

The Reel Deal: *Branching out to classic black-and-white films*

Mark Van Hook
Columnist

I had an argument with a friend about last week's column, in which I reviewed the new DVD release, "Citizen Kane." My friend took a surprisingly negative view of the piece, arguing that the vast majority of students who attend Elon would have no interest in such an old film.

I argued that there is no movie more important to the history of American cinema than "Kane." Just because the majority of college students are too ignorant to care about such an important film doesn't mean I can't discuss it. This column isn't about pandering to the masses; it's about educating college students about great films and urging them to explore new types of movies in which they might otherwise not have an interest.

My friend brings up an interesting point though. The youth of this country have fallen into a depressing rut of entering a video store and heading straight for the "new release" wall, where they find sparkling new copies of the latest Hollywood blockbusters. Too many people simply refuse to watch any film made before 1970.

For example, I had a friend during my first two years of school who wanted to be a film student, and she considered herself extremely knowledgeable about movies. When I asked her, early on, if

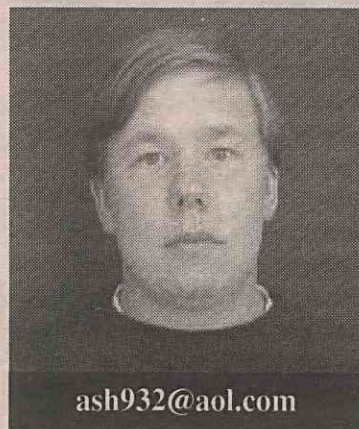
she had ever seen "Citizen Kane," she responded, "I can't stand black and white movies." Excuse me? You're a serious film student and you don't like black and white movies?

Here's an even better one case. A few weeks ago, I met a film major here that wanted to become a screenwriter. When I asked him about some of his favorite writers, he told me he was a big Paul Thomas Anderson ("Boogie Nights," "Magnolia") fan. I then asked him if he liked Billy Wilder (one of the cinema's all-time best writer/directors). His response, "Wait, he's that guy from the '50s, right?"

I'm not just talking about film students here, though. I'm addressing this to everyone out there who thinks that they love movies. The truth is that the cinema has existed for approximately 100 years now, and yet so many people simply want to ignore the first 70. In my opinion, this is like calling yourself a history lover, but ignoring everything that happened before World War II.

The stink of it is, that many, if not most, of world's best films were produced prior to the 1970s. Choosing not to view any of these films means denying oneself the pleasures of Welles, Hitchcock, Wilder, Kurosawa, Ford and hundreds of others who mastered the art of storytelling long before Spielberg and Scorsese.

And don't argue that you can't stand black and white movies.



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There's a common misunderstanding amongst college students that black and white automatically equals stuffy and boring. This couldn't be further from the truth. Black and white allows the viewer to focus on story and character rather than be distracted by pretty colors. Some of the greatest, most emotionally charged films ever made have been in black and white. I'm not one who goes around complaining that great movies don't get made any more. They do. Just look at last year, which gave us wonderful films like "Almost Famous",

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Transient ghost: *Elon alum encounters the supernatural world*

Roberta H. Poole '74
Guest Columnist

October. It is the month you really take notice that nighttime comes much sooner. The green leaves of yesterday, after a cold night are suddenly red, gold and brown. Driving down a lonely road at night, the crackle and crunch of leaves, make you glance warily in your mirror to make sure the only thing bouncing along behind you are the dry leaves.

It was on such a night, when whisks of fog drifted through skeleton trees that my daughter mentioned the fact that while the group at work swapped ghost tales she had nothing to share.

"OK," I said with a smile. "The next time the group wants to share ghost stories, you can give them this one. It's true.

"One Saturday morning a few years back, a mother got up to wash the dishes early. She enjoyed doing this in the quiet of the morning before anyone else got up. She tiptoed to her kitchen and got started.

It wasn't very long though before she felt something at her left shoulder. You know, like someone standing close to her. But, she knew no one else was up so she kept washing. She'd move around the kitchen, pick up more dishes on the table, scrape out something outside, but just as soon as she got back to the sink she'd feel that closeness. A time or two the feeling was so strong she almost glanced over her shoulder but knew no one was. She just kept on working.

"A little later she heard footsteps in the den and the creek a chair makes when someone sits down in it. But, nobody said anything. She figured one of her children was up and just didn't feel like socializing yet.

"Knowing someone was up, her mind moved to another thing and she wanted to ask the child a question. Not wanting to be loud and wake up anyone else, she shook the water from her hands and walked over to face the person.

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LISTINGS

At this time of year the clubbing scene is really busting a move.. The local clubs are holding theme nights and circuit parties. Check out these clubs and get your butt out on to the dance floor.

Fluid
Greensboro

N Club
Greensboro

Sky Bar
Greensboro

Warehouse
Greensboro

Odyssey
Winston-Salem

Insomnia
Chapel Hill

Gotham
Durham

Legends
Raleigh

CiCi's
Raleigh

Flex
Raleigh

The Paddock
Greenville

Confettis
Greensboro

HOLIDAY Follies

We want to hear your stories!

Send them to pendulum@elon.edu