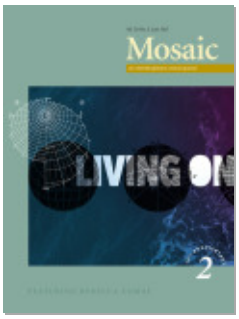
Reading Race and "Rita" in The Lady from Shanghai: Decrypting the Mogul, the Star, and the Auteur

Joshua D. Gonsalves



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This essay explicates the desire to be independent that derives, I argue, from the moguls who invented Hollywood, resistant actors (James Cagney) and "rogue" producers (David O. Selznick). My historical analysis of this desire as it circulates among these figures will be supplemented by script variations of *The Lady from Shanghai.*

Reading Race and "Rita" in *The Lady from Shanghai*: Decrypting the Mogul, the Star, and the Auteur

JOSHUA D. GONSALVES

Even the greatest stars change themselves in the looking glass. . . .

—*Kraftwerk,* "The Hall of Mirrors," Trans-Europe Express

Fredric Jameson posits that works of mass culture "cannot manipulate unless they offer some genuine shred of content as a fantasy bribe" ("Reification" 29). The unconscious "bribe" in question here is the "fantasy" of total autonomy that, instead of being confined to the director, circulates, as I will argue, between the director-actor, Orson Welles, the star-actor, Rita Hayworth, and the mogul, Harry Cohn, the head of Columbia, the company that produced the actor-auteur's *The Lady from Shanghai* in 1947. A re-reading of the ideological function of this capitalist fantasy in Welles's Hollywood oeuvre complicates recent analyses of race in *The Lady* by taking account of archival script variants. This essay sets the stage for a redirecting of attention to archival inscriptions by making the counter-intuitive claim that the auteurist drive for independence does not necessarily

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derive from the tradition of high art,[1] but can be productively reconceived through independent moguls such as David O. Selznick. Welles's ideology of the auteur is founded, then, on the fantasy that he could maintain independence within the system. This "fantasy bribe" will be seen to typify a "cognitive or allegorical investment" in "fantasizing an economic system" "at that deeper level of our collective fantasy," since it is, according to Jameson, "only" at this "unconscious" level "that we think about the social system all the time" (*Geopolitical* 9).

Selznick, the force behind *Gone with the Wind,* worked at the majors before becoming infamous as an independent producer obsessed with every detail of movie-making—set design, casting, camera angles, publicity, etc.—and for orchestrating blockbusters such as *Duel in the Sun,* which cost $5 million to make, $1 million to advertise, and grossed $10.75 million for a $2 million profit (Schatz 392, 405). Not only did Selznick write, produce, and ghost-direct (five other uncredited directors were used, including self-professed auteur *par excellence* Jo Sternberg), he also used the film as a star-perpetuating vehicle for the actress with whom he was infatuated at the time: Jennifer Jones.

Selznick exemplifies the drive for independence that Welles will also be seen to take up in relation to his infatuation with Hayworth. This libidinal drive serves, I argue, as a hidden motivator for the director, the mogul, and the star. If the fantasy bribe of the "independent filmmaker" continues to be a fetish today, the case of Welles, Cohn, and Hayworth demonstrates that the idea of "independent film" (Biskind 155-215) also serves as a way of "fantasizing an economic system on the scale of the globe itself" (*Geopolitical* 9): i.e., the current cross-cultural fantasy of the "'independent-director-as-rockstar'" or resistor to global cinematic capitalism (Biskind 165). This desire to be an auteur untouched by capitalism typifies, then, a desire to reincarnate the moguls that Selznick excelled at imitating. This desire is, however, self-contradictory in that one wants to be that from which one wants to be free.

The desire for independence is not confined to the auteur, but is distributed to actors as well as to the moguls who invented Hollywood. Most of the great moguls felt, as Neil Gabler argues in *An Empire of their Own* and as Steven Alan Carr concurs in *Hollywood and Anti-Semitism* (133), excluded from a racist East Coast establishment and invented their own coast to ape the American bourgeoisie. The stars that the moguls struggled to dominate in their rise to status, wealth, and power had less artistic and economic control than in the post-studio system. Actors were locked into long-term contracts as a condition for promotion and although loan-outs to other studios were profitable, stars resented being traded as commodities. Stars could only resist their contractual obligations by refusing to work, in response to which the stu-

dios would dock their salaries and subtract the time lost so that actors were unable to sit out their contracts and become "free agents" (Schatz 139). This keyword encapsulates a desire for independence that I will now historically recontextualize in terms of three fantasy bribes: the mogul, the auteur, and the Love Goddess.

The assertion of power on the part of the star contributed—alongside anti-trust suits, the emergence of television in the 50s, superagencies such as MCA, and other factors—to the destruction of studio dominance. The male actor who spectacularly failed to assert his star power within the studio system was James Cagney. This powder keg of libido shot to stardom in *The Public Enemy*. By 1936, the year Cary Grant successfully set himself adrift from the studios as a freelance star, Cagney was exhausted by the depleting sit-out he was engaging in to free himself from Warner Brothers and signed with a minor company, First National Pictures, yet Cagney's tactic failed in comparison to his co-star in *The Bride Came C.O.D.,* the stern Bette Davis (Schatz 218). It was indeed a "feminine" star, Olivia de Havilland, who finally freed the cattle (as Alfred Hitchcock allegedly called actors) from the moguls in the eyes of the law by filing a suit against Warners (Schatz 318).

Rita Hayworth's career demarcates how this desire to be a free agent circulates among independent-minded stars and actors, moguls and directors. Urged on by a competitive drive to replace Louis B. Mayer, head of MGM, the quality or A-movie company that dominated the 30s, Cohn effected his socio-economic climb on the back of Frank Capra, whose independence he violated on a regular basis. Capra garnered Cohn Oscars for Best Picture in 1934, 1936, and 1938. Poverty Row was behind the mogul, especially since Mayer put himself in Columbia's debt by expressing a desire to loan out Capra.

Cohn transformed Hayworth into a powerful musical diva as part of his strategic drive to maintain the A-level status of his company. Hayworth was born Rita Margarita Cansino. Cohn insisted on flattening her Spanish ethnicity by utilizing her Irish heritage: according to Priscilla Peña Ovalle, Hayworth "reinvented her look through Irishness" (74).[2] This was done by removing the hair on her forehead through a painful electrolysis process, in which each hair is plucked and the skin burned shut (Thomas 167). Hayworth's sufferings under patriarchy began much earlier than Cohn; her father trained her as both his dancing partner and incestuous object of sexual molestation. She married five times to escape familial trauma, only to fail each time due to her inability to work through, instead of repeat, her traumatic past (165-70).

Cohn made Hayworth into the Love Goddess, an incarnation of strawberry blonde Americana whose *Life* pin-up girl series so captivated American soldiers that

they placed her auratic presence on one of the atomic bombs (named Gilda) dropped on Bikini Atoll. He sold this pre-packaged image in a series of B-movies, but it was a loan-out to Warners that gained her first hit: *The Strawberry Blonde.* She was then loaned out to Twentieth Century Fox for the A-picture *Blood and Sand,* a success that made Cohn decide that there would be no more loan-outs if Hayworth was going to be his A-star. He metamorphosed her into a diva for the masses in *Cover Girl,* an A-quality musical that sealed her reputation and made *Down to Earth* a box-office success. Hayworth, certain of her power, finally began to battle Cohn. She feigned illness (a.k.a. malingered) and refused to show up for work until her demands were met: 25% of the profits for each Love Goddess film.

Cohn, however, regarded her star persona as his property and attempted to keep Hayworth under constant surveillance: "'There was,'" Jean Louis, Columbia's wardrobe designer at the time, recalls, "'a woman at the studio who reported on every move Rita made'" (qtd. in Kobal 175). When Hayworth married Welles in 1943, Cohn reacted by banning the bad boy director from the Columbia studio lot, which did little to encumber their blossoming relationship (Thomas 216). Three years later, Welles found himself exasperated by his post-*Citizen Kane* struggle to find funding and called the head of Columbia in order to acquire cash for an imploding stage production, *Around the World in Eighty Days.* Cohn agreed to Welles's offer to direct a B-movie based on *If I Should Die Before I Wake* (the Sherwood King novel on which *The Lady* is based) in exchange for $50,000. He pushed Hayworth on the auteur by forcing her to star in *The Lady,* thereby creating an uncomfortable situation for the couple as they were finalizing their divorce while intermittently reconnecting during production of the film. Cohn was enraged, however, when the Young Turk decided to wrest "Rita" from his control by cutting off her trademark locks and re-fashioning her into a noir platinum blonde for the paparazzi that the director made sure were present to publicize the event (218).

Welles's cutting of Rita's signature hairstyle can be read as his Oedipal attempt to castrate the father—Cohn—by depriving him of the phallus possessed by the woman qua fetish. Welles flaunts his independence as a theatrical director, artist, or *bon vivant* vis-à-vis the Hollywood establishment by making himself dependent on their money while parading his refusal to be dominated. Since Cohn was powerless to reverse the haircut stunt, Welles upped the ante in his efforts to outdo the mogul by mimicking Selznick's tendency to auteurist excess. *The Lady* went gloriously over budget—$2 million instead of the projected $1.25 million—and "was unsuccessful" (Thomas 218).

Welles's excess is not to be stereotyped as that of the genius or artist doomed to betray his incommensurability with capitalism. Rather, the auteur displays (and displaces) a desire to take the mogul's place: to recapture the freedom he imaginatively

1. Rita Hayworth in *Gilda*. Dir. Charles Vidor. © 1946, renewed 1973 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures.

enjoyed when making *Kane* by retroactively scoring a victory against RKO, the empowered philistines responsible for butchering his second film, *The Magnificent Ambersons.* RKO also denigrated his South American footage as too "arty" on the basis of the racial difference embodied by "wild" Brazilian dancing.[3] The racist constraints Welles faced at RKO were confirmed when a finance capital firm, the Atlas Corporation, took over the company and refused to release the South American-themed film, *It's All True,* in spite of an American government offer of $300,000 to distribute it (Benamou 41). Welles the auteur becomes, in a delayed reaction to this undermining of his post-*Citizen Kane* work, as artistically and stylistically baroque as possible in *The Lady.* Reports exist that his shooting on location was at times so carefree that editing was impossible—he forgot, for example, to shoot close-ups (Thomas 218).

The castrated mogul struck back by chopping the film from 155 to 86 minutes and by deferring release for over a year so as to prevent damaging the Rita-image he had sublimated from B- to A-status. If Cohn was happy when the auteur-diva divorce was finalized in 1948, Hayworth counter-attacked by publicizing her will to re-marry (see Leaming, *Welles* and *Happiness*). Marriage became, in other words, a paradoxical way for the Love Goddess to resist the patriarchal mogul or a new tactic in her repertoire of power.

2. "Rita"—femme fatale harshness in *Gilda*. Dir. Charles Vidor. © 1946, renewed 1973 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures.

The ascent of Hayworth's image above her trauma elicits a resistant diva figure, as is visible in two sequences from *Gilda*, namely: a) the shift from an introductory pin-up shot of her fetishized hair and subsequent "feminine" compliance to a sudden, fatal, and noir harshness—cigarette smoke rising from her mouth as if it were an exhaust pipe—when she recognizes Johnny Farrell (Glenn Ford) as a bad memory out of her past (Figures 1 and 2); and b) her unmasterable mobility in the strip-tease sequence, where her only concession to the male gaze is the condescending removal of a glove (Figure 3; see Doane). She embodies what Richard Dyer describes as "resistance through charisma."

Rita's power in Hollywood blurs the distinction between Welles's desire to be the auteur and his desire to embody Welles the actor: to become as all-powerful as his estranged wife. The auteur is not restricted to a directorial urge for artistic integrity, especially in the case of Welles, an "over-the-top" actor who loved to be at the centre of his signature films. What has escaped critical attention is how Cagney embodies the "the actor as auteur" that Welles idealized as a result of his desire to be Public Enemy Number One. In *The Lady,* Welles manifests a Romantic reincarnation of both the

3. *Gilda*. Dir. Charles Vidor. © 1946, renewed 1973 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures.

actor-as-auteur (Cagney) and the auteur-as-independent mogul (Selznick): "Whether he rewrote his dialogue (as [Cagney] frequently did), sat in on story conferences, advised casting, contributed ideas for scene design (on one occasion), or even wrote music, [Cagney's] impact on the average production was enormous" (McGilligan 200). Cagney's larger-than-life presence is supplemented, for Welles, by the actor's maniacal efforts to get out from under the studio bosses. Welles's apotheosis of Cagney as the embodiment of an acting style that simultaneously saturates and explodes the screen is more enthusiastic than any other eulogy to an artist in *This is Orson Welles*:

> OW: "Cagney—since you've got that thing on again [*White Heat*]—has just got to be called the number-one screen-filler in movie history [. . .]. All this talk about the special technique required for playing to camera is sheer bullocks. Stage actors are supposed to be too big. Well, Cagney was a stage actor and nobody was ever bigger than that." [. . .]
>
> PB: "Bigger than life?"

> OW: "Well not any bigger than *truth*. He played right at the top of his bent, but he was always *true*. Sure, acting *can* be too *broad*. Broad is wide—spread out. Cagney was *focused*. Christ, like a laser beam!" (Welles and Bogdanovich 14-15, emph. Welles's)

Cagney returns to haunt *Citizen Kane* not as a direct influence (since *Citizen Kane* was released eight years prior to *White Heat*) but as a retroactive presence. In *White Heat,* Cagney-as-auteur uses his whole body to express pathos until he virtually destroys the prison set only to be beaten down by a group of guards. His irrepressible intensity as independence personified is generically consolidated, in turn, by the actor's anti-authoritarian gangster persona.

Welles also styled himself as a politicized gangster in the 30s. His cinematic defamation of William Randolph Hearst's private life was, for instance, his way of fomenting political discord against Hearst and his conservative-in-arms Louis B. Mayer. Mayer was the most reactionary mogul and attempted to pre-empt the release of *Citizen Kane* by raising the capital to buy it back from Welles. The historical event behind Welles's Cagney-inflected animosity against Mayer and Hearst dates back to 1934, when the studios, led by Mayer's MGM, docked a day's wages from every employee to support Frank Merriam, a conservative Republican running for governor against socialist Upton Sinclair's proposed program *EPIC End Poverty in California.* The studios even produced "fake newsreels" of ethnically and racially stereotyped "armies of tramps ready to cross the California [/Mexico border] if Sinclair was elected," in response to which Cagney and Jean Harlow, his co-star in *Public Enemy,* seized media attention by leading an actor's "'revolt'" against the "'Merriam tax'" (McGilligan 192-93).

Yet Cagney did not maintain his independence. In 1942, he starred in *Yankee Doodle Dandy,* a pro-war musical, and soon turned from liberalism to conservatism after being cleared by anti-Communist purges in the late 40s. This turn to jingoism is pre-formatted by Cagney's typecasting as a tough guy at sea, in the air, and in the trenches: *Here Comes the Navy, Devil Dogs of the Air,* and *The Fighting 69th*, respectively. If the navy and army films can be blamed on Warners, *Devil Dogs of the Air* was produced for Warners by Hearst's company, Cosmopolitan Productions, a bagatelle that the media mogul created to promote the star-status of his mistress, Marion Davies.

The excessive figure Hearst-as-Kane cuts in *Citizen Kane*—a figure Lacanians might identify as the paternal embodiment of an obscene *jouissance* (transgressive, "evil," and impossible; see Žižek)—can therefore be read as a reliable indicator of Welles's fantasy construction of Hearst as a corruptor of Cagney's enjoyment, acting,

and politics: "To the press, Cagney blasted Warners's producers for forcing him into films like *Devil Dogs of the Air,* 'which had no reason to be filmed under any circumstances'" (McGilligan 63). *Citizen Kane* can therefore be re-read as an attack on Hearst, Mayer, and conservative Hollywood in the name of the actor-as-auteur that Welles wants to embody on screen so as to replace his defeated idol.

Welles's psychological investment in the towering figure of Cagney informs, in short, his authorial vision in *The Lady from Shanghai.* Joseph McBride interprets this vision as an expressive Romanticism, or as a "romanticist" abandonment of the "ideal" that constrains desire to return to this ideal in the form of a "melancholy" or lost object, for example, Cagney's manic fall into depression after his mother's death in *White Heat* (109). Charles Higham, on the other hand, idealizes Welles's "fundamental romanticism" (114) in *The Lady* as the "joy of the innocent American who lives his life physically" (115), a highly suspect masculinist wish-fulfillment for a fundamental innocence to which I will return in closing.

Welles's Romantic incarnation of the actor-as-auteur is witnessed, in the meantime, in the sequence from *Citizen Kane* in which Welles the actor creatively destroys the *mise-en-scène* created by Welles the director. The ironically stylized yet naïve movements of his body enable Welles to embody an old man physically overwhelmed by his abandonment by Susan Alexander, a lost object he failed to makeover into an opera star. Loss so haunts him that he can only move in fits and starts as he tears apart her empty room, a set enclosed by a "fake" ceiling that has since become a clichéd Wellesian trademark or signature in set design. What stops the melancholy fit catalyzed by a woman's resistance to being made over into a star persona is Kane's glimpse of a snowy glass ball that reminds him of his Colorado childhood. It is, of course, the same object that is broken in the opening sequence after Kane utters the word "Rosebud," dies, and drops the ball.

Welles's Romantic Auteurism is fleshed out via early German Romanticism. Friedrich Schlegel, a leader of the *Frühromantik* movement, imagined Romanticism as an impossible synthesis of the Ironic (or the Sentimental in Friedrich Schiller's sense) and the Naïve: "Naïve is what is or seems to be natural, individual or classical to the point of irony, or else to the point of continuously fluctuating between self-creation and self-destruction" (24). Welles seems Schlegelian in this scene of "creative destruction,"[4] creating himself as actor, director, and star-persona, or as the capitalist orchestrator of all three, even as he destroys the mogul he has become by parodying Kane-Hearst out of existence. In "play[ing]" Kane "right at the top of his bent," Welles impersonates the part of an enraged Hearst, thereby mischievously pre-empting the

arch-capitalist's furor over the film, as well as initiating his own self-undoing through the moving image of Welles-Kane-Hearst fracturing into a regressive hall (or a broken ball?) of endless mirrors after Susan leaves him forever. Yet Welles remains nostalgically attached to the image of an intact glass ball and the word "Rosebud" with which it is associated. This nostalgic object ends up halting the creatively destructive Romantic mania that he inflicts on the Xanadu set by converting it into McBride's romantic melancholy, a depressive scene in which both self and other are lost in an infinite specularity: "Even the greatest stars change themselves in the looking glass."

Welles's Romanticism in *The Lady* can, however, be re-worked in excess of melancholy once the text of the film is supplemented by different versions of the screenplay that was eventually released as *The Lady from Shanghai.* Even the studio-imposed title, a screenplay version of which was initially entitled *Black Irish,* the nickname of the Welles character, Michael O'Hara, is significant, for it effectively effaces the racial and ethnic resonances communicated by O'Hara's sobriquet. Although analyses of race inform recent criticism of the film, the lack of archival script consultation has produced a stress on an Asian otherness, as opposed to the internal otherness of black America marked by the original setting of the blowout conclusion in a Harlem funhouse, and not in the San Francisco "Crazy House!" that the studio demanded to keep expenses down.

In "The Dark Continent of Film Noir," E. Ann Kaplan elides this Harlem sub-text as she "think[s] through the relationship of 'black' film (i.e., film noir) to race as well as to sex in the political unconscious" (183). Kaplan limits Black Irish's blackness to the "Irish [being] discriminated [against] in America much in the manner as African Americans and Native Americans were" (194-95). Elsa (Hayworth) is seamlessly identified, in turn, with "the underground world of Chinese Otherness," where she "seems absolutely at home [. . .] speaking Cantonese now as well," even as Kaplan contradicts this Asian identification by racializing her "Chineseness" as a "moral blackness [that] refers metonymically to white culture's fears of ethnic 'blackness' that it cannot deal with, as well as to the same culture's fears of female sexuality" (198).

The Dark Continent trope that Freud uses to designate feminine sexuality is, in other words, recycled by Kaplan to identify a fear of woman with a fear of blackness, thereby obviating the black in *Black Irish* through a conflation of Asian- and African-American referents. Kaplan refers to a talk by Eric Lott to support her Sinocentric argument. So too, Lott's published essay re-elaborates Kaplan's bias when he critiques *The Lady* as "a film that, for all its interest in narrating ethnicity (from Welles's 'Black Irish' O'Hara to the various national and ethnic origins of his sailor associates to the abused black maid Bessie to Arthur Bannister's 'Manchester Greek' mother to Elsa's

own sojourn in China), is not above playing stereotypes for a laugh" (95). Lott, however, explores only Chinese stereotypes in depth, as do Kelly Oliver and Benigno Trigo in *Noir Anxiety,* where they read this stereotyping as a response to wartime limits on Asian immigration.

Oliver and Trigo are prescient in regard to Asian and Asian-American contexts, yet their postcolonial perspective seems unduly limited when they read *The Lady*'s deployment of race as an exploitative usage of the "shock of discovering the radical and archaic otherness that lies within us *rather* than on hearing the polyphonic harmony that is the process of identity" (72, emph. mine). Oliver and Trigo's argument is weakened, then, by a wish-fulfilling resistance to capitalist control-systems—such as the studio system or the financialization of this system—a resistance that is marked by their unstated reliance on the metaphysical ideologeme that identity formation ought to be as harmonious as a Pythagorean music of the spheres.[5]

A consultation of the script variants at the Lilly Library at the University of Indiana, Bloomington complicates analyses of race in *The Lady* while also drawing attention to Cagney's influence on Welles. *Winner Take All,* a film in which Cagney plays a boxer called Jimmy Kane, assisted by a black trainer named "Rosebud" (Clarence Muse), was released three years before the militaristic *Devil Dogs.* The actor-as-auteur is still in fine form: "He hurtles through the story like a juggernaut possessed" (McGilligan 45). "Rosebud" can therefore be parsed as an encrypted allusion to the "radical and archaic otherness" of black America that Welles associates with Black Irish, an otherness that will return via the word "Rosebud" in the opening scene of *The Lady.*

A contextualization of the archival evidence will now challenge the critical cliché that *The Lady* is an assault on Hayworth, Cohn, or the industry by tracing the encryption of the romance between the diva, goddess, or star persona in the "Welles-text." This text includes, according to Celestino Deleyto, script variants and subsequent drafts, highlighting "the inseparability of the fictional stories of the films from the fictional(ised) story of Orson Welles. No narratological nuance is necessary to discern the ontological status of the subject: he is the subject of a text which contains all of Orson Welles's films, a text with an ambivalent and ultimately untraceable relationship to the director's 'real' life" (35). In the "Third Draft" of *Black Irish* (August 13, 1946),[6] the Irish sailor "Romantic Mike" (61) meets a woman in Central Park riding in a Hansom cab and renames her "Rosaleen": "I'm going to call you Rosaleen. THE GIRL Rosaleen? Why? MICHAEL It's a gorgeous romantical name to be sure—it's a name I *enjoy* [. . .] and nobody called Rosaleen could ever be logical. THE GIRL (ponders this for a minute) I think you like to hear yourself talk; [MICHAEL] I enjoy it

immensely; [THE GIRL] What shall I call you? [MICHAEL]—My true name" (14). Welles also renames the horse drawing Hayworth "Rosinante" after Don Quixote's horse: "Rosinante's the name of a horse in a book. You're Rosaleen"; "Who's she?"; "A girl in a book." The "Girl" astutely identifies Welles's Romanticism as a foolish will to re-incarnate the romance genre in a degraded present: "I remember—Rosinante was the old nag Don Quixote rode when he went out after those windmills. I think you're a lot like Don Quixote yourself Michael. You haven't heard about the age of chivalry. It's out of business" (16). Yet this desire to regain an outdated structure of feeling also encrypts another Romanticism, a desire to be truly recognized by one's partner in romance, even though Welles crossed out the Girl's question "What shall I call you?" as well as Michael's desire that she call him "My true name" in a "Final Draft" revision dated September 16, 1946 (14).

Subsequent scripts (January 11, 1947) begin to emphasize the bookishness of these star-crossed lovers—"*My* name's Michael. THE GIRL (laughs) You're a character" (11)—as if they were literally *characters* to be decrypted in relation to the burdensome past that the director was expected to live up to—that is, to both *Citizen Kane* and the Rosebud trick that Welles later dismissed as "dollar-book" Freudianism. If Marion Davies's clitoris was one of the significations of Rosebud, as well as a perfect way to provoke Hearst, in *The Lady* Welles calls on the encryption "Rosa-bud" to signify the woman—Rita Hayworth—that the masculinist auteur is trying to both re-name and re-image in the manner of Hearst, Kane, and Selznick. Since Welles's detractors maintained the indecency of prying into Hearst's private life, Orson goes one step further by encrypting his own attempt to negotiate a private relationship to a public libidinal object or Love Goddess.

The "Final Draft" of *Black Irish* (August 17, 1946), renamed the studio-friendly and race-free title *Take this Woman,* is the first ending in which Hayworth repeats the words she uttered to Welles the first night they met ("What shall I call you?") after she declines to shoot him dead at the end of the narrative: "Call me Rosaleen" (160). This intimate moment does not, however, make it into the final 86-minute version.

The narrative fact that *Black Irish* is set in Harlem is important, for black New York was the site of a "'real' life" triumph for Welles as a maverick theatrical producer. He regarded the "Voodoo" or "Black Macbeth" of 1936, which was funded by the Federal Theatre as a job-making project for amateur actors in Harlem, as the greatest success of his life, and put his own body on the line by playing Macbeth in blackface when on tour (Thomson 58-62). Welles's move beyond uptown marks his support for a populist New Deal: government intervention in creating jobs, disseminating culture, and making highbrow discourse popular across class, race, and geographic divisions.

4. *The Lady from Shanghai*. Dir. Orson Welles. © 1948, renewed 1975 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures.

Welles dreamed of a Federal Bureau not of Investigation, but for supporting the arts, and offended cultural conservatives with his notion that America's internal others have every right to appropriate Shakespeare and the canon (see Anderegg). Welles went on to play an external version of this internal other in *Othello*, where he looks hybrid—Mediterraneanized, trans-Europeanized, or deterritorialized—rather than stereotypically blackfaced. In 1946, Welles as Black Irish is identified via Rosinante and Rosaleen with Rosebud, from whom Cagney needed assistance to be "bigger than life" in *Winner Take All*—that is, with black Americans in a culturally and politically enabling way for both parties. This identification is retained in the Cohn-authored version when Welles is seen writing as two black men read in the background under a sign declaring "Never was a Question of Race or Ancestry / We Welcome All Americans" (Figure 4).

David Thomson's conservative biography supports this association of Welles and black America when he indelicately writes that "Welles looks fine, negroid even, surveying the bitter white snakes" in *The Lady* (280). Welles's support for immigration as an *anti-harmonious harmony* or a *creatively destructive hybridization* of the centre

blackens, in any case, his name in the industry, adding one more determinant for his eventual blacklisting from Hollywood and his transatlantic flight to Paris, Venice, and Morocco. *Black Irish* also delineates a difference between the bookish world below 96th Street and the possibility of living in excess of this world. "Romantic Mike" or "Mr. Poet," as the Harlem-based Bessie calls him (48), takes the subway up to 125th Street, for instance, to encounter a race- and class-mixing festivity in Harlem's "SAVOY BALLROOM" ("Third Draft" 152). Michael clarifies this difference between centre (Manhattan) and periphery (Harlem) when he tells Elsa that people are capable of living in the looking glass that they see in books or movies:

> It's been done, you know, by real live people. That's where they get the ideas for the books. ELSA Books aren't like people. People try to act like books. MICHAEL Oh, no, Rosaleen, people are better than books; Or worse. [ELSA] What about me? You don't know what I'm like. I hope you never find out. You'd better go before you do. Keep your dream,—ride off into your sunset by yourself and look for windmills, I don't want to hurt you Michael [. . .]. We're different than you are, Michael. Horribly different. You're alive. We're dead [. . .]. *All of us are dead already.* Please go away, Michael, before it's too late. (57)

Black Irish is identified with "Harlem, as always, alive with activity," in contradistinction to Elsa and her dead white world (148).

Having re-contextualized race in *The Lady* via the archive, I will now test drive the argument that the Welles-figure in *The Lady* seeks to imitate and integrate Welles's wife's fantasy-power as a screen diva. Elsa does not threaten Michael with a gun after she has killed her husband, Bannister, in the film, whereas in the "Final Draft" Michael calls out to her not to shoot him: "Rosaleen! Don't pull that trigger! It's you I'm talking to, *Rosaleen*, the little girl inside of you [adds "there" in pencil]. The one I love [adds: "and always will" in pencil]. It's her I'm askin' not to pull the trigger" (159, emph. Welles's). Welles's additional "and always will" underlines his self-repressed love for "Rita" as a love for what she could have been if she had been able to sublimate her traumatized girlhood with his help instead of effecting this sublimation as a cinematic image for you or I.

In the film both Hayworth and Welles seem cold as ice, while in the "Third Draft" Elsa says, "Michael, you've got to believe me—I love you—I didn't want to love you—I just couldn't help myself" (157), as well as "'Kiss me, I think I'm going to die' [. . .]. He kisses her" (160). As the script mutates, Elsa both becomes colder and gains more power over politically excluded groups, such as her Chinese henchmen and her black maid Bessie. Welles also makes the ending bleaker by having Elsa scream "Oh,

Michael. I'm afraid [. . .] Michael. Come back here! Michael! [. . .] Please! I don't want to die! *I don't want to die!*" ("Shooting Script," Revision dated February 18, 1947, 148, emph. Welles's). He exaggerates her death scene both to shape her into a film noir femme fatale getting her comeuppance and to repress, kill, or cross out his undying love for Rosaleen.

The revised death scene also encrypts a desire that she call him by his "true name," in response to which he could finally call her Rosaleen, a desire for recognition that Elsa also continues to voice as the versions accumulate. This Romantic fantasy of love as a mirror stage of mutual self-recognition is, however, literally blown to pieces by the film's mirror-maze shoot-out finale. A mogul (Bannister, played by Everett Sloane, "The Chairman of the Board" from *Citizen Kane*) and a diva denuded of her humanity into the zombie life of the Rita star-image kill each other. The independence of the mogul and the star is undone into a fantasmic play of mirrors, while the auteur apparently walks away unscathed. Yet Welles's hand has been shot, as is visible when he turns on the light. It is as if he is identifying himself with an all-illuminating camera eye even as this identification is undermined by an irreparably wounded desire for auteuristic mastery (Figure 5).

Welles is apparently alluding to Kane's "Hall of Mirrors" in the mirror-maze sequence, yet any escape from the interminable specularity or melancholy Romantic loss of self in the absence of mutual self-recognition (let us call this fantasmatic mutuality "Love") has a price: the loss of control as auteur signified by the stigmata on the writer's authorial hand. Welles signifies, in other words, a resistance to his stupid masculinist desire to control others, as his final soliloquy testifies: "But that's a big word, 'innocent'—stupid's more like it. Well—everybody is somebody's fool." This confession does not, of course, allow Black Irish, Romantic Mike, or Welles to escape capture by the ideological fantasy of total control represented by Cagney's projection of "force, style, truth, and control." Welles critiques, as Michael Davidson writes, "the camera's specular potential within the Hollywood 'star' system" "by showing Hayworth in pinup poses and then cutting to a close-up of Grisby, sweating and grinning, while holding his telescope," even as this critique remains contradicted by Welles's "participat[ion] in the system by fetishizing Hayworth's pose," using "her physical perfection in contrast to Bannister's disability" (74).

In conclusion, a final encryption: George Grisby, Bannister's law partner in crime and a one-time member of a "Pro-Franco committee," says "Fella" often. "Fella" alludes to a verbal tick Welles hated about Nelson Rockefeller (Sadlier 10), who sent the auteur to South America to foster North/South American "good will" by deceiving him into the belief that he would be allowed to make aesthetically relevant tran-

5. The wounded hand of the auteur in *The Lady from Shanghai*. Dir. Orson Welles. © 1948, renewed 1975 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures.

scultural films. In *The Lady,* Welles damns the politician (Grisby) as much as the mogul: Bannister, the real author, auteur, or arthur of the film, or the mogul as an unconscious "fantasy bribe" motivating Hollywood auteurism and the fetish for "Independent Film." This double critique is registered by a scene in which the sweaty Grisby is frightened by the jungle's sheer alterity (i.e., a dark alligator) to such a degree that he is looked at by the black boat driver as if he were a fool (Figure 6). The gaze is given over to the other so that the dead white world can be seen from afar as a "hole" of "white snakes" in desperate need of hybridization via the Romantic cure of a creative cultural destruction (Thomson 279-80).

This is not to say that Welles is not a fool: "everybody is somebody's." He was born George Orson Welles. Black as he wanted to be he remains represented, encrypted, and critiqued as what he despises: George "Grisby, sweating and grinning, while holding his telescope," as his free-ranging camera eye objectifies the other: the disabled, African-Americans, women, Asian-Americans, gays (Grisby and Bannister). Not innocent, then, but stupid, "stupored" by the desire to be independent like the mogul or the star, the auteur or his ex-wife: "*stupid-us,*" from "*stupere* to be stunned

6. Racial estrangement in *The Lady from Shanghai.* Dir. Orson Welles. © 1948, renewed 1975 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures.

or benumbed" (*OED*). The "Welles-text" undoes, however, this stupefied desire by displaying the *dependence* of economic license or free agency on an uneven global extraction of resources. The drive for independence shares this dependence with the romance genre, since Michael longs to ransack the "dark continent of Africa" to provide "gifts" for his girl: "combs from the tusks of the wisest elephants to put in your hair, Rosaleen" (the line is scratched out in the "Final Draft" dated September 16, 1946, 15). This essay has returned, then, to the topic I addressed at the outset—namely, a global world-system and the multiplicit desires for independence that this capitalist order circulates, mirrors, and fetishizes. Fantasies such as the diva or the mogul, the "independent" or the "free agent," embody, in sum, this drive to control a site of power that remains uncontrollable.

In the studio film there is a moment that testifies to the capitalist reign of money and images over Orson and Rita. Bannister mocks Black Irish's statement that he doesn't "care about" money—"So money doesn't interest you Michael. Are you independently wealthy?"—to which Welles rakishly replies: "I'm independent." This fan-

tasy of independence rests, in the meantime, on the same thing that Kane's pleasure palace Xanadu—a Romantic allusion to Coleridge's creatively destructive fragment "Kubla Khan" as well as to an extreme embodiment of *jouissance*, the Mongol-Mughal-Mogul-Khan—rests on. It depends, according to the newsreel that initiates Welles's attack on Hearst as "America's Kubla Khan," on "the loot of the world!": "The old Hudson pales under the advancing day [. . .]. From the sea-reaches beyond come the clangor and complaint of shipping in impatient anchorage, iron boats straining for voyage, eager for the conquest of ocean [. . .]. Under Manhattan to the East the sun bestirs itself, and the spired city, waking with a moan, prepares for its people the burden of another days [*sic*] work. A siren speaks for the approaching police. Michael waits for them, guarding the dead. FADE OUT" ("Third Draft" 169-70). The auteur guards a dead culture in desperate need of creative cultural destruction while the Rita-image survives in painful splendor. The Love Goddess later married Prince Aly Aga Khan in a well-publicized ceremony, as if to encrypt a creatively destructive hybridization of races, cultures, and images as a way of resisting the mogul-star-auteur constellation that empowers capitalist control-systems. The diva's strategy remains, however, intimately tied to the global economy that prevents her from resisting it. Rita is ultimately akin to Welles, burdened by the impossible task of resisting the financial nexus that makes movies work. Another question also emerges once the lights return: to what degree are the desiring fantasies of moguls, producers, and star-directors also impeded by the financing that enables them to display their encrypted desires, drives, and resistances?

NOTES

1/ For a reading of Welles's auteurism that remains within the high art tradition of the auteur (see John Caughie) so as to seamlessly identify the figure of Welles with masculinism, see Brooke Rollins as well as my critique of Welles's masculinist bias below.

2/ See also Adrienne L. McLean.

3/ "'Just a lot of colored people,' to quote one studio executive, 'playing their drums and jumping up and down in the streets'" (Welles qtd. in Heylin 144).

4/ Alan Liu cites Joseph Schumpeter's "classic phrase about capitalism," "'creative destruction'" ("'incessantly revolutionizing the economic structure *from within*, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one'") as being both Romantic and Late Capitalist: "Recent scholars of business and economic history take such furious creativity to be simply post-industrial business as usual" (2, emph. Schumpeter's).

5/ For a similar aestheticization of polyphony as harmony vis-à-vis postcolonial cultural identity formation, see Rokus de Groot.

6/ *The Lady from Shanghai* scripts are filed in Box 21 (Third and Final Draft; Folders 21 and 22, respectively) and Box 22 (Shooting Script; Folder 4) of the Orson Welles collection. Citations will be given by page number in the body of the text (emphases and ellipses in the original, unless the latter are in square brackets).

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JOSHUA DAVID GONSALVES is Associate Professor of English at the American University of Beirut. He works on the interrelations between Romanticism and Cinema and War Studies. Recent publications include *Bio-Politicizing Cary Grant: Pressing Race, Class and Ethnicity into Service in "Amerika"* (2015) and work on Keats, Swinburne, and Byron. His long-term project is entitled *Brutal Melodrama: A Geopolitics of the Cinematic Ikon.*