to these stripped moments. Cameos allow snippets of film and television to recirculate, divorced from their original diegetic contexts while expressing fan mastery of long-existing systems of stardom.

Alongside video compilations, message boards and blogs provide evidence of fan contributions to a body of text-based discussion of cameos on the internet. Interest in the cameo has spread beyond specific fan cultures to emerge as a pop culture phenomenon. Discussions of the 25 cameos you shouldn't miss are a common trivia-oriented article on aggregators and the pop-culture-oriented blogs of print media from *The Onion's AV Club* to *The Guardian*.¹⁷⁹ Alongside these blog articles, user-generated content on reference sites such as *Wikipedia* and *TV Tropes* make complex points about the cameo's function. Klinger suggests that collecting is an impulse towards mastery, where "as a savvy decoder of a text's mysteries, the viewer becomes something of an authority,"¹⁸⁰ comparable to the filmmaker - or showrunner - to whom the manipulation of such detail is originally ascribed. Participation in user-generated forums allows the opportunity for fans to be publicly and immediately recognized for their knowledge,

¹⁷⁷ Leon Gurevitch, "The Cinemas of Transactions: The Exchangeable Currency of the Digital Attraction," *Television & New Media* 11, no. 5 (September 1, 2010): 367–85.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Donna Bowman et al., "The Friends of Friends: 17 Gimmicky Cameos Intended to Boost TV Ratings · Inventory · The A.V. Club," *A.V. Club*, April 7, 2008, <http://www.avclub.com/article/the-friends-of-ifriendsi-17-gimmicky-cameos-intend-2243>; Philip French, "The 10 Best Movie Cameos," *The Guardian*, July 25, 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2010/jul/25/philip-french-10-best-movie-cameos>.

¹⁸⁰ Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex*, 160.

affirming their mastery. Like viewers chuckling knowingly at cameos in a movie theatre, forum users recreate these moments of public, shared recognition.

An examination of these public forums exposes a detailed and complex discussion of cameos. *TV Tropes* exposes detailed fan interest in the cameo as generally defined by generating an exhaustive typology of the cameo supported by copious examples, exploring narrative function and industrial limitations. One section is dedicated to "Lawyer Friendly Cameos," which highlights in-character cameos that take pains to reference pop culture icons while not infringing on copyright such as the appearances of an unnamed yet identifiably costumed Lone Ranger and Annie Oakley in *Alias Jesse James*.¹⁸¹ The user-generated format means that there is dissension on what exactly a cameo comprises, but the recognition of disruptive and extra-diegetic elements that I have defined here seem to stand. The interest in the cameo, and its tropes, rather than specific television universes, represents the kind of fan mastery of the conditions of production that Klinger identifies with the traffic in trivia. More open-ended discussion is evident on message board threads on networking sites such as *Listal* or *reddit*,¹⁸² where favourite cameos are compiled with simple entries such as celebrity name and show title. Other resources project authority with single editors and focused subject matter, such as the massive PDF list compiled by site *1960s Garage Bands* of every cameo by garage bands of the era sorted by both factual and fictional name.¹⁸³ While maintained by a single editor, this list nevertheless acknowledges additional contributors sourced from the internet's vast number of users, soliciting additions and corrections via email. Large, user-generated lists can be seen as efforts towards completism, as in video compilations or the appendices to Hitchcock studies, but the disparate sources of exemplary cameos and the sheer number of authors mean that conflicting definitions of what makes a cameo coexist. In such an environment, the cameo thus provokes discussion about itself nearly endlessly, as fans argue about where exactly cameos sit on the boundary of documentary and narrative space.

¹⁸¹ "Lawyer-Friendly Cameo," *TV Tropes*, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/LawyerFriendlyCameo>.

¹⁸² "Cameos," *Reddit*, accessed May 13, 2016, <https://www.reddit.com/r/cameos/>; "Death by Cameo," *TV Tropes*, accessed September 7, 2014, <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/DeathByCameo>.

¹⁸³ Mike Dugo, "TV/Film Cameos," *1960s Garage Bands*, accessed May 13, 2016, <http://www.60sgaragebands.com/tvfilmcameos.html>.

The cameo has long been part of a production's marketing, included in press releases surrounding the release or broadcast of a film or television show. While retrospectives of cameos, such as those of well-known directors, have also historically been a subject of cultural commentary, internet forums that allow video sharing and discussion allows cameos to live on in a different context. Rather than description, viewers can find thousands of cameos clipped from their original contexts. Cameos continue to circulate long past their original release date, renewing interest in forgotten or lost cameos that belong to the category of cameos rather than related to whatever film is being re-released or promoted at the time. Cameos have been fully embraced as a pop cultural phenomenon that exists outside of the original release of a film. In video sharing, many different kinds of cameos live side by side: in "Every Donald Trump Cameo Ever," Trump's appearance on *Home Alone 2* (1992) comes in quick succession to his television appearance on *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. Cameos can also be recirculated to make new meaning: the compilation of Trump cameos is almost certainly related to his campaign for president, exposing two decades worth of his popular image as a very, very rich man in a pithy way. Edited down for video sharing, the disruptive, extra-diegetic cameo comes to its obvious conclusion, as a performance that exists separate from any film or series, designed instead to circulate in the real world.

Conclusion

Appearing amid television's recurring characters, reruns, and on-demand viewing, cameos have become an easily recognizable and often deployed element of visual pop culture. The question of the star hierarchy has coloured television cameos since the 1950s, guiding who viewers expect to see on television and elsewhere. The hierarchy of stardom has dissipated in the early 21st century, as television and movies can be viewed across multiple, internet-enabled platforms. Where once movie stars needed to be protected from association with lesser media such as television or even lesser roles such as cameos, the interchangeable viewing platforms of the 2010s, as well as the standards of production of quality television, have meant that the division between media is much less defined. As a result, a movie star on television is no longer a fish out of water. On television, celebrities rarely are asked to commit to the entrenched character spaces of recurring characters, allowing them to be playful with persona, if not exactly real. The current, subscriber-cable model of quality television, which yields higher budgets,

limited runs, and less censorship, has reestablished television as a site of experimentation. Celebrities encouraged by the highbrow value of narrative complexity might dip their toe in television performance with a cameo. Since 2000, enough celebrities have made the transition that the dangers of damaged prestige no longer loom, while the benefits of appearing in television's intimate confines are still felt.

Any cameo today can be expected to enter the still-intimate space of the home, whether on DVD or through online viewing. Negotiating the direct interaction between television programming and television advertising within the home-based viewing space has influenced the conventions of small screen performers towards candid and self-deprecating approaches. Hosts of the early 1950s mocked the fact of being famous to suggest they were, at heart, ordinary and trustworthy people. Celebrities in sitcom cameos quickly followed suit, ensuring the tradition of self-reflexive critique has lived on in the television cameo. In the last two decades, the explosion of information about celebrity lifestyles that circulates on blogs, social media, reality television, and traditional media outlets has made the promise of the cameo as an alternative glimpse of the ordinary celebrity less tantalizing. As the naive and unpracticed performances of movie stars in early television become a distant memory, cameos can no longer pretend to reveal the true celebrity. Instead, cameos on television and in movies present the viewer with the chance to view the celebrity persona under construction. While viewers, mired in fan magazines since the beginning of the star system in the early 20th century, have never ignored the manufacture of celebrity, the accumulation of fan knowledge has become increasingly visible, and more shareable. Cameo compilations on the internet show fans using their knowledge to collect and compare cameos as representations of celebrities, demonstrating their participation in the construction of the celebrity persona. This work, and the enthusiasm for it, has not gone unnoticed by moviemakers seeking to harness fan attention in an increasingly niche-oriented market. Cameos in film and television reflect this desire for opportunities for fan labour, demonstrating tongue-in-cheek fantasies of celebrity bad behaviour such as the raunchy mom Florence Henderson or cheap millionaire basketball star LeBron James in *Trainwreck* (2015). Cameos work to foil the imperatives of visibility, in cases such as the disguised appearance of Tom Cruise in *Tropic Thunder* or the false-nose-wearing Johnny Depp in the remake of *21 Jump Street* (2012). Those appearances that create the most work for fans continue to circulate on the

internet through video sharing and as the subject of metacommentaries, while accumulating the visibility that is the aim of the cameo.

How the internet as a platform will change cameos remains to be seen. The conditions of character-system that make cameos identifiable disqualifies many of the brief videos that circulate virally on the internet from consideration as potential cameo sites. However, web-based streaming platforms such as Netflix that are producing their own content modeled on cinema and prestige television's big budgets and auteurist control have attracted movie stars such as Kevin Spacey and Matt Damon. The kind of watching that is encouraged by streaming platforms is focused on intense periods of viewing, rather than regularly scheduled returns to character, and a narratively complex, serial form, yet unlike cinema, it is situated in the comfort of one's own home where one can watch as sloppily, and distractedly, as necessary. While stars may be more likely to appear in these prestige roles, the insistence on narrative complexity and dramatic rather than comedic narratives may discourage the disruptive cameo; currently, Netflix cameos are limited to the Hollywood-set animated series *Bojack Horseman* (2014-).

Outside of streaming services, the internet may be seen as a leveling force for cameos in movies and television as it allows them to circulate side-by-side in discussion and video compilations. It assembles fans to discuss and share information about cameos, and speculate on the kinds of reveals that cameos allow. However, if fans seek out mastery of the details surrounding a subject in order to be able to be the equal of that subject, sharing in their knowledge about their personal life, their influences, or their body of work, they inevitably return the focus from a decentralized, creative fan community to an authorizing subject. Rather than leveling movie and television cameos, internet forums such as *TV Tropes* take pleasure in differentiating and categorizing cameos in highly specialized groupings, from live-action film to animation. The creativity of the metatext is limited. After all, cameos depend on an acknowledgement of celebrity culture within the film's production. While on the internet, video clips of cameos may circulate outside of their initial contexts of a film or a television series, this context is often reinstated in fan comments identifying the source or by algorithmic associations made by platforms themselves, as in the sidebar links that video-sharing sites such as YouTube provide to similar videos from the same film or television show. Cameos cannot be totally decontextualized on the internet, especially while the internet relies on remediated cameos in television and film. As a database of cameos, the internet provides a supplementary site of

interaction with existing films and television shows. However, it serves as little more than a site of critique and commentary on cameos, where fans can make visible their powers of recognition. Cameos largely developed their defining characteristics of disruption and critique when movie stars did not belong in sitcoms or television narratives, yet these values continue to be an integral attribute of the cameo. Because of their potential to recirculate as ancillary content on the internet, cameos are currently experiencing a resurgence in movies and television.

Cameos are at their most successful when they claim to reveal elements of the celebrity image beyond the borders of what is commonly shared about the celebrity. Often cameos promise to expose bad habits or salacious details that are considered outside the limits of decorum for the extraordinary star. Yet such reveals are protected in a cameo in a way they are not in gossip magazines, as they push into documentary space but are sheltered by performance. As celebrity images become more fully fleshed out by inquiring fans and publicists alike, what is widely known and acceptable to share about celebrities seem to be almost limitless. Contemporary cameos seek out those distant limits by reflecting deep skepticism and disgust about the celebrity image itself and the process of its manufacture. While celebrities have used cameos to deflect and even absorb bad habits as merely another element of the manufacture of celebrity, no doubt those limits are becoming too well-trodden, and cameos will need to offer new kinds of skepticism to continue to keep exacting fans curious.

Conclusion

Cameos have entered pop culture as an expression of celebrity culture aimed at audiences eager for access to the famous. The profusion of cameo roles in film and television in the 2000s, as well as their remediation on the internet, indicates just how centrally cameos reflect the phenomenon of celebrity culture and fan viewing. Who is seen in cameos has been influenced by cultural, industrial, and aesthetic factors that have evolved since the beginning of film narratives through shifts in media forms, industrial organization, and fan culture. Cameos affirm the power of visibility as both means and end for celebrities, focused as they are around acknowledging the audience's powers of recognition. Setting up fans to judge and assess celebrity personas and the extent of their realness, cameos help sustain a metacritical relationship to celebrity that has become the norm. Each cameo provides the chance for a fan to demonstrate his or her powers of recognition. Drawing on cinephilic reverie and cult viewing practices, cameos create an opportunity for fans to assert their mastery of fan knowledge in an act that while dependent on personal memory is manufactured for a mass audience. Such pop culture knowledge offers distinction, albeit, as Bourdieu acknowledges, of a kind that is rehabilitated only as the last resort of the disenfranchised because its component parts of popular and lowbrow entertainment are so accessible to the masses.¹ Cameos create distinction, but only in so far as fans perform the consumption that cameos are designed to encourage.

Cameos create a participatory space for viewers, where recognizing those singled out among extras and small roles allows fans to demonstrate their knowledge. As Klinger points out, fans assert their fluency in details and trivia to make claims for a mastery of the form equivalent to that of a film's author. Cameos are a detail that permit and encourage this level of engagement. Just as Renaissance members of the royal court would learn the visual symbols with which a king preferred to be portrayed to curry favour, fans track the appearances of directors, actors, and showrunners, and even extras to demonstrate their familiarity with a film, television series, or celebrity. Each cameo promises an insider moment, as it hints at tributes, trades, and personal and industrial relationships. Yet cameos, although they may encourage cult viewing that focuses on the detail and situate the viewer as a master who sets himself apart from the masses, are a

¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 61.

mass phenomenon and an established and mainstream phenomenon. Even when the Hope-Crosby trades of the 1940s first plucked disruptively at the ends of classical film narratives, the sheer amount of coverage identifying cameos firmly placed their recognition within the grasp of mainstream viewers. Cult viewing, in this case, is not about a cult genre, but about a detailed and knowing kind of viewing that is firmly mainstream, especially as it has been enabled by on-demand viewing and internet-enabled recirculation through metatexts that discuss and explore cameos as a phenomenon.

Cameos are points where documentary space and narrative space collide, calling into question the viewer's relationship to the diegesis presented to him onscreen. This act of recognition is many things. It offers an encounter with the celebrity in a potentially documentary space that intersects with the diegesis of a film. It is disruptive and comedic, emphasizing the celebrity's unusual visibility. Like a game, it challenges the viewer to demonstrate his mastery of celebrity culture. Many different kinds of celebrity are recognized in cameos, from more typically visible actors to the celebrated figures of sports figures, directors and producers, and even erstwhile extras raised to the heights of recognition through repetition and replay. Auteur theories have raised some films and filmmakers to the cusp of highbrow culture, elevating their cameos from the marginal respect of cult viewing to legitimate reception. Yet cameos are quintessentially popular. Unlike the alchemical signals of court, the knowledge required to identify them is not jealously guarded, but increasingly made public.

Cameos are everywhere in movies, television, and trailers. Their brief duration and their multiple and sometimes conflicting claims for verisimilitude, tribute, affiliation, and comedic disruption make them uniquely suited to films that promote repeat and intensive viewing. Some cameos continue to uphold older attributes, such as tributes and nods to verisimilitude in appearances such as author John Green in the movie adaptation of his *The Fault in Our Stars* (2013) or reporter Walter Robinson's daughter in biopic *Spotlight* (2015).² Politician cameos continue to reveal those in power as awfully ordinary in lighthearted roles such as that of American vice-president Joe Biden on *Parks and Recreation* (2009-15). While tributes continue to appear in drama, contemporary comedies have most frequently embraced the cameo in its

² "Globe Reporters Tell Their 'Spotlight' Stories," *Boston Globe*, November 29, 2014, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/movies/2014/11/29/spotlightfilm-intro/d8Tp3MQ4Y0OQA3JZgABkeO/story.html>.

most complex form. These films encourage a metacritical stance on celebrity as celebrities mock their own star images not through supposedly telling reveals of their down-to-earth personas, but by exposing their failures and failings. Cameos have become so common in comedies that rather than a surprise, they often appear in trailers as a kind of shorthand for madcap narrative disruption to come. For example, in the trailer for the comedic, live action adaptation of *Pixels* (2015), the creator of the original video game fails to control the creatures he created, becoming their victim. A recent trailer for mockumentary *Popstar: Never Stop Never Stopping* (2016) featured the explosive death of singer Seal within its 30-second spot.³ Contemporary comedies, such *The Hangover* and *Trainwreck* have embraced the cameo's disruption of celebrity and film narrative, although *This is the End* is perhaps the best example of the cameo's accumulated legacy. *This Is the End* is a 21st century cameo spectacular, showcasing celebrities hobnobbing with celebrities, having fun at the expense of classical film forms, and interspersing television movie stars in a fragmented, vignetted narrative that is tailor made for bite-sized redistribution on the internet.

In *This is the End*, viewers are introduced via a Hollywood house party on the eve of the apocalypse to celebrity friend after celebrity friend of laidback comedian Seth Rogen, who is playing himself. The first half of the film is focused on Rogen as he wanders the mansion of heartthrob James Franco, where stars from Emma Watson to Michael Cera are assembled and the most recognizable celebrities are greeted by name, such as Rihanna or Paul Rudd. Celebrity cameos appear to assert authenticity in the style of typical Hollywood-set films: like real celebrities, Franco and Rogen have celebrity friends. However, sensationalist recreational drug use and dystopian events, including cannibalism and murder, refute any audience expectations that these cameos are glimpses of celebrities as they truly are. Rather than candid reveals, audiences are treated to over-the-top exaggerations and antithetical views of each celebrity image, laying to rest the idea that such visibility offers access to anything other than performance. At the same time, the performances are less than convincing, and audiences are encouraged by the half-heartedness of the action to parse where performance ends and the real fun begins. The intersection of documentary and diegetic space is exposed by actors who seem on the verge of laughing at themselves and those around them. The film even disrupts the

³ Devan Coggan, "Popstar Trailer: Seal Gets Attacked by Wolves," *Entertainment Weekly*, May 18, 2016, <http://www.ew.com/article/2016/05/18/popstar-trailer-seal-attacked-wolves>.

cameo's typical disruption of the character systems of classical filmmaking, as character actor David Krumholtz, who, unlike typical cameoists, definitely belongs in the background, is apparently done the honour of playing himself as he sits unnamed among the inner circle on Franco's couch. These vignette-like cameos make the film read made for fragmentation into video clips for internet-enabled sharing. Indeed, on YouTube the movie is trimmed down not to its major plot points but to its choicest cameos, including clips of beefy Channing Tatum briefly enslaved by a power-hungry Danny McBride and multiple fan edits of the mild-mannered Michael Cera flipping out on acid as in "Michael Cera best scenes" or "Michael Cera every scene high def."⁴ The celebrity-heavy mise-en-scene promotes repetitive viewing for detail. *This is the End* claims to show young Hollywood having fun at the expense of classical film conventions, but for the benefit of fans who appreciate the disruptive power of the cameo. In the manner of contemporary cameos, it repeatedly shows glimpses of celebrities not as they really are, but celebrities as they are obviously not.

If *This is the End* mocks celebrity visibility, other cameos mock fans powers of recognition. In the celebrity-heavy *The Player* (1992), for example, Tim Robbins character accosts celebrities who have no desire to be visible, such as Malcolm MacDowell as he leaves a hotel, or John Cusack as he has a business lunch. Conventionally, failure to recognize celebrities has been the mark of bumpkins from Chaplin in *A Film Johnnie* to Lucy in *I Love Lucy*. More recently, in *The Other Guys* (2010), Mark Wahlberg is a policeman who accidentally shoots baseball player Derek Jeter during the World Series when he fails to recognize the star player of the team he has been assigned to do security for. However, as the cameo critiques evolving celebrity cultures, bumpkins express their naivety not only with failed recognition, but over-eagerness to express their fan knowledge. *Trainwreck* stars Bill Hader as a renowned sports medicine doctor frequently at the side of famous sports figures. In one scene at a suburban baby shower, he stands in a group of guys listing all of his famous patients. Each name gets a huge reaction from these ordinary joes, who exclaim and high-five each other at the mere mention of each celebrity. Their reaction to what is merely a catalogue of names seems ridiculous, especially without any supporting anecdotes or information about the lifestyles or character traits of these

⁴ Brandon Jones, "This Is The End" Every Michael Cera Scene High Def!, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5y0UCMZWM>; BadfishKoo, Michael Cera This Is The End Best Scenes, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIKPJIKHXg>.

celebrities which ostensibly drives the interest of fans as truth detectives in celebrity encounters. While these reactions to mere names may seem over the top, they echo the excitement that viewers express at the appearance of cameos, an expression that can be audible in a quiet theatre, as Mathijs has pointed out. Pointing out the absurdity of the excitement of recognizing the names of very famous people, this scene comments on reactions to the cameo, where similar excitement is predicated on the recognition of their very visible appearances. In this critique, a new type of bumpkin is exposed for ridicule - the savvy fan himself.

Trainwreck is not alone in criticizing the conventions of the cameo and the fan's pride in his powers of recognition. Fake cameos expose the fan's desire to give detail to character spaces that are never meant to be expanded. In 1996's *Fargo*, singer Prince was credited as one of the many dead bodies in the film, which was set in his home region. This cameo, it turned out, never happened: the directors simply named him in the credits, creating a tribute to someone who wasn't even in the film, thus intentionally misleading fans who sought out details about the film's production.⁵ Because the body itself was not recognizable as Prince, only extra-diegetic information clued in fans who hang on for the credit roll. By misleading fans who seek out information beyond what is delivered in the film's diegesis, the Coens return the emphasis to detailed viewing rather than the accumulation of information from ancillary content. As a challenge to fan mastery, the fake cameo sets apart knowing auteurs from the fans who follow them. Likewise, in the DVD commentary for *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby* (2006), the director and stars claim to point out an otherwise invisible Sean Penn cameo that cost over \$3 million, spurring some confused fans into a wild-goose chase.⁶ These fake cameos destabilize not only the value of fan mastery, but the promise of the cameo in making the celebrity visible for inspection.

Invisible cameos likewise critique how fans recognize cameos in a media environment increasingly enabled by ancillary comment and metacommentary. In *21 Jump Street* (2012), Johnny Depp is disguised as a biker bad guy so as to be totally unrecognizable as the movie star

⁵ Todd Van Luling, "5 Stories You Didn't Know About 'Fargo,' As Told By The Movie's Main Villain," *The Huffington Post*, March 18, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/17/fargo-movie-trivia-interview_n_6880346.html.

⁶ "What Movie Has the Best Audio Commentary?," *Reddit*, February 5, 2016, https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/44ai2l/what_movie_has_the_best_audio_commentary/.

who got his break on the original television series. When he is unmasked in the film's penultimate scene, he reveals his identity by pulling off a fake nose, sunglasses, and a fake beard, moustache and wig. At the same time, it is revealed that Depp's fellow henchmen is Peter DeLuise, his co-star from the original series. However, unlike Depp, DeLuise did not become unbelievably famous after leaving the show, and so needed no such prosthetic disguise to be in "deep cover." His cameo is as invisible as Depp's until, after Depp's reveal, he explains who he is. The recognition is focused purely on Depp, not for his appearance in the original, but for his visible success since the original *21 Jump Street* (1987-91). The contrast between DeLuise and Depp's cameos demonstrate that rather than mere tribute, the cameo is an exploration of visibility. In fact, after Depp rips the prosthetic nose and grizzled beard from his famous face, he complains bitterly about the ends he went to to disguise himself as a biker, he mentions having been forced by necessity to wear trademark Johnny Depp trappings familiar to fans from interviews and gossip magazines such as scarves, rings, and goatee. Depp suggests that there is no end to this celebrity reveal, exposing that the information fans have gleaned about the real Depp is yet another disguise, that of the celebrity image.

How long viewers will be content with cameos that claim to let fans be privy to knowing criticism of celebrity culture is unclear. After all, Hope and Crosby did much the same thing before their light jibes at Paramount and the studio system were perceived as hopelessly stuffy. In some ways, disguised cameos perfectly reflect the attributes of the contemporary cameo. In *Tropic Thunder*, the disguised Tom Cruise as a dancing Les Grossman is the epitome of the candid, off-cast celebrity cameo that is a touchstone of contemporary comedy, emphasizing extratextual knowledge, testing the limits of visibility, and presenting an off-cast glimpse of the celebrity that nevertheless makes no claims to reality. Fans are encouraged to rewatch the whole movie paying special attention to the studio head for any clues that Grossman is Cruise. Yet, as cameos become increasingly critical of not only celebrity culture but fan culture itself, and fake and absent cameos muddy the waters, viewers bombarded with multiple extratextual claims can only trust the cameo's intrinsic property of visibility. However, disguised cameos strip those roles of that visibility. Can we be sure who we are seeing? (Fig. 54) After all, if we are thinking intertextually, we must acknowledge the other latex masks Cruise has worn in the *Mission: Impossible* (1996-) film series, where the seamless performance of one person as another is aided not simply by diegetic super-spy technology, but by the combination of more-or-less realistic

latex masks, continuity editing, and real live actors standing in for each other. Even without Cruise's own filmic precedents, *The List of Adrian Messenger* performed a similar reveal, where a stand-in played most of the roles credited to masked actors, except in the final coda where the four were unmasked. Depp's cameo, too, is remarkably well-disguised until the final scene where he shows his face. It would be only too easy to have an extra don the bandana, heavy sunglasses, and obscuring facial hair to run around in the background waving guns at *21 Jump Street's* heroes for the rest of the film. While this paranoid reading of the cameo is perhaps excessive, the cameo's industrial precedents, cultural history, and its current attributes of metacritique can only lead us to ask if viewers can really trust in cameos that are mostly invisible.

As a fascinatingly complex manifestation of celebrity culture, there are many facets of the cameo that remain unexplored. In this study, I have mapped some industrial imperatives that have marked the cameo, from the birth of the star system, the decline of the studio system, the desire of networks and studios to differentiate television and film products, the access to on-demand viewing and the unique suitability of the brief cameo to the circulation of video on the internet. Each of these restrictions is tied to the continued use of the cameo to make stars visible, reinforcing their desirability as commodities. Work remains in tracking the history of sports figures as cameoists, especially during the explosion of sports stars in comedy farces of the 1980s from basketball's Kareem Abdul Jabbar in *Airplane* (1980) to baseballer Reggie Jackson in *The Naked Gun* (1988), and their pivotal importance as quintessentially random cameoists in comedies such as the *The Hangover*, *The Other Guys* and *Trainwreck*. If viewers were supposed to be surprised by the presence of stars such as Alan Ladd or Humphrey Bogart in comedies of the 1940s and 1950s, today that mantle of surprise has been passed down to boxer Mike Tyson and basketball player Amar'e Stoudemire. The cameos of stars on animated movies and television series, which I have only briefly addressed, deserves to be investigated to explore how the industrial demands of voice work, coupled with the more indirect form of visibility offered owing to the visual styles of each illustrator, colour what celebrities are likely to appear in cartoon form. The sheer number of stars of all kinds who have appeared in shows from ex-vice president Al Gore in *Futurama* (1999-2013) to talk show host "Jay Limo" in *Cars* (2006) suggests that animated cameos have a unique appeal, perhaps due to the restricted access of a mediated visibility. Lastly, detailed examination of ancillary content about cameos produced to supplement DVD releases and official websites of cameo-laden film and television series could



Figure 54. A long shot of a dancing Tom Cruise as Les Grossman in *Tropic Thunder*.

shed light on how media industries have responded to and influenced fan engagement with cameos on the internet. Each of these projects would continue to shed light on the ongoing negotiation of how and why fans engage with celebrity culture.

The function of cameos has evolved several times in the last 100 years, and no doubt it will continue to be transformed. From tribute and mark of unusual performance, to marketing ploy that served to indicate the studio brand, the cameo became playful, disruptive and self-referential as the studio system broke up and television introduced candid, intimate portrayals of celebrity into the routines of everyday life. The sheer number of cameos, as well as increasingly familiarity with the remuneration of celebrities for such roles, in the 1960s alienated viewers who were seeking the intimate glimpse of celebrity as their true self. Auteur theories that established film as a highbrow art as well as popular entertainment made other producers seek the visibility that had been relegated to star performers. The self-referential cameo underwent another transformation in the 1990s, as the glimpse of the ordinary celebrity gave way to a critique of visibility, as celebrity cameos presented stars in unflattering light that, rather than suggesting the reveal of true persona, emphasized how celebrity is constructed for fans as what is made visible. The cameo currently sits in a space of meta-critique, as the convention of the cameo is mocked and parodied through lost, invisible, and missing cameos. No doubt the cameo will continue to transform, reflecting the ongoing negotiation of celebrity culture by viewers eager to really know the media producers they admire. Engaging viewers in cinephilic attention to detail as they negotiate a cameo's relationship to documentary space and thus to viewers' own real lives, cameos create a personal moment of reflection that is nevertheless engineered for a mass audience. If, as Braudy suggests, recognition allows this mass audience to exert a modicum of control over their world as they participate in the selection of celebrities through the continued affirmation of their visibility, then bite-size, digitally-circulated cameos allow fans endless opportunities to exert this power. Mining movies past and present for cameos, and identifying, examining, and sharing them on the public forum of the internet, fans use their knowledge of celebrity culture to assert that they, like stars, directors, producers, authors, and even the occasional extra, deserve recognition, too.

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Raging Bull. Dir. Martin Scorsese. United Artists, 1980.
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 "Ted Baxter Meets Walter Cronkite." *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. CBS, February 9, 1974.
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The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet. ABC, 1952-1966.
The African Queen. Dir. John Huston. United Artists, 1951.
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The Barbara Stanwyck Show. NBC, 1960-61.

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The Cleveland Show. Fox, 2009-2013.
The Color of Money. Dir. Martin Scorsese. Buena Vista Distribution, 1986.
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The Dick Van Dyke Show. CBS, 1961-66.
The Expendables. Dir. Sylvester Stallone. Lionsgate, 2010.
The Fault in Our Stars. Dir. Josh Boone. 20th Century Fox, 2014.
The Flintstones. ABC, 1960-66.
The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air. NBC, 1990-96.
The Ghost and Mrs. Muir. NBC/ABC, 1968-70.
The Godfather. Dir. Francis Ford Coppola. Paramount, 1972.
The Graduate. Dir. Mike Nichols. AVCO Embassy Pictures, 1967.
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The Hangover. Dir. Todd Phillips. Warner Bros., 2009.
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The King of Comedy. Dir. Martin Scorsese. 20th Century Fox, 1983.
The King of Queens. CBS, 1998-2007.
The Knockout. Dirs. Mack Sennett and Charles Avery. Keystone Studios, 1914.
The Larry Sanders Show. HBO, 1992-98.
The List of Adrian Messenger. Dir. John Huston. Universal International, 1963.
The Lady Vanishes. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Gainsborough Pictures, 1938.
The Lodger. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Woolf & Freedman Film Service, 1926.
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The Simpsons. Fox, 1989-.
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The Tenant. Dir. Roman Polanski. Paramount, 1976.
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