

## BABEL Review

18 members attended the screening of the powerful and award winning Babel, directed by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, with leads Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett, Adriana Barraza González and Rinko Kikuchi heading an excellent ensemble cast.

The film follows four groups of people (a family of goat herders in Morocco, an American couple on a holiday there, the couple's children with their Mexican nanny back in San Diego, and a Japanese father and daughter), who become connected as the result of an ill considered shooting by one of the goat herder's children, in which the wife of the American couple is injured.

Told in a non-linear narrative, even within the individual story lines, the film demanded total attention to understand the plot. The director brought the narrative together at the end, which was positive (for the American couple and potentially the Japanese family), but negative for the goat herders and the Mexican nanny.

The film cleverly juxtaposed the different cultures of the four groups, going further with the Japanese story line by demonstrating how difficult life in the modern world is for those who are deaf and mute.

Overall, the group felt that all of the protagonists were victims to some extent, but also that the lack of consequential thinking played a large part in the events of the film. The title refers to the miscommunication that happens between people of different cultures, within the same culture and also within families.

Some of the group (the coordinator included) felt that additional judicious editing could have reduced the length of the film to a more comfortable two hours without affecting the narrative (over two minutes of a helicopter flying the wounded gun shot victim to hospital, accompanied by emotional music, being just one example).

A challenging film, it certainly made us think that events like this could happen.