



□ Klinger, Barbara:

'Say It Again, Sam: Movie Quotation, Performance and Masculinity'

Particip@tions Volume 5, Issue 2 (November 2008)

[Current Contents](#)

[Past Issues](#)

**[Say It Again, Sam: Movie Quotation, Performance and Masculinity](#)**<sup>[1]</sup>

## Abstract

Film dialogue has a substantial presence in the popular circulation and consumption of films, from the AFI's celebration of the most quoted movie lines to viewer practices of memorizing and reciting favorite lines as a sign of fandom. Yet, the relationship of movie quotation to fandom and to viewing pleasure more generally remains unexplored. By considering quotation as part of the theatricality of everyday life, I examine its role in both confirming and challenging identities, particularly gender identities. As a common expression of fandom, quotation also focuses attention on the ways in which aspects of the media experience associated with spectacular fandoms and/or with digital technologies — immersion, interactivity, and community — intimately define everyday viewing, though not always in the utopian terms that often frame discussions of participatory culture. My essay draws from different sources, including audience surveys, ethnographies, films, TV shows, music, and the Web, to discover how this mode of film reception operates in contemporary media- and identity-scapes.

**Key words:** fan studies, theatricality of everyday life, replay culture, participatory culture, gender identity, karaoke, Movieoke, performance

In 2005, the AFI celebrated Hollywood history by producing a three-hour television special to showcase the top 100 movie quotes of all time.<sup>[2]</sup> Proceeding in countdown fashion, with *Titanic's* (1997) 'I'm king of the world!' assuming perhaps the less-than-regal 100<sup>th</sup> spot, *Gone with the Wind* (1939) took top honors with 'Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn'. Second, third, fourth, and fifth places went, respectively, to: *The Godfather's* (1972) 'I'm going to make him an offer he can't refuse'; *On the Waterfront's* (1954) 'You don't understand! I coulda had class. I coulda been a contender'; *The Wizard of Oz's* (1939) 'Toto, I've got a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore'; and *Casablanca's* (1942) 'Here's looking at you, kid'.

A few years earlier, in 2002, friends Will Russell and Scott Shuffitt set up a booth at a tattoo convention to sell T-shirts and other paraphernalia. To kill time during slow periods, the two quoted dialogue to each other from Joel and Ethan Coen's *The Big Lebowski* (1998); soon, people in adjacent booths joined in, creating a memorable moment of bonding for all. After this exchange, Russell and Shuffitt began to think that if a tattoo convention could draw enthusiasts of skin

marking and piercing, why couldn't a gathering be held to celebrate their favorite film? Thus was born the Lebowsky Fest, held in Louisville, Kentucky the same year and attended by 150 fans from across the US. The Fest has since become an annual celebration that takes place in locales such as New York City, Austin, Texas, and Los Angeles, and is attended by thousands of fans, including international devotees.<sup>[3]</sup>

While the former example represents an official industry event, the latter a fan-generated proceeding, these cases begin to suggest how movie dialogue, detached from its typical supporting role in motion pictures, can define the means by which films circulate culturally and become emblazoned in memory long after theatrical premieres. Certainly, media industries invest in various ways in dialogue's potential for giving films sustained visibility. Studios and screenwriters pepper scripts with phrases they hope audiences will embrace — 'Hasta la vista, baby' from *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991) comes to mind — to advertise the blockbuster through sales of goods that sport the phrase, while extending the mega-film's reach into everyday parlance. Assisting this process of penetration, popular sayings from one film often find their way into others; witness, as a small example of endless inter-media referencing, *Shrek the Third's* (2007) 'You had me at vermin', a de-romanticizing play on *Jerry Maguire's* (1996) 'You had me at hello'. The detachability and circulation of film dialogue is thus often propelled by production and marketing decisions that use 'catchy' sound bytes to sell products and attract audiences.<sup>[4]</sup> As the AFI broadcast indicates, movie lines have other functions that serve the industry as well. Defining the film quote as, 'A statement, phrase or brief exchange of dialogue spoken in an American film', the AFI's website envisions quotation as central to cinema's cultural impact and legacy. Because viewers cite bits of dialogue 'in their own lives and situations', these citations become part of popular culture, entering 'the national lexicon'. When film phrases gain this kind of visibility, they also evoke memories of treasured films, 'ensuring and enlivening' cinema's heritage by reigniting 'interest in classic American movies' ([www.AFI.com](http://www.AFI.com)). From this perspective, the well-wrought, eminently repeatable film line, firmly placed in everyday discourse, links citizens together through language, while testifying to and promoting the classics' enduring relevance.<sup>[5]</sup>

Beyond official film institutions, the public market for and interest in the cachet of movie lines is extensive and diverse. It stretches from books such as *I Know What You Quoted Last Summer: Quotes and Trivia from the Most Memorable Contemporary Movies*<sup>[6]</sup> and refrigerator magnet sets that allow imaginative rearrangement of famous movies lines for comic effect (e.g., 'May a Royale with cheese be with you') to online movie databases, such as *IMDB.com* which features a 'memorable quotes' section for many of its film listings, and other Internet sites that run contests to determine the all-time top film lines or encourage users to post favorite pieces of dialogue. In this

world of apparently trivial pursuits, the Lebowski Fest's origin story provides a different, but related view of quotation's importance: it represents the potent role dialogue plays, not only in expressing fan enthusiasm, but in building organized fandoms from the ground up. By memorizing dialogue, Russell and Shuffit internalized the Coen film so fully that they could spontaneously repeat the script's choice parts for sustained mutual entertainment. Trading quotes with fellow conventioners led them to recognize the presence of shared tastes in cinema that then stoked passions for creating a forum — the Fest — where fans could congregate to pay tribute to a beloved text. This example further indicates that a film's quotability — its existence as a source of catchphrases that become part of a collective discourse — plays a vital role in its attainment of long-term popularity.

Selling films and film goods, commemorating and canonizing Hollywood cinema, furnishing a genre of movie trivia, knowledge and games, and acting as a lingua franca amongst fans only begin to describe film dialogue's myriad functions in contemporary culture. Moreover, line quotation is a pervasive feature of audiences' relationship to multiple media. Songs, such as Ricky Martin's 'Livin' La Vida Loca!', TV shows, such as *Seinfeld* (a veritable goldmine of quotables from 'Close talker' to 'Yada, yada, yada'), and ad slogans, such as Nike's 'Just Do It', have been as prominent publicly, if not more so, than *The Sixth Sense*'s (1999) 'I see dead people'. Any source can launch a catchphrase that storms the nation or captures the imagination of certain groups. Cinema is simply part of an extended family of media forms that contributes to the vagaries of pop language and, beyond that, to the vast referential and intertextual network of discourses that characterize culture. Even so, aside from periodic lionization by industry organs and fandoms, the omnipresence of movie dialogue in interpersonal exchanges and social language has not attracted much scholarly commentary.<sup>[7]</sup> Instead dialogue leads a quiet existence as a subset of a larger, more recognizably important work — the script, its source. Quotation is thus rooted in a relatively neglected aspect of the cinematic experience: that part of the soundtrack devoted neither to booming digital sound effects nor the stirring musical scores that fill the theater, but to the aural delivery of words.

Although I will explore links between dialogue quotation and certain popular musical trends (such as karaoke), my analysis cannot address the full extent or abundant implications of this enormous linguistic landscape. Rather, granting that media quotation is neither new<sup>[8]</sup> nor characteristic solely of cinema, I want to focus on the phenomenon as a pervasive aspect of contemporary film consumption. Over the last twenty-five years an especially intensive 'replay culture' has developed, owing to the increased horizontal and vertical integration of corporations owning media

concerns (thanks in part to President Ronald Reagan's emphasis on deregulation),<sup>[9]</sup> the growing number of exhibition windows for media texts, viewers' ability to rent and own titles, and the playback technologies that enable repeat screenings. Together these factors dramatically enhance a single text's presence and availability, enforcing its iteration across multiple platforms — from theatrical screenings and home distribution on numerous formats (including VHS, cable TV, and DVD) to novelizations, soundtracks, and theme parks — while providing viewers with unparalleled personal access to media. Because of cinema's ubiquitous exposure in multiple forums and the audience's ability to watch favorite titles repeatedly, many film phrases, not to mention the films themselves, literally become memorable. Among its other functions, then, replay culture acts as a mnemonic device.

As I will argue, the practice of dialogue quotation provides insight into a significant mode of viewing pleasure involved in cinema's reception, especially in home contexts where repeat viewings are a convenient remote control button away. As we shall see, the viewer's immersion in film dialogue acts as an unexpected gateway to narrative engagement and constitutes its own aesthetic. This immersion also inevitably represents the interactive potentials of media consumption through a literal talking back to the screen. However, while fan studies scholars often regard personalization and interactivity as populist interventions in the media industry's preferred meanings, I hold that dialogue memorization is not restricted to exceptional acts of textual appropriation — say, raucous mimetic audience behavior at midnight screenings of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975); rather, it strongly characterizes ordinary dimensions of viewing and fandom.

At another level, the viewer's immersion in dialogue vividly demonstrates how, through repetition, films are personalized, brought so close that they provide a means of self and social identification, including gender identification. The kind of familiarity bred by repeated contact with a title enables it to become a part of a viewer's identity, a unit within a repertoire of elements that he or she may draw upon in diverse circumstances to momentarily or in a more sustained fashion occupy different subjectivities. In this light, quotation can be seen as part of what Erving Goffman has referred to in other contexts as the theatricality of everyday life — the infusion of daily existence with performances that constitute individual and social identities.<sup>[10]</sup> The applicability of the term *performance* not only to official forums such as the stage or screen but to everyday activities enables a view of even small-scale responses such as movie quotation as 'technologies of the

self<sup>[11]</sup> — devices that express and embody identity in specific situations and social contexts. The microcosm of movie quotation thus furnishes insight into the ability of apparently insignificant actions to demonstrate ‘how persons choose to represent themselves, how they construct their identity, and, ultimately, how they embody, reflect, and construct their culture’.<sup>[12]</sup> Like song lyrics, film lines provide ready-made scripts for potential deployment in both personal interactions and public discourse.

Audience research that I have undertaken and other findings suggest that, while most demographics enjoy repeatedly watching films, men find particular pleasure in re-watching to memorize, quote, and enact dialogue. Among other things, quotation allows a special focus on male audiences to gauge the role cinema plays in the daily performance of masculinity and perhaps even of national identity. As we shall see, even when lines are used in a casual, throwaway manner, they play a sometimes stable, sometimes more volatile role in presenting private and public faces of masculinity and Americanism. In what follows, I draw from a number of different sources of data concerning quotation; by analyzing audience surveys, mass market books, the press, ethnographies, TV shows, films, music, Web sites, and public performances,<sup>[13]</sup> we can pursue just how and to what ends this mode of film reception operates in the identity-scape.

### **Notes on an Audience Study**

Much of the dialogue chosen in the AFI competition to represent the top 100 movie lines of all time represents phrases that have retained their salience through the decades, thus emerging as the closest thing to ‘immortal’ that this aspect of cinema’s popularity can attain. Not all quotables are in the same category as *Casablanca*’s canonical ‘Here’s looking at you kid’, however. While any divisions we might establish between quotables are ultimately permeable, many movie lines that function as popular vernacular are generational, sectarian (as in the case of *The Big Lebowski* fandom), and/or individual or they fall into other categories equally circumscribed by time and affiliation.

In a study I conducted in 2000 of a large group of undergraduates to examine the pleasures they gained from re-watching the same films in domestic space, many invoked line memorization as a motivation for re-viewing, but few mentioned the ‘immortals’.<sup>[14]</sup> Born in the 1980s, this group was

among the first raised in the video era and thus had never known a time when films weren't replayable at will within a context defined further by the increased vertical and horizontal integration of media companies that gained momentum during the Reagan years. While the heady synergistic environment of this and subsequent periods offered an extensive library of possibilities for quotation from films old and new, most titles these students deemed worthy of replay were made slightly before or during their lifetimes and thus obtained a generational character.

The study showed that dialogue memorization served multiple, overlapping functions. Generally, the desire to learn movie lines was inextricably connected to social considerations, as it furnished a means to achieve self and group identification. A male student stated, for example, that Richard Linklater's *Dazed and Confused* (1993), a film set in 1976 about the last day of high school in a small Texas town, and Tamra Davis's stoner comedy *Half-Baked* (1998) were an important part of his high school experience: 'We used to watch the films, quote the lines, and choose which characters were fictional representations of our friends and ourselves . . . Quoting lines from films is a part of my life and a bond within my group of friends. We constantly return to certain scenes because of their humor'. Another male viewer who re-watched *Dazed and Confused* and Larry Clark's *Kids* (1995) found that the films' 'one-liners and humor' reminded him of his friends, because they 'got a lot of [their] language from these movies'. When he and his companions 'mixed the two movie lingos' together, it made for 'some funny conversations'. Relatedly, a student, who was in a rock band and repeatedly viewed the heavy metal mockumentary *This is Spinal Tap* (1984) as a source of catchphrases and inside jokes, remarked: 'If you're in a band you *must* know every line by heart'.

As these viewers fixed on character/star dyads as offering fictional representations of themselves and their cohorts, memorization helped to cement their identification with actors and roles. Further, a viewer's impersonation of characters by reciting their lines helped to verify and solidify membership in sub-communities — friendship circles, rock bands, etc. Quoting thus appears to be part of what Eric Havelock has called a 'tribal encyclopedia', a common idiom that unifies a social group.<sup>[15]</sup> This unification takes place across social strata, from those operating within the status quo to more embattled groups who use movie language to establish a common bond under social duress (for instance, in *Tarnation* [2003], Jonathan Caouette's autobiographical documentary about his dysfunctional family and his struggles with homosexuality and drugs, he recounts how he and his first boyfriend 'quoted movie lines' from *Carrie* [1976] and *The Exorcist* [1973], an activity that presumably allowed them to express solidarity in the midst of keenly felt marginality).

[16] In any circumstance, movie quotation can operate as the verbal, cinematic equivalent of a secret handshake.

Comments from study participants also indicate that dialogue recitation provided a vehicle for displaying mastery and proficiency and, hence, distinction within a group. Students often remarked how much they enjoyed quoting scenes verbatim to impress friends or they prided themselves on having memorized entire scripts, from blockbusters such as the first *Star Wars* (1977) to more obscure martial arts titles. By showing conversancy with favorite texts and superior skills at memorizing, they appeared as film experts and otherwise savvy media consumers. The impulse toward comprehensive memorization is discernable in other quarters as well; websites with titles like 'Are there any movies you know by heart?' or those that discuss having committed to memory the entire scripts for films such as John Hughes's *The Breakfast Club* (1985) and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986) suggest that this kind of mastery is part of broader patterns of film consumption, at least among young adults. [17] Recitation's tribalism operates additionally, then, to establish hierarchies based on textual expertise — a signifier of status as definitive of some corners of mainstream film reception as it is of 'Trekkies' and other more spectacular fandoms. Moreover, dialogue memorization produces an aesthetic, a canon of 'quotable' favorites that make audiences a linguistic offer they can't refuse.

Because film dialogue is portable, its social use extends beyond the screening itself into diverse situations in everyday life, giving movie lines a presence not only in the ebb and flow of conversation, but in the fine tuning of gender identities that occurs on a daily basis, a subject to which I shall return. For now, it's worth noting that many study participants repeatedly viewed films to 'steal the dialogue' so that they could employ it later in social interactions. Thus, friends watched *The Big Lebowski* to utilize its Zen-like sign-off, 'The Dude abides', in conversations 'either as an allusion or because the dialogue' struck them 'as particularly relevant or effective in a situation'. A viewer who re-watched Tony Scott's *Top Gun* (1986) and Peter Farrelly's *Dumb & Dumber* (1994) with his friends commented that, 'We know most of the lines so we will say them when they come up or after we're done watching the movie when we get into one scene and reenact the whole thing for fun'. A social setting was not necessary for another viewer who, after buying a copy of Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet* (1996), performed solo: 'Now that I own it I will have it on while I'm cleaning my room so I can quote the movie while cleaning'.

Those memorizing film lines are evidently just as committed to performing them. A male viewer, who knew the dialogue from *Dazed and Confused* by heart, remarked that, 'watching a movie repeatedly helps me to memorize . . . I love being totally accurate when I quote a film'. For him, accuracy meant not only knowing all of the lines, but 'the delivery, the context, the visuals, everything'. While I don't have visual evidence from the study that shows the process of memorization at work, an episode of *Veronica Mars*, a TV show with a high school-aged sleuth as its heroine, offers a possible scenario. As Veronica (Kristen Bell) watches a scene from *The Big Lebowski* on DVD, she repeats what Jeff Lebowski (Jeff Bridges) — a character who prefers to be called 'the Dude' — says to his wealthy namesake as he utters it, trying to capture his vocal qualities and exact mannerisms. Thus, Veronica intones along with the Dude: 'Let me explain something to you. I am not Mr. Lebowski. *You're* Mr. Lebowski. I am the Dude. So that's what you call me. Or . . . Dudeness, Duder, El Duderino, if you're not into the whole brevity thing'.<sup>[18]</sup> Memorization here is intimately tied to enactment, to an aural and physical performance of dialogue that, in this case, attempts to reproduce faithfully the original.



Quotation thus provides a means by which some viewers identify and position themselves within a social aggregate, make claims about popular cultural mastery, and, through memorization and mimicry, become apprentices in the art of movie performance. Further, the study's testimonies, as they reveal the importance of immersion, interactivity, reenactment, improvisation/play ('mixing the two lingos together'), community, and the demonstration of expertise to the pleasurable dimensions of film reception, invoke aspects of fandom more commonly associated with other media. In terms of digital technology, for example, Kurt Lancaster has written in many of the same terms about the world of online role-playing games associated with the cult TV series, *Babylon 5*, where players assume the identities of series characters within a rule-bound narrative trajectory.

<sup>[19]</sup> Certainly, film dialogue obtains an online dimension with sites devoted to canonizing

quotables or to contests focused on movie line knowledge. However, the presence of experiences associated with the 'digital revolution' in film reception indicates not only that dialogue quotation is a lower-tech, less formalized version of digital manifestations of fandom such as role-playing, but that the digital is not a privileged sphere with respect to such elements as interactivity, which have long had a more casual, prosaic place in the daily transactions between films and audiences.

Within the everydayness of participatory acts of media reception — especially acts that move beyond the formal moment of media engagement (e.g., attendance at a film screening, a video game competition) into other social situations — movie quotation may have the closest association with modes of consumption characteristic of popular music. Those gravitating to movie quotation as a pastime or obsession are typically attracted to the stars, characters, and attitudes they convey. The unavoidable aural qualities of quotation drive the viewer's desire to perfect mimicry by capturing the star/character dyad's delivery and affect; in this way, the aural, gestural, and otherwise physical aspects of the original performance become a repository for the film's pleasures and a launching pad for imitation. While the performances that viewers find quotable are not typically or literally musical (although fans do memorize songs from films), connections to forms of reenactment characteristic of popular music, materialized perhaps most notably in karaoke, help to illuminate the relationship between movie quotation and gender.

### **Cinema, Karaoke, and Masculinity**

Many media consumers have had the experience of singing along with a song played on CD, iPod, or the radio. Most have also memorized lyrics that they then perform in venues as diverse as the shower and the local karaoke bar. Karaoke simply supplies a formal dimension to this routine appropriation of musical language and melody; practiced in bars across the world, karaoke is the art of singing in the shower writ into public space. Invented in Japan in the 1970s and popularized in the US and elsewhere in the 1980s, karaoke involves amateurs who perform familiar songs to recorded musical accompaniment in front of an audience. Like singing one's favorite song lyrics, part of the pleasure contemporary film viewers find in vocalized performance lies in the amateur enactment of bits of cinema. The analogy between musical and cinematic karaoke rests, then, on the fact that regular people wed themselves to mass cultural texts in acts of performance that rely on the recitation and embodied execution of well-known lines.

This analogy is explicitly recognized in 'Movieoke', one of the few public instances to date of cinema's performative allure for amateurs. Called 'karaoke for movie lovers', Movieoke was developed in 2003 by independent filmmaker Anastasia Fite and is held in New York City's 'Den of Cin', a pizzeria and video store. Here, would-be thespians stand before a movie screen where a film is projected and, reading from activated DVD subtitles, perform a scene in front of audiences.

[\[20\]](#)



**Fig. 3**

Matthew Dujnic, a cartoonist and computer programmer, is a frequent Movieoke participant. Claiming he 'can do nearly all of *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1992) from memory' (no small feat given writer David Mamet's loquacious style), Dujnic has reenacted Anthony Hopkins's fava beans and Chianti scene from *Silence of the Lambs* (1991) and Jack Nicholson's 'You can't handle the truth' scene from *A Few Good Men* (1992), along with moments from such films as *The Breakfast Club*, *Fight Club* (1999) and *Zoolander* (2001).[\[21\]](#) His comments about his desire to perform at the Den of Cin, 'This is what I do in my living room anyway', indicate that Movieoke is a public extension of private fan practices more common than we might otherwise think (a possibility further suggested by the number of reenactments of movie scenes posted on *Youtube.com*). Fite also observes that the Movieoke experience has caused her regulars to view films differently: they watch 'searching for scenes, searching for themselves in the movie, more literally than ever before'. Hence, amateur movie reenactments appear to enhance the processes of identification and personalization that occur as movies are viewed and reviewed, memorized and performed.[\[22\]](#)

While I will return to the informative parallels between musical and cinematic karaoke, taking stock of the kinds of lines viewers memorize as they bring movies so close reveals the gender dimensions of this practice. Like Dujnic's attraction to Nicholson's line and to Mamet's aggressive dialogue, male viewers in my study were drawn to 'tough guy' catchphrases (e.g., 'Zed's dead,

baby' from *Pulp Fiction* [1994] and 'Hasta la vista, baby'). Students were also captivated by sarcastic or anti-authoritarian comebacks (e.g., 'Does Barry Manilow know you raid his wardrobe' from *The Breakfast Club* and 'You're an asshole Rooney, an asshole!' from *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*) and to comic lines (e.g., 'Why it's just a flesh wound' from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* [1975] and 'He slimed me – actual physical contact' from *Ghostbusters* [1984]). Such dialogue provides these viewers with images of masculinity — the imperturbable hyper-masculine, the rebellious youth, the absurdist clown — that they can perform repeatedly to articulate what they experience as a rebuttal of and resistance to social norms. When those participating in the ritual of memorization are in their formative years, movie quotables function to rehearse different types of masculinity they deem attractive as they attempt to figure out their identities, including familiar forms of rebellion against authority figures. Comments suggest that, rather than indulging in more daring experimentation (for example, male students rarely quote from female characters), this play involves vicarious identification with a range of commonplace masculinities that can secure individual and group identities and confirm gender and generational ties.

Other findings describe similar patterns of movie-line adoption by male movie-goers, including older demographics, showing that the negotiation of masculine identity is not an activity consigned solely to youth. Based on a 1000-person survey conducted in 2000 of the 'most popular movie quotes', Stuart Fischhoff et al discovered that Americans may sometimes gravitate to 'romantic movie quotes and words of wisdom', but 'they prefer . . . quotes [that] express aggression and sarcastic one-upmanship'. The survey found that variations in the sample's responses — where participants were equally divided between male and female, representative of four ethnic groups, and aged ten to ninety — resulted primarily from differences in gender and age. Except for men over fifty who preferred sarcastic lines, most other male demographics almost exclusively cited quotes with a hostile valence. To wit, the number one and two quotes amongst men overall were 'I'll be back' and 'Go ahead, make my day', threats spoken, respectively, by Arnold Schwarzenegger in *The Terminator* (1984) and Clint Eastwood in *Sudden Impact* (1983). The survey's women also demonstrated a preference for such lines, but mentioned romantic and affectionate quotes in their top twenty more often than men (i.e., *Jerry Maguire's* 'You complete me' and 'You had me at hello'). Continuing the trend amongst male viewers, the top thirty most memorable movie lines listed on *AskMen.com* invoke quotables 'with attitude' with the top line being *The Godfather's* 'I'll make him an offer he can't refuse'.<sup>[23]</sup>

The popular film lines that I have discussed thus far define masculinity as infused with a sense of cool that, in turn, is composed of a variable mix of elements: rebellion, determination, aggression, power, subversive humor. Given the plentitude of such lines in 'quotable' canons, it would be difficult to argue that they are genuinely transgressive; rather, their performance invokes enshrined forms of rebellion against authority that allow a temporary experience of civil disobedience. As well as suggesting the possible prematurity of Susan Jeffords' declaration that the 'hard body' film hero (such as Schwarzenegger) declined in popularity after the 1980s,<sup>[24]</sup> the pervasive presence of such lines also demonstrates that this interaction between resistance and social norms occurs every day, with line performance functioning as one of many ritual, customary expressions of male discontent and protest. Further, this 'disobedient' brand of masculinity is deployed to confirm certain overtly heterosexual notions of masculinity.

The relationship of 'cool' movie lines to the production of heteronormative notions of masculinity is both further demonstrated and put to the test in *Straight Plan for the Gay Man*, Comedy Central's parody of Bravo's series *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*.<sup>[25]</sup> *Straight Plan* also overtly raises the issue of the role humor plays in enacting masculine slogans from cinema. As opposed to *Queer Eye*'s premise, in which a team of gay men attempt to make over straight men with no sense of style, *Straight Plan*'s group of heterosexual men try to teach gay men how to become 'regular guys'. In a scene from the first episode (which, like the rest of the series, is at least partially scripted), the troupe of straight men — Rob Riggle, Kyle Grooms, Billy Merritt, and Curtis Gwinn, aka 'The Flab Four' — wants to show New York-based fashion consultant Jonathan Schneider how 'to shoot straight'. In a gun club sporting the banner, 'My President is Charlton Heston', Rob tells Jonathan that he is about to be introduced to 'one of the greatest straight-man traditions of all time: firing a gun for absolutely no reason at all'. One thing Jonathan might not know, Rob continues, is that 'whenever straight men fire weapons, they say movie quotes'. Three troupe members go first: Curtis takes aim at the target and fires his weapon, reciting, 'Yippee-ki-yay, motherfucker', Detective John McClane's (Bruce Willis) famous line from *Die Hard* (1988); when it's his turn, Billy states, 'No Mr Bond, I expect you to die', quoting the title character (played by Gert Frobe) from the James Bond classic *Goldfinger* (1964); and Kyle intones part of Jules Winnfield's (Samuel Jackson) Biblical speech from *Pulp Fiction*, 'You will know my name is the Lord when I lay my vengeance upon you'. As Jonathan finally prepares to shoot, he quotes Rhett Butler's (Clark Gable) 'Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn', much to his companion's consternation; they remind him that he holds a 44 Magnum, 'Clint Eastwood's gun, what Dirty

Harry shoots'. Although the *Gone with the Wind* quote has often been construed as the ultimate 'tough guy' line, its source doesn't measure up to 'straight plan' standards; Butler's old, rather polite put-down can't compare in testosterone value to McClane's hip blend of harder-core profanity and neo-Western machismo. Jonathan is thus given another chance. After Rob says with great expectation, 'Ready, aim, quote!', Jonathan accompanies his second round of firing with, 'Fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy night!' This time, there's greater consternation — no one has heard of this quote before. When they find out that the source is Bette Davis (as Margo Channing in *All About Eve* [1950]) and that Jonathan missed the target on every shot, the troupe agrees that his 'quotes left a lot to be desired'.



Fig. 4

Fig. 5

In this scene, each man uses quotes that align him with character/star dyads that simultaneously exhibit his existing and aspirational masculine identities. For instance, in an act of matching, Kyle, the only African-American troupe member, quotes a fellow African-American whose character exudes an utterly controlled toughness that Kyle presumably does not possess in the same measure. Even though Jonathan cites treasured movie dialogue that often crops up on 'best of' lists for movie quotables, in this super-heterosexual context, his choice of older classic lines (especially one spoken by a female character often associated with homosexual audiences) demonstrates not his macho movie savvy, but his gay and camp sensibilities. Thus, Jonathan is similarly matched via camp with star/character dyads that represent his sexual identity, while, once more, these dyads also signify more self-possession than he appears to possess. As quotation expresses existing and aspirational identities, its enactment appears to furnish an aural/visual display that confirms dominant social notions of sexual identity.

Hence, the scene's overall effect indicates who belongs in the hetero- and homosexual communities and who doesn't, while placing straight, African American, and gay characters right where audience members might expect them to be. However, the show's comedy, premised as a

way to mock *Queer Eye*'s gay conceits, depends on parody and excess in its portrayals of masculinity, just as the gun club scene additionally relies on the inherent funniness of karaoke, of amateurs attempting to imitate professionals. Through this overstatement and a slippage between quoter and original performer, *Straight Plan* sends up overt signs of both hetero- and homosexuality, as well as the aspirational aspects of male identity. Still, mimicking 'Yippee-ki-yay, motherfucker' involves contradictory sentiments: the silliness rooted in inexpert imitations of film slogans charged with heterosexuality, and the residue of the values associated with gender already attached to those slogans. Thus, the show maintains a tension between subverting and confirming stereotypes that Comedy Central's primarily male audience can mine in different ways, depending on their predispositions. All the same, the tension parody creates is strategically important to promoting, through ambiguity, a sense of a familiar, non-threatening, and inconsequential play with masculine identities. Humor (which, as we have seen, is also key to the pleasures of quotation for male students in my study) creates a relatively safe haven for what otherwise could be an edgier, less comfortable encounter of masculinities. In *Straight Plan*, gay men are sent up more acceptably within a continuum of male humor about masculinity.<sup>[26]</sup>

That the practice of movie quotation produces dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in relation to gender and sexuality has less ambiguity when it comes to women. In both its musical and cinematic incarnations, karaoke is characterized by gender asymmetry, that is, a general lack of crossover between female singers/actresses and male quoters. Whatever other factors may figure in this imbalance, problematic cultural assumptions about women often pervade the interplay between inclusion and exclusion that informs line reenactment. Rob Drew, in his ethnography *Karaoke Nights*, remarks that karaoke performers 'tend to be cautious role players', a tendency reinforced by the neighborhood bar setting in which karaoke frequently takes place in the United States. Here, many men, wary of being interpreted as anything less than 'solidly' male, prefer to mimic male singers. When men do take the stage to reenact popular songs by women, they usually do so for laughs, aurally sending up female vocalists — 'doing Irene Cara's "Fame" in a piercing falsetto, doing Helen Reddy's "I am Woman" in the voice of Arnold Schwarzenegger'.<sup>[27]</sup> Besides distancing themselves from the feminine ('this isn't really me'), these instances play up the incongruity of a male voice/body portraying a female voice/body to parody the feminine, either literally accentuating it to extremes through an absurdly high voice or replacing it altogether with a masculine accent. In relation to Reddy's feminist anthem, the male singer doubly displaces the

original through his own voice and physical appearance and by invoking one of the ultimate hard-body stars and political conservatives, Schwarzenegger (himself the target of many a send-up).

Certainly, scholars have lauded camp as a self-conscious interrogation of the categories of masculine and feminine, just as others have expressed concern about its tendency to reify gender and sexuality.<sup>[28]</sup> While camp is not an uncontested terrain in terms of its politics of femininity, not all send-ups fall into this category. Send-ups can simply paint the feminine as patently outside of the masculine, as silly, or as generally outré, demonstrating an instance of masculinity being codified by a repudiation of the feminine. As is often the case, then, practices of inclusion are tacitly based on practices of exclusion: to be a heterosexual male within some group dynamics means not to be female or to be seen as feminine. At the same time, whether male performers parody or avoid altogether the work of female singers, this asymmetry demonstrates the social policing men undergo as part of their daily lives, where any signifier of femininity might be sufficient to compromise what the dominant culture regards as heterosexual masculinity.

Female karaoke performers do not operate with the same onus about gender-switching in performance. They often mimic male singers, doing so without irony or parody as they try to capture the original's vocal qualities and general flavor. As in my study, Fischhoff et al found that women frequently crossed over to male characters in their selection of film quotations. Because Hollywood productions favor male genres and characters, he argues, quotables from these characters comprise most of the menu, leaving female viewers with little other choice;<sup>[29]</sup> through this logic, since many of these characters are white men, viewers of other races would also find themselves with fewer alternatives. Put in other terms, those outside of the dominant classes are invited, through cinema's strategies of engagement, to cross over, to be more flexible in their choice of objects of identification as a condition for being able to experience spectatorial pleasure at all.<sup>[30]</sup> This does not mean that female quoters are free from participation in inclusionary or exclusionary systems or that parodies, including gender parodies, cannot be complex, multivalent forms of cultural expression. The point is, rather, that the gender asymmetry found in line quotations from cinema and music is suggestive: it indicates a conservative flair in the communal confirmation of gender identities that occurs in the private and public spaces in which these performances occur. In such ways, a seemingly insignificant activity like line quotation contributes to the lively maintenance of the status quo. Those brought together by a mutual interest in media interactivity, immersion, and community are thus not necessarily engaged in a utopian realization

of an enlightened world via participatory culture, but may be informed by and help to perpetuate longstanding social ideologies of gender.

As most films quoter regard as performable are U.S. products, we might wonder additionally how this form of popular cultural literacy attempts to preserve national identity as well — a relationship exhibited in remarks made by former actors on the national stage. Ronald Reagan's famous citation of Clint Eastwood's 'Make my day' applied the expression's machismo and intransigence to suggest that Reagan would veto any proposed tax increase; meanwhile, Schwarzenegger's 'Say hasta la vista to Gray Davis' deployed his signature statement to announce that he would run in a recall election against then governor Davis. On a different front, media language is also used in programs such as *Movielearn* to teach English to immigrants and others through movies and TV shows that provide 'exposure to conversational English not normally taught in traditional teaching methods'.<sup>[31]</sup> With Donald Trump's *The Apprentice* as one of the program's pedagogical tools, subscribers also get a crash, tycoon's-eye-view of corporate America and its version of the American dream. Here, media language attains a national function insofar as it not only exposes users to a vision of the United States but also acts as a 'social equalizer, a sign that [audiences] too, share the up-to-date American personality'.<sup>[32]</sup> Dialogue quotation can act as a tie that binds people within a nation together as they utilize colloquial national idioms stamped with a fashionable 'Americanness'.

### **Quotation, Identity, and Instability**

Thus far, I have weighed the normative functions of movie quotation — its role in recycling familiar notions of gender and nation to celebrate Hollywood, while acting as a form of currency for identity-creation (no matter how aspirational or transitory). Leslie Savan, in *Slam Dunks and No-Brainers*, a book that investigates the habitual use of slang catchphrases in the United States, argues that this phenomenon has only negative implications. She evaluates pop vernacular through a single lens: that of a 'top-down' approach that sees phrases such as 'whatever', 'duh', and 'don't go there' as part of the 'demagoguery of everyday life'.<sup>[33]</sup> In her view, advertising and other media concerns promote an automation of language to help sell products. In the process, 'Pop's prefab repartee can serve as thought replacement' encouraging people 'not to think or grapple with complications'.<sup>[34]</sup> This lamentable state of affairs can become serious when political

figures deploy this language in international affairs (e.g., CIA director George Tenet's statement to President Bush in 2002 that locating Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction would be a 'slam dunk').<sup>[35]</sup> Thus, Savan regards catchphrases as problematic forms of communicative shorthand because they characterize complex agendas as if they had cowboy solutions, support the status quo to sell commodities, and otherwise practice social control over a robotic citizenry.

Granting that pop language, movie quotation included, can act as an automated form of expression meant to persuade through simplification, variables exist that complicate uniform readings of the personal and public use of such language. The nuances of performance, the contexts in which quotation takes place, and the complexity of identity itself lend film quotation and its cousin musical karaoke wilder and woollier possibilities.

Drew acknowledges that karaoke is 'the most scripted of song performances', where the performer desires not only to memorize lines but also to reproduce minute aspects of the original performance. In turn, audiences prize this replication as a sign of the karaoke singer's talent.<sup>[36]</sup> Even when mimesis is the aim, however, Drew contends that karaoke is much more than a derivative art form that testifies to the media's colonizing power. Drawing on the work of performance studies scholars Elizabeth Fine and Jean Speer, he argues that karaoke has a 'creative, meaning-making potential'.<sup>[37]</sup> This potential affects the performer, his or her audience, and social elements activated by the performance. Of the transformative aspects of performance at the individual level, Johan Fornäs remarks that the karaoke participant may find 'his or her self strengthened and enlarged by the experience'; assuming the identities of professional performers makes it possible to 'discover new potentials in oneself'.<sup>[38]</sup> On stage or off, performance obliges the actor to be a 'double agent' performing 'between identities ... which makes it possible to work on "being" and "becoming" simultaneously'.<sup>[39]</sup> Along with the creativity of everyday enactments and the possibility of personal change brought on by the identity-shifting at their core, role performances incite reflection on social mores. As Fine and Speer write, through

performance, human beings not only present behavior ... they reflexively

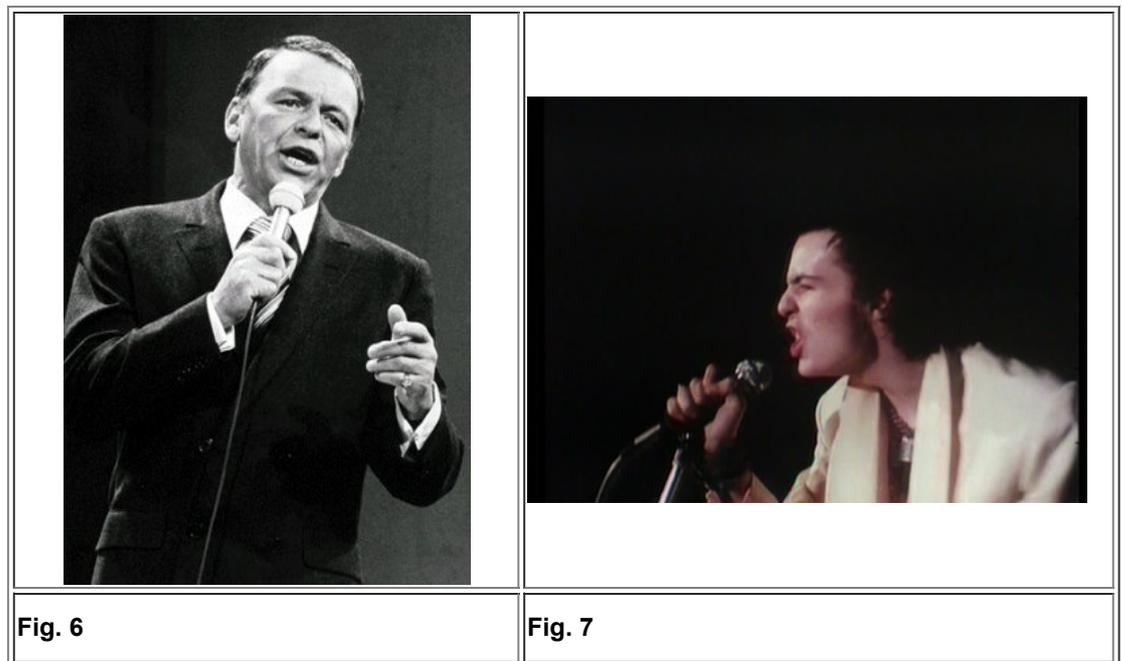
comment on it and the values and situations it encompasses. Through the

myriad number of choices performers make ... they have the opportunity

to comment on others, on situations, and on themselves.<sup>[40]</sup>

Hence, performance modes such as karaoke have far-ranging effects that stretch from dynamic makeovers of personal identity to incisive social observation.

While the scholarship encourages us to equate creativity and transformation with more radical rewritings of self and society, as we have seen, these elements are also involved in performances that consolidate existing identities (whether dominant or marginal) or certify the status quo. In any kind of performance 'double agency' is always operative. That said, the mutations inherent in musical and cinematic karaoke provide the possibility for different kinds of transformations, including those that introduce irony and a volatile disjunction in meaning. Think, for example, of Sex Pistol Sid Vicious's cover of the Frank Sinatra standard, 'My Way' (available on *Youtube.com* and elsewhere).<sup>[41]</sup> Vicious's version attacks Sinatra's sincere, melodic, and middle-aged crooning of the song through a mangling, sneering, and defiant punk act. Vicious's over-the-top number shows how reflexivity can not only satirize the original, but the imitation as well, leaving in its wake a double deconstruction of competing musical mythologies and the competing visions of masculinity that support them.



Although the nuances of performance do not have to take on aggressive reformations of the original for a process of transformation to take place, as this example illustrates, not all performance aims at a faithful imitation of a standard. Like other cover songs, transformations of the standard, including parodies, may be the performer's goal. In such cases, the cover song's ability to invite its audience to comment on the values and presumptions of an original is evident. No matter the closeness or departures from the original, though, the audience is always positioned as interpreter, judging the performer, as well as what is being delivered by the performance. Even

when a rendition's parody has conservative roots, as in the exclusionary tactics characteristic of some gender crossovers in karaoke, the presentation cannot entirely stabilize the meaning of the re-performance — it is subject to the audience's interpretive activities which may support, see through, or otherwise depart from intended effects.

This instability of line performance's meaning is further heightened by the fact that meanings change depending on context. Film dialogue, like song lyrics, has unpredictable, situation-dependent meanings that can produce results running the gamut of the political and ideological spectrum. For example, *Cool Hand Luke's* (1967) 'What we have here is a failure to communicate', once embraced by liberal youth as a statement about generational conflict, has been deployed more recently both by a press article from the left chastising California Governor Schwarzenegger for his inability to explain his education policies to his constituents and a piece from the right classifying the kind of hate mail the writer often gets from wrong-headed liberals. Similarly, the phrase 'Ding dong, the witch is dead' from *The Wizard of Oz* has titled press articles and blogs as diverse as those hailing the dismissal of Rosie O'Donnell from the TV program *The View* and those cheering Harriet Miers's withdrawal from consideration for Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court to pieces on Saddam Hussein's execution and Reverend Jerry Falwell's death.<sup>[42]</sup> Here we see movie lines that once again express aggressive sentiments — in the film the phrase celebrates the end of the Wicked Witch of the East — used to enunciate a variety of political positions with the familiar phrase doing the additional work of attracting eyeballs to the news piece.

Cases where movie lines circulate internationally as a form of language instruction attain an even greater degree of uncertainty as to their function. For example, the Chinese TV series, *Action English*, uses clips from Hollywood movies to teach 'American slang'. Broadcast almost nightly on the station CCTV6, the show has reportedly become a cult hit where viewers enjoy wrestling with terms such as 'walking felony' from the comedy *Legally Blonde* (2001).<sup>[43]</sup> Although the English language is often regarded as the great colonizer, as in any discussion of globalization, the import of international goods is not simply a matter of impressing the values of the import culture onto the destination culture, but about how the latter, according to its own institutions and social habits, negotiates the meaning of what comes its way — here, movie lines and their embodiment of Hollywood and the United States. Once again, in any appropriation of movie lines, context influences the decipherment of movie lingo to suit the diverse priorities that define the setting of the enactment.

Movie lines can be deployed, then, in almost any conceivable fashion to support political agendas. They can also shore up, challenge, or introduce ambiguity into ideas of identity. In fact, since quoters may inhabit diverse star/character dyads during performances, distributing identification mercurially across multiple figures, Movieoke and other forms of film reenactment may harbor yet even more complex possibilities for conceiving of film's relationship to subjectivity. Ultimately, dialogue quotation is a dynamic, multilayered phenomenon that functions in the most predictable ways in relation to identity, as well as the most robustly unexpected. As an example of how the performance of identity is constantly processed in everyday life, quotation suggests that the structure of identity is reminiscent of that of hegemony itself. Identity too is a 'moving equilibrium', constituted by a variety of tendencies that cross the ideological spectrum. As such, individual, group, and national identities do not simply reproduce the dominant ideology as somehow given. Rather, they have to be continually 'won, reproduced, and sustained', meaning that, within this struggle, there are spaces for the resounding confirmation, ambivalent embrace, and fracturing of the status quo.<sup>[44]</sup> The point is to continue to be 'alert to the patternings of power' manifested by performances as they materialize in specific situations.<sup>[45]</sup>

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Quotation's foregrounding of film dialogue shows that this poor cousin to other elements of the contemporary soundtrack is capable of forging a significant relationship with audiences. Beyond engaging viewers actively in narratives that may go on to be canonized based on their quotability, an investment in movie lines helps to form a film culture that galvanizes, affirms, or transforms notions of self and associations between viewers during and after screenings. Through memorization and performance, viewers identify themselves and others, acquire cultural capital as masters of movie lines, indulge in practices of inclusion and exclusion, rehearse accepted modes of protest, and, potentially, test the boundaries of dominant social categories of identity. This kinetic interaction between films and viewers has been enhanced unmistakably by replay culture, by a single text's iteration across multiple media platforms and the additional repetitive availability of that text to viewers through playback technologies. Since replay culture extends well beyond cinema, quotation is but one sign of the intimate ties between cinema and other media, between film consumption and media consumption more generally.

A mainstream case of personalized and interactive response, quotation also offers a friendly amendment to fan studies that focus on spectacular fandoms, such as the legendary devotees of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Unlike public screenings of this film or other overt displays of investment in a text, such as the re-released sing-along version of *The Sound of Music* (1965) in 2000 or the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) sing-along (for which audiences dress up as film characters, sing, chant lines, and act out parts), memorizing and performing media lines represents a more common and pervasive mode of ritual re-viewing. Although self-consciously pursued, everyday practitioners don't always recognize the excesses of this form of response nor its potential for camp. Yet, even the most quotidian examples of vocal and gestural reenactment achieve many of the same things associated with spectacular fandoms, notably, a muscular, interactive intervention in narrative trajectories according to personal desire, the creation of status rooted in mass cultural expertise, and the constitution of a body of cult films through exercises of group taste.

At the same time, the line quotation phenomenon is circular, so much so that we cannot ultimately draw lines in the sand between its public and private manifestations. The case of The Lebowski Fest shows that more mundane instances of recitation help to create spectacular fandoms. Rooted in a casual exchange of film dialogue at a convention, the Lebowski Fest, typically held in a bowling alley, attracts fans that dress up like characters and engage in their behaviors (such as bowling and drinking White Russians); the Fest thus takes performance to a highly visible level of embodiment. As Charles Ross's performance of his *One-Man Star Wars Trilogy* at New York's Lamb Theater (where, in just over an hour, he acts out all of the parts and voices the music and sound effects from the original trilogy) further indicates,<sup>[46]</sup> ordinary fan practices of memorization, quotation, and enactment can truly come full circle when they rematerialize as public theatrical events. Thus, quotation is at once an everyday manifestation of routine fan behavior and the foundation for the growth of public, more conspicuous displays of fandom, from costumed fandom or cosplay to theatrical performances themselves.

Ultimately, line recitation indicates that personalized and interactive responses to films watched repeatedly are part of daily rites devoted to negotiating or maintaining gender identity. As such, recitation manifestly recalls Judith Butler's well-known assertion that identity, rather than being stable, is the product of a 'stylized repetition of acts'.<sup>[47]</sup> If we grant that managing identities of all kinds requires work and that this work can at times appear as play, we can regard dialogue quotation as a micro-process involved in this activity. Such micro-processes have as much to tell

us about the routine conservation of identity as they do about experiments with notions of the self that occur during and after movie consumption. No matter how dialogue is deployed in this identity-scape, replay culture and movie line performance compel consideration of the relationship of viewers to cinema as an aural as well as a visual medium, as a home as well as a theatrical experience, encouraging us to venture into those intimate territories of reception where the Dude still very much abides.

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## Notes

[1] 'Say it Again, Sam' is drawn from 'Play it Again, Sam', a popularized, but incorrect, quotation from *Casablanca* (1942). The correct relevant lines (spoken by Ilsa Lund [Ingrid Bergman] to pianist Sam [Dooley Wilson]) are: 'Play it once, Sam, for old times' sake' and 'Play it, Sam, play "As Time Goes By"'.

[2] The full list is available at 'AFI's 100 Years...100 Movie Quotes' [WWW document] URL <http://www.afi.com/tvevents/100years/quotes.aspx> [visited 04/17/07]

[3] Caleb O. Brown (2002) 'City Strobe X-tra: Dude, Stay Out of the Gutter', *LEO Magazine* [WWW document] URL [www.lebowskifest.com/leo.asp?article=11070](http://www.lebowskifest.com/leo.asp?article=11070) [visited 06/05/06]; and Nikki Tranter, 'True Bliss: Celebrating *The Big Lebowski*' [WWW document] URL [www.popmatters.com/film/features/050831-lebowskifest.shtml](http://www.popmatters.com/film/features/050831-lebowskifest.shtml) [visited 04/17/06]

[4] Film dialogue's detachability offers another example of the kind of textual modularity Justin Wyatt finds characteristic of contemporary 'high concept' Hollywood films. Although a film does not have to fall into this category for its dialogue to spin off into common usage, Wyatt shows how cannily the industry calculates the deployment of a film's components across synergistic media and business channels to help sell its wares through representative images and music. See his *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994.

[5] That the industry recognizes the social presence and cultural capital of film dialogue materializes further in such high profile materials as the poster for the 79<sup>th</sup> annual Academy Awards Ceremony held in 2007, which features an Oscar placed against a background of scores of famous movie lines. To attract viewers to this event, the industry also mounted an ad campaign focused on famous lines, including a series of commercials directed by Spike Lee that showed people-on-the-street uttering favorite bits of dialogue.

[6] Jai Nanda, *I Know What You Quoted Last Summer*, New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2003. Other books devoted to movie lines include: Dale Thomajan, *Great Movie Lines*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1993; Bruce Adamson, *The Best Things Ever Said in the Dark*, New York: Allworth Press,

2004; and Jon Anthony Dosa, *Reel Life 101: 1,101 Classic Movie Lines*, Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2006.

[7] In *Overhearing Film Dialogue*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, Sarah Kozloff analyzes dialogue's narrative and generic functions, offering one of the few scholarly studies devoted to this aspect of the soundtrack. Kozloff's book also examines the voice and aurality, an area of inquiry that includes such other work as Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988, and Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, ed. and trans. Claudia Gorbman, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. Marie Gillespie reviews the research on the importance of "TV talk" in everyday social interactions, while also offering her own ethnographically-grounded take on the phenomenon in *Television, Ethnicity, and Cultural Change*, London: Routledge, 1995.

[8] For example, *Casablanca* began its journey to becoming part of the quotable canon, when it gained a cult following in an earlier iteration of replay culture in repertory theaters in the 1960s. Here, according to Daniel Peary, 'Bogart addicts came back repeatedly and joined their idol as he spoke such classic lines as "I stick my neck out for no one"'. For more on this, see Peary's *Cult Movies*, New York: Gramercy Books, 1981, p. 47.

[9] For more on how Reagan and subsequent presidents' emphases on deregulation affected media companies, see David R. Croteau and William Hoynes, *The Business of Media: Corporate Media and the Public Interest*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2001, especially pp. 75-115.

[10] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, New York: Anchor Books, 1959.

[11] John Shotter, as quoted in John Tulloch, *Performing Culture: Stories of Expertise and the Everyday*, London: Sage Publications, 1999, pp. 6-7.

[12] Elizabeth C. Fine and Jean Haskell Speer, 'Introduction', in Fine and Speer (eds.), *Performance, Culture, and Identity*, Westport, CN: Praeger Publishers, 1992, p. 10.

[13] I do not mean to suggest that these diverse materials are somehow identical pieces of evidence. Rather, I want to present as robust a picture as I can of quotation's contemporary

cultural manifestations, while tracing constancies that cross these materials in order to gain a general sense of the significance and implications of quotation for analyzing reception.

[14] Barbara Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies, and the Home*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006, pp. 181-86.

[15] Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963, p. 43.

[16] Amidst laughter, we hear Caouette quote from the critically panned *The Exorcist II: The Heretic* (1977), 'I am Pazuzu!', a line spoken by Regan (Linda Blair), a young woman possessed by a powerful demon named Pazuzu. That this film is considered in the camp category of a 'Good Bad Film' by gay viewers sustains the connection often found between gay aesthetics and camp, as well as the solace and pleasure that marginalized groups may find in marginalized films or disreputable film genres.

[17] 'Are There Any Movies You Know by Heart?' [WWW document] URL <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20070906233752AArhB8z> [visited 02/15/03]. On *The Breakfast Club* and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, see, for example, 'What is your favorite John Hughes Movie?' [WWW document] URL <http://forum.dvdtalk.com/archive/index.php/t-179540.html> [visited 02/15/03]; and Patton Dodd, 'Watching Movies with More than Popcorn' [WWW document] URL <http://www.boundless.org/1999/departments/atplay/a0000090.html> [visited 02/15/03].

[18] 'Nobody Puts Baby in a Corner', *Veronica Mars*, Season 2, Episode 7, 2005-2006. Interestingly, this episode is titled after an oft-repeated line from another favorite of movie quoters, *Dirty Dancing* (1987).

[19] Kurt Lancaster, *Interacting with Babylon 5*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001, pp. 34-91.

[20] Reuters, 'Karaoke's Offspring, Movieoke, Hits NYC', 12 February 2004 [WWW document] URL <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4252908> [visited 07/22/06]. Fite reportedly conceived the idea of Movieoke because of her own penchant for line quotation and from a film she had made in college featuring a woman who could speak only using movie lines. For more on Movieoke, see <http://www.movieoke.net/faq.htm>. Well before Movieoke materialized, movies themselves could offer moments of full-bodied reenactment; see, for example, Emir Kusturica's *Arizona Dream*

(1993), in which Vincent Gallo, during a talent show, acts out the crop-dusting scene from *North by Northwest* (1959).

[21] Jennifer D'Angelo 'New Game Shows Off Bar Dwellers' Acting Chops', 4 March 2004 [WWW document] URL <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,113222,00.html> [visited 07/22/06]; Randy Kennedy, 'Amateur Celebrities Pick a Movie and Join In', *New York Times*, 10 March 2004 [WWW document] URL <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/10/movies> [visited 07/22/06]; 'Movieoke Questions', 4 March 2004 [WWW document] URL <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/byform/mailling-lists/amia-//2004/04/msg00091.html> [visited 07/22/06]; and Mark Allwood, 'Film Fans Embrace Movieoke' [WWW document] URL <http://iscms.irn.columbia.edu/cns/2006-04-04/allwood-moviekaraoke> [visited 07/22/06]

[22] Allwood, 'Film Fans Embrace Movieoke'. According to Allwood, Movieoke is also present in New York in the form of 'porno karaoke', called Karma Sutra Karaoke, in which 'participants have one minute to perform their own audio rendition of a porno clip playing onscreen'. As a further sign that various interests are looking for methods to sell Movieoke, a California software company has produced a CD-ROM of 'Movie Karaoke' that includes scenes from *American Pie* and other movies and allows users to dub their voices over the scenes. Meanwhile, Movieoke has reportedly spread to Canada and Australia.

[23] Matthew Simpson (2006) 'Top 30: Memorable Movie Lines' *Askmen.com* [WWW document] URL [http://www.askmen.com/toys/top\\_10\\_60/87\\_top\\_10\\_list.html](http://www.askmen.com/toys/top_10_60/87_top_10_list.html) [visited 12/11/06]

[24] Susan Jeffords, *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994.

[25] *Straight Plan for the Gay Man*, Season 1, Episode 103, 2004.

[26] My thanks to Brenda Weber for her insights about how male sexualities can be successfully managed through humor and for additional information on the scripted nature of reality TV.

[27] Rob Drew, *Karaoke Nights: An Ethnographic Rhapsody*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001, p. 65.

[28] Among numerous sources on this subject, see, for example, Jack Babuscio, 'Camp and the Gay Sensibility', in Richard Dyer (ed.), *Gays and Film*, New York: New York Zoetrope, 1984, pp. 40-57; and Andrew Britton, 'For Interpretation, Against Camp', *Gay Left*, 7, Winter 1978-79, pp. 11-14.

[29] Fischhoff et al (2000) 'Popular Movie Quotes: Reflections on a People and Their Culture' [WWW document] URL <http://www.calstatela.edu/faculty/sfisco/quotes.html> [visited 07/22/06]. Fischhoff and his colleagues discovered that, unlike men, women cross genders frequently in their quoting practices. The top five quotes for women in his study were all from male characters. In descending order, they were, 'Show Me the Money', from *Jerry Maguire*, 'Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn', 'Mama always said that life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get', from *Forrest Gump*, 'I'll be back', and 'Hasta la vista, baby'. But female participants also quoted more frequently from female characters ('You had me at hello') and from animated characters than their male counterparts.

[30] For more on the 'crossover' effect in spectatorship within a colonial context, see Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, 'From the Imperial Family to the Transnational Imaginary: Media Spectatorship in the Age of Globalization', in Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake (eds), *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996, pp. 145-170.

[31] See [www.movielearn.com](http://www.movielearn.com)

[32] Leslie Savan, *Slam Dunks and No-Brainers: Language in Your Life, the Media, Business, Politics, and, Like, Whatever*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.

[33] Savan, p. 88.

[34] Savan, p. 13; pp. 120-1.

[35] Savan, p. 6.

[36] Drew, pp. 18-22.

[37] Drew, p.51.

[38] Johan Fornäs, 'Filling Voids Along the Byway: Identification and Interpretation in the Swedish Forms of Karaoke', in Toru Mitsui and Shuhei Hosokawa (eds), *Karaoke Around the World: Global Technology, Local Singing*, London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 130-31.

[39] Kirsten Hastrup and Susanne Rostas, as quoted in Tulloch, p. 7.

[40] Fine and Speer, 'Introduction', p. 8.

[41] See especially Julien Temple's documentaries on the Sex Pistols, *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle* (1980) and *The Filth and the Fury* (2000).

[42] Daniel Weintraub, 'What We Have Here is a Failure to Communicate', *Sacramento Bee* 28 April 2005 [WWW document] URL <http://dwb.sacbee.com/content/opinion/story> [visited 09/14/07]; and Barbara J. Stock, 'What We Have Here is a Failure to Communicate', *RenewAmerica*, 11 January 2004 [WWW document] URL <http://www.renewamerica.us/columns/stock> [visited 09/14/07]; 'Ding-dong, the Witch is Dead', *Dallas Morning News*, 26 April 2007 [WWW document] URL [http://www.guidelive.com/sharedcontent/dws/ent/television/stories/DN-peoplede\\_0426gl.ART.State.Edition1.434ba9c.html](http://www.guidelive.com/sharedcontent/dws/ent/television/stories/DN-peoplede_0426gl.ART.State.Edition1.434ba9c.html) [visited 09/04/07]; 'Breaking News: Ding Dong the Witch is Dead', *Underneath Their Robes*, 27 October 2005 [WWW document] URL <http://underneaththeirrobes.blogs.com>. [visited 09/04/07]; Serr8d (2006) 'Ding dong, the witch is dead?' [WWW document] URL <http://www.knoxviews.com/node/3235> [visited 09/04/07]; and Michael Dowling, 'Ding Dong the Witch is Dead', 15 May 2007 [WWW document] URL <http://blog.minderupt.com> [visited 09/04/07]

[43] Fiona Ng, 'Movie English as a Third Language', *New York Times*, 20 November 2005, p. 5.

[44] Stuart Hall, as quoted by Dick Hebdige in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979), London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 15-16.

[45] Charlotte Brunson, *Screen Tastes: Soap Operas to Satellite Dishes*, London: Routledge, 1997, p. 157.

[46] For more on Ross, see <http://www.onemanstarwars.com>.

[47] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 140.

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