Notions of Authorship and the Reception of *Once Upon a Time in America*

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Current approaches in the study of the historical reception of film suggest that there is no such thing as a fixed text, that a text is a function of -- and extends into -- historical context. Tony Bennett's study of James Bond, for example, has done a convincing job of unmooring a text from notions of a set material manifestation of text and a set, unified author. Michael Budd has further illustrated the ways in which interpretation varies with respect to context. Given this approach to reception, the question I want to pose, particularly with respect to film, is what happens to the concept of the author of a text? How (if at all) does the historical spectator understand the idea of an author, and what kind of communication, if any, exists between the historical, biological being who creates a work of art (a being whom I will call the historical author) and the spectator if interpretation is a function of a variable context?[1] The purpose of this essay is to suggest possible answers to these questions through a close analysis of American reviewers' responses to a film text that poses direct questions about the identity of the author: the Ladd Company's shortened American release print of *Once Upon a Time in America*.

Shooting on the film began on June 15, 1982 ("Leone's 'America' "), and within a year it was evident that it would likely exceed the 165 minutes director Sergio Leone was contracted to deliver to the Ladd Company, the distributor for the United States and Canada ("Negative Preview" 3).

Company executives initially considered releasing the footage as two films, but decided in August of 1983, after watching 165 minutes of fine-cut footage, to go ahead with releasing a single film. Final running time was expected to be 180 to 210 minutes, and one executive stated, while praising the director's work, "No one wanted cuts" ("Leone's 'America'"). However, the picture soon began to change. By December, executives were aware of exhibitor resistance to carrying such a lengthy film (Beck). Leone eventually delivered a 225-minute cut, involving numerous leaps forward and back in time, which the Ladd Company previewed to a Boston audience on February 17, 1984.[2] The film received an extremely negative reaction, apparently due in part to its violence, running time, and temporal structure, and a Washington, D.C. preview scheduled for the next day was abruptly canceled ("Negative Preview" 36).

On March 14th, *Variety* reported that the Ladd Company had held another screening, in Burbank, and that this time they had used a shortened (180-minute) cut in which the film's events had been placed into chronological order. An executive claimed that this screening had gone "infinitely better" than the other and that an additional 10 to 15 minutes of material might be removed before the company released the film. Leone expressed concern after reading this *Variety* report, not so much over the film's being pared down as over its being restructured, noting how such changes "would seriously damage my film" ("Sergio Leone"). A restructured film continued to be previewed, however, and Leone continued to speak out against it. He claimed that the Boston preview was not properly arranged -- viewers were not informed about the film's length or its subject matter -- and disowned the shorter film, stating, "Because my film is about memory, when they take away my flashbacks, it is no longer my film" (Siskel 17).

A Leone-approved 227-minute cut premiered at the Cannes Festival on May 20, 1984 (*Once Upon a Time*), while the Ladd Company's 143½-minute film opened across the United States on June 1st ("Once Around"). After the Ladd print did disappointing early business, *Variety* reported that Leone claimed the print (which he did not see) was "a trailer, a commercial" of his film and that it was "unrecognizable and incomprehensible"("Leone Speaks"). A Leone-approved *Once Upon a Time in America* did finally open in the United States, apparently due in part to pressure from American critics, premiering at the New York Film Festival on October 12, 1984 and then moving to Manhattan's Gemini 2 Theater for an exclusive run ("Leone Thanks"). Leone trimmed 1½ minutes from this print so that it would conform to MPAA requirements for an "R" rating, and it reportedly ran 218 minutes.[3]

The film whose reception I have chosen to focus on (to reiterate: the Ladd Company's 143½-minute *Once Upon a Time in America*) poses a special case for more than simply the fact that its authorship has been called into question. As the above account might suggest, this particular controversy received a wide, detailed coverage in the news media from its

start -- not only in trade papers, but in popular dailies and national magazines as well. As early as May 22, 1984, a writer in the *Los Angeles Times* was able to refer to the "legendary" battles between Leone and the Ladd Company (Pollack, " 'Paris' "). Indeed, the entire project received heavy American media coverage from the beginning of the shoot because of the popular stature of the director and the stars (especially Robert DeNiro), the immensity of the production, the fact that period photography was being done on-location in Brooklyn, and the occurence of an uproar of national proportions over the importation of foreign crew members for the Brooklyn shoot, prompting President Reagan to ask the Department of Labor to investigate the situation ("IATSE Opposes"). It is safe to assume, then, that almost all the American critics had some familiarity with the project (and the controversy over distributor editing) before seeing the film.

Another important given in the case study is that director Leone had fairly strong creative control over the project up until the point when the footage was delivered to the American distributors. Leone himself co-wrote the screenplay, after selecting the story on which it was based; he was consulting Norman Mailer on the writing as early as 1970 (Pollack, "Rape Scenes"). Leone paid considerable attention to testing and selecting his cast and crew, and was able to be exacting about potentially costly production details as well (Hamill). Leone's own confidence in his control over the production is suggested by comments he made shortly after the shooting began, when discussing why he was returning to directing after a spell as a producer:

> The creative producer is a bygone figure even in Italy. Here, less than a handful could qualify and most of them have migrated. In Italy, even a modest director is considered a film author, inaccessible to give and take. The producer and the director are now worlds apart. (" 'Once Upon' Rolling")

Clearly, the great extent of directorial control (before the final cut) in this special case will ultimately help streamline the complex issues involving authorship raised here.

Finally, I do not propose to do a "scientific," statistically sophisticated study of the American reviews of the film. I am not using a "random sampling" of reviews, but rather looking at what is readily accessible in public and university libraries in New York City, a selection that is institutionally dictated.[4] Nevertheless, my sample, consisting of about 45 reviews and critically-oriented features from newspapers and magazines across the country, does include the writing of people with a wide range of academic, social, and political orientations, from Vincent Canby of the *New York Times* and Ed Sikov of the *New York Native* to Phil Kloer of the *Florida Times-Union* and Catherine Rambeau of the *Detroit Free Press*. Another potential pitfall in my method is the possibility that what the reviewers publish does not accurately reflect their notions of authorship. However, I do not claim to be conducting a definitive study of critical response in this area; rather, I am doing a close analysis of certain written responses to a problematic film in order to reveal a range of current

assumptions about authorship and in order to examine some of the means by which an author is constructed.

In reading over these reviews a number of distinct trends quickly become apparent. The most immediate and significant of these is that a majority of reviewers, whether praising or condemning the film, acknowledge that the final cut was out of Sergio Leone's control and then go on to analyze the text on the assumption that Leone is nevertheless its author. Vincent Canby's June 1984 review offers a prominent example of this phenomenon. Canby opens his piece with a description of the historical personage named "Sergio Leone" and indicates that the film at hand is of his making, noting, "What is not expected is that his name should be attached to a film that makes such little narrative sense." Canby then briefly discusses the shortening of the film, using the passive voice and thus avoiding any mention of who did the shortening, noting only that "it seems to have been edited with a roulette wheel." The review continues with a short, largely negative description of the film in which Leone is only referred to once (as one of six creators of the screenplay) and ends with a short statement reaffirming Leone's authorship.[5]

The ostensible contradiction in Canby's approach (assigning the authorship of the film to an historical person who, in fact, lacked control over the selection and ordering of the scenes presented) comes to the fore when he describes the screenplay written by Leone and his co-writers as opening with a scene which, in actuality, opens the shorter film but not the longer one. This suggests that the "Leone" Canby writes about has been constructed by him at least partly from the experience of watching a specific film projection; to this extent Canby's Leone appears to fit in with the notion of an implied author constructed from the text, as postulated by Wayne Booth, among others (151).[6] However, the issue is complicated by the fact that Canby refers to this same Leone as the actual, physical personage who has worked on a number of westerns and resides in Italy -- a man who has denied authorship of a film Canby has seen. The reviewer manages to get around this disjuncture, to retain his concept of a single, unified, historical Leone as author, through the rhetorical strategies of using the passive voice in a discussion of editing, separating his discussion of Leone from his discussion of the film, and ignoring certain historical information he has available to him.

Canby's subsequent October 1984 review of the New York release of the longer film contains nothing either to affirm or deny this conception of the author of the shorter film. He does now make it clearer that the editing was done by someone apart from Leone -- "it was pulled to pieces by someone's bare, greedy hands" -- but views the prints he has seen as a "shortened form" and a "restored version" of the same film, thus retaining the idea of a single historical author, and a single authoritative text.

A majority of the other reviewers similarly discuss what is clearly a hybrid historical/implied Leone as the sole author of the shorter *Once Upon a Time in America*, using (intentionally or not) a variety of means to bridge

the gaps in their conceptions of author. One extreme strategy is simply to overlook the historical incident of truncating; Howard Kissel of *Women's Wear Daily* appears to be the sole proponent of this approach. Quite a few critics, however, choose to make the issue of re-editing vague (as Canby does) or to mention it and then simply drop it, thus avoiding having to deal with a prospectively complex conception of authorship. *New York* magazine's David Denby typically declares that what remains after the Ladd Company's trimmings are "semi-coherent fragments," then goes on to discuss the film and its emphases as belonging to Leone, its plot mechanisms and its atmosphere as a function of the screenplay by Leone and his collaborators.

Another common means of getting around the problem of a questionable authorship (sometimes combined with those described above) is to argue that the issue of re-editing is moot because Leone's direction is not of a high quality to begin with; the negative aspects of his authorship, in other words, permeate both films. For example, although the *New York Post*'s Rex Reed does describe some deleterious effects of the "Cuisinart approach to editing," including a "ruining of Leone's style and texture," he ultimately takes the position that the film is Leone's and the film is bad. Philip Wuntch of the *Dallas Morning News* similarly claims that it evidently "never was a good film at any length," summing up his review by stating:

> Film scholars will probably be wrestling with *Once Upon a Time in America* for the next decade, wondering what the complete film was like and pondering to what extent the editing distorted it. There must be something better to think about.

Again, the controversy is made to seem irrelevant; authorship transcends montage.

Some reviewers similarly downplay the importance of restructuring as it applies to authorship by noting that the Leone who authored the "spaghetti westerns" is not generally strong in piecing together narratives, that plot is not what one looks at in his films in any case. Thus, the auteurist approach is invoked as a means of keeping intact the sense of an autonomous author, even in a case where there has been significant outside intervention in the final form of a work. In discussing the issue of the "butchered version," the *Village Voice*'s Andrew Sarris declares, "Leone has never been a master of narrative," while the *Virginian-Pilot*'s Mal Vincent tells us, "Logical plotting is not his forte even under the best of conditions," and that therefore, "One suspects that Warner Bros. has done the film good instead of harm..." My point is not that these observations are inaccurate, but that their presence in this context facilitates a discussion of the re-edited film as authored by Leone. It follows logically that many critics focus on aspects of the film not closely tied to the storyline when attributing the film to Leone; that is to say, they deal with elements *not* immediately affected by cutting, such as dialogue and visual style. The lengthier reviews generally open and close with discussions of Leone and of the editing controversy, but absent Leone from the paragraphs describing plot that make up their bulk.

A natural corollary of this overwhelming tendency to retain some concept of a unified historical author is a propensity to describe the two physically different films as one text and its shorter variant, rather than as different texts; if the shorter film is simply a different version of the longer film, then the author of the one must be the author of the other. Most reviewers (Canby, for example) use terms such as "long version" (or "long form") and "short version" to designate the two films. Stephen Hunter of the (Baltimore) *Sun* describes the shorter film as not a "bad film, only a ruined one," which is to say that it does not possess its own qualities, only an alteration of another's. One cut is a "condensed," "compressed," or "abbreviated" manifestation of the other. It is interesting to note that, particularly among critics sympathetic to the figure they designate as Leone, there is a trend towards describing the shorter film in terms that personify it; the film has "left its heart on the cutting-room floor," it has been "mutilated," "emasculated," "castrated," it has "gone soft." What this seems to indicate -- particularly considering the designations of the film as masculine -- is an identification of the film and an historical male author. Indeed, one newspaper feature on the controversy surrounding the film is tellingly entitled "A director wounded by final cut." Thus, an organic, whole author is preserved through a yoking to an organic, whole artwork -- and vice-versa.

A few of the reviews do suggest alternate notions of authorship (and text), but on the whole, these suggestions are not followed through. Kenneth Shorey of the *Birmingham* (Alabama) *News* brashly opens his review of the film by saying, "I can't very well review Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America* because I haven't seen it. Neither have you." It soon becomes clear, however, that Shorey does not believe that there are two different works at hand but only one work, authored by Leone and then altered by the Ladd Company so as to cause it to lose its identity as a work: "This isn't a movie: It's what's left of a movie." (He does, in any event, review "what's left" as Leone's film.) *Time*'s Richard Corliss goes a bit further in this direction, starting his review with a description of the first scene of "Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America*" and following this with a description of the first scene of "the Ladd Co.'s *Once Upon a Time in America.*" He immediately shifts from this conception of two *separate* films, referring to "the two versions of Director Leone's $28 million gangster epic" in the next paragraph. Corliss then embarks again on a description of "both films," but quickly switches back to a singular "film" from a single source, Leone. This Leone is at once an implied author constructed out of the text, an *auteur* of the text at hand and of various "spaghetti westerns," and an historical personage whom Corliss quotes in his review. David Ansen *(Newsweek)* similarly wavers between referring to two different films and two versions of a single film (the shorter an "injured whale of a movie"). What is interesting about his review, for our purposes, is an implicit acknowledgement of a split in authorship. Specifically, in writing on the shorter film's ambiguity of character, he asks, "Does Leone recognize this [ambiguity] -- or did he in the complete version?" Thus, there are two implied

Leones, one existing prior to the other. However, Ansen keeps with the status quo by collapsing these two implied authors, along with an historical Leone, into one.

Although the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s Peter Stack does not explicitly suggest a diffused authorship, his lengthy review leaves open the possibility for one: the piece uses Leone's name only once (referring to the "full version of this Sergio Leone movie") and makes numerous references to the distributor's cuts, concluding with, "I think the movie was supposed to have a great sweep of humanity in it -- but it got swept away by the weasles at the Ladd Company." It is true that Stack is technically referring to the two film texts as one, somehow connected to Leone, yet the implications of absenting Leone's name from his discussion and focusing on the re-edit remain strong.

Only two of the reviews in the sample appear to contain consistent, explicit notions of two different texts with two different authors. *Horizon*'s David Fryxell states that the release of a longer *Once Upon a Time in America* amounts "to an altogether different motion picture." Fryxell assigns Leone the authorship of the longer film, while suggesting that Leone's direction is simply one element among many in the shorter film:

> What American audiences saw this summer, chopped for studio-executive attention spans and re-edited as though by a berserk Cuisinart, was no breakthrough... [It] combined Italian artistry (Leone, cinematographer Tonino Delli Colli, and art director Carlo Simi) and a fistful of American stars (Robert De Niro, Elizabeth McGovern, James Woods, Tuesday Weld), but the result had no more style or verve than a can of Italian-American spaghetti-o's.

This wording implies that, if anything, the shorter film is a commercial package, the product of the (re-editing) distributor.

Mary Corliss, writing for *Film Comment*, goes the furthest in suggesting a split in authorship. Corliss pointedly and consistently refers to Leone only as the author of the longer film, describing him (along the lines followed by most of the reviewers) as an historical figure and the author of a series of westerns, and also as an implied author constructed out of the longer text (as, for example, when she states, "Leone shoots the scene with ruthless precision"). She strongly suggests that the Ladd Company's Alan Ladd, by virtue of directing the uncredited editor Zach Staenburg in his recutting of the film, is the author of the shorter work. Interestingly enough, she describes Ladd (like Leone) as both an historical figure and an implied author, speculating (largely on the basis of what she has seen in both texts) about the artistic decisions of the creator of the "Ladd cut." Corliss does not go so far as to deny Leone's contribution to this cut. She feels he has supplied the quality raw material that it has been formed out of, and in fact spends much of her discussion describing this raw material and Leone in relation to it. In her final analysis, however, Leone's film is but "the massive, flawed marble block out of which Zach Staenburg sculpted a superior movie."

To return more directly to our question of how American reviewers conceptualize the author of a film, it begins to appear that the tendency is to see this figure as a single personage combining both the characteristics of a theoretical author implied by the film within its historical context and an historical figure suggested to the viewer through such contextual channels as news reports, photographs, interviews, and, conceivably, personal encounters. Still more significant is the strong inclination in this case to take the director to be the author, even if the director does not have final control over the look of the film. Recalling our premise that "[r]eadings are determined not only by the structuration of the text, but by the subjective and social situation into which that text is inserted" (Budd 41), it seems clear that this understanding of director as author is closely related to the contemporary predominance of an auteurist approach to interpretation, introduced to American reviewers by Andrew Sarris and others in the sixties.

Briefly, this approach, which originated in film studies in the work of the writers of *Cahiers du Cinema*, values film as a medium of *personal* expression; it follows, then, that the most valued auteurs are those who bring a truly personal quality to their films, rather than merely working as skilled technicians (see Buscombe). A comment in a *Washington Post* feature appearing in December 1982 clearly reflects such an auteurist attitude toward Leone in America: "Sergio Leone has the most recognizable style of any director living today" (Williams). The reviewers' conceptualization of the film as an organic unity (albeit injured) is symptomatic of the auteurists' Romantic notion of art and artist as related wholes -- a notion which, as Ed Buscombe has pointed out, has been particularly stressed by Sarris (77). Leo Braudy has argued that many critics' aversion to the notion of a collective authorship originates in a Romantic bias against mechanical, less "personal" artforms, in apprehensions about a modern, industrialized society in which individuality is obliterated. Moreover, film, due in part to its reproducible nature, tends toward the commercial and the popular, the Romantic antitheses of "serious art," and thus its retention of individuality, of its potential for expressing a "personal vision," is crucial to its integrity as art (1-9, 108).[7] In the reviewers' downplaying the restructuring of the original narrative, one can also detect an abuse of the cine-structuralist variant of auteurism as put forth by Peter Wollen, which conceptualizes an auteur in terms of a system of repetitions and differences evident across a group of film texts; since Leone's previous films have shown a weakness in plot, these reviewers essentially argue, Leone's plotting is not a significant element of Leone's system, and hence its loss does not throw the film's authorship into question.

It is important to note that while American auteurism does not require assignation of authorship to a particular *director* (e.g., Spielberg is often discussed as an auteur even when he is not directing), it does require assignation of authorship to a personage historically associated with a certain system of filmmaking practices. In the case of the film at hand, the horizon of expectations[8] is such that that personage is clearly Leone, rather

than Ladd. Leone has long been associated with his "spaghetti westerns," as is evidenced by the references to them throughout the reviews. Articles in trade papers and other publications associating the Leone figure with this film were published for years before the film's release. An auteurist reading is further anchored through indications in the immediate context of promotional materials;[9] the press kit touts the shorter film as a clear representation of Leone's "personal vision" of America (Sabulis), captions under stills refer to the film as "Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America*," and the second credit in the film -- before the title -- reads "A Sergio Leone Film." Even the credit listings accompanying many of the reviews suggest an *a priori* institutionalization of the notion of authorship; the listings as a matter of course generally exclude the (in this case pivotal) editor(s) and distributor. As this study has suggested, the contextual mandate for such an authorial approach is so strong as to force reviewers to use various rhetorical means to reconcile an accepted auteur associated with a previous group of films and an historical person who clearly lacked a significant degree of control over the final form of the film at hand.

A more general trend toward uniformity in journalistic reviews can also be seen as contributing, to some degree, to the overall uniformity in conceptualizing the author. Less widely read critics are not usually noted for their attempts either to break away from standards set by the better-known, oft-quoted heavyweights or to establish alternative reading strategies; instead, success for these critics appears to be a function of their absorption of popular trends. It it interesting to note, then, that while Canby states that the film "plays like a long, inscrutable trailer for what might have been an entertaining movie," Hunter on the same day states that it "looks like a long trailer for the complete feature," and Wuntch three days later reports that it "plays like an elongated trailer for an upcoming feature." Reed and Fryxell share their Cuisinart metaphor, and pasta jokes abound. I am not arguing that these critics plagiarize one another, but that there is a general awareness of a common journalistic-critical style; the overall approaches to film are so similar that the results are as well.

Although Mary Corliss does differ from the other reviewers in that she postulates an author not suggested by their horizon of expectations, her argument nevertheless remains within the prevalent auteurist canon; she retains the notion of a single, unified author (Ladd) rather than grappling with an entirely new conception of authorship. David Fryxell largely manages to avoid the issue of authorship, but his description of the film quoted above does open up the possibility of a different kind of author. Fryxell describes the film as an improperly-formed combination of elements, which suggests that a good film is a combination for which the author has coordinated the elements well. This view of the author as a general coordinator or orchestrator of sorts is similar to views put forth by V.F. Perkins and David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, among others.[10] Fryxell, however, does not make any attempt to elaborate on this view or to draw out its implications.

It should be pointed out that the overwhelming predominance of auteur-oriented approaches in this sample is likely a partial function of the special circumstances surrounding this case: Leone did have full control over much of the production, and he had already been constructed as an auteur. In order to further substantiate the trends delineated here, it would ultimately also be necessary to examine cases in which, for example, changes not authorized by the director were either less substantial (e.g., fiddling with the soundtrack of Peter Bogdanovich's *Mask*) or non-existent, or in which the director was lesser known (or unknown). It nevertheless remains evident that a critical strategy of discussing a film in relation to a single author is the standard institutional practice even in a case where such an author may be difficult to pinpoint within the historical context.

Terminology developed by Sue Clayton and Jonathan Curling, working from premises set out by Michel Foucault, provides an alternate means of describing the complex situation that arises here.[11] Sergio Leone is indeed the "Author" of the shorter *Once Upon a Time in America* if we take that entity to be a function of the circulation of discourses attached to a text or texts, comprised of our "projections, in terms more or less psychological, of our way of handling texts" (Foucault 21).[12] Leone and the Ladd Company are *both* "authors" of the film, however, both being parties who have legal rights to it, whose names are attached to it by way of contractual agreements.[13] A problem arises in that "Sergio Leone" functions as both an "author-name" -- referring to the Author associated with the film in the critical discourse and, indeed, in the text of the film itself -- and as a proper name -- referring to that actual, physical person who has publicly dissociated himself from the film because of what the Ladd Company, by way of its rights as an author, has done to it;[14] the homonymy of the two Leones facilitates and disguises their conflation.

One conception of authorship which does bear close comparison with the reviewers' construction of a single author encompassing both implied and historical Sergio Leones is Barthes' postulation of the hybrid "author-writer."[15] The reviewers' construction is at once an "author" (in Barthes' terms) in that he is a creative figure for whom the film medium is an end in itself (Leone-as-auteur) and a "writer" in that he also uses film and other media (television, newspapers, even conversation) as a *means* for communicating his thoughts on his art and the issues surrounding it. As Barthes describes it, the author-writer's "function is inevitably paradoxical: he provokes and exorcises at the same time; formally, his language is free, screened from the institution of literary language, and yet, enclosed in this very freedom, it secretes its own rules in the form of a common style; having emerged from the club of men-of-letters, the author-writer finds another club, that of the intelligentsia" (149). Transposing this schema for Leone's situation, the intelligentsia would consist of the reviewers and academics propagating the notion of Leone-as-auteur.

Perhaps more significant with respect to historical reception is what these reviews ultimately suggest about the relationship between author and reviewer -- and conceivably between author and a more general spectator as

well. A corollary of the expansion of text into context, it now becomes evident, is a reestablishment of a potential communication link between historical author and spectator: the historical author's statements, when available, can become an important element in interpretation. Almost all of the reviews involve at least an implicit interpretation of Leone's comments in the context of text; whether the reviewers agree with Leone's complaints or not, they feel compelled to address them. Moreover, it should be remembered that the reviews themselves form part of the context for reception; spectators who read them also become aware of Leone's opinions to some degree, and this can in turn affect their readings of the film. Thus, while text is taken away from author, author is returned to audience.

Notes

I would like to thank Janet Staiger for her invaluable suggestions.

[1]The term "historical author" is similar in meaning to the more commonly used term "actual author," only the latter term is less specific and assumes as given that which this paper attempts to ascertain.

[2]For a discussion of the film's temporal structure, see Kaminsky.

[3]Running time reported in "Leone Thanks" and New York Film Festival program notes. If both this time and the Cannes Festival time were reported accurately, then a few more minutes of the film evidently disappeared somewhere over the Atlantic.

[4]The following list of reviews examined includes some reviews of the longer film that refer to the shorter film: Pat Anderson rev. in *Films in Review* XXXV, no. 9 (Nov. 1984), 568-9; David Ansen, "The Good, the Bad, the Ugly," *Newsweek* 103, June 11, 1984, 81; Gary Arnold, " 'Once' Is Enough," *Washington Post*, June 2, 1984, C9; Sheila Benson, "Leone's 'America' -- A Startling Vision," *Los Angeles Times*, June 1, 1984, Part VI, 4 and "Leone's Truncated 'America,' " *Los Angeles Times*, June 10, 1984, C24; Ed Blank, " 'In America' seems mutilated masterpiece," *Pittsburgh Press*, June 2, 1984; Vincent Canby rev. in *New York Times*, June 1, 1984, C8 and "The Festival Makes a Potent Case for Preservation," *New York Times*, October 21, 1984, sec. 2, 23; Mary Corliss, "Once Upon A Time...," *Film Comment* 20 (July-Aug. 1984), 18-21; Richard Corliss, "The Long and the Short of It," *Time* 123, June 18, 1984, 82; Bill Cosford, " 'Once Upon a Time' has seen better days," *Miami* (Fla.) *Herald*, June 2, 1984; Bruce Daniels, " 'Once Upon a Time' Shows Shocking Honesty," *Albuquerque (N.M.) Journal*, June 8, 1984; David Denby, "Fear of Boring," *New York* 17, June 18, 1984, 88; David Fryxell, "Creating a Hybrid," *Horizon* 27, October 1984, 60;

J. Hoberman revs. in *Village Voice,* June 12, 1984, p. 48 and October 23, 1984, p. 47; Stephen Hunter, "Abbreviated 'America': not a bad film, only a ruined one," (Baltimore, Md.) *Sun,* June 1, 1984; Pauline Kael, "Tidal," *New Yorker* LXI, no. 14 (May 27, 1985), 82-5; Stanley Kauffman, "From South Africa and Elsewhere," *New Republic* 191, July 2, 1984, 25; Howard Kissel rev. in *Women's Wear Daily,* June 1, 1984; Phil Kloer, "Shorter version of gangster epic is still awful," (Jacksonville) *Florida Times - Union,* June 6, 1984; Andrew Kopkind rev. in *Nation* 239, July 21, 1984, 60; Fred LeBrun, " 'Once Upon a Time' simply has no focus," (Albany, N.Y.) *Times-Union,* June 3, 1984; Ernest Leogrande, " 'Once Upon a Time': beauty in the beast," (New York) *Daily News,* June 1, 1984, Fri. Section, 5 and "Uncut Leone movie opening here," *Daily News,* Leisure Section, 19; Rick Lyman, " " 'Once Upon a Time in America' follows the stormy friendship of two street toughs," *Philadelphia Inquirer,* June 2, 1984; "Once Around The Park For 'Once Upon A Time,' " *Variety,* June 6, 1984, 5; "Once Upon A Time In America," *Variety,* May 23, 1984, 13; Dale Pollack, " 'Paris,' 'America' Lead Cannes Pack," *Los Angeles Times, loc. cit.,* " 'Once Upon A Time,' On A Cutting-Room Floor ...," *Los Angeles Times,* June 6, 1984, and "Rape Scenes Are 'Love' In Sergio Leone's Eyes," *Los Angeles Times, loc. cit.;* Catharine Rambeau, "Heart is cut out of Leone's 'America,' " *Detroit Free Press,* June 1, 1984; Rex Reed, "Chopped 'America' is a puzzling mess," *New York Post,* June 1, 1984, 43, 56; Desmond Ryan, "A director wounded by final cut," *Philadelphia Inquirer,* May 22, 1984; Tom Sabulis, "And it rambles unhappily ever after," *St. Petersburg* (Fla.) *Times,* June 4, 1984; Julie Salamon, "A Jewish 'Godfather': Oh No. Sergio," Wall Street Journal, May 31, 1984, local ed., 28 and "Here We Go Round the Godfather Tree," *Wall Street Journal,* June 21, 1984, local ed., 32; Andrew Sarris, "Old Lions at Bay," *Village Voice,* June 5, 1984, 59 and "To Cut or Not To Cut," March 19, 1985, 49; Kenneth Shorey, "Once upon a time in America, a movie was snipped to bits," *Birmingham* (Ala.) *News,* June 5, 1984; Ed Sikov, revs. in *New York Native* July 2, 1984, 30 and November 5, 1984; Gene Siskel, "Once Upon a Time in America," *Chicago Tribune,* June 1, 1984; David Sterritt, "Two gangster flicks that fail to deliver the goods," *Christian Science Monitor,* August 6, 1984, 27; Peter Stack, "A 'Time' to Forget," *San Francisco Chronicle,* June 2, 1984; Mal Vincent, " 'America' is fascinating but lacks focus," (Norfolk) *Virginian-Pilot,* June 7, 1984; Bruce Williamson, rev. in *Playboy* 31, September 1984, 36; Philip Wuntch, " 'Once Upon a Time' doesn't tell story," *Dallas Morning News,* June 4, 1984. Clippings for most of the regional dailies provided by NewsBank/Review of the Arts information service.

[5]The last sentence of Canby's review reads: " 'Once Upon a Time in America,' which is not to be confused with Mr. Leone's far wiser 'Once Upon a Time in the West' (1969), opens today at the Beekman and other theaters.

[6]The usage of the term here differs somewhat from Booth's in that it is audience-oriented (implied author constructed out of the text) rather than text-oriented (implied author created by the text).

[7]For a further discussion of the auteurists' Romantic biases, see Staiger, especially 11-14.

[8]Terminology is from Jauss.

[9]The relationship between interpretation and the context created by advertising is explored by Barnes and Budd.

[10]Compare also with views in Braudy, 44-5 and Mixajlov and Moskvin.

[11]Clayton and Curling use their terminology at one point for an analysis of the similar editing controversy that surrounded *1900* (46). See Crofts for a discussion of their approach in relation to other conceptions of authorship.

[12]Mary Corliss's argument, in these terms, is that Authorship should be transferred from Leone to Ladd.

[13]If authorship is understood in legal terms, then the Ladd Company is also an author of the longer *Once Upon a Time in America* in the United States and Canada. This authorship does not, however, extend to Europe: as legal rights vary geographically, so does authorship.

[14]Actually, Leone as author-name refers not only to the Author, here, but to one of the authors as well. Clayton and Curling use the more precise term "Name" to indicate the former designative function (41).

[15]I do not mean to suggest that the connection between implied author and historical author is analogous to that between author and writer, but that the two dual entities, understood as separate *wholes,* function in similar ways.

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