

GUESS WHO'S OFF THE HOOK: INVENTING INTERRACIAL COUPLING IN GLOBAL ART CINEMA

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Abstract: Black Studies scholar and critic, bell hooks, offers many insightful analyses of American life in her book *Outlaw Culture*. hooks levels a quick claim that Americans “have to go to films outside America to find any vision of redemptive love in films that depict interracial relationships, but she doesn't provide an analysis of a foreign film to illustrate her accusation. This work seeks to utilise hooks race theories to interrogate constructions of interracial relationships in select global art cinemas, particularly how these movies seek to understand postcolonial violations, transnational migration, and globalization anxieties in Jean Luc Godard's *Le Petit Soldat* (1960), Tomas Gutierrez Alea's *Memories of Underdevelopment*, and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974). Framing this discussion is the forty-year span between the release of *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* and *Guess Who*, which depict interracial coupling between a black male and white female in the late sixties and a white male and black female in 2005. Analyzing the use of race in global cinema may allow American audiences the necessary critical distance to see how 'other' movies construct interracial relationships to instigate a form cultural atonement, an agenda hooks sees absent in American film yet fails to prove in foreign film.

“We have to go to films outside America to find any vision of redemptive love – whether it be heterosexual love or love in different sexual practices – because America is a culture of domination. Love mitigates against violation yet our construction of desire in the context of domination is always, always about violation.”
bell hooks, *Outlaw Culture* 59

The introductory quote expresses a level of frustration with representations of interracial coupling found in popular American movies, particularly how our films efface history and fail to confront our nation's past. This means that American movies construct images of interracial romance that broaden the reach of “white, supremacist, capitalist patriarchy,” to riff a common bell hooks expression (6). To acknowledge our painful past, and the history of brutality, rape, and violation, requires we recognize that expressions of interracial relationships in American films rarely redress the horrors of our past, but reframe interracial desire as a new front of historical effacement taking place in the movie-houses in our neighbourhoods. I argue that this painful legacy is by no means easily usurped, evidenced by the way hooks feels American films militate against redemption. I suggest that one way we can understand the influence of our failure to recognise the past is to escape from the local theatre, and watch and learn from representations of interracial coupling a few older foreign films invent.

Before reading images of interracial romance in foreign film, a short reading of Stanley Kramer's *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967) will help qualify bell hooks' frustration with representations of interracial relationships in American film. Kramer's film fails to acknowledge what Jenny Sharpe defines as the “internal colonisation” and “marginalisation of racial minorities” (106). In the place of this history, Kramer's Oscar-winning film depicts Dr. John Wade Prentice (Sidney

Portier) and Joanna Drayton's (Katharine Houghton) coupling in Hawaii, the newest transnational acquisition of the United States. A series of aerial shots of a United Airlines plane and Joanna's bamboo hat signal John's new social and economic mobility and white youth culture's willingness to accept "others" in the 1960s, though the hat is stereotypically Chinese – not Hawaiian. These images mask John's transnational status as an African American by emphasising his assimilation into the ranks of the professional classes. Jenny Sharpe's "internal colonisation" extends Michael Kearney's definition of the "transnational" as a "term of choice when referring, for example, to migration of nationals across the borders of one or of more nations" and the processes of the state as "arbiter of citizenship" (273). The Reconstruction Amendments challenge Kearney's limited definition since his term does not account for internally nationalised African American men who became citizens after the Civil War, who also migrated internally to urban centres looking for work. John Prentice, however, acknowledges his transnational qualities when Matthew Drayton (Spencer Tracy) interrogates his professional status. John responds, "I'm not established in any one place," signalling his professional mobility and arguably the history of African Americans' fight for citizenship and recognition, a notion that at first unsettles Drayton. John's upward mobility emphasises his transnational position. Born in Los Angeles, educated at Johns Hopkins, and holding a professorship at Yale, John meets Joanna in Hawaii before his trip to Switzerland, where he is to begin work on a program bringing doctors to Africa. Historically, the Reconstruction Amendments also instigate Women's Suffrage, a movement seeking to nationalise American women and earn their right to citizenship. Joanna's desire to leave the hotbed of sixties liberalism in San Francisco for Switzerland identifies her own concomitant mobility during the Civil Rights Movement, and perhaps serves as a way Kramer acknowledges the limited progress of the countercultural movement in the United States.

The burgeoning intercultural awareness on display in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* intervenes in the Civil Rights Movement by speaking to African American progress, but the film sidesteps the history of slavery and the limitations the Reconstruction Amendments imposed on African American acceptance in American life. Though African Americans were permitted to own property and vote, assimilation into "white" culture was difficult as Jim Crow laws proliferated the south after the Reconstruction. "The rise of multiculturalism," Jenny Sharpe adds, "[followed] fast on the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act signalled a dramatic change in U.S. Policy" (109). Sharpe seeks to establish the impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the white, male, political establishment, and the subsequent effect new legislation had on black and white notions of nationhood and the prospects of interracial co-mingling these new laws accelerate. Blacks now expected to have equal economic opportunities as whites and access to the white community, a fact encouraging the woman's movement that sought equal pay with men. Though there is little doubt that legislation increases the likelihood of interracial romance in the 1960s, interracial coupling destabilises white authority and weakens the inherent whiteness of the nation's political framework. Kramer's film articulates the reverse by ceding the authority to Drayton, whose position as editor and owner of a San Francisco media company marks his high-minded influence at the epicentre of American liberalism. Despite Monsignor Ryan's (Cecil Kellaway) observation that Mr. Drayton is "off balance" and has "gone back on [himself]" for his rejecting Joanna's marriage to a black man, Kramer defers to white, male, capitalist patriarchy's approval of the marriage proposal by drawing John insisting that both parents approve of their prospective marriage. On the surface this appears to include his own parents, however, Drayton's closing lecture to his wife Christina (Katharine Hepburn), the Prentices, John and Joanna merely affirms the

centrality of white patriarchal approval – the Prentices don't get to approve of John's prospect of marrying a white girl, and Joanna appears to have even less to say about it. Thus, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* affirms what bell hooks resents about American films that defer to white patriarchy, sensing Hollywood contradicts itself when it comes face to face with its “broken down, old, phony, [liberalisms],” to quote Monsignor Ryan's last appeal to Matthew Drayton's moral sensibilities.

Another way to explain hooks' antipathy toward images of interracial coupling, like that of John and Johanna's, is to view interracial relationships as an alliance between subaltern classes – the African American male and the white female. Antonio Gramsci argues that the subaltern cannot form until the State recognises and intertwines them with “civil society” (13). Gramsci's Marxian observation exposes how Kramer's film concludes with Drayton's approval of the new social formation, white patriarchy represents the ruling class that authorises the legitimacy of the subaltern classes. In both instances, John's acceptance by Drayton's white, professional affluence and Johanna's need for permission facilitate a patriarchal blessing. Again, Gramsci is helpful here, by criticising the way “new formations which assert the autonomy of the subaltern groups [still] work within the old framework,” Kramer's film reasserts white authority when it is under its most potent attack (14). Drayton sanctions John and Johanna's coupling working to simultaneously efface and promote the centrality of white maleness.

In the same decade that produced *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, French New Wave auteur Jean-Luc Godard released his second film *Le Petit Soldat* (France 1960), during the tumultuous Algerian resistance movement of the 1960s. Banned by the French censor, *Le Petit Soldat* did not become available to the public until 1963, and not until “a number of cuts had been made” (Dixon 25). The film attempts to mark a shift in French attitudes toward the colonisation of Algeria that dates to 1830, but French authorities felt that the release date exacerbated French-Algerian tensions just as the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) began to win Algeria's independence (25). Seen in this context, Godard's film confronts France's sensitivity to its colonising past, forcing the national culture to deal with the legacy of colonisation and racism as part of an ongoing national conversation, a move helped in no small part by the increasingly public efforts of the FLN. The posthumously published work of Franz Fanon reveals the psyche of French nationals as the public war for Algerian independence took place. Fanon asserts that “[the] racist's purpose has become a purpose haunted by bad conscience,” an impression echoing Drayton's realisation in his granting John and Joanna's marriage in the end of Kramer's film (36). Fanon later compares the battle for Algerian independence with the Civil Rights movement in the United States: “Racism...haunts and vitiates American culture. And this dialectical gangrene is exacerbated by the coming awareness and determination of millions of Negroes and Jews to fight this racism by which they are victimised” (36). Wheeler Winston Dixon investigates how the context of racism that surrounds French-Algerian hostilities shaped Godard's stylistics: “*Le Petit Soldat* is thus a brutal and entirely unromantic film, a film of political activism, or the cinema of conscience. Everything about the film is flat and mundane, particularly the torture sequence; Godard in *Le Petit Soldat* is making an utterly personal film which puts his audience effectively on trial” (26-27). Dixon's observations about Godard's film reinforce what I see neglected in American films that take up the subject of interracial relationships. For one, the history of race relations in the United States is not a playground for romantic expression, which means inventing scenes of interracial romance is perhaps the first move toward the effacement of our real brutal history. Secondly, the willingness of Godard to confront moviegoers, to challenge their participation with violation, demonstrates how cinema can operate to move a culture toward reconciliation and limit their complicity with new forms of imperialism.

Le Petit Soldat's narrative traces Bruno Forestier (Michel Subor), a photojournalist and army deserter, captivated by the eminently white Veronica (Anna Karina), who is a Russian-born Algerian sympathiser. Thus, Veronica is a transnational figure who, like Dr. Prentice, destabilises the centrality of French whiteness. Conspicuously, Bruno works for the media, yet he acts as an informant for the Organisation of the Secret Service (OAS), the national spy network that facilitates his military defection and asks that he kill Arthur Palivoda, a member of the literati mobilising against French military rule in Algeria. Here too the narrative illustrates the way in which media figures, like Drayton and his San Francisco newspaper, support racist attitudes. In Godard's film, released from military service, the OAS coerces Bruno to participate in a covert mission to prevent French-Algerian reconciliation by killing Palivoda. In a sense, Godard implicates media as part of the political apparatus that seeks to align spectators with racist national sentiments, a view that resonates with hooks' condemnation of the application of race in mainstream American film. For Bruno, the covert operation and desire for Veronica tears at his allegiances, a tension Godard plays out through a heterosexual tryst. Simultaneously, Bruno propagates French imperialism when he desires Veronica, who swears her allegiance to the "dark other" Algerians.

The interracial coupling that Godard frames in *Le Petit Soldat* sets up the representation of race as the locus of Bruno's resistance to the colonisation of Algeria, this means that white men sense the oppression felt by Algerians maligned by French imperialism. Contact with the Algerian racial body puts Bruno in relation with a counter-hegemonic force that resists the French national agenda. bell hooks sees coupling with dark races as another form of cultural domination. The interracial couple is a filmic trope that flirts with attaining pleasure from dark others, and hooks points to Peter Greenaway's film criticising the legacy of British imperialism at a time when public nostalgia for the English empire resurfaced in the British heritage film:

Certainly the relationship between the experience of Otherness, of pleasure and death, is explored in the film *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife, and Her Lover*, which critiques white male imperialist domination even though this dimension of the movie was rarely mentioned when it was discussed in this country. Reviewers of the film did not talk about the representation of black characters, one would have assumed from such writing that the cast was all white and British. Yet black males are part of the community of subordinates who are dominated by one controlling white man. After he has killed her lover, his blonde wife speaks to the dark-skinned cook, who clearly represents non-white immigrants, about the links between death and pleasure. It is he who explains to her the way blackness is viewed in the white imagination...He says that to eat black food is a way to say "death, I am eating you" and thereby conquering fear and acknowledging power. ("Eating the Other" 377-78)

Filmgoers learn that whiteness doesn't actually need to be in direct contact with "Otherness" as long as the target of pleasure carries the signification of blackness; as hooks suggests, even contact with black food could function to allay white heterosexual desire for contact with a racialised body. Bruno Forestier's desire for Veronica stems from her contact with the oppressed Algerian members of the FLN; therefore, sexual contact with her excites in his imagination the idea that he too resists French hegemony by way of her association with Algerians. At the same time, Bruno's sexual contact with Veronica mitigates his fear of the Algerians and re-enacts the behaviour of French imperialism within her private space.

The scene at Veronica's apartment illuminates Bruno's desire for pleasure with the counter-hegemonic racial signifiers tied to Veronica's "Otherness." After framing an establishing shot of Bruno running into a secret service agent outside Veronica's high-rise, Godard intensifies their coupling by cutting to a handheld

medium shot as Bruno enters her flat with a camera. His entry parallels the French occupation of Algeria, “Yesterday I didn’t see you, but I thought of you. Now I see you but think of something else.” These elusive opening lines reveal how Bruno assigns meaning to Veronica’s body in her absence, much in the way that the French military must have given the territory of Algeria meaning before the invasion in 1830. French Algerian author Assia Djebar’s work helps historicise the imperialist mindset one hundred years before Bruno’s occupation: “The first confrontation. The city, a vista of crenelated roofs and pastel hues, makes her first appearance in the role of ‘Oriental Woman’, motionless, mysterious” (6). Bruno’s dialogue, like Djebar’s rewriting of the invasion of Algeria, signals the way in which the imperialist consciousness expresses itself through the desire for a female “Other.” Veronica’s body only exists within the imagination of the coloniser; her body becomes the imaginary territory whereby Bruno reassigns her meaning. Once in the presence of Veronica’s body, Bruno shifts her representation as a desired object of pleasure to a sign of resistance to French imperialism, or the “something else” he later wishes to photograph nude in the shower. This scene illustrates how Veronica’s apartment represents the playful territory for Bruno to imagine her body as the site of transference, a place where he exercises his own feelings of subordination through a desire for pleasure with the other that merely replicates French capitalist patriarchy. Godard deploys Brecht’s *verfremdung* to illustrate the historical gap and the national detachment occurring in Bruno’s mindset, “a foreigner speaking French is lovely.” This voice-over technique destabilises the diegetic reality of the film, an act that associates Bruno’s connection to the spectator, and attempts to confront their complicity with French imperialism by speaking directly to them.

Godard’s lens and Bruno’s camera function as parallel signifying systems of domination that implicate the role of media in the exploitation and violence against subaltern classes. This means that the film illustrates how media are agents of imperialism, which appears to be hooks’ complaint against popular American movies. After gazing at herself in the mirror, a form of self-objectification she has been disciplined to accept, Veronica approaches Bruno, picks up his camera and asks, “Is this all you have?” Since the spectator views the action from Bruno’s gaze, or his camera, Godard signals media’s complicity with the imperialist construction of the other by cutting to a close up shot of Veronica. Bruno’s command promotes what Godard and hooks see as a violation of interracial representation, “When photographing a face...look at me...you photograph the soul behind it.” Here, Bruno takes on the role of the director by positioning and commanding Veronica as an object of his imperialist gaze, a shot mirrored by Godard’s close-up that mines her likeness for Bruno’s pleasure. Moreover, the soul behind the face remark signifies the way media images can ascribe meaning to the objects they shoot; the camera extracts the essence (soul) of the other. The shot reverse-shot that follows articulates media’s participation by denying a corresponding gaze onto Bruno. In its place, Godard performs a cut away to reframe Bruno snapping pictures at Veronica from another point of view, a tactic Godard uses to maintain Veronica as an object of meaning for Bruno’s subjectivity. Cutting back to a handheld medium shot, Bruno proclaims, “Do as you please and I’ll shoot. I’ll ask the questions, it will make it easier.” To which Veronica attests that their role-play mirrors a police interrogation, but Bruno rebuffs her, “Photography is truth, and cinema is truth 24 frames a second.” These quips foreground how the imperialist gaze frames the colonised subject, demarks the territory in which the other expresses itself, and deludes themselves that they have done no harm, another parallel to the way in which the French army may have viewed the Algerian territory in 1830.

The work of André Bazin helps us understand a few of the popular attitudes of images and reality operating in French New Wave Cinema and in Godard’s film, “[in

photography] the logical distinction between what is imaginary and what is real tends to disappear. Every image is to be seen as an object and every object as an image” (15-16). The exchange between Veronica and Bruno is analogous to the object-image relationship Bazin finds in photography. An effect of photography is to cheat death through mechanical representation, to create a form that endures in the imagination of the subject, and by extension the audience. Bruno’s camera can extract the soul of his object of desire and murder it for his pleasure. Once objectifying Veronica, the subject position can turn that object into any imaginary form, which is the reason her whiteness merges with the Algerian resistance movement, so that Bruno can express his own hostility to French rule – he can murder his own Frenchness and extend it at the same time.

Godard’s film is a critique of representations of interracial coupling that hooks thinks reasserts imperialist attitudes in American movies, but the role of film in ascribing racial significance needs further clarification. Here I find the theory of invention by French-Algerian transnational, Jacques Derrida, helpful to understand how “tekhne” (the film arts) works on the psyche (imagination). For Derrida, two competing meanings for invention appear to exist: for one, invention is the “first time, the event of a discovery, the invention of what was already there and came into view as an existence or as meaning and truth” (31). In this form, invention is not a discovery at all, but stands as the “first time” instance, or the constative, even though the discovery must have previously existed. Cameras operate within the misnomer of invention, making the sign of the object, or Veronica’s photographic presence, the work of a technological process that aims to discover a world that has always already existed. The industrialisation of invention can be seen as the technical faculty of film, which elicits a level of truthfulness simply because the object exists and the camera merely captures the always already object. For spectators, the discovery appears scientific, empirically harvested, “true”, since the camera seems to not have acted on the object. The second form of invention aggravates Derrida’s first proposition by way of giving an object “a place, and thus [granting] rise to it” (31). In the second instance of invention, a director shapes the presentation of the already object with the camera, a performative operation which gives the object a new meaning. Therefore, the object placement within the film frame works to “invent” a new conceptualisation based on an object’s always already existence. This twofold theory of invention illuminates how Godard tries to affect the spectators’ imagination, Veronica’s body is the dark other territory for their discovery, much like that of a body of water, a landscape, or an alien planet that must already exist. The body appears as a discovery, and a concept that Godard conflates with otherness through the lens. The manner in which Godard’s camera presents the body, the gazed-at, objectified placement of the racialised and sexualised form, tells spectators that the body exists for the possibility of their invention, and thus, his film offers the ability to conceptualise an already existing object of whiteness with signs of “dark other” resistance to French imperialism. Derrida sees this double inscription as the “invention of the truth” that “never [stops] accentuating what separates them, and that the tendency of the second, since its appearance, [asserts] its undivided hegemony” (32). Here, Derrida believes the object status of the image, or Veronica’s white female body, interacts with the concept of the Algerian resistance movement, working to conceal and reveal the imperialist attitudes under the logic that placement of sexual and racial forms in film denotes new levels of racial tolerance.

Taken together, hooks’ theory of race and resistance and Derrida’s theory of invention inform us that Godard’s camera, his form of “truth 24 frames a second,” decodes the imperialist logic of France in an effort to discover and place “white, supremacist, capitalist patriarchy” within French cinematic discourse. *Le Petit Soldat’s* narrative tries to put in play a white French national’s disenfranchisement

within capitalist patriarchy through Bruno Forestier's point of view of the other, rarely from Veronica's counter-hegemonic gaze, which would expose French violence by assigning her agency, thus giving her a look herself. As Veronica points out, framing the other is another form of imperialist interrogation, but Godard emphasises how she only looks at herself in the mirror and enjoys her objectification by Bruno. Spectators see how Veronica's transnational racialisation destabilises Bruno's allegiance to France; her allure furthers his estrangement from the OAS and increases his ambivalence to French hegemony. *Le Petit Soldat's* ambivalent ending invents Veronica's assassination as Bruno walks away unscathed. This final image avoids the feel good clichés found in popular American film, it asks spectators to rethink how Bruno's attitudes may reflect their own.

Back on the American side of the Atlantic, in the Caribbean Sea, and in the same decade, Tomas Gutierrez Alea's *Memories of Underdevelopment* (Cuba 1968) invents another representation of interracial coupling as a form of resistance to the legacy of Spanish colonisation, the omnipresence of American and Russian imperialism, and the struggle to modernise under Fidel Castro's brand of communism. Alea's film allegorises the complexity of national identity with Sergio's (Sergio Corrieri) seduction of Elena (Daisy Granados), a coupling that occurs within the context of a superpower showdown, and during the instability of the Cuban revolution. Historian Nicola Miller claims that this time-period in Cuban history doesn't fit "comfortably with the discourse associated with the term 'transitions,' which in the post-Cold-war tends to imply a change from dictatorship to liberal democracy" (151). Miller means that the context of 1960s Cuba requires a level of inter-textuality to convey the transnational complexity of a Caribbean island nation negotiating with two superpowers. Through image and voice-over editing, Alea intermixes different "texts" to frame Sergio's vulnerable identity as a light-skinned, divorced, bourgeois dilettante with European sensibilities. Cuban film scholar Michael Chanan sees the camera as a form of critique, where Alea's shot selection and documentary footage work to expose Sergio's imperialist behaviour:

This is why the film-makers chose to oppose the camera to the pen as instruments through which to record the world, by contrasting Sergio's subjectivity with the documentary quality of the camera image. In fact the film invites us alternately to identify the camera with Sergio and to separate them, and it does this in an odd and irregular ways, like making his voice the commentary to a piece of newsreel. (242)

Alea's film entwines competing images from newsreels, documentary footage of the Cuban revolution, Hollywood films, World War II, nuclear bomb testing, and flashbacks from Sergio's marriage with Hanna within the fictive narrative of seduction and betrayal that localises in an interracial courting scenario with a native girl named, Elena. Thus, Alea utilises Derridean "invention" by weaving "constantive" film texts with a "performative" operation that gives them a new meaning in his film, a practice audiences do not see in *Le Petit Soldat* and rarely witness in popular American movies.

As a member of the comfortable class targeted by Castro's regime, Sergio expresses his alienation by walking the streets in a deep cultural malaise: he is estranged from his affluent family, separated from his former "white" wife Laura, and strained by his friend Pablo's defection, all of whom have left for the United States. Under one of his trance-like phases of disenfranchisement and depression, Sergio meets a seventeen year-old, dark skinned, aspiring actress named Elena, who comes to represent his distaste for the "underdeveloped" state of Cuba. bell hooks gives insight into Sergio's psyche, and the parallel between white desire for racial others and imperialism: "It is precisely that longing for the pleasure that has led the white west to sustain a romantic fantasy of the 'primitive' and the concrete search for a real

primitive paradise, whether that location be a country or a body, a dark continent or dark flesh, perceived as the perfect embodiment of that possibility” (“Eating the Other” 370). Through hooks, readers get a sense that Sergio feels he can alleviate the symptoms of his mature, white, bourgeois intellectual identity crisis with an encounter with a poor, dark-skinned teenager. Sergio’s behaviour in his apartment at the beginning of the film exemplifies his preference for Cuba’s imperialist past; he frequently grabs his telescope to peer down onto Havana’s streetscape from his impervious high-rise. Conversely, the spectator meets Elena on the street outside of the Cuban film commission, where the aspiring actress waits for a screen test – she shares a similar wish “to be looked at” like Veronica in *Le Petit Soldat*. These characterisations signify, again, the role of media and the gaze as expressions of sex and power between the coloniser and colonised, and the capability of the dark other woman to unsettle the white imagination. Elena desires to be gazed at by an “institution of imperialism,” the Cuban film commission, an organisation run by Sergio’s acquaintance. Within hooks’ theory of interracial sex, desire for the primitive exercises a “nostalgic evocation of a ‘glorious’ past” that allows us to see Sergio’s demeanour as a way he tries to maintain his European sensibilities as Cuba divorces itself from Spain (370). For Elena, Sergio’s desire “offers the promise of recognition” that assuages her feelings of being ignored or invisible (370). Together, Sergio and Elena’s relationship reenacts colonialism as a negotiation of desire, where the “white” colonist nation craves a “primitive” island country that longs to be discovered.

The setting of Ernest Hemingway’s estate does much to demonstrate Alea’s inter-textuality, affecting to symbolise the omnipresence of the West in Cuban affairs on the one hand, and alluding to the author’s work as signs of white transnational displacement on the other. Hemingway’s *The Garden of Eden* illustrates the effect of dark otherness on the white psyche. Catherine, the protagonist’s wife, desires “to be darker,” this upsets David’s ability to write a novel about a childhood hunting expedition with his father in Africa. At one point in the novel, Catherine’s desire to be darker intensifies with her statement, “I love you and when we go to Africa I’ll be your African girl too” (29). In a brief critique of *The Garden of Eden*, aptly named “The Kindness of Sharks,” which accuses the author’s application of race as a form of feeding frenzy, Toni Morrison defines Hemingway’s use of “Africanism” as “the fetishising of color” (81). Morrison thinks Hemingway assigned blackness meaning to facilitate his desire to overcome something he lacked, an assertion one could easily ascribe to Sergio and Bruno Forestier. In “Memories,” Alea uses Sergio’s voice-over to transition from the art museum to Hemingway’s island paradise, “She has another world in her head very different from mine.” Sergio’s aloof, melancholy tone matches the foreground-background tension in the film frame; Alea frames Elena closer to the spectator and positions Sergio with his back to the camera, which asks the audience to identify with Elena, and thus Sergio’s point of view appears more distant for the viewer even with his voice in the soundtrack. Sergio’s voice-over offers us a look into the colonising attitudes as he cogitates what he thinks Elena might be thinking, much in the way that Bruno speculates Veronica in *Le Petit Soldat*. Sergio expresses his imperviousness to Elena’s oppositional gaze with the line, “She doesn’t see me.” These last few frames hold as Alea cuts to Hemingway’s estate with the title graphic “A Tropical Adventure” placed under the trophy head of an African gazelle in centre frame. Here, the edit sequence and voice-over allow the audience to see a position of the other by conflating Hemingway’s escapades in Africa with Sergio’s behaviour with Elena. The voice-over of Rene Villareal, Hemingway’s former butler giving a walking tour of the estate, signals Sergio’s distance with Elena and the spectator, a move Alea makes to present the inter-textual subjection of Rene to Hemingway, Elena to Sergio, and Cuba to Spain. Alea’s voice-over technique works to weaken Sergio’s connection to the audience, a tactic that opposes the way Bruno’s narration

serves as a point of view for Godard's spectators. The moment that the viewers' empathies move from the coloniser to the dark other, Sergio fills in the narration to highlight Hemingway's exploits in Africa, "He said he killed [the gazelle] as not to kill himself. But in the end he couldn't resist the temptation." Sergio speaks for Villareal's scripted tour, defending Hemingway's imperialist actions in Africa and aligning himself with killing exotic and indigenous species as a temporary form of self-preservation, a theme that appears to parallel Sergio's street-stalking behaviour earlier in the film and the way Bruno walks away after Veronica's assassination.

In an intriguing edit sequence, Alea demonstrates his inter-textual narrative by inserting a series of Hemingway's photographs taken as a war correspondent in World War I. Images of death, destruction, and starvation offer another allusion to Cuba's colonisation, which Sergio supports with his voice-over. This photographic vignette elucidates the way in which Hemingway and Sergio's behaviour resembles Western imperialism. Immediately after Hemingway's war images, Alea cuts to Elena complaining about the American smell of Hemingway's estate, while confessing that she doesn't understand what's at stake in the U.S. and Soviet interest with Cuba, a sign that Sergio thinks marks her underdevelopment. The medium shot of Elena mirrors the shot of the gazelle that opened this scene, however, this time an unidentified white tourist takes a series of stills as Elena willingly poses behind the window frame of Hemingway's estate, reminding the audience once again how film may supplement attitudes of colonisation. Alea uses another voice-over technique when he directs Sergio picking up and reading one of Hemingway's journals: "The tropics. That's what backward countries are for: to kill animals." This reading cements Sergio's alignment with Hemingway as the narrator of *Memories of Underdevelopment*, which incriminates film and storytelling devices that may serve to extend imperialist practices.

The final shots at the Hemingway estate prepare the spectator for Sergio's indictment and acquittal of rape charges, an allegorical device that aligns colonialism with rape, which Godard chooses to allegorise with Veronica's murder. The scene ends with Sergio separating himself from Elena by hiding in Hemingway's lofty study, where he regains the panoptic gaze of the opening scene and re-establishes his dominant position. Elena calls out to him, but Sergio doesn't reply, leaving Elena thinking he has abandoned her. hooks would read these concluding shots as a form of "gaslighting, that great old term we should have never have abandoned: men who seduce a woman, and just when you think you're in heaven, they suddenly abandon you. The syndrome of seduce and abandon, seduce and betray" (*Outlaw Culture* 279). Sergio fetishised Elena because she stood in to represent the exotic primitive, enabling him to reconnect with his European sensibilities through the subjugation of the other at a time when the Spanish occupation wanes. As a transnational subject himself, Sergio is victimised by the same imperialist attitudes Spain held for Cuba, but with Cuban independence emerging, Sergio becomes a colonised subject of the new Cuban regime that seeks to recuperate Elena's subjugation by dismantling white privilege. Sergio and Elena's relationship cannot move beyond seduction and betrayal as hooks points out, a sustained relationship would intimate that a healthy interdependence exists between the coloniser and the colonised territory. Sergio negotiates his relationship with Elena by exchanging his ex-wife's dresses for sex, a condition Elena accepts as a form of acknowledgement and sophistication; perhaps she thinks the dresses mark her development and promote her "to be looked-at-ness". By withdrawing from Elena, Sergio rescinds on the unspoken contract and no longer acknowledges her, but he already received pleasure. This constitutes the violation that hooks sees in the primitive fantasy, which Sergio thinks he fulfilled. In matters of colonisation, however, betrayal goes both ways. In return for Sergio's abandonment,

Elena accuses him of rape, throwing the wealthy white patriarch into his final melancholic malaise that doesn't appear alleviated by his acquittal.

With the thrust of the Civil Rights Movement demobilised by new legislation fully authorising African American citizenship, equality, and opportunity, and the Feminist Movement unfolding throughout Western-style democracies, Rainer Werner Fassbinder doesn't let whiteness off the hook in his interracial and intergenerational love story *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (Germany 1974). As *Le Petit Soldat* and *Memories of Underdevelopment* attempt to understand and confront imperialist attitudes of their respective homelands, which both end by exonerating the white man after he "eats the other," Fassbinder's "Ali" narrativises a form of national reconciliation that puts German racism directly at odds with a narrative that wants the public to atone for Germany's past. Fassbinder reverses the white male centric story by constructing a "December-May" marriage between Ali (El Hedi Ben Salem), a Moroccan-born, migrant worker known as a "Gastarbeiter" during the "Economic Miracle" established by the U.S. Marshall Plan after World War II, and Emmi (Brigitte Mira), an older, low-wage cleaning woman who appears passed her productive and reproductive years (Watson 21). These characterisations illustrate Fassbinder's view of how oppression operates on the psyche in Western capitalist democracies; Emmi senses her own oppression as a low-skilled worker threatened by even lower-wage transnational labour, which makes her feel vulnerable as a "productive" member of the emerging global economy. However, Emmi's subjugation doesn't merely come from the hegemony of capitalist culture, but from her own grown children who take advantage of her willingness to look after her grandchildren, even after they disapprove of her marriage to the younger, dark-skinned, Ali. For Fassbinder, the multifarious nature of cultural oppression "becomes such a normal condition that it is no longer expressed as oppression, but as adapting or conforming; that is as something natural and necessary" (Thomsen 137). Christian Braad Thomsen thinks Fassbinder's "women's films" bring to light how subjects unconsciously internalise and transfer their own feelings of domination onto themselves and to others, acts that film audiences witness with Emmi's desire for Ali and his affair with the white woman bar owner.

Fassbinder invents several scenes of interracial desire within Emmi and the bar owner's apartments, where the setting undermines the male centric narrative by placing the contested territory inside the "motherland" figure's apartment or the bar owner's business-like apartment enterprise. Acts of imperialisation are no longer outward, such as when Bruno invades Veronica's apartment or when Sergio stalks the street for Elena, but internal negotiations of emotions between two racial others, who also represent different classes and age groups. Thomsen claims that "the film is without any stylistic finesse," but I sense he misses how the film articulates the tension between racial others, and arraigns the spectator's viewing habits (143). As Emmi and Ali work out their feelings of exploitation and disenfranchisement, which Fassbinder illustrates by interjecting contentious shots that mirror their corresponding gazes, he places the viewer in the role of the oppressive gaze. This "third person perspective" aligns the spectator with racist attitudes that mirror gawks and gestures inside the diegetic reality of the film.

Fassbinder frames the first kitchen scene with a long shot through a door jam that restricts Emmi's distance from Ali to the right of the dominant contrast, or the centre third of the film frame, keeping Ali pressed up against the left side of the doorway. In this scene, the spectator occupies the look of the gazer and peers into the kitchen from a distance, alienating the social antagonism that occurs in the public sphere by transferring it to the movie theatre, another Brechtian technique. Compressing the private space in the apartment accelerates the tension and intimacy between Emmi and Ali, which drives the diegetic reality of the film and forces spectators to confront a relationship that appears foreign to them. Immediately,

Emmi's conversation turns to her own foreignness, her status as a daughter of a transnational Polish emigrant who emigrated during World War II. This scene exposes the contradictions of racist attitudes within Emmi's familial class-consciousness: her father "hated foreigners" too. The distance the spectator's gaze elicits enables a reflexive operation, where Fassbinder challenges audiences to confront their own "foreignness" within the context of new and old forms of imperialism: the U.S. sponsored economic development that brought Ali to Germany and Hitler's Aryanism that brought Emmi's father from Poland. As this conversation takes place, Fassbinder cuts to a two-shot of Emmi and Ali each taking a shot of cognac together, thereby compressing the space even further and increasing their intimacy, marking the beginning of the new class-consciousness taking shape between them, and presumably German audiences. Keeping Ali and Emmi in the two-shot, the conversation turns to marriage and Ali's heritage, where he reveals that "Arabs are not human in Germany," which ends in Emmi fixing a bedroom for him to stay the night. The first kitchen scene personalises transnational, intergenerational and interracial conflict within Emmi's kitchen to probe and urge audiences to rethink how white, supremacist and capitalist patriarchy sluices through German consciousness.

In a later scene, Ali senses that Emmi exploits his foreign worker status and race: she volunteers his labour to a neighbour, shows off his dark muscular build to her friends, and rebuffs his request for couscous. This level of exploitation that occurs within the marriage drives Ali to have an affair with Barbara (Barbara Valentin), a local blonde bar owner, who suffers a form of loneliness of her own. Barbara is willing to give Ali a taste of home in exchange for moments of companionship and a night of sex; she institutes old colonist behaviours that offer meagre dispensations to maintain the upper hand in the relationship. Ali accepts Barbara's offer and concedes to be treated as an exotic-other in exchange for couscous, a concession not unlike Elena's willingness to accept dresses for sex. In this economy of sex, race and gender, Fassbinder does not put the spectator in the role of Barbara or Ali, a strategy that both Godard and Alea utilise to affect the audience's colonising attitudes, but retains the third person perspective, and its distancing effect, to confront how feelings of exploitation and oppression shape interracial behaviour. The initial long shot frames Barbara at a distance in the centre of the frame looking back into the camera through two door jams, which immediately cuts to a medium shot of Ali with his back to the camera. The edit sequence captures two forms of despair operating at once: Barbara's desperate need for companionship mirrors her overworked look of exhaustion she feels a night with Ali might revive. With his back to the camera the shame and violation cuts so deep that Fassbinder conceals Ali's facial expression from the audience. The scene intensifies with a series of edits supported by the emptiness of footsteps and silence, a sound technique that doesn't disrupt the diegetic reality of the scene, but maintains the spectator's focus inside the apartment and their emotional investment with the images. Fassbinder returns to a shot of Ali's back, where he throws his coat on the floor in an instance of defiance and complicity; he regrets his actions but doesn't turn to reject Barbara's advances. The edit sequence ends with Barbara stripping Ali in the centre of the frame with his head hung low. The long shot that distances the camera from Ali and Barbara replicates the emotional detachment between the characters, thereby reducing interracial sex to an act of connivance and non-cooperation, the same attitudes Fassbinder wants his audience to recognise their culture imbues.

For Ali, however, the scene with Barbara appears as another form of exploitation, which he internalises by getting drunk and passing out in front of Emmi's apartment. Fassbinder frames another doorway motif, putting love and race relations to the test in the last kitchen scene. Fassbinder situates the spectator to gaze in on another domestic space after Ali's affair, where the tension and intimacy

resurfaces in an exchange of “looks” between Ali and Emmi, with the spectator looking on again. The camera pulls out to a wider two-shot in this scene, giving Emmi and Ali greater distance to exchange gazes in the absence of conversation. Between the clanking of silverware, the married couple intermittently looks at each other without ever making eye contact; connoting how each of them recognises how they have violated the acceptance they once came to share. This scene prepares audiences for Emmi and Ali’s redemption; they have each transgressed their commitment to each other, but come to recognise that atoning for their behavior begins with acknowledging the depth of their betrayal, and the courage to accept each other despite these offenses. Thus, Emmi and Ali realise that the history of cultural infidelity makes interpersonal indiscretions between others a matter that requires ongoing conversation.

In the nearly forty years since the premiere of *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner*, Kevin Rodney Sullivan’s *Guess Who* (2005) reframes interracial desire post-NAFTA, CAFTA, guest workers visas, and after European unionisation and 9/11. New economic allegiances work to dissolve national borders, de-centre one’s sense of nationhood, and complicate old economies of sex, race, and gender. This new context of globalisation, Arjun Appadurai asserts, “is inextricably linked to the current workings of capital on a global basis; in this regard it extends the earlier logic of empire, trade, and political domination in many parts of the world” (4). One may conjecture from Appadurai’s theorising that whiteness would garner a wider sense of privilege as previous beneficiaries of imperialist behaviour that now seek new rewards beyond the colony. However, John Carlos Rowe reminds us of the way in which the destabilisation of whiteness emerges from the new “postnationalist...work being done on U.S. national ideology, and its concomitant imperialist ambitions in North American, Latin America, and outside the Western hemisphere” (170). Transnational workers enter the country pushing the centrality of whiteness and national attitudes away from its dominant position. Thus, globalisation, as Paul Lauter more recently suggests, places America in a “a world system, in which the exchange of commodities, the flow of capital, and the iterations of cultures know no borders” (quoted in Fishkin 21). The exchange, flow, and iterations of capital and culture that Lauter proposes does not assert parity in global relations, but erodes the sense of nationhood. America’s global position and its whiteness weaken in the new way capitalism works.

Guess Who’s opening scene begins with images of multicultural workers hurrying through New York’s financial district and ends with Simon Green (Ashton Kutcher) quitting his stockbroker job because he doesn’t agree with “how [his white boss’] world works.” Simon’s sudden joblessness precedes images of his romance with Theresa Jones (Zoë Saldaña) and knowledge that he grew up fatherless in Brooklyn. Simon and Theresa prepare to visit her parents in an affluent suburb in New Jersey, where she, like Joanna in Stanley Kramer’s film, neglects to tell her parents that Simon is white because she assumes they’re “cool with it.” Percy Jones (Bernie Mac) isn’t cool with his daughter dating a white guy, primarily on the basis that he doesn’t trust him and suspects he doesn’t have a job, which he later finds out is true. The father’s “my house, my rules” policy emphasises Simon’s de-centred whiteness and his border crossing into neighbouring New Jersey illuminates whiteness’ deference in seeking the approval from blackness. The Jones’ stately home, their new Cadillac, and Percy’s impeccable variety of business suits project many of the signifiers of African American progress with no reference to the Civil Rights Movement or Affirmative Action. The dinner scene elicits a new level of ease with which the black community now senses its place within the United States. Percy provokes Simon to tell a few “Black jokes” to demonstrate his family’s full assimilation into the American dream. Most of the jokes spark laughter from the three

generations of the Jones family sitting at the dining room table with one exception: the last part of the punch line to “what are the three things a black guy can't get? Black eyes, a fat lip, and a job.” Sullivan's film juxtaposes Black success with hints to Simon's work ethic, his single-mom upbringing, and surrogate father and mentor on Wall Street; these allusions reframe whiteness as a return to the immigrant story within their nation of origin. References to joblessness, career advancement, and upward mobility reflect anxieties with transnational labourers displacing the centrality of white labour in age of globalisation. Percy allays white fear by restating the primacy of the American success story that serves to reference and ignore five hundred years of the African American experience: “Everyman gets to choose his destiny no matter what his father did.”

As the new established authority in an idyllic suburb, the black man is no longer the transnational subject Dr. Prentice admits to in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, but he is thoroughly nationalised as a twenty-year veteran of a community bank, a fan of NASCAR, and avid proponent of American sports culture that once precluded blacks. The patriarchal lineage that *Guess Who* reassigns to blackness permits Simon and Percy to sleep together, not Simon and Theresa. The interracial relationship between Simon and Theresa is entirely reversed and prevented until the black father overcomes his resistance to white maleness; blackness doesn't want to be de-centred after achieving the level of success previously limited to whiteness. An aerial shot of the Statue of Liberty follows Percy and Simon's first night together, the expansive vista overlooks the New York and New Jersey border where thousands of nationals and transnationals cross to get to work each day. Their coupling resembles a similar level of self-preservation that developed in the pairing of Joker Jackson (Tony Curtis) and Noah Cullen (Sidney Portier) in Stanley Kramer's earlier interracial drama *The Defiant Ones* (1958). Instead of running from the law, Percy and Simon police the vulnerable boundary together and alleviate their fear of others.

The interracial coupling of Bruno and Veronica, Sergio and Elena, and Ali and Emmi articulate the interpersonal violations that take place as new iterations of capitalism such as postcolonial territoriality, transnational migration, or decentralised globalisation work on the imagination. When new social formations emerge, such as those experienced in post-bellum America or globalisation today, new epistemic shifts in our thinking sets off a period of volatility as populations negotiate emerging economic practices with previous discourses of race and gender. The global cinematic representations of interracial relationship discussed try a variety of devices to intervene these discourses: espionage and murder, rape and acquittal, melodramatic tension, and comedy. In rereading Stanley Kramer's *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* many may concede its earnestness despite deferring to the white establishment. With *Guess Who's* comedic rewriting of history, some may be left to wonder just how far we have come.

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