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THE COLOR PURPLE
BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET

The slavery motif in recent popular cinema

by Ed Guerrero

After a prolific and profitable era spanning approximately 70 years, it seems that the overt inscription of the slavery motif and plantation genre has all but faded from the screens of U.S., popular narrative cinema.[1] Because of the emergence of Black political consciousness, rising initially out of the Civil Rights Movement of the 50's, refining its expression in the Black rebellion of the 60's, and contributing to America's ever growing perception of itself as a culturally plural, multi-ethnic society, it would be almost impossible, today, to capitalize and bring to the screen a culturally hegemonic, "Old South" epic on the scale of GONE WITH THE WIND (1939), or a film with the reactionary, plantation sentiment of Walt Disney's SONG OF THE SOUTH (1946).

Moreover, Hollywood's termination of "Blacksploitation" films as a profit making strategy in the late 70's, and the shift of studio capital into films with "crossover" themes aimed at broader, multiracial audiences have effectively put an end to films such as SLAVES (1969) and MANDINGO (1975), which took as their themes a reversed, or Afro-American, perspective on the slave system, by exposing its injustices and brutality.

This does not mean, however, that the depiction of slavery has entirely disappeared from U.S. screens. On the contrary, since slavery, and resistance to it, is a central and formative historical experience deeply rooted in the ideology of all Americans, its thematic interpretations are, generally, sedimented into contemporary film narratives and genres, and, specifically, into the symbolic or latent content of many films depicting Afro-Americans.[2]

These sedimentations can be as obviously and coherently expressed as the parody of the plantation genre in THE TOY (1982), starring Richard Pryor as a present day department store clerk bought by a rich, Southern politician, Jackie Gleason, as a 'toy' for his son; or as in the PLANET OF THE APES quintet (1968-1973), where the struggles and reversals between futuristic apes and humans create a sustained allegory not only for slavery but also the Civil Rights Movement and the Black rebellion that followed it. Or, slavery's sedimentation can be as momentary as a fleeting musical allusion threaded into a flim's soundtrack.

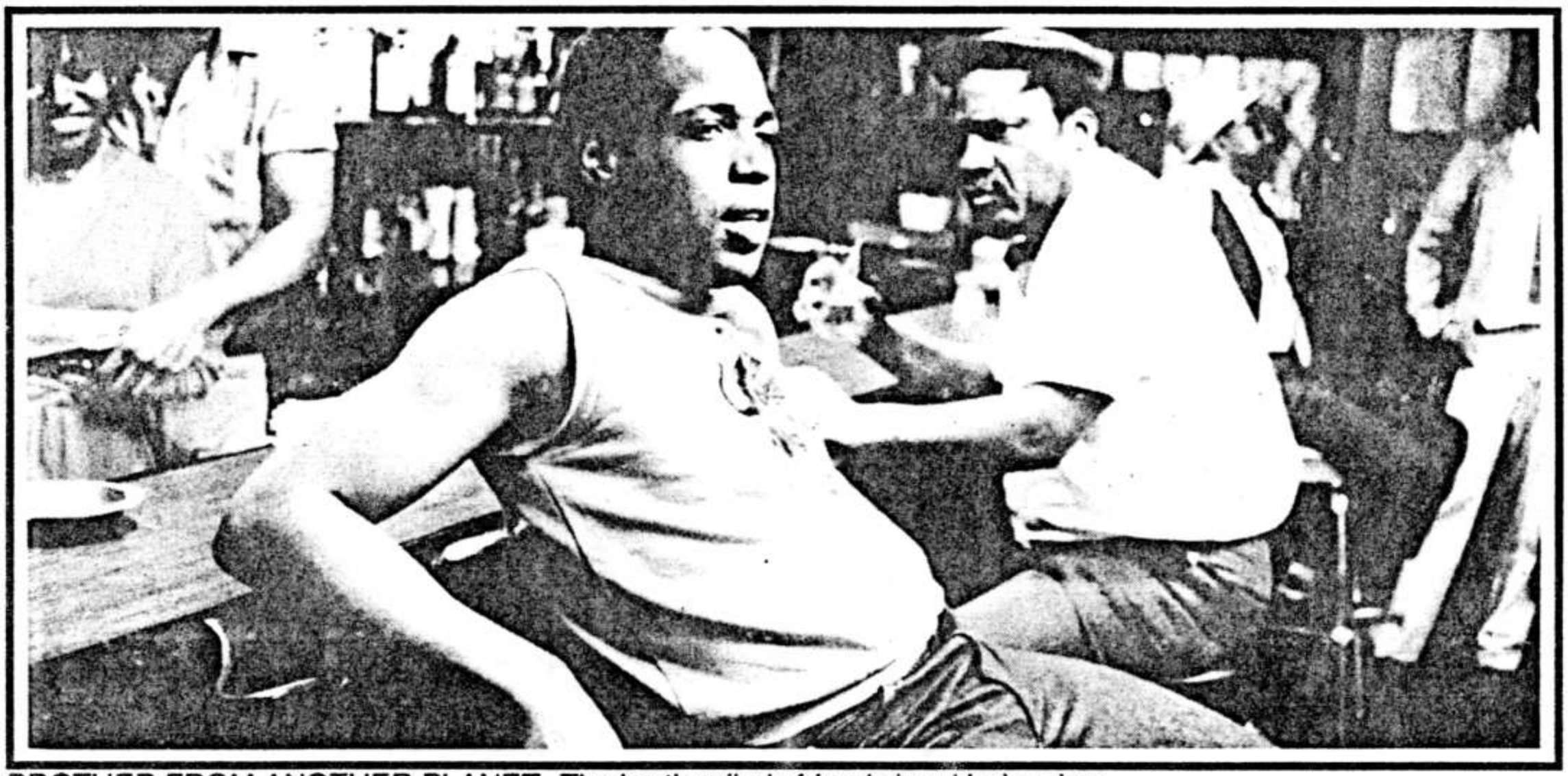
This occurs in the 'post nuke' science fiction DEF CON 4 (1985), when a bunch of Georgia 'good ol boys' capture some of the scientific elite held universally responsible for nuclear disaster in the genre, tie their hands behind their backs, line them up single file with ropes around their necks and trot them down a highway. Filling in the scene's sedimented meaning is the sound of African marimbas as the technocrats are led off into captivity.

While considering the range of possible manifestations of this concept, I will focus on two recent films, BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET (1984) and THE COLOR PURPLE (1985), which are important not only for their sedimentations of the slavery motif, but also because they are popular commercial productions that attempt to articulate Black story lines acted by Black casts for consumption by a general mass media audience.

Since these films were made about Black people and not necessarily by them (Afro-Americans having little institutional control over 'the mode of production' of their screen images) this article will locate these sedimentations in the broader context of popular cinema's culturally dominant ideology, which at minimum tends to fragment and individualize the Afro-American impulse for justice, and social equality, and usually, explicitly or implicitly, favors a privileged, white, male, perspective on the screen.

BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET

BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET (1984), starring Joe Morton, produced and directed by John Sayles comes as a noteworthy, if rare, effort at making a film for commercial distribution that privileges elements of the Afro-American aesthetic, lifestyle, and historical/political perspective on the U.S. Made as an allegory for the historical situation of the runaway slave, set in contemporary New York and produced in the loose framework of the Science Fiction genre, the film cannot be defined as the typical commodity turned out by Hollywood "studio system" which has been



BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET--The brother finds friends in a Harlem bar

accurately described as "First Cinema."[3] Rather, it fits into the style of film language labeled "Second Cinema" which has been accurately described as,

> . . . New Wave and related film. It has a subjective, individualistic, 'auteur' perspective; it often is less linear than First Cinema, more fragmented, disruptive, and thought-producing; it is more likely to expose social problems; it attracts liberal and progressive intellectuals; but it seldom addresses the politics of change.[4]

BROTHER, then is an amalgam of displacements and sedimentations of slavery thematics figured into a unified allegory expressed in the "Second Cinema" style. And in a number of ways, BROTHER goes beyond merely reversing the older Hollywood hegemonic perspective on slavery as do the films of the "Blacksploitation" 70's which tend to depict revolt, reversal and revenge in the relations between slave and master. BROTHER is timely and politically relevant because its sedimented slavery motif is set in contemporary New York, thus conecting the oppression of the antebellum past with the contemporary inner-city ghetto.

Because the film's narrative unfolds outside the South (slavery and the South being displaced to 'another planet') the film focuses its attention on the trials and adventures of a "runaway" in the North, and his resistance to slavery and slave catchers. Because few films articulate the perspective of the runaway slave facing an uncertain and problematic future in the North, BROTHER broadens the filmic mediation of slavery into significant new political dimensions and narrative terrain.

The film is about a "Brother" who escapes slavery on another, more technologically advanced, planet and takes refuge in Harlem with the active support of its Black, Latino and welfare white inhabitants. While the Brother (who cannot speak but has miraculous and psychic powers) goes through a series of adventures and interactions with various people in Harlem and the surrounding city, slave catchers, sent from his planet, track him, interrogate his friends and attempt to recapture him.

Here one finds an important refinement of the reversed perspective on slavery in the film's narrative, in that the film goes beyond merely exposing the evil nature of the slave system to show resistance to it in some detail, both on organized cultural and political levels. Brother's interplanetary flight, and the refuge he finds in New York, are analogous to the activities of the historical Underground Railroad, the abolitionist apparatus which helped tens of thousands of Afro-Americans escape across the Mason-Dixon Line to one of its most popular "stations," New York. Brother underscores this when he views an Afro-American historical enhibit celebrating the resistance and exploits of runaways and gestures to a young boy with him that he too, knows the plight of the runaway slave.

Audience identification with Brother is built by depicting the slave catchers as the faceless, sinister, Orwellian agents that we've all come to recognize and fear in our cinema. The ground is well prepared for the film's parody of such 'thought police' by the 'conspiracy' films of the 70's, SERPICO (1973), THE PARALLAX VIEW and THE CONVERSATION (both1974), which reflect the nation's cumulative concern about extra-legal corporate or govern-

ment activities.5 Consequently, the Black men in Odell's bar, responding to the standard "have you seen this man" routine, instantly understand the slave catchers as a form of police authority, inter-planetary or otherwise, and activate the Black cultural code of silent or evasive resistance in the face of such persons and institutions.

A white, woman clerk at a welfare office deploys a bureaucratic strategy, giving the slave catchers a stack of meaningless and confusing forms to fill out, thus avoiding their questions. The Puerto Riquenio who works with the Brother at a video arcade reads the slave catchers as *migra*, immigration agents, and dissembles using linguistic strategy, refusing to understand English. In all of these scenes the film's allegory works with complex multi-leveled, perfection, depicting the relentless pursuit of the slave catchers while at the same time portraying them with the impersonality of outer-space aliens and as authoritarian undercover agents. Here, the film is aesthetically and politically effective in translating the experience of the runaway slave into the terms and gestures of contemporary urban culture.

If the location of slavery is displaced onto another planet, it is also transfigured and existent here on earth, in contemporary New York City. The setting and visual terrain of the film make it clear that the Black inner-city the Brother must negotiate, is as unfree, socially and racially stratified and dangerous as any plantation, if not more so. Brother is mugged and slashed by young junkies in a tenement hallway. Or, de facto apartheid is shown with subtle irony in a scene where a white kid on the subway tells Brother that he can perform a magic trick and make all the white people disappear. The train then makes its last stop before heading uptown into Harlem; all of the whites get off and blacks headed home from work get on.

Brother makes a profound observation about the new and different forms slavery can take in this confusing urban world which the film fittingly calls "Babylon." On his planet, the displaced Old South, slavery takes its traditional form of beings owned as commodities from whom labor is extracted. Whereas here in the ghetto, where Black labor has little value, as clearly shown by the idle, unemployed Black men in Odell's bar, slavery takes the form of consuming commodities: the ultimate commodity being heroin. Thus the film constructs a causal chain of exploitation shown in Brother's psychic detective work, tracking the line of profit from an o.d.'d junkie kid in an alley up through the street pushers to the top dealer, a white, corporate businessman directing the drug traffic from his plush office suite atop a skyscraper in Manhattan. Here the film's political argument is dialectically sharp, revealing drug addiction as a new insidious slavery and the corporate businessman as the new slavemaster.

However in other ways, the film's political argument is proscribed by the very commodity system that it seeks to unmask or critique. While Brother's muteness is an essential narrative device which allows several of the characters to play revealing soliloquies off of him, it also creates a "structuring absence" in the text which reveals ideological boundaries which the director and writers are unable to transcend.6 In this sense, Brother's voice, and the possibility of him vocalizing claims for resistance, justice and freedom are eradicated, and he comes across as the silent, exotic "other", a common figure in the movie industry.7

Two examples of the sci-fi slave's silence come to mind. In PLANET OF THE APES (1968) the apes refuse to believe that humans they have captured can use language, the silence of the slave being one of their main rationalizations for keeping humans in slavery. In ENEMY MINE (1985), alien being Lou Gosset, yet another 'brother from another planet' who has also experienced slavery, cannot speak to the audience because of the barrier of his exotic language.

Another important, latent meaning of the film's narrative mediates the contemporary concern about non-white immigration. The film opens with Brother's space ship splashing down at Ellis Island, a key historical entry point of 19th and early 20th century immigrants coming to the U.S. seeking new lives and opportunities. So, Brother is simultaneously constructed as an alien from outer space, a runaway slave, and a West Indian immigrant. The latter of these identities is signified by the sound track of Caribbean steel drums, Reggae music, Brother's nascent dreadlocks and his journey through the hell of "Babylon" (New York at night) with his Jamaican "dub poet" guide "Virgil," an obvious allusion to Dante's *Inferno*.

However, the problem with his immigrant identity is that with it Brother takes on the neo-conservative political emblem of "model minority." As the right-wing argument goes, "model minorities," immigrant Asians, West Indians etc. have succeeded in America with personal initiative and self-discipline, whereas Afro-Americans, Indians and Chicanos lacking this "human capital" have not.8 Of course this argument conveniently overlooks the hundreds of years of organized genocide, exploitation, underdevelopment and racism that all people of color have had to endure.

But also, the film presents the audience with a complex, double message on Black solidarity. In the main, the film definitely speaks of Pan African unity and stuggle against oppression, as signified in the name the protagonist is given "Brother," and the support of the blacks who so eagerly take him in. However, Brother is also different from the earthlings who shelter him. The eradication of his voice denies him the solidarity and identification of learning or communicating in the Afro-American or West Indian idiom. Brother's psychic powers and feet with three toes, as well as his talent for fixing electrical appliances are interesting expressions of the science fiction genre, but they also symbolize the "human capital" that allows him to succeed as a model minority.

He is able to use his psychic abilities to instantly find work and become the exception, the immigrant "model"

among the unemployed Black men trapped in the streets and bars of Harlem. Moreover, these contrasts are heightened when the blacks at Odell's bar and Brother and other interplanetary runaways resist the slave catchers as separate, uncoordinated groups, and with different levels of effectiveness.

The film's closure builds when the slave catchers trap Brother at Odell's Bar and the Black patrons are able to resist long enough to allow Brother to make his break. Later, he is apprehended but manages to escape down an alley with slave catchers in pursuit. Here Brother encounters the Underground of runaways and they make a stand, surrounding the slave catchers. Shocked into immobility by the sight of dozens of ex-slaves gathered in collective resistance, the slave catchers pause in bewildered contemplation of their situation and then self-destruct by vaporizing themselves. This resolution clearly privileges the value of collective organization and resistance to oppression and has an allusive validity to the collective resistance of Afro-Americans, abolitionists and others to historical slavery.

Brother's merger into the Black community is ultimately signaled by his taking the A Train back up to Harlem and a shift in the soundtrack from steel drums, his musical marker throughout the film, to the Afro-American spiritual "Promised Land." However, this last scene seems to pose a set of ideological tensions and ironies as it reveals Brother, alone, smiling and looking through a chain link fence across an empty schoolyard at a drab, institutional building with a banner, "Harlem Plays The Best Ball In The Country," hung on its facade. This final shot frames Brother as an individual seemingly released from slavery and the social collectivity, free to pursue the vicissitudes of the American Dream.

Conversely, this final *mise-en-scène* also confronts and entraps him. The barrier of the chain-link fence and the dreary school building with its ironic message (Harlem has always played the "best ball" but it's quality education that determines a people's future) seems to signal Brother's absorption into a society where the opportunities and rights of the Afro-American are uncertain and ambiguous at best. Despite a thematic emphasis on the social collectivity throughout the film, Brother standing here alone, at the film's end, in a sort of spatial and social emptiness seems to partially recoup the Hollywood, studio system's narrative strategy of ultimately resolving social and political problems in individual terms.9

BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET

THE COLOR PURPLE

Unlike BROTHER which is aesthetically and politically quite innovative in the trajectory of U.S. commercial cinema, THE COLOR PURPLE (1985) comes at the end of a long line of Hollywood studio productions based on all-Black casts and themes. And, in many ways PURPLE, predictably, shares a number of similarities and flaws with these films. While BROTHER sediments slavery into its narrative as a unified allegory, in THE COLOR PURPLE the slave motif surfaces intermittently as fragments that subtly invert historical meaning of slavery. And though the film avoids one of Hollywood's dominant codes, the female body as an object of voyeuristic, sexual pleasure, many of the Gettino/Solanas "First Cinema" criteria apply to PURPLE.

First Cinema productions are Hollywood or Hollywood derived films that offer the consumer/spectator a slick, glossy cinematic commodity that is expressed in the dominant language of popular, narrative film. Moreover, it depicts a world that is complete, where no social change is possible or necessary. And again, it always solves social or political problems with the actions and perspective of the individual.10

Moreover, THE COLOR PURPLE can be better understood when historicized as part of a long, line of such Hollywood, all Black spectacles that locate their narratives in the rural, Black South in a romantic, ahistorical void that occurs somewhere between World Wars I and II. COLOR PURPLE's resemblances to HALLELUJAH and HEARTS IN DIXIE, (both 1929), and CABIN IN THE SKY (1943) are instructive here. Consider that, all of these films locate the Black community in naive or idyllic, rural settings removed from the containment and oppression of the surrounding white community. Further, all of these spectacles construct Black folk as simple, country beings without the slightest

inkling of a political consciousness or recognition of their painful historical situation. PURPLE does make some concessions on these latter points in that it tries, no matter how superficially, to acknowledge the social reality of racism in the confrontation between Sophia and the white Mayor and his wife.

All of these Black, studio spectacles have entertaining, folksy, musical interludes built into their narratives. And, in the case of CABIN IN THE SKY and THE COLOR PURPLE, Black music is falsely polarized as "good" & "bad." In both films, Gospel or church music is inscribed as good, while the more powerful and universal Black idioms, Jazz and Blues, are evil. In a clever fantasy scene, in CABIN IN THE SKY, Louis Armstrong performs masterfully as a devil, playing Jazz in hell, while Duke Ellington's music is depicted as a sinful temptation set in a saloon, gambling house milieu as opposed to the virtuous, and nondescript, music sung in the church.

In COLOR PURPLE this same tired juke joint-church polarity is repeated, only this time with patriarchical affirmations which are particularly puzzling, since Walker's novel, above all, articulates and celebrates Black women's values. Shug Avery, who is a Blues singer, yearns throughout the film for a reconciliation with her preacher father. However, this comes about in a curious manner in a scene that is one of the film's climactic, ideological resolutions. Shug sings at Harpo's juke joint, a short distance from her father's church where the lead vocalist and the choir also sing to their congregation. By cross-cutting between scenes of the two singers and their audiences, a musical, and ideological, contest builds between the secular world of the saloon and the realm of the church. As clever editing shapes an accelerating montage, Shug, leading the patron's of the Blues, starts walking towards the church. And, as they walk, their music subtly shifts to that of the church.

The final reconciliation between Shug and her preacher father, also between Blues and gospel audiences, occurs on unequal ground, in the church in front of the altar, with everyone singing spirituals and Shug throwing herself uncritically back into the arms of her father, the prime signifier of the institutional Christian patriarchy. Here, the ideological meaning and intent of Walker's book on the point of white, hegemonic, patriarchal religion is reversed. In the novel, Shug breaks with her father and the church because God, as interpreted by the church, is a "he" and a white man's God. Suffice it to say that this scene is unique to the film as Hollywood blatantly recoups the very values that Walker, through Shug, rejects.

Another way in which the dominant ideology is built into the film's musical, "apparatus" can be best explored by posing a critical question: If THE COLOR PURPLE is really about Black life and culture, and it depicts, no matter how ineptly, in its *narrative content* both Blues and Gospel music, why can't the film use Black music in its extradiegetic soundtrack?11 While the musical *content* of the film is Blues and Gospel as heard in many scenes, the film's musical *form*, its musical soundtrack, is the same old generic, cliche Eurocentric movie music functioning on a commentative level jerking tears from the consumers, cueing them as to where to laugh, whom to hate or sympathize with, etc. This is all the more curious when one considers that renowed Black composer, Quincy Jones, is responsible for this music. In contrast to PURPLE's tired soundtrack, note the articulation of the Black musical idiom in the soundtracks of Jones' IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT (1967), Taj Mahal's SOUNDER (1972), Muddy Waters' MANDINGO (1975). In fact, many critics have observed that the strongest component of many of the thematically Black films of the 60's and the heyday of "Blacksploitation" (1970-76), was the soundtracks composed by Afro-Americans in Afro-American musical idioms.12 So in PURPLE, one ideology contains and dominates another as director Spielberg contains and reverses the meanings of novelist Walker, and the Eurocentric soundtrack contains or packages Afro-American music for popular consumption.

Conjoined with PURPLE's musical operations are fleeting images, and gestures that subtly shift the historical onus for the crime of slavery from the white planter class onto the Black male. One can discern in these sedimentations the unconscius recovery of some of the idological terrain lost in commercial cinema with the disappearance of the plantation genre after the rise in Black political and media consciousness precipitated by the Civil Rights Movement. But also, Hollywood's strategy of inverting historical relationships between the dominant society and people of color is traditional. For an example out of many, consider that one of the most common paradigms in the Western is that of peace loving settlers surrounded on their land by intruding, bloodthirsty Indians, when in historical fact the situation was exactly the other way around.13

MISTER AS MASTER

In THE COLOR PURPLE there occur a number of images and moments that implicate Mister as 'Master' in his isolated little domain. First we see Mister's house which has two facades to it. The one most commonly seeen is that of a well-to-do farm house. The other, which flashes on the screen breaking through the surface narrative is the white, columned facade of the "Old South" mansion, the filmic, architectural icon of slavery, siginifying that Mister's farm is also a plantation. Other visual fragments further reinforce this notion. Mister, wearing a planter's straw hat, sits on a horse in the field overseeing the work, a Black parody of the white planter managing his field hands. The visual contradiction in this scene surfaces when one considers that the universal beast of burden of blacks in the agrarian South and the animal that Afro-Americans have celebrated and identified with in their literature, poetry and music is the mule.

Added to these visual fragments are actions in the narra-

tive that are further, latent expressions of the slavery motif. Celie's assumed father (another inferred slavemaster) rapes her and then separates her from and sells, the resulting child, as happened many times under the domination of the white planter class in historical slavery. When Mister comes on his horse to Celie's father's door looking for a new wife, he and the father bargain for a moment and then Celie called out to display herself, like chattel on the auction block.

Moreover, in true plantation tradition, Mister sexually abuses, overworks and beats the Black women that live on his land. He also keeps Shug, his concubine in the same house as his wife and discourages his chattel from reading and writing. All of these things happened to Afro-Americans, as a people, under slavery. These were things done to Afro-Americans by the planter aristrocracy and their agents. But in THE COLOR PURPLE, the meaning of slavery, sedimented into the text as latent fragments, is twisted, inverted. The planter class composed of white men and women is replaced by Black men. The burden of the slave master is displaced onto Mister and the implications of the film's sedimented subtext are that blacks, and Black men in particular, are somehow responsible for slavery.

These explorations of PURPLE resonate with the most obvious Afro-American criticism of the film which is that the film constructs a gender divided reading of the oppression of Afro-Americans, with, even on its narrative surface, Black men as the *predominant* oppressors of Black women.14 Black men are depicted as brutes, as mean, without any reference to the historical and social conditions that may have made some of them that way.

The film privileges sexism over racism, scapegoats Black men, and, unconsiously or not, fragments the Afro-American impulse for political, economic and human rights. This is not to say that folks didn't have many good reasons for liking the novel or that Afro-Americans don't have any gender problems. But one must ask the time-honored rhetorical question posed by Black film critics: Why is it that the only big budget, studio production of the year that mediates a Black theme and foregrounds Black women contains so many crude distortions and reifications of Afro-American culture and devalues Black men?

IDEOLOGICAL CONTAINMENT

But, there are other issues in the film that go beyond sedimented plantation thematics and seem to emphasize the kind of careless contempt with which Hollywood still handles the cultures and images of people of color. In once scene Celie, is, justifiably, tempted to cut Mister's throat while shaving him. As she pauses with razor in hand the scene cross-cuts back and forth between her, razor poised, and the ritual scarification of children taking place in Africa. By juxtaposing an initiation ceremony with Celie's murderous impulse, serious African religious/cultural practices are depicted as "savage" or "primitive" and African standards of

THE COLOR PURPLE: Mister as master

beauty are ridiculed. This scene is purely a cinematic invention that occurs nowhere in the novel and expresses commercial cinema's donimant cultural values.

Another prime example of ideological containment in the film is the way that it packages Shug and Celie's lesbianism. Firstly, lesbianism, except for one timid scene, is repressed in the film where it is significant in the narrative and to the meaning of the novel. But, when the issue is explored, commercial cinema's taboo against depicting homosexuality with any degree of acceptance or normality overrides the possibility of the audience understanding the scene's sexual importance.15 Shug and Celie sit on a bed. They touch, kiss briefly, almost as sisters, all to the strains of Jones' canned soundtrack, and 'that's all folks.' Here, it is certainly true that one can read a text for its omissions and discern the director and film's ideological limitations as the commodity system demands the containment and control of all issues served up for popular consumption.16

Finally, we should discuss the film's closure which contradicts the ending in Walker's novel. In the novel's conclusion, Mister sits on the porch, smokes, talks and helps Celie sew pants for her business. He is caring and humanized to a certain extent, and the scene suggests the possibility of reconciliation and healing within the Black family and community. But conversely, the film constructs a dissonant ending. It fragments Black unity by closing with Celie, Nettie, the children and the women of the family fathered in front of the house with a contrite and reflective Mister alone, out in the field. Again, the manipulations of the dominant cinema apparatus override the possibility of reconciliation and unity suggested in the closure of Walker's novel.

In conclusion, we must expect sedimented slavery the-

matics to continue in U.S. commercial cinema in all of their varied expressions. Whether slavery is constructed as a unified subtext in the form of allegory of parody, or is displaced into other historical periods or different genres, or surfaces in fleeting images of moments, it is too much a part of popular cinema, its codes and images to completely disappear from the screen. And, given the fact that U.S. cinema is conditioned by the commodity system itself, experiencing economic ups and downs, right and left cycles, we can expect intermittent attempts to recoup some of the cruder hegemonic manipulations and stereotypes depicted in the older films of the plantation genre. Of course these attempts will test the political awareness of all concerned, but judging from the critical response to THE COLOR PURPLE these films will at least serve to advance the dialectical relationship between the movie audience and an industry that changes only when its audience forces it to.

For helpful criticisms of this article I would like to thank Ron Takaki, Barbara Christian and Elaine Kim.

NOTES

1. Ed Guerrero, "From BIRTH to MANDINGO: Hollywood's inscription of Slavery 1915 to 1975," *Ethnic Studies Occasional Papers Series* , , 1: 1 (S.F. State University, Fall 1986). Here, I discuss the overt inscription of slavery as divided into three phases: 1. The hegemonic phase running from 1915 to WW II and exemplified by BIRTH OF A NATION (1915), 2. the revised phase running from WW II to the 60's and exemplified by THE FOXES OF HARROW (1947), and 3. the reversed phase running from the late 60's to the early 80's and exemplified by MANDINGO (1975). The present article continues this discussion.
2. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), 211-12. Here I apply Jameson's concept to film, in that images, stereotypes, themes, metaphors are subject to a "vertical repression and layering and sedimentation" causing "the persistence of the older repressed content beneath the later formalized surface."
3. Fernando Solanas & Octavio Gettino, "Towards a Third Cinema," *Movies and Methods* , ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 44-64.
4. William Alexander, "Class, Film Language, and Popular Cinema," *Jump Cut* , No. 30 (March 1985), 45.
5. Seth Cagin & Philip Dray, *Hollywood Films of the Seventies* (New York: Harper &Row, 1984), 92-253. Fredric Jameson, "Class and Allegory in Contemporary Mass Culture: DOG DAY AFTERNOON as a Political Film," in *Movies and Methods* , vol. II, Bill Nichols ed. p. 728. Here Jameson discusses the figuration of social authority in recent American moviemaking as a "gazing face," reflecting a "cool and technocratic expertise" and a faceless impersonality that carries out the orders of a remote, or hidden power structure. In BROTHER the power structure is, in fact, on 'another planet,' and the impersonality of the 'alien' slavecatchers, clad in sunglasses and futuristic jumpsuits, is a clear parody of contemporary cinematic agents of authority.
6. Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 85-89. Sylvia Harvey, *May '68 and Film Culture* (London: BFI Publishing, 1980), 13. Fredric Jameson, "On Magic Realism in Film," in *Critical Inquiry* , 12: 2 (Winter 1986), p. 321. Jameson adds to the discussion saying that: "...narrative reduction has, for example, very real and practical consequences for ideology and ideological analysis. It is not enough to show a systematic abridgement in the generation and projection of narrative meanings, as though that were only a matter of aesthetic choice; we must try to understand that such eradications also have a political function."
7. Tom Engelhardt, "Ambush at Kamikaze Pass," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* , 3: 1 (Winter/Spring 1971), 65-67.
8. Thomas Sowell, *Ethnic America* (New York: Basic Boooks, 1981), 282-96. Thomas Massey, "The Wrong Way to Court Ethnics" *The Washington Monthly* , May, 1986. David Bell, "The Triumph of Asian Americans," *The New Republic* , July 15 and 22 (1985).
9. Judith Williamson, *Consuming Passions, The Dynamics of Popular Culture* (London: Marion Boyars Pub., 1987), 5. Robert B. Ray, *A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 57.
10. William Alexander, "Class, Film Language, and Popular Cinema," *Jump Cut* , No. 30 (March 1985), 45. Fernando Solanas & Octavio Gettino, "Towards a Third Cinema," *Movies and Methods* , ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 44-64. For discussions of the "invisible style" see Stephen Heath's article "Narrative Space" in *Screen*, 17: 3, (1976), 97, or Robert B. Ray's subchapter "The Formal Paradigm—The Invisible Style," in his *A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1985), 32-55.
11. Robert Stam and Louise Spence, "Colonialism, Racism and Representation," *Screen* , No. 2 (March/April 1983), 9. Many writers are now calling for a move beyond the "reductionism" of focusing the examination of cinematic racism on stereotyping alone. They discuss the need to look at other "mediations" and at how the "cinematic aparatus" as a whole structures racism into its operations.
12. Mary Ellison, "Blacks in American Film," in *Cinema, Politics and Society in America* , eds. Philip Daves and Brian Neve (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 87-89.
13. Leonard Quart and Albert Auster, *American Film and Society Since 1945* (New York: Praeger, 1984), 23. Tom Engelhardt, "Ambush at Kamikaze Pass," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* , 1: 3 (Winter/Spring 1971), 65-67.
14. Les Payne, "NAACP Wins Best Flip-Flop in a Nonsupporting Role," *Newsday* Sunday, March 30, 1986. Marlaine Glicksman, "Lee Way" (Spike Lee interview), *Film Comment* Vol. 22, #5, September-October 1986.
15. Chuck Kleinhans and Julie Lesage, "The Politics of Sexual Representation," in *Jump Cut* , No.30, (1985), 25 & 26. Amos Vogel, *Film as a Subversive Art* (New York: Random House, 1974), 235. "In the commercial cinema, the portrayal of the homosexual has moved through well defined, if ridiculous, stages; his invisibility, his elimination, his transformation into something slightly less offensive (such as a Jew), his having to die a difficult death or commit suicide, and lat-

er, actual hints of his 'odious' activities and sniggering or circumscribed acceptance."

16. Bill Nichols, *Ideology and the Image* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 1. "Ideology operates as a constraint, limiting us to certain places or positions within these processes of communication and exchange. Ideology is how the existing ensemble of social relations represents itself to individuals; it is the image a society gives of itself in order to perpetuate itself. These representations serve to constrain us (necessarily); they establish fixed places for us to occupy that work to guarantee coherent social actions over time. Ideology uses the fabrication of images and the processes of representation to persuade us that how things are is how they ought to be and that the place provided for us is the place we ought to have." ●