

'Place Beyond the Pines' satisfies unmet longing for challenging, engaging film

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The Place Beyond the Pines is as wistfully enigmatic as its title. The movie, written and directed by Derek Cainfrance (Blue Valentine), plunges into the vivid emotional landscapes of two generations of men struggling to navigate the complex, social fabrics of responsibility and fatherhood, all while learning to balance individual and relational goals through sacrifice. If I wished to relay the mood concisely, I would suggest listening to the closing song, "The Wolves (Part I and II)" by Bon Iver (which might explain the inordinate amount of bearded hipsters present); if I were to describe how the movie affected me emotionally, I would say, imagine a brick tied to your heart, descending leagues into the sea.

Pines opens with Luke's story (Ryan Gosling): a motorcycle stunt driver who turns to robbing banks in order to support his baby boy (Anthony Pizza—yes, even the baby's got creds) and the mother of his child, Romina

(Eva Mendes). The story then hands off to Avery (Bradley Cooper), a rookie cop whose life becomes entangled with Luke's after a fateful encounter, and whose future-life as a District Attorney brings both him and his son, AJ (Emory Cohen), fatefully-yet-again into conflict with Luke's now-grown son, Jason (Dane DeHaan).

As I implied above, the movie lays on thick layers of emotional and moral conflict, and in such a way as to directly tap into the ennui and disillusionment of my generation, in particular. I would argue that is precisely why the audience demographic was, as I dryly remarked above, 20-30-something hipster, young adults. Both Luke and Avery are forced to make principled choices for themselves and the ones they love, and both—while hitting close—miss the mark in some way.

In such a way is tragedy written, but I would argue that the successful delivery of this film relies heavily upon the skills of the writer/director, cinematographer (Sean Bobbitt), and music department, and not specifically the lead actors—though the lead actress

was the strongest—both as an actor and as a character. This last (rather bold) claim is accepting most of the supporting cast: in particular, the two youngest actors (excepting little Mr. Pizza), Cohen and DeHaan, who I thought completely captured misguided adolescence in the face of a weak, paternal figure; and Ray Liotta, who plays one bad cop (go figure!), and Ben Mendelsohn (*Killing Them Softly*), who completely embodies his role as Luke's backwoods, bank-robbing acquaintance.

As far as Gosling and Cooper go: the first never convinced me he was anything other than the mysterious, handsome character he seems to play so well (i.e. this character is not unique; a la *Drive* and *Blue Valentine*); the second, (and I write this while acknowledging my sincere desire to see him shed his Hangover stigma) lacked a certain gravity in his character (it's his eyes, they're too playfully dreamy) and has not quite convinced me he's a serious actor yet—although crying on his knees in the woods with a gun to his head is a step in the right, dramatic direction.

Returning again to the success of

this movie as a whole, Cainfrance has a strong voice as a writer and knows how to weave a beautifully rich and engaging plot. Bobbitt, I think to credit with the emotional tone presented by the visuals, but certainly Cainfrance has his stamp there, too. In any case, as its poster suggests, this movie's visuals communicate the brooding, unmet desires—the pining, if you will—of these characters. In fact, the title itself evokes strong feelings of emotional isolation. Lastly, the music department succeeds in creating the perfect soundtrack to accompany the rich visuals and to complement the dense, emotional landscape (the last scene, with Bon Iver's voice and lyrics, is haunting in these regards). *The Place Beyond the Pines* is a movie for the current generations of adolescents and young adults (now with ages stretching into the forties, sadly) who are wise enough to discern the challenges of the post-modern, fatherless, moral-abolitionist age. This movie transports you beyond the pines of unmet longing to that sublime pinnacle from which to observe that winding course back through to your mending; perhaps some will heed its message.

Shimer students perform 'Eurydice'

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A&E EDITOR

A small (even by Shimer standards) group of students have devoted several times a week to preparing their performance of Sarah Ruhl's play, *Eurydice*, this semester. The product of their labor will be presented later this week in Cinderella Lounge at Shimer College, located in 3424, on the second floor.

For those unfamiliar with the story of *Eurydice*, the study revolves around Eu-

rydice, daughter of Hades, who tragically dies during her marriage to Orpheus (in the original myth her death occurs after the marriage).

After her death, *Eurydice* descends to the underworld where she travels through the waters of forgetfulness. She does not remember her husband and does not recognize her father, but instead mistakes him for a hotel porter. Meanwhile, distraught with the loss of his beloved, Orpheus goes to the underworld to retrieve her. *Eurydice* is then faced with the choice of continuing to live in

the underworld with her father or returning to live with Orpheus. Orpheus is told that if he can exit the underworld alone without turning around, *Eurydice* can return to the world of the living.

This play would be a great way to familiarize yourself with a classic Greek myth (seriously, I'm pretty convinced that this story has been represented by pretty much every art form). For those students who are already familiar with the story, Sarah Ruhl's script offers a new and often very funny takes on the classic story. Notable twists include *Eurydice* be-

ing lead out of the wedding by a man claiming to contain a letter from Hades and *Eurydice* calling out to Orpheus as he walks out of the underworld. Given the amount of time devoted to this production, the strong script, and the cheap ticket price (free!) it would be a shame to miss this play.

Eurydice will be performed Thursday, April 11 and Friday, April 12 at 7:00 p.m. in Cinderella Lounge at Shimer College. Tickets are free but must be reserved due to limited seating, reservations can be made at: <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/5870391499/>

Facebook unveils Android home screen application

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LAYOUT EDITOR

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg launched the new Facebook Home app last Thursday. In his words, it's neither a phone nor an operating system; it's something that's a whole lot deeper than just another app. In a broader sense, it replaces your standard Android's home screen with an immersive Facebook experience featuring full-screen photos, status updates, and notifications.

Facebook Home can replace any Android handset into a "Facebook phone" by putting the social giant right there on the home screen and all of its products at the forefront of the user interface. It isn't a phone made by Facebook. But, yes, we can think of it as a combination of "app" and "operating system:" an apperating system.

"Our phones today are designed around apps, not people. We want to flip that around," Zuckerberg said at the unveiling event in Menlo Park. Home will put the updates from social network right on the home screen via a feature called Cover Feed, which is quite similar to the HTC One which has a live Flipboard-like interface for its home screen. It will give you live updates on what your friends are doing without you having to launch an app, or even unlock your phone. You can even like a post or comment on it from the home screen rather than viewing it on Facebook. In other words, content from Facebook takes up the

entire screen, and users can navigate through updates simply by swiping. The built-in Gallery app lets you share directly to Instagram, Facebook Messenger and Facebook Camera.

Another great feature of the new Facebook Home is the new messaging system called "Chat Heads." In this new system, messaging is built directly into the user interface. So, one doesn't need to pop in and pop out of different apps to chat. When a friend messages you, their profile picture pops up as a small circular icon; you can tap and open up the message thread. One can even have multiple conversations as well, with all the Chat Heads you like on your screen. After you're done with messaging, you can simply swipe the Chat Heads away from the screen. The new Chat Heads is integrated with Facebook messages and SMS, but not third-party messaging apps (Hinting on WhatsApp).

Facebook Home is hitting the Google Play store on April 12. Currently, it would be available directly on a new HTC phone, i.e. "HTC First" and for download to a half-dozen other HTC and Samsung phones. The app will have a new Facebook-focused home screen that puts instant messages, news feed updates, and photos front and center on the smart phone home screen.

In simple words, Mark Zuckerberg wants to turn the Android phone into a simple sharing device. By that, he means he wants to turn it into a Facebook phone. So after iPhone, Android phone, and Windows phone, we will have something "Facebook phone"!

Chicago YarnCon

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The recent rise in the popularity of fiber arts like knitting and crochet has caused an equal rise in the prevalence of small, artisanal yarn-making companies. For those who partake in the crafts that involve yarn, choosing the right material for the project is a crucial factor in the outcome of the finished product—every good Etsy seller knows you can't use just any yarn to make really quality dog ponchos.

But really though, one of the reasons that many choose to make scarves and sweaters for themselves and others is that it allows them to control 100% of the end product. They can dictate the size, color, material, pattern, etc. of their work. With the power of infinite customizability in their hands, they tend to pay pretty close attention to their options.

For those of you who are a part of this yarny, crafty world (or want to be a part of it), there is the Chicago YarnCon. YarnCon took place in the Chicago Journeymen Plumbers Union Hall this past weekend (April 6-7), when hundreds of fiber and textile enthusiasts gather to show their wares, exchange wisdom, and pick up some new yarn for their next project. Since I was interested in taking a peek into this crafty subculture that I know so little about (and since there was no admission fee), I decided to stop in on Saturday.

There were vendors from all over the country selling exquisite small-batch, hand-dyed yarn made from every animal under the sun, expert crafters selling their handiwork, and plenty of needles, looms, hooks, and all other sorts of yarncraft paraphernalia for sale.

Whether you're a dedicated fiber artist or—like me—less of a crafter and more of an I-can-sew-the-button-back-onto-my-coat kind of person, there was plenty of opportunity here to get inspired by the work of the pros and get supplies for your next project.

There were also workshops available to crafters of every skill level. You could learn to dye fibers with Kool-Aid, make slippers out of old sweaters, or just learn the basics of crochet.

Additionally, there was a talk by Susan Gibbs, the creative director of the yarn company Juniper Moon Farm. Gibbs talked about her experience starting her company, from a "this is my calling!" revelation in a book store in New York, to the spur-of-the-moment purchase of her first flock of sheep, to the trials involved in making it into a national yarn company and the world's first and only yarn CSA.

My main takeaways from YarnCon 2013: 1) crafting is an expensive hobby, and 2) it is one that a lot of people are really passionate about. Although I figured that buying the materials and making one's own hats and mittens and such would, logically, be a much more cost-effective method of building a wardrobe, most of the yarn for sale here cost way more than anything in my closet. That being said, I can still understand the appeal of making your own things from scratch: it's a creative outlet, it allows you to take part in this immense community of skilled, like-minded people, and it gives you a definite sense of accomplishment when you've finished your project. You've just got to be willing to invest a bit of time and money, and to accept that the first few things you make will be completely impossible to wear.