

Document Citation

Title	The saga of Anatahan
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Source	<i>American Film Institute</i>
Date	1977 Jul
Type	booklet
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	21
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Anatahan, Von Sternberg, Josef, 1953

BACKGROUND

Josef von Sternberg's THE SAGA OF ANATAHAN, completed in early 1953, was first shown in Japan in July of 1953 and in the U.S. during the spring and fall of 1954. Though it had been well received in Europe, the film received poor to mixed reviews in the U.S. where critics objected to the film's slow pacing and to the lack of erotic and sensational elements which the basic story seemed to require.

In 1958, Sternberg decided to modify the film to increase its commercial potential, and so he wired his cameraman in Japan to shoot some new and more explicit sequences featuring the leading actress, Negishi. Sternberg selected several of these shots, printed them along with pieces of sound track duped from the 1953 version, and spliced these short sequences into the existing release prints of ANATAHAN. In each instance, when putting in the new nude shots, Sternberg removed the equivalent footage from the prints. He also cut out several brief sections to drop repetitious

shots of ocean waves, and to eliminate certain lines of dialogue and narration which had provoked unwanted laughter from audiences. The picture and sound quality of the new scenes did not match the adjacent scenes in the release prints, so the overall effect was disturbingly uneven.

During the 50's and 60's, the film was variously titled ANATAHAN, ANA-TA-HAN, THE SAGA OF ANATAHAN, THE DEVIL'S PITCHFORK, THE ONLY WOMAN ON EARTH, and FEVER OVER ANATAHAN. Each time the title was changed, a new main title was spliced into the prints.

In December of 1975, Film Technology Co. was put in charge of reconstructing ANATAHAN. The Company received the following materials for this purpose.

1. Composite fine grain (safety) of the original 1953 release version, from George Eastman House.
2. Positive print of the 1958 modified version, from Twyman Films.
3. Original picture negative (part nitrate, part safety), of the 1953 version. This and the remaining materials were from Mrs. von Sternberg.
4. Original mixed sound track negative (nitrate) of the 1953 version.

5. Original music track negative (nitrate).
6. Original Japanese dialogue/sound effects track negative (nitrate).
7. Original picture negative of 1958 nude shots (safety, nitrate).
8. Various trims, outtakes, pieces of negative and fine grain left over from Josef von Sternberg's 1958 revision of the film.

One important element missing was the original English narration sound track; we had neither a negative nor a positive print at our disposal.

The above materials were in the following condition:

1. Composite fine grain - safety stock, complete and in good condition. Picture quality was satisfactory for duping purposes; however, there were some scene-to-scene mistimings and a few flashes on shot changes. The sound quality was only fair. The recording of Mr. von Sternberg's narration was noisy, muffled and badly mixed with the rest of the track elements. The poor composite sound track was not an exclusive fault of the fine grain, but was common to all negatives and prints of the 1953 version.

2. Positive print of 1958 revised version. Made on safety stock, this print was in fair condition. Some footage was missing and there were a considerable number of splices, most likely caused by print damage over the years. The nude shots were spliced in and the track level and picture timing of these did not match the rest of the print. Some scenes had been deleted causing bad jumps in the sound track and noisy splices. Generally, the print was badly timed and much of the beauty of Josef von Sternberg's photography was lost; in addition, flashes occurred on many shot changes as the result of improperly placed timing notches. This will be discussed later in this report.

3. Original picture negative. The negative was comprised of about 80% safety and 20% nitrate film. All head and tail leaders were nitrate; this caused the head and tail scenes of most reels to have picture deterioration consisting

3. Original picture negative. (cont.)

of yellow-brownish or green colored stains and splotches. Many splices were coming apart.

There were edge tears and torn sprocket holes in reels two, three, seven, and eight with several very bad tears of one to two feet in length across the center of the picture. These had been repaired with ordinary Scotch tape. Some abrasions and scratches were noted on both base and emulsion in reels two, four, five, six, eight and nine. Reels two, three, four and seven had frames replaced with clear leader slugs. Damaged perforations were found on reels six and eight. Most timing notches were misplaced by two-three frames.

4. Original mixed sound track negative. This negative was completely on nitrate stock and showed signs of beginning deterioration. The general quality of the sound track was poor.

5. Original music track. This negative was completely on nitrate stock and was in good condition. The sound quality of the track was poor to fair with a

5. Original music track. (Cont.)

recorded-in hum. It did not sync exactly with any version of finished film.

6. Original Japanese dialogue/sound effects track negative. This negative was completely on

nitrate stock and was in good condition. The sound quality of the track was poor to fair with a recorded-in hum. It did not sync exactly with any version of finished film.

7. Original picture negative of 1958 nude shots.

This footage was on safety stock and comprised about 500 feet of miscellaneous nude scenes not used in either the 1958 or 1976 versions of the film.

8. Trims, outtakes. All on safety stock, these consisted of pieces removed from 1958 release prints. One set had been spliced together into a roll marked "Guide to Changes". Other rolls comprised fine grain positives and dupe negatives of various nude shots. A number of main title replacement negatives and fine grains for alternate titles were found. This material was useful

8. Trims, outtakes. (Cont.)

for determining how Mr. von Sternberg had modified the release prints in 1958; otherwise, it was not needed for the reconstruction.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ORIGINAL NEGATIVE, FINE GRAIN AND
1958 POSITIVE PRINT

Several differences between the negative, fine grain, and print were noted. The fine grain, as discussed earlier, represented the film as originally finished and released in 1953. The 1958 positive print differed from the fine grain in the following respects:

- Reel One: The original main title, THE SAGA OF ANATAHAN, had been replaced with a new main title reading, ANATAHAN. The sound track had been duped from a release print and the whole was just spliced in.
- At 386 feet, there was a cut of 11 feet, apparently to eliminate an unwanted line of narration:
 "All by himself - or was he all by himself?".
- Reel Two: At 73 feet, there was a cut of 85 feet;

Reel Two: (Cont.)

this has been replaced with a new nude sequence running about 90 feet showing the heroine taking a bath and being watched by Japanese soldiers. This new piece of film had a duped section of the original music track, but was missing narration and sound effects. The track level, and general looking picture density did not match the rest of the print. Narration missing:

("Some of us - sooner than the others, longed for something more than bread alone - and we watched her - and we watched each other.) The walls of the huts were thin. There were no secrets. She had been out collecting shells as usual - his way of paying her a compliment was to call her 'shell crazy'. The rains stopped - nothing lasts forever - though the waves of the ocean lasted long."

NOTE: Portion in parenthesis was re-stored in 1976 version.

At 347 feet, there was a cut of 16 feet, eliminating most of a shot of ocean waves and the following narration:

"Tides lifted and the tides fell.

Reel Two: (Cont.)

We watched the waves approach and we watched them recede, and we tried to find a meaning where there was none."

Reel Three: At 522 feet, there was a new nude shot (seven feet long) of the heroine as she is thrown to the floor, which replaced the old, less explicit shot; the duped sound track was the same as the original; the picture quality and sound level of the new piece did not match the rest of the print.

Reel Four: At 16 feet, there was a ten foot cut of a shot of the ocean which eliminated the following narration:

"We were free - free of all restraint - which only meant that we were slaves to our bodies."

Reel Five: At 80 feet, a new nude shot, seven feet long, was substituted for a portion of a shot of a group of men playing a musical instrument. The new shot consisted of the heroine standing nude on

Reel Five: Cont.

the beach in long shot. The sound track was duped and the quality of the section, both picture and track, did not match rest of print.

At 138 feet, a new nude shot, seven feet long, was added, showing the heroine running off beach; the sound track was completely silent.

At 383 feet, a cut of about five feet was made. This shot showed a man tuning a musical instrument.

Reel Six: At 68 feet, there was a cut of 14 feet which eliminated a shot of ocean waves and the following narration:

"But, he missed the most important point - the enemy was on Anatahan - man's genius to destroy himself was in clear evidence."

Reel Seven: There was no difference between the 1953 fine grain and the 1958 print.

Reel Eight: At 654 feet, there were two new shots of about ten feet each which replaced the old single shot of trinkets in the hut. The first new shot showed the woman's breasts as she was manhandled and the second new shot showed her falling to the floor, nude, behind an overturned chair. The sound track was duped; and once again, overall quality did not match the rest of the print.

Reel Nine: At 71 feet, there was a cut of 22 feet which eliminated three shots of soldiers in the woods calling, "Keiko! Keiko! Keiko!".

At $367\frac{1}{2}$ feet, a new nude shot eight feet long was substituted for an old shot of ocean waves. The new shot showed the heroine throwing off her clothes and walking into the ocean. The track was duped, etc.

When examined in 1975, the original negative matched the 1953 fine grain in every respect, except one:

Two of the nude shots of the heroine bathing in a tub, shot by Sternberg's Japanese cameraman and used in reel two of the 1958 version, were spliced into reel five of the picture negative. This is at the very same place that the 1958 print had a different set of nude shots of the heroine on the beach. The fine grain consisted of a single long take which showed men playing a musical instrument and singing. Apparently, Josef von Sternberg, in recent years, decided to make this one change in the original negative. This appears to have been done years after the fine grain was made.

In one other respect, the original negative no longer matched the fine grain - physical condition. Virtually none of the tears, splotches, repairs, etc. in the negative appear in the 1953 fine grain. Most of the damage must have been done in the late 1950's and early 60's.

WHAT TO DO?

Picture

Several options were available to Film Technology Co., Inc. The picture negative could just be matched to the fine grain,

thus restoring the film to its 1953 version. This could be accomplished by taking out the nude sequence in reel five and replacing the bad sections with dupe negative from fine grain, or:

The picture negative could be left alone, just fixing the damaged sections (ie: leave in nude bathing sequence in reel five) creating a new varient edition, or:

The negative could be matched to 1958 prints which had been assembled by Josef von Sternberg and the necessary repairs and replacement sections made from fine grain.

Sound

We could print from original nitrate mixed track negative, or:

Re-record from mixed positive track on the 1953 fine grain or 1958 positive print, or:

Make prints of original music, dialogue and effects tracks, transfer these to magnetic tracks, edit the mag tracks to match, then mix to make a new improved sound track.

According to Mrs. von Sternberg, her husband felt the 1958 revision of ANATAHAN was the final form in which he wished to leave the film. Therefore, she decided that we should proceed by changing the original negative to match the 1958 print. This meant cutting certain shots out, adding nude shots, repairing bad splices and tears in the negative, and replacing badly damaged sections with dupe negative made from the fine grain. Regarding the sound, it was decided to use the original track elements and re-mix to get a better result, because Sternberg's narration on the original 1953 sound track was very muffled and hard to understand. One major problem arose, however, when it was discovered that the original track for Sternberg's narration could not be found. It was then decided to make as good a recording as possible, by means of special filtering and equalization, of Sternberg's voice from the mixed track on the fine grain, then combine this voice recording with a re-mix of the original music, dialogue/effects tracks.

RECONSTRUCTION

Picture

The following operations had to be performed to prepare the

picture negative for printing:

First, missing footage had to be filled in in the 1958 positive print to make it useable as the workprint for the new 1976 version. To do this, we compared the problem sections of the 1958 print with the 1953 fine grain, and spliced in slugs of leader to bring the 1958 print out to length.

We had to determine which sections of the original negative were too badly deteriorated, torn or damaged to use. The negative was carefully gone over and cards were filled out for each reel listing all defects, however small; then, we marked portions of the fine grain which needed to be duped to replace damaged shots in the picture negative. These pieces (about 30 in all) were printed, and spliced into the original picture negative. The remaining small tears, bad splices, etc. in the negative were repaired by means of re-cementing, repair tape, etc.

At this stage, all nitrate picture negative in good condition was left in the negative, in order to get the best projection prints and fine grain possible for the new 1976 version. Before shipping the final negative

to AFI, the remaining nitrate pieces were replaced with safety negative duped from the fine grain.

The timing notches had to be standardized. The majority of the notches were consistently off by two and one half frames from the proper position. We could either fix all of these notches and make them standard, or we could leave these alone and move a smaller number of notches to make them consistent with these. The latter decision was made, and a special electronic delay unit was constructed to use when printing the film to avoid flashes on shot changes.

Finally, timing cards were prepared for the negative, cinex strips were made, and proper timing was determined for each scene in the film.

The picture negative was now ready to use for the first trial answer print.

SOUND

The 18 rolls of separate nitrate track negatives were

printed up and down on nine reels of safety positive film. Then these music and Japanese dialogue/effects tracks were transferred to separate rolls of magnetic stock while being carefully filtered, equalized and noise-suppressed. The recording of Josef von Sternberg's narration from the 1953 fine grain was given a similar treatment.

The music and dialogue/effects magnetic tracks were then cut to sync with the 1958 workprint. The narration magnetic track was also cut to fit, and pauses between words and sentences were slugged out so as to facilitate mixing this material with the other tracks. Skillful cutting and syncing of the narration track was imperative because bits of music and effects remained on the narration track and could have caused phasing problems in the final mix if not kept in perfect sync with the other elements.

After much testing and many rehearsals, the separate track elements - music, dialogue/effects and narration track - were mixed to make a combined final sound track on 35mm magnetic film. It was from this film that the final optical negative track was made.

PRINTING

After a complete cinexing and analysis of the cinex strips, the first trial print was made. At its first screening, many small, but significant exposure changes were made, and the timing cards marked accordingly. Because this print would eventually be sent to AFI, the decision was made to reprint certain reels and sections of reels so as to produce a smoother, more acceptable overall print.

Three release prints were made, all of excellent quality. Further refinements continued to be made while making print numbers one and two. Print number three came closest to perfection.

A 35mm composite fine grain, matching the number three release print in terms of timing, was also printed as protection and to use for making a 16mm reduction picture negative.

A 16mm reduction negative was made from the fine grain, and a 16mm optical sound track negative was transferred from the 35mm magnetic mixed track.

FURTHER NEGATIVE RECONSTRUCTION

After the above materials were made and before sending the original picture negative to AFI/LOC, all remaining nitrate footage was eliminated and replaced with new safety dupe negative made from the Eastman House (1953) fine grain.

TRAILER

A dupe picture negative and track negative for Josef von Sternberg's trailer for ANATAHAN were found in the trims and outtakes from the 1958 version. Both picture and track negatives were on safety stock so no restoration was necessary beyond replacing the main title (THE ONLY WOMAN ON EARTH changed to THE SAGA OF ANATAHAN).

Three 35mm prints and a composite fine grain were made from the negatives; the fine grain was then used to make a 16mm reduction picture negative, and a 16mm optical track negative was re-recorded from one of the positive prints.

DISPOSITION OF ELEMENTS

After finishing the reconstruction, all materials relating to THE SAGA OF ANATAHAN were disposed of as follows:

- (1) Returned to George Eastman House:
 - a. 35mm Safety composite fine grain (1953 version), nine reels.
- (2) Sent to Twyman Films, Inc.:
 - a. Three 35mm safety release prints (1976 version), nine reels each.
 - b. 16mm Reduction picture negative (1976 version), on five rolls.
 - c. 16mm Optical track negative (1976 version), on five rolls.
 - d. Three 35mm safety release prints of Trailer.
 - e. 16mm Reduction picture negative of Trailer.
 - f. 16mm Optical track negative for Trailer.
- (3) Sent to the Library of Congress/AFI:
 - a. First trial answer print - 35mm safety positive (1976 version), nine reels.
 - b. 35mm Safety composite fine grain (1976 version), nine reels.
 - c. 35mm Safety original picture negative (1976 version), nine reels.
 - d. 35mm Safety optical track negative (1976 version), nine reels.
 - e. 35mm Mixed magnetic track (1976 version), nine reels.
 - f. 35mm Safety composite fine grain of Trailer.

- g. 35mm Safety picture negative of Trailer.
- h. 35mm Optical track negative for Trailer.
- i. 35mm Safety positive, fine grain, and negative of extra footage (1958 nude shots), about 500 feet total.

(4) Returned to Mrs. von Sternberg:

- a. 35mm Safety workprint (1958 print modified for 1976 version).
- b. 16mm Magnetic track elements - music, Japanese dialogue/effects, narration, additional effects, and mixing sheets for reels one to nine.
- c. 35mm Safety up and down track prints - music and dialogue/effects tracks.
- d. Misc. 35mm safety trims, outtakes, etc. from Josef von Sternberg 1958 modification of film, and from 1976 reconstruction. Twenty-one cans.
- e. Quarter-inch protection tapes - narration, nine rolls.
- f. Quarter-inch protection tapes - final mixed track (1976 version), nine rolls.

(5) Returned to UCLA Film Archives:

- a. 35mm Nitrate picture negative trims - shots removed before sending picture negative to AFI. One can, approximately 900 feet.
- b. 35mm Nitrate track negative - music, nine reels.
- c. 35mm Nitrate track negative - Japanese dialogue/effects, nine reels.
- d. 35mm Nitrate track negative - mixed sound track (1953 version), nine reels.

AFI Film/TV Documentation Workshop July 1977