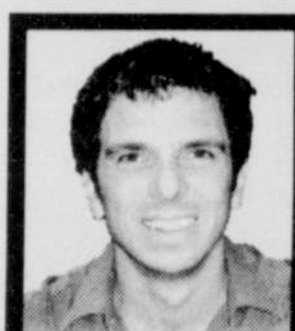


I try to make the world a better place: I recycle, I give to charity, I voted for La Toya on *American Idol*. And when a gay-themed movie arrives at the multiplex, I try to show up on opening weekend—y'know, to help the grosses.

Plus, a lot of these movies disappear faster than vegan cookies at a lesbian potluck. I swear, before I could find my shoes and wallet and head out the door to see *Saved!* and *The Stepford Wives*, they'd vanished like President Bush's National Guard records.



The Gospel According to Marc
by Marc Acito

So it was with this goal in mind that I took myself to see *De-Lovely*, the Cole Porter biopic that purports to set the record straight (pun intended) on Porter's bisexuality. A noble task, but I'm puzzled by the decision to have musical theater veteran Kevin Kline muffle his robust baritone so much he sounded like bronchitis set to music.

Would that the ambiguously straight Robbie Williams had been cast instead. The British pop star's rendition of the title song is so flighty you expect him to sprout wings and fly away. The guy's so light in the loafers he must get altitude sickness.

Frankly, it distresses me to see our stories told so wrong—it almost makes me nostalgic for the days when we had to hunt for gay cinematic content. For instance, back in the 1980s, my only access to beefcake was Arnold

Schwarzenegger movies on cable (giving new meaning to the term "cable access"). To this day, the governor of Callee-formia is the only politician I've ever whacked off to. As far as I'm concerned, Ah-nold's not the Terminator, he's the Masturbator.

I still hunt for hidden gay meaning in mainstream films. I can't help it. It's like I'm handed a pair of those green and red glasses you wear to watch 3-D movies, except mine are lavender and pink.

This summer I've seen *Troy*, which glorified the male form so lasciviously it could be described as Homer-erotic. There was more beef on display in that movie than at the butcher counter.

Then there was *Shrek 2*, which got the Religious Wrong in a kerfuffle because they thought the movie's "love whom you choose" theme was a veiled metaphor for the love that dare speak its name. It seems that I'm not the only one hunting for hidden gay subtext.

But the movie gay guys are talking about the most this summer is *Spider-Man 2*. Now, before I go any further, full disclosure: The Spider-Man movies are produced by Laura Ziskin, the producer who optioned the film rights to my comic novel, *How I Paid for College*. Actually, there's no real journalistic reason for me to reveal this fact; I just felt like bragging.

Since I arrived for Spidey early, I wandered over to check out the new Harry Potter. As

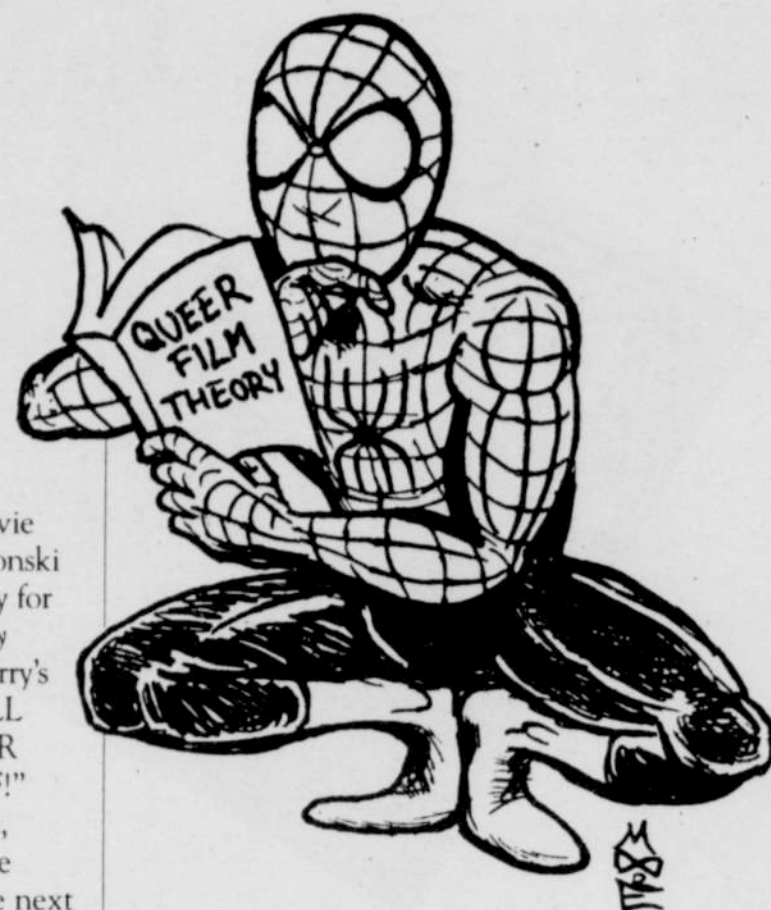
much as I want to contribute to the grosses of certain films, I also think of my 8 bucks as admission to the entire multiplex, like it's a One-Day Pass that gives me unlimited access to all the attractions.

I wanted to see if the Harry Potter movie was as queer as the books. As Michael Bronski pointed out in *The Boston Phoenix*, it's easy for gays to identify with the moment in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* when Harry's uncle screams: "I WARNED YOU! I WILL NOT TOLERATE MENTION OF YOUR ABNORMALITY UNDER THIS ROOF!"

No such luck with *Prisoner of Azkaban*, although I did enjoy seeing how much the Gryffindors have grown. I fully expect the next film will be *Harry Potter and the Mystery of the Sticky Sheets*. Or maybe just *Hairy Potter*.

But Spider-Man came to my rescue, and I'm not just saying that because it's produced by the woman who optioned the film rights to my hilarious comic novel. (Oh, did I mention that already?)

Now, sitting in a theater staring into Tobey Maguire's moist, dreamy eyes is already a gay experience. But, as columnist Byron Beck pointed out to me, there's something very gay about a line like "It's wrong we should only be half alive—half ourselves," particularly when the hero's own "chamber of secrets" is that he prances around New York City in a crotch-hugging bodysuit.



The film even has Mary Jane starring in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* just so she can say the line, "I hope you're not leading a double life."

Whether it's intentional or not, when I think of the millions of kids, straight or gay, who digest the film's positive messages along with their buttered popcorn, one thought comes to my mind: It's de-lovely.

And that, my friends, is *The Gospel According to Marc*. 

MARC ACITO's novel, *How I Paid for College*, will be published next month. Write him at marc@marcacito.com.

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