"YOU HAVEN'T SEEN IT UNLESS YOU HAVE SEEN IT AT LEAST TWICE:" FILM SPECTATORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF REPEAT VIEWING

Vinzenz Hediger, Ruhr Universität Bochum

For the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates
the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual.
Walter Benjamin, 1937

It's a ritual and fun thing to go into a videotheque.
George Atkinson, video store pioneer, 1985

This essay is about frequency in spectatorship. It addresses a question that has not been at the center of research on film spectatorship so far: namely, how many times does a given spectator usually watch a film? More specifically, this essay is about the repeat viewing of individual films. Without doubt, the practice of repeat viewing has always been part of the repertoire of cinema going. As I would like to argue, however, repeat viewing has only in the last three decades become a culturally and economically significant pattern of spectator behavior, at least in the Western world (a study of repeat viewing in Indian cinema, for instance, would pose different problems, and certainly yield different insights). Prompted partly by the introduction of new technologies such as the VCR and the DVD, repeat viewing has not only become a major factor in the economics of film production and consumption. The practice of repeat viewing also marks an important shift in the overall practices of film reception. That is, shifts in the way films are viewed, and how their visibility is organized. By extension, repeat viewing marks a change in the way cinema relates to and informs culture.

In order to tackle the problem of repeat viewing, the notion of practice – by which I mean a sustained pattern of behavior regulated by institutional and discursive frameworks – is of particular importance. Research on film spectatorship has mostly been concerned with the question of meaning. In fact, cultural studies, semio-pragmatics and historical reception studies have all in similar ways re-located the site of the production of meaning from author and text to audience and spectator. This has led to the point where "immanent meaning in a text is denied," to quote the radical hypothesis that informs Janet Staiger's research into film reception and the construction of cultural meanings.[1] From such a perspective, the construction of cultural meanings is to be understood as an event informed by highly specific historical conditions and discursive formations. Based on this assumption, one could treat each viewing of a film as a separate event and study how repeat viewing effects the meaning of the film across a series of screenings. However valuable such a microscopic approach to the question of the

construction of meaning might be, I would like to propose a different perspective. Rather than a question of meaning – how does repeat viewing effect the meaning of the film? – I would like to address a question of significance. What does it mean that an important section of the film audience views the same films repeatedly? How did the practice of repeat viewing come about, and what are its cultural implications?

In order to briefly illustrate what I think is at stake in the practice of repeat viewing, I would like to cite some anecdotal evidence. Recently, over an excellent Thai dinner after a film screening in Stockholm, the conversation turned to the subject of repeat viewing. While everyone at the table routinely admitted to being a repeat viewer, the person who was the most specific in her description of her own practice of repeat viewing was the only one who was not a film scholar, an archaeologist from Denmark in her late twenties. "I like to watch films repeatedly," she said, "and pay attention to different aspects of the film: Color, lighting, the music, acting." For instance, she had first seen Lagaan, the globally successful Bollywood film about a turn-of-the-century cricket team of insurgent Indian peasants, in the cinema and then watched it eight more times on video; quite an investment, given the film's three-and-a-half hour running time. When she first began to watch films repeatedly, she continued, she had felt "like a vegetable." "I thought I was not allowed to do it [i.e. watch a film more than once]." After a certain time, however, she found her enjoyment of the films far outweighed her unease and decided not to feel bad about repeat viewing anymore.

This account is interesting partly because it highlights both the institutional and discursive frameworks that regulate the practice of repeat viewing. The institutional frameworks include enabling technologies such as the VCR. They also include organizational forms such as the patterns of film distribution, in which a film is first distributed to cinemas and then, with a hiatus of few months, rented or sold to patrons in video stores for home viewing. The discursive frameworks include norms of acceptable behavior, such as the one invoked in my friend's statement that, even though no one had ever explicitly told her so, she felt she was "not allowed" to view films repeatedly. Practices, insofar as they are regulated behavior, involve an element of discipline. In this case, one could even talk about a shift in discipline: a shift from the discipline of not watching films repeatedly to the discipline involved in watching a three-hour films eight times on video. This shift is quite significant. In fact, as I would like to show in this essay, my friend's statement, for all its historical specificity, encapsulates what you might call the psychological history of repeat viewing. I will argue that for repeat viewing to become a widespread cultural phenomenon, certain changes in the institutional framework of film spectatorship had to occur, but they had to be accompanied by a change in the discursive framework as well: most notably by the emergence of what I propose to call the discipline of repeat viewing – or rather, to adopt Francesco Casetti's term, by a re-negotiation of a discipline of novelty into a discipline of repeat viewing.

This piece of anecdotal evidence is relevant also because it points to the methodological difficulties a discussion of repeat viewing necessarily entails. The practices of film reception are always difficult to reconstruct. Like all everyday behavior, spectator behavior is ephemeral. Where no systematic records of reception activities survive – and they almost never do –, one has to rely on reviews and other published protocols of reception (Janet Staiger's approach),[2] or on the traces left of film reception in literary texts (Yuri Tsivian's),[3] while attendance patterns may also be traced through demographic data (an approach variously used in studies of the nickelodeon era in New

York by Ben Singer, William Uricchio and Roberta Pearson, for instance).[4] Furthermore, as Janet Staiger reminds us, "the entire history of cinema in every period, and most likely in every place, witnesses several modes of cinematic address, several modes of exhibition and several modes of reception."[5] I would like to argue, however, that it is still possible to describe certain dominant patterns of film viewing for particular periods, particularly if one takes into account information about both the institutional and discursive determinants of spectatorship as well as records of actual observable behavior. Accordingly, in this essay I propose a number of hypotheses about patterns of repeat viewing based on an account of viewing habits and practices that draws on a variety of sources. With a particular focus on the situation in North America, I will try to reconstruct repeat viewing practices based on a discussion of distribution and exhibition practices as well as on articles published in trade papers and archive documents specifically dealing with the question of frequency in spectatorship. At this point, however, the evidence on which my account is based is preliminary at best. Far from a comprehensive history of repeat viewing, then, this essay proposes a first look at the problems of historical research about repeat viewing as much as it tries to sketch the outlines of a theoretical account of the emergence, or re-negotiation, of the discipline of repeat viewing.

How many times, then, does a given spectator usually watch a film? In the classical Hollywood era, the most likely answer to this question would probably have been "only once." Repeat viewing was always an option and was certainly practiced as occasional traces left in art and literature suggests. Consider Cecilia (Mia Farrow) in Woody Allen's Purple Rose of Cairo (Orion 1985) who returns to the same 1930s movie over and over again until the main character steps down from the screen and into her life, or the protagonists of Jack Kerouac's On the Road who spend a night in an all-night movie theater of the 1940s watching, and sleeping through, the same B-film for hours on end. Repeat viewing was, however, a practice not favored by a distribution system almost fully geared to novelty. Up until the early 1940s, film production ran from 500 to 800 films annually, and films were distributed through a system of runs, zones and clearances that favored rapid turnovers. Accordingly, films hardly ever stayed on the bill for more than one week or even a few days. An average film took two years to descend the ladder of the distribution system, from urban first run in prestigious movie palaces, to lower-run and rural theaters.[6] After their two-year distribution period, most films were withdrawn and disappeared into the vaults of the studio. The prints were destroyed, and sometimes even the negative (one of the reasons why only just over ten percent of the filmic record of the American silent period survives). Easily the best chance an average film had for an afterlife was to be remade ten years after its original release, but under a different title. Accordingly, if you didn't catch a film in its first round of release, chances were slim that you ever got to see it again.

One could argue, of course, that the experience of repeat viewing was supplied to audiences of the classical period through the formulaic and repetitive nature of screen entertainment. The process of repetition was rather more complex, however. Producers tended to break successful films down into their component elements and reuse them in new combinations, or they would try to cash in on a successful film with covert remakes a few months later.[7] To a certain extent, film viewing in the classical era meant indeed going along with the repetitive rhythms of formulaic entertainment (as, in fact, it does today). Repeat viewing, however, is something else again.

What opportunities then, if any, did the moviegoer have for repeat viewing? One could certainly go to see the film every night (or day) during its run, or one could try to catch a film again on a lower rung of the distribution system, in a second-run or neighborhood theater. Furthermore, opportunities for repeat viewings during its first period of release varied according to period, area and type of film. In the so-called silent period, major productions regularly enjoyed long runs in metropolitan areas. De Mille's original The Ten Commandments ran on Broadway on and off for three calendar years and a record-breaking total of 62 weeks in the time period between 1923 and 1925.[8] Similarly, the Grauman's Chinese theater in Hollywood showed only three films in its first full year of operation from March 1927 through February 1928.[9] In both cases, the long runs are partially explained by the fact that movie-palace film showings were accompanied by elaborate and expensive stage presentations. On par with the most lavish stage shows, these film shows competed with regular theater productions as well as with films shown in other film theaters. As a result, they followed the same logic of playing long runs whenever possible.[10] With the disappearance of the stage shows in the sound period, first-run engagements were cut back to a few weeks. In the 1940s, a six-week premiere engagement in the 6.000-seat Radio City Music Hall in New York, the world's largest movie theater, was considered a newsworthy item. Up until 1952, for instance, only four films had ever had a run of ten weeks at the Music Hall. The record holder with a run of eleven weeks was MGM's Random Harvest from 1942.[11]

Other than prolonged first runs, re-releases offered the best opportunities for repeat viewing. Re-releases were quite common throughout the classical period. Even though they became standard practice in the 1930s, however, they were not a steady feature of the distribution system as it emerged in the mid-1910s. The distribution system of the classical period replaced an earlier system in which films were shorter, but had potentially longer life spans. Prior to the mid-1910s, producers and distributors listed their films in catalogues, and exhibitors booked them according to title or genre. Films usually stayed in the catalogue as long as prints were available (and sometimes even longer). In the system established after 1914, feature film producers and distributors controlled the flow of product and dictated the availability of films and the terms on which they were available to exhibitors. The focus of the system was on new releases and big films, which were sold in conjunction with less attractive productions (the practice of "block booking").[12] The newer and bigger the big films, the better the outlook for profit: this was the basic formula of the system. Old films held little value in this system beyond their two-year distribution life span. With its short runs, however, the system was actually quite wasteful. Films were routinely withdrawn before they had exhausted their potential audience. A Gallup study from the 1940s recommends that stars make four films a year, so that their fans get a chance to see them at least once every year.[13] Among other things, this implies that an average film would sometimes only reach as little as a quarter of its potential audience. Accordingly, producers thought about ways to better exploit their library of films as early as 1919, when the Goldwyn studios briefly reverted to the practice of publishing a catalogue of all their available films, including older ones.[14]

Re-releases were a way of addressing the same problem within the confines of the established system. In normal times, however, re-releases were usually limited to a few major films, particularly to those that had been box-office successes during their original release. The list of such films includes early De Mille and Griffith films[15] as well as

films such as The Ten Commandments (Paramount 1923, C. B. DeMille), Ben Hur (MGM 1925, F. Niblo), Cimarron (RKO 1930/31, W. Ruggles), and of course Gone with the Wind (MGM 1939, V. Fleming), which for three decades served as a kind of life insurance for the distributing studio: whenever MGM was in trouble, it would re-release Gone with the Wind, always successfully. On occasion, a film would be re-released as an advertisement of sorts for the sequel, as in the case of First National's Tarzan of the Apes in 1918.[16] Furthermore, a film like Birth of a Nation was almost permanently on release throughout the silent feature period, while Pathé paid half a million dollars for the reissue rights to four Chaplin comedies from the teens, exactly the same sum that First National had paid for the original release rights of the same four films in 1917 (the films were A Dog's Life, Shoulder Arms, A Day's Pleasure and Sunnyside).[17] Similarly, RKO re-released Disney's Snow White in 1944, seven years after its original release, and managed to obtain a percentage of the box office revenue comparable to that of current A-films.[18] Re-releases were usually marketed to exhibitors at rates significantly below their original release rates, and sometimes even below the rental rates for B-films. By contrast, Griffith, Chaplin and Disney belonged to a select group of artists whose films never lost their value at the box office. As I discuss below, the enduring appeal of the Disney films even contributed to the emergence of the formerly independent animation studio as one of the six major global media conglomerates in the 1980s and 1990s.

In the mid-1930s, re-issues became a standard practice with the introduction of the double bill.[19] Exhibitors feared product shortages, and distributors began to supply them with older films for the second spot on the bill, which was normally occupied by a B-film. Since both exhibitors and distributors favored well known, previously successful films and particularly costume dramas, the re-release would sometimes end up in the top position on the theater program.[20] In 1934 in particular exhibitors booked re-releases of major productions for image reasons. Under pressure from the Legion of Decency, the industry had adopted the production code and was engaged in an effort to fend off criticisms that it was corrupting the morals of American people with a variety of public relations initiatives. Among those measures was the production and distribution of "making of..." short films that highlighted the healthy, orderly and industrial character of film production in Hollywood studios.[21] Re-releases served a similar purpose. Although distributors adamantly denied that they acted on a coordinated plan, the sudden reappearance of such of high quality films as Cimarron, Flying Down to Rio (RKO 1932) or Little Women in theaters in 1934 reminded both audiences and the industry's critics of what the Hollywood studios thought was the best that they were capable of in terms of both morals and art.[22] Furthermore, in the mid-1930s producers and distributors began to strike 16mm prints of films that had run their two-year course of distribution in theaters. These 16mm prints were destined to what in the age of cable and home video came to be called "ancillary markets:" they were sold to owners of 16mm equipment for home viewing – Universal called their selection of films for sale the "Home Film Library" –, or they were distributed to non-theatrical venues such as community centers and churches.[23] Occasionally, re-releases gave rise to controversies themselves, albeit only within the industry. In 1935, for instance, some exhibitors asked distributors to end the practice of the re-release altogether. Small independent exhibitors had developed a technique of booking old films with popular stars and playing them against the newest film with the same star when it was showing in a competing theater. Sometimes, the small exhibitors even went so far as to mislead the audience

and advertise the re-release as a new film. Not only did such rogue behavior attract away part of their competitors' audience. Since rentals for re-releases were significantly lower than for new releases, the unruly exhibitors also stood to make a nice profit from their scheme.[24]

While the bulk of re-releases were older A-films, re-releases could include more recent and less exceptional films in times of need. This was the case particularly in the 1940s and during the war years, when the industry output of films dropped by 24% from 536 in 1940/41 to just below 400 in 1945.[25] This drop in production was due to war-related shortages in personnel and material, as well as to the 1940 anti-trust consent decree, which outlawed block-booking and forced to studios to produce fewer, but higher budgeted films (since every film had to be sold on its own strengths).[26] The lack of suitable films was further exacerbated by the extension of first-runs in metropolitan theaters, which delayed the arrival of new films in smaller theaters.[27] To fulfill the programming needs of lower-run theaters in the war years, the distributors would fall back on their catalogue of already released films and used old A-films to replace the B-films they no longer produced in sufficient quantity.[28] In order to guarantee an adequate supply of films, studios even temporarily halted their practice of destroying prints after the standard two-year distribution period.[29] While some studios, such as MGM and United Artists, refrained from re-releasing their films, re-issues were an important source of income for others, most notably RKO and Columbia. Columbia landed an unexpected success with the re-release of two Frank Capra films, It Happened One Night and Lost Horizon in 1943, to the point where the studio had to dig into its limited wartime supply of raw stock to strike new prints.[30] After the war, re-releases kept up, partly because a significant number of independent exhibitors had entered the field during the wartime boom years and demanded to be supplied with films.[31] Generally speaking, re-releases continued to stand in for and replace B-films on the distribution schedule, as they had first done in the 1930s when the double bill was introduced.[32] Furthermore, re-releases in the theater anticipated the broadcasting of old films on television. In 1948, Paramount-Publix company head Barney Balaban said he would refuse to release Paramount films to the emerging medium of television because he didn't want to hurt the re-release business.[33] After long hesitations and negotiations, the studios eventually released and actually sold their pre-1948 films to TV in the mid- to late 1950s, when many of the independent exhibitors who formed the primary market for re-releases had already succumbed to the post-war crisis of the theatrical market.[34] Rather than marking a lasting break, Balaban's refusal of 1948 points to a continuity: re-release theaters and television stations were indeed in the market for the same product, and the same audience. Later on, films such as Wizard of Oz or It's a Wonderful Life became American cultural icons mainly through their annual, quasi-ritual re-broadcasting on Halloween (Wizard of Oz) and Christmas (It's a Wonderful Life). One could argue that in both economic and cultural terms, such television broadcasts of old Hollywood films continued a practice that had already begun to emerge in the cinema of the 1940s.[35]

However, this doesn't mean that the cinemagoers who attended re-releases in the 30s and 1940s were all repeat viewers. As Yuri Tsivian points out, "in terms of saliency, reception is related to production as mould to cast."[36] The same could be said for the relationship between distribution and presentation practices and spectatorship. If the classical distribution system was almost fully geared to novelty, so were the cinemagoers. There are few indications that audiences systematically used the opportunities for

repeat viewing that I tried to outline above. Very little information is available about repeat viewing during long first-run engagements. As for viewing a film repeatedly on different rungs of the distribution ladder, one has to keep in mind that audiences of the classical period were to a large extent differentiated according to the price levels of theaters. People who were willing to pay high attendance fees to see the film in pristine print quality on its first engagement in a downtown movie palace were most likely not in the habit of going to a lower-quality second run house to see the same film again. As for the re-releases, some evidence suggests that re-releases and return engagements of major box-office successes were targeted at repeat viewers. During a re-release of Ben Hur in 1928, one exhibitor in Salt Lake City booked the 1925 MGM production twice in five weeks for one-week engagements and advertised the film with a special trailer "stressing the fact that Ben Hur should be seen more than once to give full enjoyment." It is important to note, however, that this campaign does not so much reflect an established habit of repeat viewing as it indicates that repeat viewing had to be actively encouraged. Most of the evidence suggests that audiences for return engagements and re-releases consisted of first time customers and of people who had missed the film on its first run. In 1918, First National circulated a story in trade papers about an exhibitor from Mount Vernon in upstate New York who had booked Chaplin's Shoulder Arms for three return engagements and sold out his theater for all shows on all four play dates. He had to bring the film back by popular demand, he claimed in a letter to the distributor, since patrons who had missed the film on its previous engagements wrote to him asking for another showing of the Chaplin comedy. Clearly, the distributor fed this story to the trade papers for business-to-business advertising purposes, in order to encourage other exhibitors to book the film for similar return engagements. However, the story also exemplifies the workings of the distribution system. The Mount Vernon exhibitor only booked the Chaplin film for short runs of two days at a time, and the return engagements were meant to fully exhaust the potential audience for the film rather than to generate additional revenue from repeat viewings (although one cannot, of course, exclude that there were repeat viewers in the audience).[37] Interestingly, it took four engagements to reach the point of saturation.

The re-release audiences of the 1930s and 1940s were not necessarily repeat viewers, at least judging by the reports of exhibitors. When re-releases became an important source of income during the war years, exhibitors and distributors attributed the popularity of the old films to demographic and economic factors. From the boom conditions of the wartime economy a new audience of juvenile cinemagoers with money to spare had emerged. Apparently, these avid new cinemagoers wanted to get the most out of their pocket money and preferred to spend it on the relatively cheap re-releases rather than on more expensive new films.[38]

Even in the 1940s, then, when conditions were more favorable, repeat viewing did not become a widespread practice among moviegoers in North America. Cultural factors account for this as well. In early 1942, Gone with the Wind, an exceptional film by any standard of the industry, was about to enter its third round of release, roughly two and a half years after its Atlanta premiere. In order to evaluate the remaining revenue potential of the film, producer David O. Selznick commissioned a series of market research studies from George Gallup's Audience Research Institute in Princeton. Selznick was a pioneer of market research in the film industry. As early as 1939 he used Gallup's research methods to test parameters such as audience reaction to the casting of Vivien

Leigh in the main role of Gone with the Wind, and he kept on relying almost entirely on market research in his production, casting and marketing decisions throughout his career.[39] Not content with the box office results of Gone with the Wind so far, spectacular and unparalleled in the history of screen entertainment as they may have been, Selznick was particularly interested in the potential revenue from repeat viewers in the film's third round of release. The Gallup reports yielded some interesting results. Among the major box-office success of the previous three years, Gone with the Wind was the film with by far the highest revenue potential in re-release.[40] As of 10 February 1942, 51,980,000 cinemagoers had seen the film. Roughly 11% of these, an estimated 5,489,000, were repeat viewers. But if these figures looked as if they could be significantly improved upon, the potential number of repeat viewers remained relatively limited nonetheless. Of the third-run audience, Gallup predicted, only 34% would be repeat viewers.[41] This had to be attributed at least in part to an aversion to repeat viewing that the Gallup study detected among moviegoers. Apparently, there was a general attitude that everyone who went to see a film more than once was, as Selznick himself bluntly phrased it, "something of a booby"("vegetable" would have been another appropriate term).[42] Repeat viewing was considered to be regressive behavior not suitable for grown-ups and self-respecting, mentally healthy moviegoers (a practice for outsiders, you might add, like Woody Allen's Cecilia or the heroes of Kerouac's On the Road). To the extent that Gallup's "measurements of desire" are any indication, they suggest that the discursive frameworks of film viewing in the classical period provided audiences with a focus on novelty, or a discipline of novelty, which corresponded to a similar focus in the institutional frameworks. It is at least interesting to note that MGM and United Artists, two studios known for the high quality of their films, were not willing to join the re-release business in the 1940s (although MGM had re-released some of the films in the industry's image campaign in 1934). Maintaining the notion that the quality of these studios' (or anyone's) films was somehow related to their novelty was obviously considered to be more important, i.e. more economically valuable in the long run, than the additional revenue from re-releases.

Selznick, on the contrary, never one to stick to old formulae when it came to the marketing of his films,[43] devised an advertising campaign for Gone with the Wind's third round of release that was actually more of an educational campaign meant to alleviate the audience's suspected fears of repeat viewing. Selznick's campaign followed along similar lines as the campaign organized by the Salt Lake City exhibitor mentioned above on behalf of Ben Hur in 1928, but it used stronger rhetorical hooks. The theme of the campaign was established by a quote from Bosley Crowther, film critic of the New York Times and thus bearer of the highest possible degree of cultural prestige in his profession. In a review of Gone with the Wind, Crowther wrote that "You have not seen it unless you have seen it at least twice," and Selznick planned to use this quote throughout the campaign. Clearly, this was an attempt to turn the established discipline of novelty on its head: Crowther's quote implied that at least in the case of Gone with the Wind single viewings, rather than being a pattern of culturally acceptable behavior, were actually useless and devoid of cultural value. Furthermore, the campaign would employ popular stars such as Spencer Tracy as role models and indicate to the audience how many times these idols of consumption had seen the film.[44] Your favorite screen idols kindly suggest that repeat viewing is OK while the country's foremost cultural authority on film steps in to tell you it's actually mandatory: a strategy that might be

characterized as the good cop/bad cop approach to the enforcement of the discipline of repeat viewing.

However much, or little, these campaign ideas eventually contributed to the box-office results of the film, the general trend of the following years was to go in Selznick's direction. When MGM was readying Gone with the Wind for yet another re-release in 1954, market research indicated that there was a potential audience of 20 million viewers. Roughly 5 million were teenagers who were aware of the film but had never seen it. Fully half of the 20 million were going to be repeat viewers, an improvement of 16% over the 34% of 1943.[45] In 1966, ten years after its original release, Paramount sent The Ten Commandments into re-release. According to a market study by the A.J. Wood Research Company, more than 60% of those who had originally seen Cecil B. DeMille's bible epic, the first film ever to gross $100 Million worldwide, wanted to see it again in theaters. Repeat viewers accounted for more than half of the film's potential audience.[46] By the mid-1960s, repeat viewing was beginning to take hold in other quarters as well. According to a New York Times report from 1965, audiences at revivals of Humphrey Bogart films that were described as collegiate and post-collegiate by the journalist "shouted the dialogue" throughout the film.[47] Obviously, these audiences were familiar enough with the films through previous viewings to memorize the dialogue.

In all likelihood, they had gained their familiarity with the film through television broadcasts, rather than through repeat viewings in the cinema. In the mid to late 1950s, broadcasts of old Hollywood films became a standard feature of television programs.[48] Movies on television were limited to pre-1948 films and to the non-network programming slots of regional television stations that bought the films directly from the companies to which the studios had sold the rights. Television stations in metropolitan areas such as New York showed more films, and a more diverse selection, than stations in smaller cities. In New York in the late 1950s, for instance, more than one hundred films aired each week on different stations, mostly during the daytime or in late-night slots. Never before, not even at the height of the re-release wave of the 1940s had there been so many previously released films available to film viewers, let alone in their homes. One can safely assume that the audiences for these films included numerous repeat viewers, since the films rotated, which means they were shown once every three or six months. Meanwhile, the networks limited their film broadcasts to "specials" such as the annual Wizard of Oz showing on CBS. The networks began broadcasting Hollywood films in earnest in the early 1960s, with the advent of color television. Rather than pre-1948 films, the networks showed relatively recent box-office successes, and they programmed the films in prime-time slots. NBC led the way with "Saturday Night at the Movies," a program which kicked off with the network premiere of How to Marry a Millionaire (TCF 1953) in September 1961. RCA, a pioneer in color television, owned NBC and used the program to promote sales of color television sets. In 1962, ABC, third among the three networks in terms of ratings, started its own program with recent Hollywood films, and finally in 1965/66, CBS joined in as well. The networks' screenings of films quickly established a new pattern of exhibition for films. Films were first shown in theaters, then twice on network television ("premiere" and "rerun"), before they were passed on to local and regional network affiliates and independent stations for their late-night programs. Screenings of recent Hollywood films were national events, with nearly 40% of all television sets tuned in when Alfred Hitchcock's The

Birds (Universal 1963) had its network premiere in 1968. Other films such as The Bridge on the River Kwai (Columbia 1957, D. Lean), shown in 1966, or Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (MGM 1958, R. Brooks), shown in 1967, scored similar ratings. Some older films were even more successful. Gone with the Wind, which had been released to theaters for the last time in 1972, was shown on television in two parts in 1976. As many as half of all television sets in the US were tuned in to the film.[49]

The changes that occurred in the institutional frameworks of film viewing in the 1960s significantly increased the opportunities for repeat viewing. The breakthrough to a widespread practice of repeat viewing, however, came in the 1970s. In the early 1970s, midnight movies became a regular feature of cinema programming in metropolitan areas such as New York. Films like The Rocky Horror Picture Show began to attract filmgoers who dressed up as the film's characters and turned the screenings into parties. Film-going parties were a regular feature of teenage viewing habits in the 1950s and of the New York underground in the 1960s.[50] The midnight movie parties of the 1970s were based on quasi-ritual repeat viewings of the same films, and they appealed to a somewhat broader audience. With the premiere of Star Wars in 1977, the habit of repeat viewing in theaters became a common phenomenon . According to reports, some particularly devoted fans saw the science fiction adventure film more than a hundred times during its long premiere run in theaters, a phenomenon that reoccurred in a similar, albeit less pronounced fashion twenty-one years later with Titanic (TCF/Paramount 1997, J. Cameron).[51] Part of the attraction that Star Wars held for repeat viewers came from the improved sound quality. Star Wars was the first major film to be released in Dolby stereo. The spectacular sound effects lent the viewing experience an entirely new quality, which for many viewers apparently took more than one screening to exhaust its appeal.[52]

Even more instrumental to the entrenchment of the practice of repeat viewing than theatrical sound was another technological innovation, the VCR. First marketed in the mid-1970s as a device for "time shifting," for recording and deferred viewing of television programs, the VCR became popular in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a machine for watching movies.[53] In fact, part of the reason why JVC and Matsushita's VHS system rather than Sony's Beta system became the standard video format was that VHS offered a recording capacity of two hours as early as 1978, which made it possible to record and play entire films, while the more expensive Beta system worked with one-hour tapes. In the 1980s, renting and buying films on video quickly became a standard element of film viewing practices. The growth of the home video market in the 1980s and 1990s was nothing short of spectacular. By 1998, 84,6% of TV households in the US also owned a VCR.[54] In the late 1990s, theatrical box office accounted for 25% of the revenue of an average Hollywood film, while more than 50% came from home video (and later DVD) rentals and sales.[55] Contrary to fears expressed by the Hollywood studios in the early 1980s, none of this growth came at the expense of the theatrical market. Instead, the theatrical market itself continued to grow in the last twenty years.

To an important extent, the rapid growth of the home video market can be attributed to repeat viewing. The VCR made it possible to rent or buy films one had seen in theaters and on television and watch them again at will. Furthermore, with the VCR films became collectors' items. As early as the late 1970s, video dealers realized that many of their customers wanted to own their favorite movies. While collecting films on 16mm had been a cinephilic activity at least since the 1930s (remember Universal's "Home

Film Library"), film collecting became an industry in the era of home video, a trend that has become even more pronounced since the introduction of the DVD.[56] In the 1990s, video rentals in the US contracted slightly from $4.4 billion annually in 1992 to $3.9 billion in 1998. In the same period, video purchases almost doubled from $386.8 million to 676,3 million, a further indication of the growing importance of both film collecting and repeat viewing.[57]

The company that benefited the most from the home video boom and the new culture of collecting films was Disney. Home video revenues importantly contributed to Disney's growth over the last twenty years from a minor Hollywood studio to one of the seven largest media corporations in the world. In 1996, for instance, Disney video sales alone accounted for 35% of the total volume of the so called sell-through market, the market for purchased videos.[58] An important share of this revenue came from the marketing of classic Disney animation films. Video copies of these films were rented and purchased mostly by families with children and destined for repeat viewings by children. While children had always been a core group of customers for the Disney Corporation, home video allowed Disney to increase its hold on the children's market. The success of Disney films on video is largely due to the fact that children are without doubt among the most avid repeat viewers of films (as they are, and used to be, the most avid repeat listeners of fairy tales). While children used to go the cinema before, the enabling technology of the VCR significantly increased the number and extent of repeat viewings of films by children. If repeat viewing was considered a childish pattern of behavior by audiences of the classical period, it is now to an important extent a behavior of children indeed.

Along with the VCR, cable TV emerged as a major outlet for repeat screenings and viewings of films in the 1970s.[59] Cable and pay TV and home video again modified the patterns of exhibition for films. The theatrical release now constitutes a "showcase" in which the film is established as a brand, before it is further exploited first in the pay and cable TV and then in the home video markets. Meanwhile, network TV screenings of films have become less significant. While in 1980 network fees still accounted for 10.8% of the revenue of an average film, they were down to 1.4% in 1995 (which is partly due to the relative growth of the revenue from cable and video).[60]

Our understanding of the institutional framework of repeat viewing would not be complete, however, without a discussion of another significant shift in the modes of film presentation that occurred in the 1960s. Up until the 1960s, films were mostly screened continuously, and movie going was mostly casual. Even in movie palaces of the silent feature era, where film screenings where accompanied by stage shows, spectators arrived and left at will, and not at specific hours. In 1916, S.L. "Roxy" Rothapfel (or Rothafel, as he later called himself), then already a famous movie palace impresario noted for his elaborate stage presentations, rented the Knickerbocker theater on Broadway and temporarily ran it as a movie theater. While Rothapfel offered the usual composite programs of short and long films and stage numbers, he also introduced a new policy of continuous performances.[61] After just a few weeks, the owners of the Knickerbocker, which had previously been a relatively prestigious legitimate theater, filed a lawsuit against Rothapfel, demanding his eviction on the grounds that he devalued their property by "showing [motion] pictures continuously at popular prices."[62] Continuous shows, the brief stated, were a feature of "third class entertainment" and should not be associated with the name of the Knickerbocker theater in the public

mind. This lawsuit is significant because it points to an important difference between the institutions of the theater and the movie palace. As much as Rothapfel and other movie palace impresarios aimed to make cinema the rival of the legitimate stage: the institution of the legitimate stage included an entire apparatus of measures of social control such as dress codes and fixed show times that were not integrated into the protocols of movie going. Even at its most culturally ambitious, the movie palace remained a relatively anonymous site of casual entertainment. In the theater, as French theorist Jean Deprun wrote in an article in 1947, you never escaped the gaze of the social eye, whereas in the cinema you could.[63]

Throughout the classical period, fixed show times and numbered seats existed in the cinema as well, but they were strictly limited to the so-called "road shows," the first-run engagements of certain major productions which were handled like theater performances on the road. In the 1950s, however, some movie theaters in New York began to advertise their show times, apparently at the behest of their customers.[64] Then, in 1960, Alfred Hitchcock went on a mission to educate his audience into becoming docile and disciplined moviegoers. Every single piece of advertising for Psycho included the line "The Picture You Must See from the Beginning ... or Not at All."[65] This was not a hollow warning. Theaters strictly enforced a policy of making latecomers to wait in line for the next show. Furthermore, the theater had to be vacated by the audience at the end of every screening. In the case of Psycho, there were artistic reasons for this change: Janet Leigh's star disappearance trick worked only if one saw the film from beginning to end. Fixed show times and the so-called "fill and spill" technique in which the theater was emptied after every screening soon became standard practice. "Fill and spill" made sure that viewers saw the film one time per session and paid for each viewing. Furthermore, the theater owners considered the long lines of patrons waiting for the next show of successful films such as The Godfather an additional advertisement for the film.

Perhaps paradoxically, the shift to fixed show times that assured a practice of single screenings in the cinema is an important element of the discipline of repeat viewing. As early as 1971 Stanley Cavell, for whom the pleasure of the continuous movie show was partly in "enjoying the recognition [...] of the return of the exact moment at which one entered, and from then on feeling free to decide when to leave, or whether to see the familiar part through again," deplored the change to fixed show times and considered it a claim on his privacy.[66] Fixed show times reorganized the relationship between film and spectator. Rather than a "text in itself," the film now appeared as a "text for me," as Yuri Tsivian points out.[67] The fixation on the individual film and, if you will, the systematic personalization of the relationship between film and spectator is one of the crucial features of the framework of film viewing that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Even though they may not be the dominant overall pattern of film consumption, film collecting and the individual's repeat viewing of his or her favorite films on video best epitomize this new system.

On an economic level, both the individualization of the film and the personalization of the relationship between film and spectator function to improve the efficiency of film marketing. On the occasion of the premiere of The Godfather in 1972, Charles O. Glenn, Paramount's head of advertising, could still claim that "in fact, the average life of a motion picture is 16 months, through all of its releases, worldwide."[68] The development of the home video market, first driven by independent video store owners, but soon brought back under the corporate control of the major Hollywood studios, poten-

tially extended the life span of Hollywood films ad infinitum. The Godfather continues to do excellent business in video rentals and sales on DVD to this day. Furthermore, coupled with the introduction of the wide release in film distribution in the mid-1970s, through which distributors make new films available to all cinema goers in the first week of release with several thousand prints, the development of the home video market has significantly improved the chances for a film to reach its entire potential audience. David O. Selznick wanted to enhance the market penetration of his films and compensate for the overall lack of efficiency of the classical distribution system when he devised his campaign in favor of repeat viewing. The changes in the framework of film viewing that brought about the current discipline of repeat viewing represent a solution to those problems.

On a social level, the personalization of the relationship between spectator and film is intertwined with a privatization of film viewing. With television, and even more so with the VCR, film viewing turns from an activity conducted in public spaces to one confined to the privacy of the home. This privatization of media consumption can be read in different ways. One the one hand, it may be seen as an intrusion of the culture industry into the last recesses of one's private existence, and thus as an elision of the boundary between the private and the public (or yet another claim on one's privacy). This was Adorno's reading of television in 1953.[69] In the particular case of home video, one could argue that the privatization of film viewing further contributes to a commodification of the film experience. With regard to the promotional narratives of the "making of..." films that accompany every major film release, Barbara Klinger argues that these "mini narratives ... encourage the spectator to internalize the phenomena of the film by becoming an expert in its behind-the scenes history or by identifying the subject matter of a film with his or her own experience."[70] From this standpoint, the "bonus materials" on DVDs such as "making of...," trailers and interviews may be seen as a crucial factor in the process I propose to call the personalization of the relationship between film and spectator: They constitute a ready-made opportunity for the viewer/owner to further intensify his or her engagement with a film, particularly as the viewer watches the film in the privacy, or "privacy," of his or her home.

On the other hand, the VCR and the DVD player allow the viewer to recuperate some of the freedom lost in the introduction of fixed show times in the cinema, and gain additional liberties into the bargain. When Goldwyn tried to revive the use of the film catalogue in 1919, one trade paper claimed that films would now be available like books: "The best product of each company will remain in demand," the Moving Picture World wrote, "just as published fiction appears and either takes its place on the shelves or falls into the obscurity it deserves because of its lack of merit."[71] In a similar fashion, Alexandre Astruc envisioned the library of the future in his 1948 essay "Naissance d'une nouvelle avantgarde: la caméra-stylo:" "Le jour n'est pas loin où chacun aura chez lui des appareils de projection et ira louer chez le libraire du coin des films écrits sur n'importe quel sujet, de n'importe quelle forme."[72] Astruc's utopie du film-livre has become a reality with the introduction of home video: viewers can now select and view films almost at will, indeed as one would select a book from a library or a bookstore. Apart from contributing to a commodification of the film experience, then, the privatization of film viewing also represents an increase of what German sociologist Niklas Luhmann calls the "individuality of the individual:" an increase in the possibilities available to the individual to express and experience his

or her individuality.[73]

And finally, there is the question of ritual. In his essay on the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction, Walter Benjamin argued that mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its dependence on ritual. Where the work of art used to be an auratic object for concentrated and attentive contemplation, mechanical reproduction has created a new regime of engagement with art that is characterized by distraction rather than contemplation, and where the full appreciation of art is not limited to the authority of a few priest-like experts, but where everyone becomes an expert – a change best exemplified, indeed, by the new medium of film and its urban audiences. It remains highly debatable whether technological change alone, as Benjamin suggests, can bring about a new regime of perception, or whether it is not rather a new regime of perception that favors the development and employment of certain technologies.[74] Furthermore, not everyone agrees that cinema as an instance of mechanically reproduced art emancipates art from ritual. Jean Deprun, for instance, holds that, on the contrary, cinema reattaches art to religious ritual while the bourgeois institution of the theater marks a break with, or rather a betrayal of the ritual nature of spectacle.[75] In a similar vein, but with a different historical perspective, Dudley Andrew argues that cinema constitutes a social ritual, but one that is undermined by the introduction of television since home viewing leads to a particularization of the audience.[76] Perhaps paradoxically, one could lend further support to Andrew's claim that cinema is, and remains, a social ritual by arguing that only with the help of television does cinema truly become a collective ritual. From 1975 and Jaws onwards, network television advertising campaigns for films have formed the basis of the wide release distribution pattern, and they have consistently contributed to focus the audience's attention on individual films on the occasion of their premiere to a degree not heretofore known in the history of cinema (with the possible exception of the premiere of Gone with the Wind).

Whatever the status of cinema as a social ritual, however, there is no doubt that the discipline of repeat viewing constitutes a regime of engagement with mechanically reproduced art that is not characterized by distraction, but rather, by concentrated contemplation, as in the case of the archaeologist who watches films repeatedly in order to fully appreciate them in their various aspects as works of art. Repeat viewers are experts in Benjamin's sense, but they are also concentrated and not distracted viewers. Furthermore, repeat viewing represents a form of engagement with art that is in itself a kind of ritual: a secularized ritual based on fun, or a ritualization of fun. The ritual of repeat viewing differs from Benjamin's and Deprun's (or Andrew's) notions of ritual in that it is a highly individualized and personalized ritual. At the same time, repeat viewing, formerly a behavior typical of "boobies," is now a ritual shared by large numbers of people, indeed by a mass audience, and it is often practiced in groups.[77] Repeat viewing has become a deeply entrenched collective celebration of the individuality of the individual, based on media consumption and centered on the surplus of meaning that the personalized relationship to the film offers to the spectator.

"But the instant the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production," Benjamin argues, "the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice – politics." As I have tried to argue in this essay, the politics of the ritualized fun of repeat viewing are to be located on different levels: the level of institutional frameworks, the level of discursive frameworks, and the level of actual behavior. In order to grasp what is at stake in repeat viewing, one has

to understand repeat viewing as a discipline articulated on all three of those levels. As my analysis suggests, the politics of repeat viewing are ambivalent. Repeat viewing, as it is now practiced, includes a strong element of both economic and behavioral discipline in a Foucauldian sense, as well as some liberating aspects. In order to fully understand how these seemingly contradictory tendencies interact, one has to write a more comprehensive history of the discipline of repeat viewing, a history that investigates, among other things, how repeat viewing breaks down along gender lines. As I have also tried to show, this work still largely remains to be done.

1 Janet Staiger, Perverse Spectators. The Practices of Film Reception (New York: New York University Press, 2000), p. 162.
2 Janet Staiger, Interpreting Films. Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
3 Yuri Tsivian, Early Cinema in Russia and Its Historical Reception (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996).
4 Cf. among others: "New York? New York!: William Uricchio and Roberta E. Pearson comment on the Singer-Allen Exchange," Cinema Journal, Vol. 36, no. 4 (Summer 1997), pp. 98-102; Ben Singer, Melodrama and Modernity. Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), chapter 6.
5 Janet Staiger, "Writing the History of American Film Reception," in Richard Maltby, Melvin Stokes (eds.), Hollywood Spectatorship. Changing Perceptions of Cinema Audiences (London: BFI, 2001), p. 19. As Staiger argues in this essay, reception practices obviously include activities beyond the interaction of spectator and film text, such as talking and reading about films, film location tourism, naming children after film stars etc.
6 Douglas Gomery, Shared Pleasures. A History of Movie Presentation in the United States (London: BFI, 1992), pp. 57-82.
7 Cf. for an analysis of this process Rick Altman, Film/Genre (London: BFI, 1999), chapter 3. A good example for a covert remake is Comrade X (MGM 1940, K. Vidor), a follow up to Ernst Lubitsch's Ninotchka (MGM 1939).
8 "DeMille Film Smashes Record With 62 Weeks' Run," Exhibitors Herald, Vol. XX, no. 10 (February 28, 1925), p. 34.
9 "Film Producers Get Grauman's Advice First," Exhibitor's Herald and Moving Picture World, Vol. 90., no. 8 (February 25, 1928), p. 34-35.
10 Cf. Vinzenz Hediger, "Putting the Spectators in a Receptive Mood," in Veronica Innocenti, Valentina Re (eds.), Limina. Le soglie del film/Limina. The Film's Thresholds (Udine: Forum, 2004), pp. 291-304.
11 "$538,000 for Miniver," Motion Picture Herald, Vol. 148, no. 2 (July 11, 1942), p. 8; "Random Joins 6-Week Films at Music Hall," Motion Picture Herald, Vol. 150, no. 4 (January 23, 1943), p. 32; "'DeMille's Show' Enters 10th Week at Music Hall," Motion Picture Herald, Vol. 186, no. 11 (March 15, 1952), p. 3.
12 For recent studies of the emergence of the classical system of distribution cf. Michael Quinn, "Paramount and Early Feature Distribution, 1914-1921," Film History, Vol. 11, no. 1 (1999), pp. 98-113; Michael Quinn, "Distribution, the Transient Audience, and the Transition to the Feature Film," Cinema Journal, Vol. 40, no. 2 (Winter 2001), pp. 35-56.
13 Audience Research Institute, Report 150, 1 April 1942. Selznick Archives, Harry Ransom

Center for the Study of the Humanities, University of Texas, Austin, box 3562, folder 2.

14 "Goldwyn Revives Use of Catalogue," Moving Picture World, Vol. 40, no. 12 (June 21, 1919), p. 1783.

15 "Distributing Companies Seeking Longer Exhibition Life for Film," Exhibitor's Herald, Vol. 14, no. 14 (April 1, 1922), p. 61.

16 "Second 'Tarzan' Story Permits Exhibitors to Book or Repeat Original Film to Popularize the Sequel," Exhibitor's Trade Review, Vol. 4., no. 17 (September 28, 1918), p. 1397.

17 "Chaplin Reissues Bought by Pathé for Half Million," Exhibitors Herald, Vol. 23, no. 3 (October 10, 1925), p. 30.

18 "Exhibs Balk at Reissues, Claim Curb on New Pictures," Variety, Vol. 154, no. 8 (May 3, 1944), p. 3.

19 "Marked Trend Toward Reissues and Repeats," Motion Picture Herald, Vol. 124, no. 13 (September 26, 1936), p. 13. For a discussion of double features and the reasons for their introduction in the 30s cf. D. Gomery, op. cit., pp. 77-79.

20 "Films Become 'Classics'. Revivals Have B.O. Longevity," Variety, Vol. 119, no. 11 (September 4, 1935), p. 5.

21 Cf. Vinzenz Hediger, Verführung zum Film. Der amerikanische Kinotrailer seit 1912 (Marburg: Schüren 2001), pp. 133-137.

22 "No Concerted Idea Behind Revivals," Variety, Vol. 115, no. 6 (July 24, 1934), p. 6.

23 Cf. "Extra Gravy from 16mm. Cutting Down 2 Year Old Films," Variety, Vol. 117, no. 13 (March 3, 1935), p. 23. As early as the 1910s, the Hollywood studios tried to use small-gauge home cinema to promote their image as a healthy, family-friendly industry. Cf. Moya Luckett, "'Filming the Family.' Home Movie Systems and the Domestication of Spectatorship," Velvet Light Trap, no. 36 (1995), pp. 21-36. Starting in 1922, Pathé offered a wide variety of films for home viewing on their 9,5-mm amateur format, including Chaplin films and Fritz Lang's Metropolis. Cf. Vincent Pinel, "'Le Salon, la chambre d'enfant et la salle de village'. Les formats Pathé," in Pathé: Premier empire du cinéma (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 1994), pp. 196-217. Both the home viewing market and the parallel circuits merit further study, particularly with regard to the question of repeat viewing.

24 "Shoestring Exhibits Playing Oldie Revivals Have Everybody Squawking," Variety, Vol. 117, no. 2 (December 25, 1934), p. 21; "Film Reissue Practice Seen as an Evil to be Curbed Next Season," Variety, Vol. 118, no. 3 (April 3, 1935), p. 4.

25 "Features Down 24% in Five Years; War Changes Release Patterns," Motion Picture Herald, Vol. 159, no. 13 (June 30, 1945), p. 16.

26 Michael Conant, Anti-Trust in the Motion Picture Industry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), p. 36.

27 "Cycle of Reissues and Repeat Dates Due to Extended Runs of Newer Pix," Variety, Vol. 151, no. 12 (September 1, 1943), p. 11.

28 Cf. for instance "RKO, N.Y., Sets 3d Reissue Package," Variety, Vol. 152, no. 8 (November 3, 1943), p. 5.

29 "Nix 44 Reissues, Repeates. See Protection for the Future," Variety, Vol. 153, no. 2 (December 22, 1943), p. 9.

30 "Surprise B.O. of Reissues Eating Up a Lot of Raw Picture Stock," Variety, Vol 152, no. 2 (September 22, 1943), p. 9.

31 "Reissues a Postwar Headache. Industry Sees 'Squeeze Play'," Variety, Vol. 160, no. 3 (September 26, 1945), p. 9; "Reissues Still Keep to Wartime Peak in Boff Sales; Repeat Bookings Spurt," Variety, Vol. 161, no. 10 (February 13, 1946), p. 7-13.

32 "Reissue Balloon Deflates B's. Exhibits Prefer Buying Oldies," Variety, Vol. 170, no. 13 (June 2,

1948), p. 5.

33 "TV Hurts Reissues – Balaban. Hence No Par Pix on Video," Variety, Vol. 170, no. 10 (May 12, 1948), p. 9-22.

34 For a detailed account of this process cf. D. Gomery, op. cit., pp. 247 passim.

35 Similarly, television series such as Bonanza replaced the action and adventure serials of old, the last of which, Columbia's Blazing the Overland Trail, was released to theaters in 1953.

36 Y. Tsivian, op. cit., p. 178.

37 "Shoulder Arms For Fourth Time," Exhibitor's Trade Review, Vol. 5, no. 4 (December 21, 1918), p. 218. For a discussion of the distributors' manipulation of trade paper reports for business-to-business advertising purposes cf. also David B. Pratt, "Fit Food For Madhouse Inmates. The Box Office Reception of the German Invasion of 1921," Griffithiana, no. 48-49 (October 1993), pp. 97-157.

38 "New Audience, Chiefly Kids with Fresh Defense Coin, Hypo Reissue B.O.," Variety, Vol. 152, no. 7 (October 27, 1943), p. 7.

39 Memo from Victor M. Shapiro to David O. Selznick, 18 February 1939. Selznick Archives, folder 3562 1. For a detailed account of Gallup's activities in Hollywood cf.: Suzanne Ohmer, "Measuring Desire. George Gallup and Audience Research in Hollywood," Journal of Film and Video, Vol. 43, no. 1/2 (1991), pp. 3-28. For a survey of film audience research up to the late 1940s cf. Leo Handel, Hollywood Looks at its Audience. A Report of Film Audience Research (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1950).

40 Audience Research Institute Report, 25 June 1942, Selznick Archives, box 3562, folder 1.

41 Audience Research Institute Report, 19 February 1942. Selznick Archives, box 3562, folder 1.

42 Memo from David O. Selznick to Louis Calvert, 31 March 1942. Selznick Archives, box 177, folder 6.

43 At one point in 1939, Selznick developed plans to release Gone with the Wind simultaneously with 600 prints in order to benefit as much as possible from the national advertising campaign for the film. This was at a time when films premiered with just a handful of prints, and when there were never more than 300 prints of any given film in circulation. In 1947, Selznick set up his own distribution unit, Selznick Releasing Organisation, to release Duel in the Sun with 300 prints simultaneously in the New York area. He thus anticipated the wide release, which is the standard of Hollywood film distribution since the mid-1970s, by almost thirty years. Cf. Vinzenz Hediger, "Le cinéma Hollywoodien et la construction d'un public mondialisé. Quelques notes sur l'histoire récente de la distribution de films," in Jean-Pierre Esquenazi (ed.), Cinéma contemporain. État des lieux (Paris: L'Harmattan, forthcoming).

44 Memo from David O. Selznick to Louis Calvert, 20 April 1942. Selznick Archives, box 182, folder 10.

45 "Claims Teens Anxious to See Wind," Motion Picture Herald, Vol. 195, no. 11 (June 12, 1954), p. 31.

46 "Ten Commandments Re-release," Motion Picture Herald, Vol. 235, no. 14 (April 13, 1966), p. 3.

47 Quoted in Janet Staiger, "Writing the History of American Film Reception," in R. Maltby, M. Stokes (eds.), op. cit, p. 24.

48 In the early 1950s, television stations showed B-films from minor Hollywood studios and foreign films rather than Hollywood films. This is how Martin Scorsese first came in touch with Italian neo-realism as a child, by the way: through American television broadcasts of subtitled versions in the early 1950s. Cf. David Thompson, Ian Christie (eds.), Scorsese on Scorsese

(London: Faber and Faber, 1989).

49 D. Gomery, op. cit., pp. 248-250.

50 J. Staiger, "Writing the History of American Film Reception", cit., p. 22.

51 Olen J. Earnest, "Star Wars. A Case Study of Motion Picture Marketing," in Bruce A. Austin (ed.), Current Research in Film. Audiences, Economics and Law, Vol. 1 (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1985), pp. 1-18.

52 Cf. Barbara Flückiger, Sound Design. Die virtuelle Klangwelt des Films (Marburg: Schüren 2001), pp. 50-53.

53 For a comprehensive account of the development and introduction of the VCR and Hollywood's reaction to the new technology cf. James Lardner, Fast Forward. Hollywood, the Japanese and the VCR Wars (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987). Cf. also Janet Wasko, Hollywood in the Information Age (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), pp. 113-170.

54 Benjamin Compaine, Douglas Gomery, Who Owns the Media? Competition and Concentration in the Mass Media Industry (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlenbaum Associates, 2000), p. 417.

55 Cf. Harold Vogel, Entertainment Industry Economics, 4th Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 55.

56 Cf. Barbara Klinger, "The Contemporary Cinephile. Film Collecting in the Post-Video Era," in Richard Maltby, Melvin Stokes (eds.), op. cit., pp. 132-151.

57 B. Compaine, D. Gomery, op. cit., p. 412.

58 Ibid., p. 416.

59 For an account of the emergence of cable TV cf. J. Wasko, op. cit., pp. 71-112; for the current state of the industry cf. B. Compaine, D. Gomery, op. cit., pp. 406-411.

60 H. Vogel, op. cit., p. 55.

61 "Rothapfel Opens Knickerbocker," Moving Picture World, Vol. 27, no. 4 (January 22, 1916), p. 571.

62 "Knickerbocker vs. Triangle," Moving Picture World, Vol. 27, no. 7 (February 19, 1916), p. 1103.

63 Jean Deprun, "Cinéma et idéntification," Revue internationale de filmologie, Vol. 1, no. 1 (July-August 1947), pp. 36-38. Trans. by Annabelle J. de Croÿ in http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/classics/cl0499/jdcl1.htm

64 "RKO Theatres Advertise Starting Time of Shows," Motion Picture Herald, Vol. 202, no. 1 (January 7, 1956), p. 17.

65 For a discussion of this campaign cf. also Linda Williams, "Discipline and Fun: Psycho and Postmodern Cinema," in Christine Gledhill, Linda Williams (eds.), Reinventing Film Studies (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 363 passim.

66 Stanley Cavell, The World Viewed. Reflections on the Ontology of Film (New York: Viking, 1971), p. 11.

67 Y. Tsivian, op. cit., p. 39.

68 "Celebration Of Success: Sales promo Exec Assn. Hears About Godfather," Variety (May 24, 1972), p. 4.

69 Theodor W. Adorno, "Prolog zum Fernsehen," in Gesammelte Schriften, B. 10.2 (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp 1997).

70 Barbara Klinger, "Digressions at the Cinema: Commodification and Reception in Mass Culture," in James Naremore, Patrick Brantlinger (eds.), Modernity and Mass Culture (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 132.

71 "Goldwyn Revives Use of Catalogue," cit.

72 Alexandre Astruc, "Naissance d'une nouvelle avantgarde: la caméra-stylo," in Du Stylo à la caméra... et de la caméra au stylo (Paris: Archipel, 1992), p. 325.
73 Cf. also Stefan Rieger, Die Individualität der Medien (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 2001), pp. 12 passim.
74 As Jacques Rancière points out, the enduring success of Benjamin's theses among critical theorists has to do with the fact that they are compatible with both Marxist materialist positions and Heideggerian ontology, or rather that they permit the passage from one paradigm to the other, in that they suggest that modernity is essentially about the deployment of the essence of technology. Cf. Jacques Rancière, Le Partage du sensible. Esthétique et politique (Paris: La fabrique, 2000), pp. 47-48.
75 J. Deprun, op. cit.
76 Dudley Andrew, "Film and Society: Public Ritual and Private Space," in Ina Rae Hark (ed.), Exhibition. The Film Reader (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 161-171.
77 Interestingly, representations of repeat viewing in films usually are of groups of viewers. Nanni Moretti's Palombella Rossa (Sacher 1989) comes to mind, where the protagonist Michele Apicella abandons a water polo game to watch the ending of Dr. Zhivago for what is clearly not the first time together with an audience in the stadium bar, or Nora Ephron's Sleepless in Seattle (TCF 1993), where a group of female friends watch An Affair to Remember (TCF 1957, L. McCarey), the 1950s tearjerker of which Ephron's romantic comedy is a covert remake of sorts.