

Not Much Fun

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“Seemingly released from the ‘burden of representation’, black artist now enjoy a sense of permission that contrasts with the gravitas associated with the frontier-effects of institutional racism fifteen years ago. However having won such individual freedom of expression (which was always normative for Euro-American modernism), the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme such that difference was almost unmentionable. What arose was a trade-off whereby the ‘excess visibility’ associated with both multicultural exhibitionism, and its sublation into corporate internationalism, was offset by mute or evasive positioning on the part of the younger artist who no longer felt ‘responsible’ for a blackness that was itself increasingly hyper visible in the global market of multi-cultural commodity fetishism.”

-Kobena Mercer (Rasheed & Cubbit & Ziauddin 2002, 118)-

In a recent series of pages in my postgraduate saga, I was told to discuss and critically evaluate a critical studies essay that speaks to one’s critical view of one’s critical concerns brought up in one’s critical practice, and in here I was advised about the potential critical observation one can have in regards to the over-visibility mentioned in the above quote. This ‘hyperblackness’ (Rasheed & Cubbit & Ziauddin 2002, 117) not only speaks to current critical discourses in the art world, where *multi’s* and *inter’s* are involved, but also of popular entertainment culture. I want to speak about blackness and its contemporary visibility; a visibility that in present culture is part of a circum that involves a particular history. Through the methodology of what a circle entails—going from point zero back to point zero, an inevitable re-surfacing, rotation—I will discuss racism in a area of popular language familiar to many—Hollywood films—and critically look at one of its recent off-springs through an acerbic disposition and bring about a difference in, and of, viewer perception, the actual receiving language and different activations from the received moment forward. But first I hope you have picked up on my induced comment on criticality (if such a word exists), the absurd over-use is deliberate and it is with this distance that I approach this essay. This is in no way to abate the strength and conviction this paper approaches, but to problematize the very notion of multiple criticalities in my everyday art-world involvement, an inevitable attrition of the ‘critical’ space I am in. So please if you would indulge my minor, yet personally major, contribution to throwing out this word, figuratively.

While sifting through potential ways of continuing my assigned essay, post meeting mentioned above, I approached a persisting disposition, and awareness, and related it to the 2002 Academy Awards—the grand visual display of the most homogeneous institution in entertainment outlets. My initial adulation was common, there had always been the same nominations, more so the same people nominated (by this I mean white people). As I am sitting, remote in hand, and comforting myself on the couch, I don’t have fantastic aspirations. My constitution in watching the event was neither aspirational or critical, it may simply have been to burn time. But, quickly I felt something in the air,

the television air. I sniffed it through the tube as if there was the much anticipated scent television (in time, I tell you, in time) I'd been hearing so much about in the next-waive, new-waive, same bullshit-waive adverts. Were there actually two main black actors being nominated for the two top categories? Yes; not necessarily sure why I did not pick up on the pre-show press, but there it was. So, before I continue on about my false jubilation, I must forward to recently; to when I was in the library and decided that I wanted to write this paper on that event, more particular the criteria for judging the nominators, and how I had found a present base for the concerns I wanted to forward.

In my research stage I compiled my efforts, of those that you will soon read about, and I delegated this weekend towards constructing my way through this labyrinth of an idea, that to be honest is still not too clear to me, but I digress. So, just a few minutes ago I was reading through a critical review of one of the film's whose actor received the nomination. Now don't get too excited, I will reveal this film in due time—actually I might do it in this very next line. *Training Day* (Fuqua, 2001) came out in 2001 and as you may have guessed by now is the movie I will be discussing here; but before I go into my pressing position on it, I will forward my next few paragraphs to a comment that was made by the well known Chicago Sun Times film critic, Mr. Roger Ebert. Mr. Ebert makes a very didactical observation in his critic of this film, and it actually comes out a bit unintentional (my guess, by his lamented use of language), good for me because here is where I will commence my disparaging disposition on this film—by the way you may not know it yet, but this is all about race, racism, racists, all that good stuff. Please! Please stay and read, I was just kidding a bit, there are other things involved as well, like: King-Kong, missionaries and even cakes; you do like cakes don't you, and icing? I figured you did.

Training day, a brief description:

Training Day is a Warner Brother's film, directed by Antoine Fuqua, a director I came to find out has also been a participant in many R&B and Hip Hop videos—this will be relevant later on in the essay. It stars the all-mighty (and I do mean that, I really like him) Denzel Washington, one of the most celebrated and gifted actors in Hollywood, and he's black, isn't that great! It came out in 2001, right around the appropriate time for nominations by the Oscars. The film is about police corruption, brutality, lawlessness and so forth. Set in Los Angeles, it entails a black cop that is the apotheosis of corrupt, and like Mr. Ebert says, "more corrupt than anybody ever thought the white cops were"(rogerebert.suntimes.com). Denzel Washington plays Alonzo Harris, the poster child for dirty policemen. So bad is he, that you can only use clichés: *bad to the bone*, *hard like rock*, *got anger in his blood* (I could go on you know!). He is accompanied by a new prospect by the name of Jake Hoyt, played by Ethan Hawke. Hoyt is the young cop who wishes to join the highly decorated narcotics squad. Like a new wet baby out in first wind, so is the young innocent cop, who just wants to 'serve and protect.' The film is an escalator taking viewers through different scenarios: car chases, police busts, a bit of sex, some shooting for no reason, and lots and lots of weapons, all which accumulate in the ultimate apex; the main bad cop being punished by the rookie's innocence and forthright—your standard Hollywood recipe. I will snake my way through this film and

come up with poisons that present a boomerang existence, when speaking about race; but first we will need to go back to Mr. Ebert's comment hinted at earlier, to begin to cipher through what is ultimately a race-base film, set to an obscure, subtle, almost hidden language—today's distribution tactics—by method of this over-visibility.

In Mr. Ebert's concluding statements he points out an observation that I take to be, on his part, a bit on the peripheral level. I will place this quote first and work my way backwards through the actual film pathology and write my instability with its perceived relegation, 'just another Hollywood film.'

Of Course you can't watch the movie without thinking of the Rodney King and O.J. Simpson sagas, two sides of the same coin, both suggesting the Los Angeles police are not perfect. I found myself wondering what would have happened if the movie had flipped the races, with rotten white cop showing a black rookie the ropes... it would have involved flipping the itinerary of the street tours, too; instead of the black cop planting the white boy in the middle of hostile non-white environments, you'd have the white cop taking the black rookie to the white drug-lords; gated mansions... Not as much fun.

-Roger Ebert (rogerebert.suntimes.com)-

“Not as much fun”

The enjoyment, the pleasure of watching a movie surely comes into Mr. Ebert's mind, but I must think about his position as a critic and one that speaks to a certain demographic (I am sure he is familiar with this), one who's make-up is Occidental. After watching the movie for a second time, I wanted to pin point what this “fun” was, or more importantly, where the signals for excitement laid. Race-bound here we go, for the excitement is immersed in the contemporary, chosen, black visibility—one of embellished urban (black) sub-cultures, as well what Hollywood continues its subscription to: the distribution of complex moralities in its white participants and the complex-less Others. This need not go further in criticality, for Mr. Ebert has given us an area of searchable playfulness, fun, and to make things fun you can't make it too complex, and what's more simple than a black actor as a demon stricken, jungle trotting, bestial policemen and an ever taming white ringmaster.

In the opening scenes, altruism is presented, one that includes the rookie cop in the comfort of a loving family pyramid—dad, mum and child. This scenario is urgently placed in our mind, as our supporting actor shows his humanity by showing apprehension in his first day of work. With a consoling wife holding a newborn in her arm (Newborn: innocent life, that which needs protection), he is advised he will do good, that most likely by doing his job, and following righteousness, he will be in the unmatched strength of moral's arms. Comforted by good consciousness, and let known his disposition is cared for, he is off to face the day, whatever it may bring. Sounds like fun? No, off course not, but this is known, hence why it is quickly dispensed—the image has been planted, the source of good has been established, all part of the recipe, nothing new. Time to meet the

MAN, the one who will hold this innocence in his hands, the threat (I am pushing it a bit; maybe he is not a threat, yet). Arrogant, straight forward and tricky, the head detective appears. With just a few words commencing his performance the characterization is emblemized. Now for some fun... fun I tell you. After discovering that there is no precinct, that the renegade detective seems to be his own office, uneasiness dawns on the conversation. The traditional play of new and old, rookie and veteran begins; with the usual over-talking, question asking by the veteran and the predictable shyness, got-to-fit-in-fast mannerisms by the rookie. But wait, something occurred that may as well have gone unheard had it not been for how many times I heard it in just a ten minute time period, the words "My Nigga." Street lingo has been introduced in to the plot, without hesitation on film, but surely thought out in script. The detective, street wise and savvy, speaks with the jungle tongue. I say jungle for it will be evident by the end of the film, and this paper, that this has been nothing but an Occidental look at the inner city jungle and one of its primates, 'wanna-be' alpha.

Continuing on... one of the Circles I want to take you through is how inter-resting (interestingly) they have used the word *Nigga*, so openly and so, I guess, accepted. On whose authority has this been permissioned? I will take a guess that it has something to do with the authority one takes when concerned with realism, the depiction of actual, the present, the Real. *My (mah) nigga* is being used all over the streets and so how authentic would such a plot be with this erasure? I will discuss this authenticity soon, I first want to focus on a rotation, a back to the start, a potential future closing of a Circle; one we are now $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through by the word *Nigga* being said to the white man. We have gone from the white man calling the black man Negro, then calling him *Nigga*, it then becoming everyday black inner-jungle vernacular (look up Richard Prior for the appropriation of this word into black culture), to now it being said to white folks— incredible I tell you. In the first opening car scene, and much throughout the film, the detective refers to the rookie as "My (mah) *Nigga*." Alluring enough it is welcomed by the rookie (or at least he doesn't show any indifference to it) almost with comfort. We should not be confused, for it is not a comfort that ajars a certain liberty of back-and-forthness of this word (viewers aren't ready for that yet, that will be in about 2years...?), it is a comfort of acceptance, an acceptance that by the gravitation of the plot the rookie shows his true chameleon ness to it and rethinks his position on. This acceptance, *they* (Hollywood) feel at liberty to include, is not meant to be questioned by us, it is slipped and blanketed by the arrogance of the head detective. His forwardness distills the gravity of the words new direction. Because you feel it is very much his jungle language, you accept the unmentioned disposition this word has, where it is now being directed and the obvious realization that the cop never attempts to cross this bridge of assimilation, as he does with many other things throughout the film. It is the morality plot that is thrown at us to feed on (just keep holding on I will discuss how this wonderful plot unfolds soon.). There is more than enough articles one has access to, regarding the contemporary views of this word usage, but few thoughts on the circulation of it towards "whitie." I won't use this time to expound my personal feelings on this discourse, but simply to point out an observation. It is easy to think that it speaks about the transformation (acceptance) in society's apathy towards black's appropriation of the word for some sort of de-powering and empowering of its historical context and it may even be comically viewed by some;

'oh look the white man is being called Nigga,' to take this observation would be a narrow calumnatory one, it limits the understanding of the pathologie's inevitable circumference; this is why focus should be concentrated towards the inevitable closing of this Circle, an eventual envisaged theatre with historical ties. Still, my countenance imports familiarity in the rookie's role and I soon identify it, it is one of the explorer.

Like his counterparts in history, the Modern ethnographer, the old style anthropologist or an even further whiteness (literally), the missionary, so is our 'innocent' rookie, carefully shifting through what appropriations he must make. The head detective continuously tells him such things as, "don't bring your wife to work, it's a good way of not returning to her" and "saying no (to drugs) out here will get you killed." Just open your archival footage of early missionaries, anthropologist, botanist, whatever other *gist*, and there you will see accompanying them is the helping donkey, the ultimate signifying monkey, the guide tourist, telling him "don't eat this food" or "wipe your ass with that plant, you might get a rash!!" Though we come to find out that the clever detective has plotted sequential activities to trap the rookie into a submissive role, where if he chooses to report the head detective for criminal activities he will be discredited (such as making him take what he things is pot, but ends up being PCP and getting him to unwind with some beer, intoxicating his blood for potential evidence), it is still not without the likeness of relic films brought back by ancient scientist to show a new species of monkey ass. Hollywood pictures function in the same way, especially when dealing with the Urban (the Black). "My Nigga" becomes the first of these signifiers translating the current metamorphoses of the old style jungle, the one filled with trees and swinging ropes and, wait! Hold on!! That's, uh...Tarzan (Van Dyke 1932), that's right. I will come to him shortly too.

I hope we are still having fun, for we are still in Mr. Ebert's jubilation. We have seen that one part of this fun is white men being called "Nigga"—crazy, but the white man has always wanted to join in the fun of being called "Nigga," and the other is that constant position of explorer. Like a child's young back yard camping experience, where he acts out being lost and rediscovering himself, so is our young rookie. Who wouldn't want to play the explorer, the adventurer, for real...right!?

Continuing with the *fun*:

The broadness of entertainment as always entailed merges, assimilation and borrowings. The most apparent is Hollywood and its constant money sign emblem, in constant search for its glow/shine. It is important to be aware of the current shifts in popular language and its contribution (\$) to the entertainment business. Such languages circulate and rotate visibility. Its most interesting subject, the exotic, has always been center attraction. Exoticism equals profit and profit equals emblemizing. When I say exotic I don't just reference that which seems to be of easy reference in one's mind (wild hair, long legged wild women; an example), but also what we've become accustomed to. It wasn't long ago that main Hollywood actresses, white as silk and pure as clouds, were typified as exotic. Posterized and framed, they excluded any peripheral abstraction; confusion laid to rest and readability manifested only through desire and delectation. The only step cautioned in

these contrived illuminations of Hollywood white exoticism (the actresses) was that they weren't faceless—the line bordered but not crossed was that of pornography (we have power, sex, fictional ownership, its all there). Now, to this we owe marketability, I must be careful with this because we all know the most profitable entertainment business in the world is that of pornography, but I am talking about the “clean” (you can laugh) Hollywood and its viewership, subscribed censorship, and its close alignment with television, radio, and newspapers. The merges that intersect their pathos and their benevolent masks, along with the real bilious of a front, is a principal position to look at in assessing the fun Mr. Ebert speaks of.—for this I must continue my attrition of *Training day*.

I've mentioned a particular in the language of the new jungle, but let's focused on a second. One cannot help but notice the soundtrack of the film. It plays so well with the jungle theme—jungle music for jungle scenes. Hip Hop is the name; reality was once its game. There was a time when this music spoke to political righteousness and responsibility. Artist like Poor-Righteous-Teaches, Public Enemy, and B.D.P. (Boogie Down Production) with front man KRS1, used the structure of sampling beats and constructed flowetic poetry to transform and manipulate one's position in government-built concrete jungles. But soon that changed. If it is marketable then put it on the market, and a sub-culture, filled with difference, appropriations, and discontinuities, to put it simply, 'freshness,' became a projected emblem, one filled with new exotics and full of palatable dips—but only to be appreciated from a distance. This has created a saturation of blackness, and its authenticity subscribed to black faces, especially if you are depicting the new jungle. This marketing potential has spread through this web of capital. It has stretched its arms far and beyond, to distances that can only be described as, worldly. In *Training Day* we have Detective Alonzo Harris, a baleful hip hop man of law, who knows not only what laws function in the jungle, but also what style reflects it. He say's in a scene, one depicting uneasiness by the rookie after witnessing the detective in lawless activities, "...to protect the sheep you need to go after the wolf. To catch the wolf you need to be a wolf." There is even a scene where he howls like a wolf and insights the rookie to do the same, finally bringing the rookie to animal stage—again the jungle. But all this is done with style, the new “Hip Hop style.” With a platinum metal chain, long leather coat and two power-house 9mm pistols under each of his arms, he demonstrates, while “supping” up his car and switching the hydraulics on, that he is part of this inner-city scene, that his language is not different or austere. This visibility is what we are meant to find cool, and stylish. Blackness has taken one of the most hated police departments in the U.S. and made it cool, like only a black man could.

As if the street scenes in south side Los Angeles, the detective's Hip Hop styled mannerism or the constant track pumping forward the latest urban (black) music singles, was not saturation enough, you can't have a “hit” urban (black) objective film without cameos of that urban (black) world—just would not be “credible enough.” I will point out one cameo (though there are more then three you can choose from), his activity in it and why, I wonder, it was not played by a REAL actor??? Snoop Dog-y, Dog-y, Dog-y, or is it one Dog?! Now here is a Hip Hop artist hat is of pinnacle status in popular music culture/business. The man sits on millions and though he spent much effort removing

himself from the jungle, *you can't run from the jungle...you can't hide from the jungle* either, in short, this is what his cameo presents. What better part to play than that which you know most, or that which you have worked so hard to run away from—a drug dealer. Please, please, stop your shock! He is only playing, or how they say, acting. I wondered about the many black actors waiting for roles in big time films, whose whole careers have been in acting classes practicing and honing the skills needed to say, “I ain’t scared no cop. I ain’t got notin on me.” I feel for the constant black practitioner, the professional actor, striving for action-hood but being passed over by a much better actor, Snoop Dog—what a pity. Here is a man that has claimed to own cars worth upwards of 300,000 dollars each, but is playing a handicapped drug dealer, shown on film throwing up narcotics swallowed while fleeing from the police; yet another wonderful depiction of a Black millionaire. Oh, how wonderful we are doing with showing the gamut our black race! What language is here? What fun are we introduced to—it is one of clarity. So clear is our dumbness that we only measure the worth of a film by its cameos, at least if the performances were worth it, or even good, then one might see something more than pure marketability contributing to over visibility without true ability. I don’t want to forget to mention the director of the film’s inter-resting imagery. Mr. Antoine Fuqua has not only directed numerous Snoop Dog music videos, but was select to direct this film based heavily on his video depictions of “street (jungle) life.”

A racial throw back:

This film in its most narrative sequentialness is a throw back to an all too familiar other film, *King Kong* (Cooper & Shoedsack 1933). In a very simplistic explanation, of this most fantastic (perceived) and “unforgettable” (we will see just how unforgettable) epic film, I will focus the racial plot of *Training Day* to that of the big Kong, a film directed by Merien Cooper & Ernest B. Shoedsack. It is, guilelessly put, a movie about a man who goes to the depths of the African jungle in search of lucrative objects (this can include people) and comes across a big black monkey. One that through numerous warnings given by the “locals” of its danger is dismissed (mind you there obvious respect for the creature is taken as a position of attenuated balls), he has money on his mind, he is Hollywood. But the cloud of profitability mists an obvious reality, the immensity of this character. This large ape is taken from its home land where it is “king” and brought to the civilized jungle of bricks. Here the ape is affixed to white powder, the paleness of innocence, the flavor of all delicacies—the white women. To its fault, he should know not to mess with “white folks property,” (yes property, for the white man has never seen his women as anything more), but like a big dummy he does, and has to be killed. The threat of the big black monster is averted and then he is destroyed; so whiteness, again, prevails. Like the big ape of Africa, striped and used, so were once the descendants of detective Harris. Through his historical disposition, he has been placed in a new jungle, one where he has taken the falsity of thinking he has domesticated, actually feeling like he knows it. What we come to find out is that no jungle inhabitant knows the jungle better than he who is foreign and white. With all the hoopering-and-hollering the detective does, it only comes across as mere grunts from an oversized primate, the hairy giant who comes to a predictable cabal. Off course he must die, for he is bad, right? Or must he die because he is too knowledgeable; the kind of knowledge that has allowed

him to navigate through a system that only a few are handed access to. To balance out this potential perception he is pinned with an attitude that is that of a head alpha male. One that is conditioned to us in such a way that we are actually led to believe that he is so poisoned even his own peoples need to turn on him, which they eventually do. Allowing this altruistic rookie to navigate through the alpha male's jungle with impunity. What we have is the oldest scenario in the white fictional/non-fictional narrative. We have a morally good, innocent rookie, brought to the pedals of demonism, to the very gates of blackness only to conquer and defeat its menacing bane. We, those that have watched this film, will not soon forget the words of our bilious protagonist, "King Kong ain't got shit on me," and I guess the way he was bulleted down by more than ten white men in the middle of the streets he so infamously called his, was no more than a match to King Kong's fall from the biggest building (at that time) in the world, a phallic symbol the white man wished true.

Back to the real

Hollywood is Hollywood one can state, but one that controls entertainment is most likely the one who perpetuates signifiers. Through a very old narrative the same is being said and pushed as constructs of good. Everything else is profitability. The over visibility of blackness in popular culture right now is nothing more than image, image without words. The popularity of slang, Hip Hop wardrobe and such, is limited at best, subscribing to narrowness and superficial surfaces. Like so many attenuated revolutions, this once prominent sub-culture of blackness has been given a money sign; its capital interest is worldly. This current fascination with blackness is nothing new, though its hyper visibility is. It is not new because white societies have always had a hatred for its complete opposite, so blacks have always been in the mind, so much so that it easily subscribes to fetishism. This fetishism has found a playground. One that white boys and white girls can dip their exteriors in and play dress up. But even this has changed and moved towards a new step in the Circle. This prancing about in someone else's closet is no longer restricted to white girls and white boys, for they only represent a piece of the potential money/profit pie. With kids in Hong Kong waiting days in lines to see MTV's new Hip Hop artist of the month on tour, Australian boys gathering every Friday night to "battle" one another with lyrical skills, Pakistani boys in South London pumping their verves with Snoop Dog's latest beats and West Brazilian girls dying their hair blond to match Beyonce's interchangeable weaves, we need to think of this dipping as an accessed-ability—the ability to be able to access blackness as if shopping for different color shoes. *They* are building materiality, labeling and signaling objects for placement in store windows. So are we not just speaking about the Objectification of blackness? I ask this question with a serious tone, because it is at the base of this beguiled construct. Nothing has changed if we view it from this perspective.

Blackness, in western history, has always been for sale. Examples such as slavery, circus shows, world fares, primitivism in the fine arts, come to mind; but it is a sale through deliberate pickiness, one that has never done anything for the perception of black persons in the world; a perception that sits firmly within racial constructs imposed by the Western protagonists. The codes of action, uniforms on the players, are what have

shifted/changed. No longer the blatant, the outwardly, now the hidden, obscure are mechanisms for perpetuation. All that is shown is the extreme. Like a layer of icing on a cake, it can blind the potential eater of its true contents. What we have now are multi-layered cakes, with black icing adorning bakery shops—the goodies are for sale. With a clear chance to slice cakes open, at least, at minimum, for display, the bakery shop conceals its product, for fear of disclosing the untrue label it's been dispensing, the false recipe it's been advertising. This icing is an artifice to create exterior pleasures, like trying on clothing—an exterior act. They are not meant to activate interior notions of black person's. It is an exterior language that doesn't challenge the prefixed constructs of this population. Don't think for once when these cakes are bought they are eaten. Like some hidden plague, at the first sign of hunger they only lick the access icing—for to cut open a slice and eating it whole, would mean more than just enjoying blackness, it would mean feeling its pain and admitting one's complicity.

Here is where the same language is used and where other's would want new languages to be used (when speaking about racial differences), but we just can't. **Blacks are still the most discriminated peoples on the face of the earth.** This is a bold and strong statement (literally) that cannot be made any clearer. This is a perception that has been prescribed by a visual, the hardest and most baleful method of branding; one that has other cultures following patterns and traits used by such prescriptions. It is not an uncommon occurrence now to have Middle-Easterner's calling black people niggers, Somalian Refugees in London calling blacks lazy, Koreans in Los Angeles calling blacks monkeys, Chinese tourists stereotyping blacks in New York City; there are many more examples that can be used. Black visibility in the world market is limited towards information that is simple and basic, so the same methods of harvesting strands of blackness that were used then (historically) are being used today. There is a reconstruction of old—dated constructs for new suitabilities—ones that involve capital manipulation of the populous mentioned above. This reconstruction is a relic of pure racism, pre-sixty's abatement of those imaged with most difference. The continuation of labels, or new adaptations called post-racist, political-correctness, multi-cultured, international-communities, hyphen-nationalities, all these new partnered words, should not exclude the unresolved, the lamented inertia we are still within when relating to the disposition of blacks. We (blacks) are only in a moment of over-popularity, chained heavily with capital interest. What was slavery all about again? Capital interest. Such moments are fleeting and if not directed by those of social change, like the beginnings of Hip Hop, then its course inevitably falters. Black people generated the forwardness for such visibility, but lost its potentials when capital was introduced—and capital has been the white man's principal concern, so much so that now majority of young minority groups feel its their principal to. Sell a false dream, package it well and they will buy—Over visibility with no ability.

Mr. Denzel received the Academy Award's leading nomination, that of Best Actor and won. "The first time an African-American won a best actor award since 1963, when Sidney Poitier received this Oscar" (www.Indiana.edu/~bfca/features/oscars.html). This

brings me to think about Mr. Denzel's previous nominations, which were both as leading roles, but resulted in no wins. The first was *Malcolm X* in 1992 and the other *The Hurricane* in 1999. What's familiar about these two films is that they were both portraits of strong, determined social commentators, cogent thinkers and respected individuals in their communities; individuals that influenced change and redirected history and they were both black. The other point, as I end this essay, is that in both films he played life telling stories, literally, depicting their individual characters through their life span, an activity by an actor that is rarely done.

... Almost forgot (not really), be on the look out for King Kong 2005, by Paramount Pictures, with Tarzan as the hero (the last bit with Tarzan is pushing it). Off course the Saga continues...

Also check out these comics called *The Boondocks*, (news.yahoo.com/comics/uclickcomics) by Aaron McGruder; a very young African-American social commentator. Sometimes a simple strip points out so much...



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