March 16 Class Review Sofia Scoular

The class began with Clara's Image Presentation on the controversy behind the Metro Goldwyn Mayer Logo. MGM is a film company whose logo features a Lion roaring, was redone in 2015 but this time it features a lion being forced to lay down, connected to a drip, and with a screen of the logo in front of the lion. The image leads us to question whether this is how the image for the MGM logo was taken. In reality, this image (from 2015) was photoshopped and the original photo/video for the logo was taken with a trained Lion standing or sitting up. These images show the power of an image especially when it comes to leading to a movement or controversy.


MGM Logo

Photoshopped photo

Original Photo

How the original Logo photo/video was taken

The class discussions that follow include comments about even though the photoshop is not great, it is convincing especially in the way we consume photos. We look at photos really quickly and move on. We do not really analyze them or pause to think if it is true or not. The discussion also turned to Schiaparelli's recent collection that featured the head of a lion on a black dress. Some believed the lion was real and some that it was fake. The dress is an interesting comparison to the MGM Logo as in many ways you could consider both as trophies for humans to show off.

Celine's Image Presentation on Alan Turing and the Bombe Machine; a machine used to decrypt German messages during the war. The original photo is compared to the 2014 movie, The Imitation Game and how it does not tell the full story. The movie makes it seem as though it was the work of one man when in reality it was a whole team.
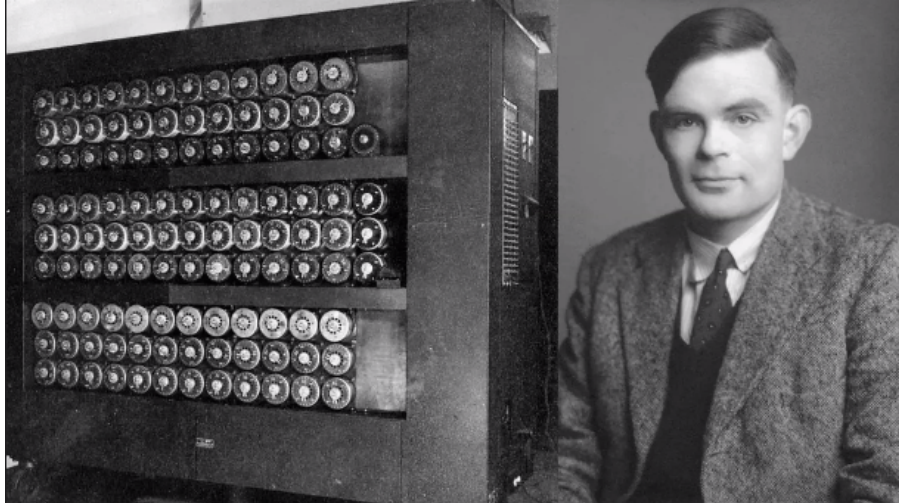
Alan Turner with the Bombe machine

Still from the imitation game

The class discussion led to the idea of movies based on a true story and the end credits where they show the original man/woman. There are always different ways to tell a story but it is never the full picture. The archival images at the end tend to make us believe that the story is even more true. The fast the original image is in black and white would also add to this narrative.

Eslie also presented her image on Politics: the Model First Lady and Fashion, archives of Côte D'Ivoire. Eslie speaks about the wives of presidents and how iconic they were/are especially when it comes to fashion. The wives almost seem like an accessory that enhances the presence of the president. She would get compliments about her style being afro modernism but when she was in Cote D'Ivoire she could always wear her traditional clothing and when not, she aimed still to wear something to represent her culture usually in the form of jewelry. Two images are also

presented where presidents swap wives as a symbol of kindness and unity but again bears the connotation of women acting as an accessory.

Wife of president and fashion icon

Swapping of the wives

Original photo presented

The discussion led to how it is difficult to tell whether they swapped wives or who they are married to and how the women are holding hands and making peace but the men are not. Women tend to symbolize the peace of a nation. We also spoke about how it does not feel very genuine and how even politics has many elements of theater and how this gesture of swapping wives is only a big message because this image is taken. What happens after the photo was taken? This photo in many ways symbolizes a new wave era with how known this image is.

For the remainder of the class we discussed panopticism and Marc Garanger's Algerie. The basis for this discussion was Foucault's Paper we had read previously titled Discipline and Punish where Foucault speaks on a prison system where everyone can see you but you can't see anyone and how this ideology applies to other aspects of society. As a class we discussed the COVID-19 Pandemic and how we experienced it in our respective countries as well as the prominent role of surveillance in our everyday lives. To add to the topic of surveillance we spoke about ID Photos and how they are used to manage us. The example given was on Marc Garanger's Algerie. He was sent during his military service to photograph the people of Algeria so the government could keep track of everyone. He took more than 2000 photos of Algerian women and through these photos he shows the intrusiveness and lack of consent needed to take these photos. This is extremely apparent in the way the people stare back at you and have to in some cases remove their veils in order for the photo to be taken.