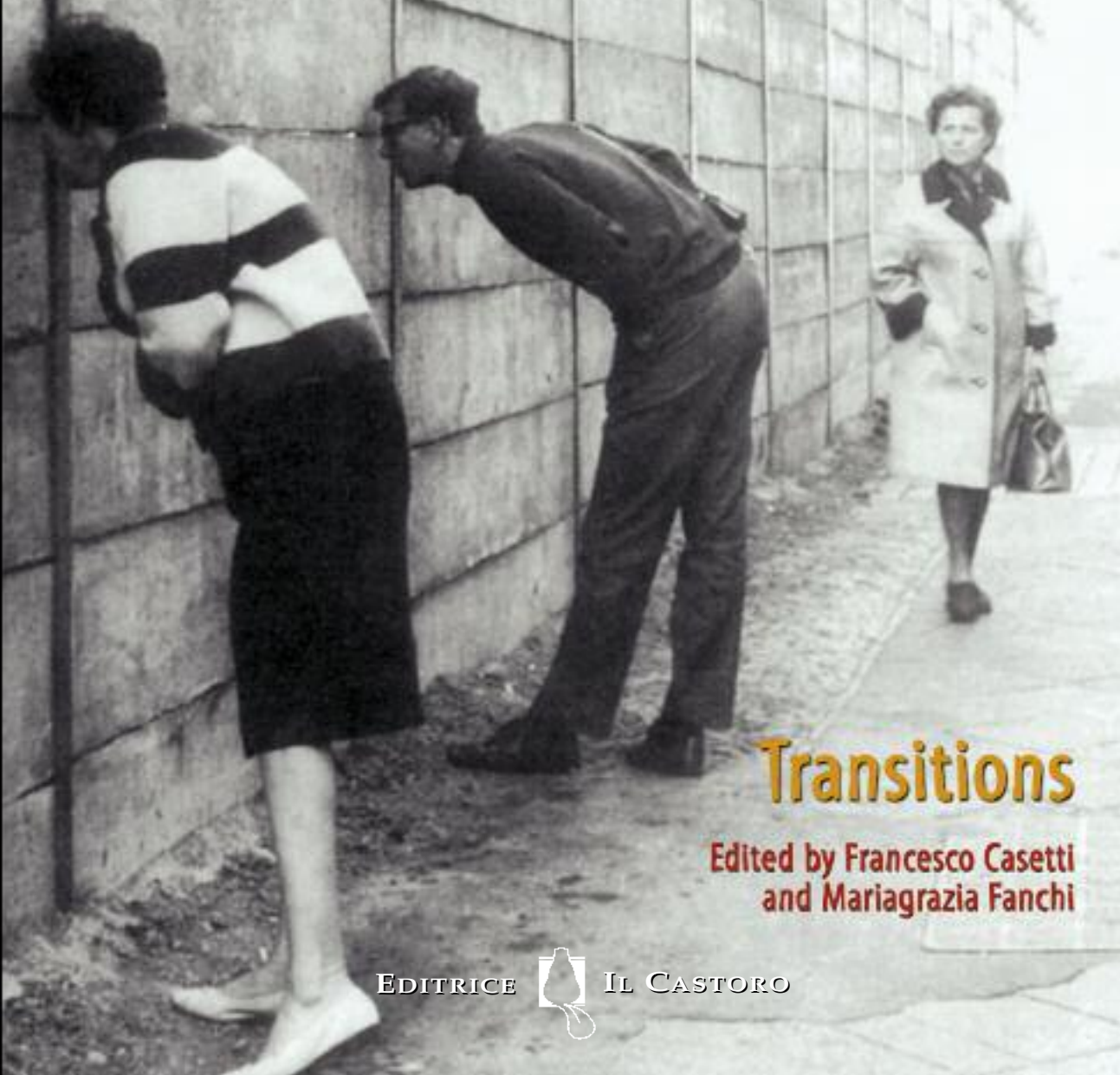


no. 5, Fall 2004

# CINEMA & Cie

International Film Studies Journal



## Transitions

Edited by Francesco Casetti  
and Mariagrazia Fanchi

EDITRICE



IL CASTORO

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International Film Studies Journal

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## INTRODUCTION

The spectatorship experience and viewing forms have deeply changed during cinema's more than a century of existence. The evolution of the apparatus (from the multi-faceted technological innovations that have transformed the cinema medium, to the regeneration, driven by digital technology, of the media scenarios), the changing viewing conditions (the evolution of the trade, the multiplication and differentiation of the fruition spaces), the metamorphosis of the social and cultural scenario (the extension and transformation of the social and discursive networks that the viewers are inserted into and that constitute the inescapable framework of the viewing experience) have changed the relationship forms between film and viewer and the habits and the value of going to the cinema. The present issue of *CINEMA & Cie* aims straight for the heart of a question that today, due to the drive towards interactivity and media convergence, is ever more relevant, by examining in depth the viewer's experience. This involves on the one hand an understanding of how many and which factors shape the cinema viewing forms, how they interact with each other and what type of observation, method or approach is more suited to grasp the variety and complexity of the relationships and on the other hand to assess how the cinematic experience can contribute to define the usage modes of other media and even a canon of apperception and understanding of the extra media reality.

More than on the epoch making changes, we focus our attention on the transitions, on the small cracks in the social viewing ritual that reveal the dynamism and reactivity of the spectatorship processes in respect of the evolution of the apparatus and the transformations that occur in the broader relational and cultural context. The common theme of the essays collected here is the conviction that the viewer's experience is a combination of many variables, a good part of which outside the cinema itself, and that the viewer's experience can provide a privileged point of view from which to observe and understand the transformations taking place in the social and cultural, as well as the media, environment.

Francesco Casetti, in the opening essay, highlights the close relationship that ties movie going to modernity's trends, needs and restlessness. A bijective relationship in which the forms of cinematic vision incorporate and render paradigmatic certain distinctive traits of modernity. Through specific filmic samples, the essay illustrates how the viewer's experience is the result of two orders of processes, respectively social and symbolic, and it highlights their inextricable connection. More specifically he hypothesises a relationship that is at the same time symmetrical and compensational, between

the contact that the viewer establishes with the screen and the relationship that he builds with the rest of the public in the cinema. An unresolved tension between the virtual nature, that is never fully realised, of the symbolic identification with the film and the physicality, never fully sublimated, of the presence of other viewers in the cinema.

The perception of a liminality of the viewer's experience shapes and guides Annette Kuhn's reflection. By studying the recollections of cinema viewers from the 1930s, Kuhn identifies an essential ambivalence in the images and perception of cinema. The cinema places, in particular, occupy in the viewer's memory an interstitial position between the private and public sphere borrowing from the first the sense of proximity and safety and from the second the perception of alteration and extraneity that feeds the escapist attraction and function of viewing. Veritable transitional spaces that, due to the intimacy that they establish with the viewer, become safe havens for the exploration and appropriation of the external environment. In the interwar years going to the cinema represented an important experience to know and familiarise oneself with the neighbours and the social context of the neighbourhood. A significance that, Kuhn specifies, is closely tied to that particular historical moment and the characteristics of the apparatus.

The inter-dependency of the forms and functions of going to the cinema, with the social and cultural surroundings and with the configuration of the media environment, constitute the leitmotiv of Vinzenz Hediger's research. Hediger examines a particular form of viewing: the practice of the repeated fruition by reconstructing its progressive affirmation from the 1930s and by trying to identify its origin both within and outside the cinema medium. A complex network of interferences is revealed, in which the apparatus nevertheless plays a primary role. From the restraining effort exercised by the distribution and exploitation strategies of the films during the classic cinema period, to the contemporary propulsion exercised by the diffusion of domestic viewing technologies (VCR and DVD).

James Hay explores the closeness and interaction between cinema and television and other forms of consumption. Starting from an analysis of a recent car advert, Hay's text highlights the ever-closer interaction between media environments and even non-symbolic forms of consumption. The media convergence is masterfully illustrated through a rich repertoire of examples that range from the more traditional contamination of the discursive forms (for example, the translation of contents from one medium to the other), to the influence of apparatus and other consumptions not necessarily of symbolic goods, in the definition of the usage canons of a medium. The case of the first car stereos radios as a model of television fruition is exemplary. The fusion and relation between media, and not only, consumption experiences offers unprecedented interpretations. The association between radio and car, for example, brings into play a series of values, such as the sense of freedom and contemporaneously the control and obedience of rules of behaviour (highway code and by extension the social system), that can effectively be applied to the examination and understanding of the television viewing experience and its social impact.

Inter-discursiveness and inter-operativeness are other key words that appear in the text that closes the monographic section. Mariagrazia Fanchi's analysis concentrates on the most advanced forms of spectatorship experience tied to the introduction of digital technology. By examining the institutional forms of cinema consumption, without looking at its most extreme and innovative aspects (such as the use of the web to down-



load and watch films), Fanchi detects the signs of a change in progress that assails the status of the viewer and the values and forms of his viewing praxis. The examination of the multiplexes (with particular attention to the Italian situation) allows us to glimpse the progressive expansion of the cinema viewer experience: on the sensorial level the development and diversification of the stimuli, on the social level the crucial role of the cinema as meeting place and focus of a network of relations that innervate the surrounding territory and on the symbolic level the re-investment on the consumption experience of the opportunity for self-expression. New ethical principles and rules of behaviour shape the viewer's action, which is progressively less tied to a single media environment and its discipline. It is now engaged contemporaneously in different contexts, negotiating between the rules of each context, and organising a variety of offers in an experience that assumes hyperbolic characteristics.

Inter-media, evolution of the viewing syntax, development of the senses, radical transformation of the relationship with the filmic text. The new forms of cinema viewing are still largely to be explored, both in terms of their phenomenology and, especially, in terms of their social consequences. But also the study of spectatorship from a historical point of view continues to present broad shadow zones: the complex relationship with the apparatus, the variety of viewing modes and the interferences, exchanges and connivance with the social environment reveal a poorly explored research territory.

The following essays do not propose systematic explorations or final mappings. They provide an awareness (towards the social and cultural, as well as the semantic and symbolic, aspects of viewing) and a method (able to capture and reconstruct the variety of elements that come into play when defining the viewer's experience) that can certainly contribute to bringing together in a more critical and conscious manner the diachronic and synchronous study of cinema spectatorship.

[f.c., m.f.]

# THE PLACE OF THE OBSERVER<sup>1</sup>

Francesco Casetti, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano

## In the Heart of Things

“Sicily! The night was an eye full of gaze.” *Le Cinématographe vu de l’Etna* is one of the most fascinating essays by Jean Epstein.<sup>2</sup> It describes, in a sort of diptych, an ascent and a descent. The ascent is the one to the volcano, “the great actor that explodes his show two or three times a century” and of which Epstein came to film “the tragic fantasy.” On this journey, at a time physical and moral, the filmmaker finds himself overstepping a threshold: the carabinieri have set the road blocks, but the “coloured leaflet of the aspirins’ bottle” has on them “more effect than the genuine signature of the prefect of Catania,” and allows the troupe to penetrate the forbidden land. Hence in front of their eyes a grand and terrible scenery burst open “the fire had covered up everything in the same tintless colour, grey, opaque, livid. Every leaf on every tree, as far as the eye could see, went through all the shades and crackles of the autumn, and, in the end, twisted, burnt, fell to the breath of fire. And the tree, naked, black, stood up for an instant in its burning winter.” The effect is one of an authentic revelation: things show all at once a soul, indeed, they come to life, and they seem to talk to who is watching them. “The earth had a human and stubborn face. We felt in the presence of someone and awaiting for him.” Thus, Epstein is amidst a vivid landscape openly involving him; this situation, made of surprise, closeness and complicity, brings us back to the very core of cinema. Films also offer revelations: “to unexpectedly discover, as for the first time, all things in their aspect divine, with their symbolic profile and their greatest sense of analogy, with an air of individuality, this is the joy of cinema.” And also in films landscapes come to life: “one of cinema’s greatest powers is its animism.” Objects have their attitudes. Trees gesticulate. The mountains, as the Etna, signify. In the film theatre reality is literally born again. For us, for our eyes. Up to the point that we are captured, included in its world: “In the end, when man appears in its entirety, it is the first time that he is seen through an eye that neither is human.”

The descent, symmetric to the ascent, on the contrary takes place in an all closed space. “Two days before, in the morning, I was leaving the hotel for that expedition and the elevator was stuck since half past six between the third and fourth floors [...]. To go down I had to take the main staircase, still with no banisters, where some workmen were singing insults against Mussolini. That huge spiral of steps gave me vertigo. All the walls were covered in mirrors. I descended, surrounded by many myselfs, by reflections, by the images of my gestures, by the cinematographic projections.” It is thus a descent that is as terrible and revealing as the ascent. Epstein, step by step, ends up facing himself: “Those mirrors forced me to look at myself with their indifference,

with their truth.” And he finds himself naked, with no superfetation left: “I thought myself in a way and saw myself in another; that spectacle was destroying all the usual lies I had been building around myself.” Naked and manifold at once: “I moved my head and to the right I saw only a root of the gesture, while to the left that gesture was raised to the fourth power. Looking at one side and then the other, I started to have a different awareness of my prominence.” Manifold and ephemeral at once: “Each of these images lived but an instant, just the time to grasp it and it was gone out of sight, different already.” Naked, manifold, ephemeral, surrounded by its own reflection, and uncertain of himself. Obviously a sense of authentic bewilderment takes over: “I saw myself void of illusions, astonished, naked, eradicated, arid, veritable, net weight. I wanted to run away from that spiral movement in which I felt I was swirling down towards a terrible centre of my self. Such a lesson of egoism is merciless. An upbringing, an education, a religion, had patiently consoled me of the fact of existing. Now everything had to be started all over again.” In this initiation journey, what is emerging is drawing us to cinema: more than a play of reflecting mirrors, “The cinématographe provokes such unexpected encounters with oneself.” The camera lens is “an eye provided of non-human analytical abilities:” it displays the individuals in their bare truth, forces them to look at themselves with no excuses; reveals to each person that oneself that was never met before. From this, of course, comes a sense of unease: “The restlessness in front of one’s own cinematic image is utter and sudden”; moreover “the first reaction to the cinematic reproduction of ourselves is a sort of horror.” To the point that who is filmed, quite often does not recognize himself in his own portrait. What he sees is a stranger. One moment after finding himself, he literally has lost it.

Thus, an ascent and a descent. A going to the core of things, discovering them alive, and participating in their existence. But also, almost as a consequence of the first movement, to find oneself in the middle of the spectacle, to discover oneself as the object of one’s own gaze, to perceive oneself as itself and as other, and thus feeling a sense of bewilderment. In short, to plunge into what surrounds us, and to have it difficult to find ourselves back. Cinema repeats this double movement: it does it in its practice, and at the same time offers it to its spectator. The camera is indeed inevitably implicated in what it is filming; in chasing things, it somehow shares their destiny; in exchange, it cannot hide its presence; what is filmed shows itself for the very reason that something or someone is framing it, therefore the camera acts as a co-protagonist outside and into the scene; but its action, so laid bare by its object of interest, ends up by being so to speak expropriated. A similar articulation applies also to the spectator. Who is in front of the screen tends to adhere to what he is watching, he projects himself and at the same time identifies with the shown reality; he feels it as living and feels as living it; but in the very moment that he achieves this intimacy, hence he finds himself suspended between different worlds, the one from which he is watching and the one from which he is watched; the risk is to be uncertain of his position, indeed of his identity.

Such a situation refers straight to the new status that modernity seems to assign to the observer-observed relationships. Instead of an opposition between two poles, what emerges is a mutual interdependence: the observer partakes of the destiny of the observed; he moves on its same ground; but intertwining his existence with the object of his gaze, he also ends up losing his privileged position, up to the point of blurring with what he is facing, or what surrounds him. Hans Blumenberg, going over the

metaphor of the shipwreck, from Lucretius to Neurath, shows quite well how this new pattern is imposing itself.<sup>3</sup>

The starting point for this is a page from the *De rerum natura*, in which a person sees, from the shore, a ship in the storm, and is well pleased of being onto solid ground. But already with Pascal the situation changes: the ship took us on board somehow (“Vous êtes embarqué”), and we share its struggle. From here on, the superposition of spectator and spectacle goes further: there are no more safe places where to shelter, life itself is a big tempest; he who thinks he is watching the sea’s surging waves, does it from the midst of it. So we are wrecked, and we have always been. As much so that the only thing we can do is to build ourselves a raft with the debris from earlier shipwrecks.<sup>4</sup>

Away from the dry land: in the waves and winds, in the middle of the eruption. We are cast away: recovering beams and ropes, rebuilding our self from the fragments that a mirror or a screen are giving us back. At this point it is not difficult to seize a parallelism between Epstein’s metaphors and the one explored by Blumenberg. In both cases there is the idea that what modernity brings to light is an always closer intimacy with the surrounding universe, and at the same time the progressive loss of all certainty. All distance is wiped out. Indissoluble complicities are created, and at the same time the coordinates are lost. One enters an unstable world that makes him unstable as well. At this point such is the observer: “Inside” the observed world, but also with no precise place. Amidst things: in the sea, or on the mountain of fire. And at risk: exposed to winds and waves, exposed to the lava, exposed to himself.

So now the lesson of *Le Cinématographe vu de l’Etna* becomes clear: what Epstein finds out along the paths of a volcano and along the mirrored staircase of a hotel is a more general situation of which cinema can be an excellent witness, and to which, as we will see, it can also acutely reply. It is a condition marked by an overlapping of presences, instead of a strict division of roles, and by an interweaving of gazes, instead of the dominion of one amongst them. It is the condition of an observer with apparently no safety net, that finds him immersed in the landscape he observes, compelled to share his destiny with that of the object of his gaze, and to become at the same time, himself the object of a gaze. This is the condition we finally have to come to terms with: maybe with some embarrassment, but in the bare spirit of truth.

## Immersion and Distance

Three films give us the chance to put this picture to the test. Three among many, but chosen for their ability to dig out the condition of the observer, and the spectators’ experience. *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (E. Porter, 1902) gives us an ironic illustration of the attraction a film exercises on the viewer, and, as a consequence of the sense of proximity and interaction that is established between who’s in the theatre and what’s on the screen; the world that is represented is at hand, it offers itself directly, and asks for participation; but the desire that lights up cannot find a full response. Uncle Josh approaches the screen, tries to take part in the scene he is watching: but the screen rips apart, and the projection comes to an end.

*The Crowd* (K. Vidor, 1928) draws attention to another axis, that of the relationship between the spectator and the audience around him. Also here it is a matter of creating a whole from two terms: the spectator is called upon to be part of his environment, set-

ting himself not only as a scopic subject, but also as a social subject. If this manoeuvre works out, it is also because it posits itself as a compensation for the missed unity with the fictive world: one plunges into the surrounding world also because one cannot plunge completely into the represented world. The desire for a bond and for participation with the represented world then becomes a desire for a relation and participation with the surrounding world: in the name of desire (and of the desire to desire) the subject-spectator becomes a member of a community.

Blow Up (M. Antonioni, 1966) finally, seems to close the circle: one can “blend” with the spectacle as much as with the environment, forasmuch as they are both territories crossed by a web of gazes. Within this net the spectator experiences the fact of being a subject, as well as the fact of becoming an object; he experiences the reification of his own gaze: in the very moment when it looks as though he is assuring to a role of absolute protagonist, hence he is lost on a ground of uncertain solidity. This closeness with the spectacle and the environment, as a matter of fact, gets him lost. The main character in the film, Thomas, a photographer, wants to immerse in the city he lives in and finds himself involved in a murder he eventually took pictures of; in the end he will not be able to distinguish effective from fictive reality, as well as he will not be able to understand what his role and position have come to be.

The three films here considered thus draw a sort of path, which follows the same pattern we have seen in Epstein: approach, implication, the putting at stake of oneself, sense of loss. Three stylistic devices that have to deal with these films, the close-up, the crane and the semi-subjective view can ideally mark this path. The close-up (not present in Uncle Josh, but evoked by the approaching of the spectator to the screen) conveys the sense and the need of proximity. The crane that closes *The Crowd* is symptomatic because of its ability to plunge the character into his environment. Finally the semi-subjective view that marks the most significant moment of *Blow Up*, when Thomas loses control over his own pictures, here we have a character that observes, but caught in the same frame with the objects observed by him, and therefore reduced to their same status, this character sees, but in his vision he also sees himself, and thus, reduced to object, he is maybe even deprived of his own gaze.

The complex situation that has come to emerge, and that precisely marks the experience of the spectator as well as the condition of the modern observer, leads us to some considerations. It is first of all evident how this condition corresponds to a farewell to that sort of “theatre of vision” that had long worked as a model for the scopic activity. Such a “theatre” was based on the presence of a seeing subject and of an object seen, one facing the other, well separated, with the first one catching and grasping the second, enclosing it so to speak into his own look, and the second one entrusting itself to the first, revealing all its aspects, in a direct and exclusive relationship. Blumenberg had, with the shipwreck metaphor, given us the basic elements for such a model, as well as the more general ways of its crises.

Also following Jonathan Crary, who has dedicated a meaningful study to the ways in which the idea of vision has evolved throughout the nineteenth century,<sup>5</sup> we can here recall some other passages. For example among the factors that strongly undermine this model there is the awareness that things do not show themselves; reality becomes a perceived reality only thanks to a series of mental processes that make it possible for it to be grasped, but which inevitably also act as a filter. Crary goes through a reconsideration of the studies of the physiologists from the first half of the eighteenth century,

with the discovery of phenomena such as the afterimage or the perceptive adaptation; it is clear, though, that this orientation has its germinating moment in the Kantian revolution.<sup>6</sup> Parallel to this, there is also the awareness of the fact that the observer does not operate innocently: he approaches reality with a burden at times heavy of mental assumptions, almost forced orientations. For this matter, it will here do to recall Marx and his notion of “ideology:” the complex of the social and productive relationships creates an “environment” where the social subject finds himself put in, and that deeply conditions its thought processes. We could go on and on: the fact remains that, from some point on, the relationship between the scopic subject and the object seen can no longer present itself as a direct and exclusive face to face. It is not direct: there are mediations that intervene on both sides. It is not exclusive: the context in which subject and object find themselves also plays a decisive role. Most of all it is not a fronting: it is a two-player game based on a common belonging, intertwined of mutual determinations, and therefore sustained by some strong complicity. Along this line, to conceive scopic activity as an action that leads to confrontation and immersion into what one sees as well as into one’s environment, becomes a necessary step.

Well then, cinema picks up this ongoing transformation and makes it its own. If, as we are reminded by Crary, what I have here called the “theatre of vision” had found its emblem in the 15<sup>th</sup> century’s Camera obscura, cinema, after the stereoscopic vision, can posit itself as the emblem of this new pattern of vision. Its offering itself as a field of cross-gazes that includes and embraces observer, observed and situation, is the seal to such a candidacy. Yet... if it is true that cinema can intercept and put into form the issues that agitate modernity, offering itself as an exemplar, it is also true that it does so negotiating between innovation and resistance. There is like a subtle wariness that goes together with its option for what is new: almost to allow what is old to leave a trace. And so it happens that cinema incarnates the need for a fusive relationship between subject, object and environment, but it does so offering a fusion that is partly imaginary, and a fusion that is temporally delimited.

An imaginary fusion. Uncle Josh already suggested how the relationship between spectator and spectacle is basically built on an illusion. He who watches a film is confronting not with reality itself, but with images that “look like” reality. This status undoubtedly depends on their photographic nature; but it strengthens itself thanks to the fact that the spectator re-elaborates and integrates perceptively the filmic stimuli,<sup>7</sup> and at the same time he deliberately suspends his disbelief.<sup>8</sup> We must add to this the mechanism of projection and identification activated by the spectator towards the represented world.<sup>9</sup> If he who is watching a film partakes of the adventures taking place on the screen, it is because he puts himself in the place of the hero (and of who is watching him),<sup>10</sup> and in this he finds himself living in first person what the character is living. In cinema, spectator and spectacle are tied together: but through a bond that is essentially mental.

A temporally limited fusion. When the lights in the theatre go on, the spectator interrupts its relationship with the spectacle; and when the public starts leaving the theatre, he interrupts his relationship with the audience. Sure, something remains sticking on him: the lightness of an experience that brought him out of his world, to another one; but also the viscosity of the closeness of the rest of the audience, the subtle thrill of having fully been part of some collective body. Roland Barthes, in his “En sortant du cinéma,”<sup>11</sup> has wonderfully described the moment of leaving the theatre and the screen: the

farewell to that darkness, that blackness, which is “the very matter of the reverie” and at the same time “the colour of a shed eroticism,” the farewell to “that dancing cone that cuts through darkness,” made of light, and whose “imperious jet borders our head, grazes, from the back, the side, some hair, some face;” the farewell to “the filmic image (including sound),” that seduced me, captured me and to which I am “attached” (and it is this attachment that grounds the naturalness – the pseudo nature – of the filmed scene). In a word, what the spectator is leaving is a representation and what surrounds it (the image and its contouring: “The property of the sound, the theatre, the blackness, the dark mass of the other bodies, the rays of light, the entrance, the exit”): both seduced him, yet precisely, he now leaves them. In a separation that takes over unity; in a discretion (possible site of protracted pleasure) that reassembled the indistinct.

The viewer plunges into the spectacle and the environment: but in a partial and momentary way. In this interplay the cinematic apparatus plays an important role: on one side it lays the conditions for a fusive unity between subject and object and between subject and environment, and, at the same time, it also lays the conditions for this fusion never to be accomplished in full once and forever. The fulfilment of the illusion of reality is aid by the peculiar condition of the spectator during the screening (there are representations that can be taken for direct perceptions of the world;<sup>12</sup> and there is a suspension of the flow of life that permits the activation of belief); in the meanwhile, due to the synchronism of reactions of the spectators to the film, a veritable community is created where each can feel part of.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the structure of the theatre, as it is being shaped from the nickelodeon on, arranges for a double segregation: he who watches the film cannot physically touch the screen and what’s on it, neither can he share his intimacy with the other spectators, for there is at least some sort of separation between spectators. In this sense the setting partially undoes the work of the device. This ambiguity of the apparatus is not an innocent one: it is so done to keep a practice alive which, as shown with Uncle Josh, would otherwise be interrupted; it is but the preservation of an intangible boundary that permits the enjoyment of the show by the spectator in his singularity. But this non-innocence goes even further. As a matter of fact, in keeping this boundary, the apparatus allows the spectator to keep believing that he has some sort of control upon what he is facing and upon what surrounds him: we might say that this not only permits him to take part in the show and the environment, but moreover of “dominating” them. It is on this basis that someone has made the connection between cinema and Bentham’s panopticon:<sup>14</sup> in both cases, we are dealing with a situation in which a subject “surveys” all that is happening around him from the centre of the scene. This observation has some interest: in fact, if the spectator was to be completely immersed in the represented and surrounding world, he would not be able of controlling anything at all; but even only the slightest distance from the rest (a single seat) is enough for him to look at things “from the outside,” and thus to seize and master them. In conclusion, the “centre” of the scene is the issue: if this means to be at the mercy of winds and waves, then the spectator would be a wrecked person, though a happy one (“And sweet to me is shipwreck in this sea:” Giacomo Leopardi, not Blumenberg...); but if this centre was to be connected to bridges and ways out he would be safe again; even more: he would go as far as to orchestrate the tempest...

Thus, cinema is exactly this: an occasion to “con-fuse” with the spectacle and the environment, but keeping some form of distance, at least a safety distance. Although... the

boundary is useful; indeed necessary. But the dream of its complete abolition remains alive, and it has always haunted cinema. From *Sherlock Jr.* (B. Keaton, 1924) to *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (W. Allen, 1985) the films that stage the dissolution of all boundaries and the perfect superposition of the time of the stage and the time of real life are well numerous. Precisely, so that the immersion be no less than absolute. Come hell or high water. Sweetness of the shipwreck.

- 1 This paper contains the opening and closing passages of a chapter in an ongoing work, *L'occhio del Novecento* (Milano: Bompiani, 2005), whose central topic is the way in which cinema has come to build a gaze that widely worked as a model for the gaze of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In that text, the three films here mentioned in passing, are analyzed in detail, and are commented with a series of contemporary theoretical essays, in order to bring to the surface the issues they deal with.
- 2 Jean Epstein, *Le Cinématographe vue de l'Etna* (Paris: Les Ecrivains Réunis, 1926). For a recent study of the work of Jean Epstein, see Jacques Aumont (ed.), *Jean Epstein, cinéaste, poète, philosophe* (Paris: Cinémathèque Française, 1998). On this specific text, see Stuart Liebman, "Visiting of Awful Promise. The Cinema Seen from Etna," in Richard Allen, Malcolm Turvey (eds.), *Camera Obscura, Camera Lucida. Essays in Honor of Annette Michelson* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003).
- 3 Hans Blumenberg, *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997).
- 4 In this line of interpretation, see also the introduction by Bodey to Blumenberg
- 5 Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge-London: MIT Press, 1996).
- 6 Max Milner, *La Phantasmagorie* (Paris: PUF, 1982).
- 7 On the ability of the spectator to filter and integrate filmic data, see the classical observations by Hugo Münsterberg, *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study* (New York: D. Appleton & C., 1916).
- 8 On the intentional suspension of disbelief and the building of belief from the Freudian denegation, based on a structure such as "Yes, I know it is not true, but still...", see at least Octave Mannoni, *Clefs pour l'imaginaire* (Paris: Seuil, 1969).
- 9 The mechanism of projection-identification, as a constituent of the spectator's participation is already analyzed by Münsterberg in *The Photoplay*. This will be the topic of many filmological studies in the 1950s, and finds its most effective analysis in Edgar Morin, *Le Cinéma ou l'homme imaginaire. Essai d'anthropologie sociologique* (Paris: Minuit, 1956). For a survey of filmological studies, see Francesco Casetti, *Theories of Cinema. 1945-1995* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999).
- 10 For the difference between secondary identification, with the character portrayed, and primary identification, with the filmic gaze on the character, see Christian Metz, *Le Signifiant imaginaire* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1977).
- 11 Roland Barthes, "En sortant du cinéma," *Communications*, no. 23 (1975), pp. 104-107.
- 12 On this aspect of the device, see Jean-Louis Baudry, "Le Dispositif: approches métapsychologiques de l'impression de réalité," *Communications*, no. 23 (1975), pp. 56-72; Jean-Louis Baudry, "Cinéma: effets idéologiques produit par l'appareil de base," *Cinéthique*, no. 7-8 (1970). For a continuation of Baudry, see Ch. Metz, op. cit.



- 13 Regarding the relationship between cinema and the creation of communities, during the past years many contributions focused on the power of the cinematic medium to define and legitimate the social identities of subcultures or ethnical and political minorities. It is not possible in the present contribution to take them in the proper account; therefore, I would rather like to remember one of the first reflections about cinema socializing function: Emilie Altenloh, *Zur Soziologie des Kinos. Die Kino-Unternehmung und die sozialen Schichten ihrer Besucher* (Leipzig: Spamerschen Buchdruckerei, 1914); see also Emilie Altenloh, "A Sociology of the Cinema: the Audience," *Screen*, Vol. 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2001), pp. 249-293.
- 14 This idea has recently been put forward especially by Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1993).

# SPATIAL PRACTICES: SOME THOUGHTS ON CINEMA, MEMORY AND ITS FUTURE\*

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In a review of some of the findings of an ethno-historical study of 1930s cinema culture that I have been working on over a period of some years, a chapter on “the scenes of cinema memory” concludes with the following remarks:

For [the 1930s] generation, going to the pictures was the occasion for the very earliest ventures into the world beyond the home. Close to home, almost an extension of home, and yet not home, “the pictures” is remembered as both daring and safe. Referencing Freud, Michel de Certeau suggests that the back and forth (fort/da) movement and the “being there” (Dasein) which characterise spatial practices re-enact the child’s separation from the mother. To translate this conceit to cinema memory, it might be argued that, for the 1930s generation, cinema constitutes a transitional object.<sup>1</sup>

How was this discovery arrived at? Why is it important? And what might it suggest about the peculiarities of cinema memory and about the future of cinema memory, now that cinema – certainly in the form the 1930s generation knew it – is dead?

First of all, it is about how place and space figure in certain kinds of memory-stories, and about how memory works through the body, or is embodied. In his phenomenological study of remembering, Edward Casey says that place is important in remembering because “it serves to situate one’s memorial life”<sup>2</sup> in several possible ways:

- places can act as containers of memory
- places can be *mises-en-scène* for remembered events
- memory itself is like a place that we revisit.

Therefore memory both is a topography and has a topography. Note that I am talking about place and not (the more abstract) space. The idea of place implies attachment, belonging – or its absence. Attachment in turn implies a bodily relationship, or even a merging of boundaries, between body and place.

It surprised me to find how insistent place was in the memories of 1930s cinemagoers. There is plenty of variation in how place is evoked, and in how metaphors of place organise people’s memory talk.<sup>3</sup> But emerging from all the variation is an overall sense, above all in accounts of childhood cinemagoing, of a navigation of mental topographies of familiar remembered territory. My contention is that this “topographical memory talk” offers clues to the ways in which cinema memory works as a distinctive form of cultural memory. One key feature is the prevalence of the discursive “walking tour” in

informants' early cinemagoing memories: a retelling of journeys to the pictures, always made on foot, often with very precise details of street names and landmarks. This is an embodied and kinetic memory – a reliving of the experience of moving through space, or rather through a very particular and familiar set of places.

There are five aspects of this kind of memory talk that make it distinctive:

- the starting place for the memory-journey is usually the family house, the home;
- the journey is highly goal-directed, its destination being the neighbourhood picture house;
- there is a sense that the same journey is/was frequently and repeatedly made, combined with
- a sense of its ordinariness, everydayness;
- an implicit return home is part of the journey.

Underlying this sense of repeated movement away from home and back again, and of the quotidianness of the journey's topography, is a sense of *fort/da*, a trying out of separation in a psychical, emotional and physical space of belonging, security.<sup>4</sup> This is why I contend that in 1930s cinemagoers' place-memories, cinema figures as an extension of home.

It is significant, I think, that these memories are always of a particular sort of cinema – the neighbourhood picture house, invariably remembered as modest and accessible (“one on every street corner,” as a number of informants put it). This is another aspect of their home-like quality (I shall return to the question of different types of cinema below). It is worth noting, however, that memories of going to the pictures are more pervasive and lengthier in the telling than are memories of being at the pictures. Going-to and being-at memories also differ markedly in both content and timbre. I shall return to this point as well.

When I wrote that cinema constitutes a transitional object for the 1930s generation, this was not a particularly deep thought, nor a very considered conclusion. But I have since taken the opportunity to look at some discussions of transitional objects and popular culture which suggest that the idea might be worth exploring in greater depth. Transitional objects (and, more broadly, transitional phenomena) is a concept developed by D.W. Winnicott, the foremost representative of the British Independent tradition of object-relations theory in psychoanalysis.

Transitional objects are the ubiquitous first possessions of infants and young children (a blanket, a teddy, etc) that belong at once to the child and to the outside world, occupying an intermediate position between fantasy and reality, the place of imagination. Winnicott famously said: “No human being is free from the strain of relating outer and inner reality,”<sup>5</sup> and transitional objects and transitional phenomena help negotiate that relationship. They inhabit what Winnicott called an “intermediate zone” between inner psychical reality and the external world, keeping the two separate but related. Importantly, they are precisely material objects, things: they have a physical existence but are pressed into the service of inner reality. They are at once part of the subject and not the subject.

Winnicott uses the term “transitional space” to refer to this third area, this intermediate zone or space inhabited by transitional phenomena: his spatial metaphors are, I

think, significant. His earliest writings on transitional objects link them wholly to childhood and developmental issues, in particular with the activity of play, whose defining characteristics he regards as:

- preoccupation, near-withdrawal
- activity is “outside the individual but not the external world”
- objects/phenomena are drawn from the external world and pressed to an inner reality agenda.

It is clear from some of Winnicott’s later writings, however, that he thinks transitional phenomena have a structural aspect as well: in particular, he explores the relationship between transitional phenomena and how adults experience and relate to culture. For present purposes, I am interested in both developmental and structural aspects.

- Developmental. Winnicott links transitional objects and associated behaviours in infants and young children with processes of separation. For Winnicott, this means separation from the mother, but I would broaden this out to include separation from a mother-associated place-object, the home. In either case, this is part of a process of development of self in distinction from the outside world, and serves as a bridge between the familiar and the unfamiliar, thus facilitating the child’s acceptance of the new.
- Structural. The dynamic equilibrium of inner and outer reality is not confined to the transitional objects of childhood, but continues in adult life. We continue re-enacting play and other transitional processes throughout life in relation with our “adult” transitional phenomena. These phenomena are identified by Winnicott as culture in general (“There is a direct development from transitional phenomena to playing [...] to cultural experiences”), and art and religion in particular. Here the tension lies between living in the everyday, inhabiting ordinary consciousness, and leaving it; and a key issue is how we manage the transition between the two. Christopher Bollas has talked about the experience of transitional phenomena in adult life in terms (borrowed from Bruce Berenson via Marion Milner) of the aesthetic moment: “An occasion when time becomes space for the subject. We are stopped, held in reverie, to be released, eventually back into time proper.”<sup>6</sup> Others refer to “the ebb and flow of losing and refinding oneself personally and endlessly in space-time.”<sup>7</sup>

As I have noted, place-memory or topographical memory is pervasive in 1930s cinemagoers’ talk. An embodied form of memory discourse, place-memory re-enacts separation and the interaction of inner and outer worlds in terms of the remembered experience of bodily movement through space and to and from particular places – in this instance home and the picture house. It is in this sense that the cinema building, the place, functions as a transitional object in the Winnicottian sense.

But what happens inside the cinema? The remembered walk to this place is a process of enacting and of restating belonging to a place-object that is both outside home and like home: this is the locality, the neighbourhood. What happens inside the cinema is rather different: it is the virtual experiencing of other, unfamiliar places. There are in fact two levels involved in the experience/memory of being inside the cinema: being in

the cinema building, the auditorium; and “being in” the world on the screen. Significantly, informants’ memories of this aspect of “going to the pictures” are relatively few in number. They are also either (a) unanchored in space and/or time (memories of isolated images or scenes from films, for example; usually frightening or funny ones); or (b) often rueful stories about the speaker’s failure to understand or properly negotiate the difference between ordinary space and time and space and time in the cinema (for example, stories of sitting through several performances, losing track of time and getting into trouble with worried parents). Or else they might be (c) narratives about the transition from the everyday world to the world of the cinema (repeatedly expressed in terms of being transported to ‘another world’) and crucially back again.

In all these stories, the experience of being in the cinema is remembered first of all as being outside ordinary time and space:

Standing in the street queuing in pleasant anticipation of what the next couple of hours had to offer, as the lights dimmed and the screen lit up away we went transported into a world of fantasy.<sup>8</sup>

And also as involving an involuntary, passive journey – informants repeatedly talk about being “transported” or “carried away:”

It’s like being in another world... And then when I come out, I’m a bit, you know, kind of ooh! A bit, eh, carried away. And, eh, then I come down to earth eventually.<sup>9</sup>

A handful of memories of this kind even evoke the epiphanic quality that marks the aesthetic moment:

Oh it was great! Cause the life, the cinema life then it was everything!<sup>10</sup>

I indicated above that two distinct types of picture house emerge in 1930s cinemagoers’ memories, and noted that the neighbourhood or street corner picture house is associated particularly with place-memory and with negotiation of home/outside world issues. The other sort of cinema is remembered as a place that, in its own right, is just as separate from the everyday as the world inside the cinema. This type of cinema embodies, in memory, some or all of the following qualities:

- a) it is one of the new 1930s supercinemas, or “dream palaces;”
- b) it is reached not on foot but by other means of transport, and is beyond the neighbourhood – in other towns, perhaps, or in the city centre;
- c) the decor and general ambience of the place is exotic and other-worldly;
- d) it is associated with memories of courtship or romance – that is, with adolescence and adulthood as opposed to childhood.

This, I believe, could have some bearing on how we might speculate about the future of cinema memory – by which I mean how (and indeed if) cinema might figure today in transitional processes, in negotiations of inner and outer realities, and therefore how today’s cinemagoers and consumers of films might remember these things in years to come.

Questions to consider in this content include:

- Does cinema, and do films, figure at all today as transitional phenomena? If so, how?
- How does this involve issues of place and/or space?
- How does this involve the body?

In approaching these questions, we clearly need to take into account the impact of changes in how films and cinema are delivered to the consumer, and how and where these are consumed and used. But it goes beyond this, I believe. Transitional processes are not transhistorical: reality perception and experience of the outer-inner relationship are historically and culturally variable. For people in the west, for example, the contemporary emphasis on shifting boundaries (of both inner and outer worlds) as opposed to stable structures should perhaps be borne in mind. It is also worth stating that transitional phenomena, particularly but not exclusively as experienced or remembered in adulthood, can have a collective dimension and so become part of a generational memory bank.

To conclude, then: here are some features of present-day cinema that might be relevant to a discussion about the future of cinema memory:

1. There are far fewer cinema buildings than there were in the 1930s, in real terms admission is far more expensive, and the frequency of cinema attendance per person is much lower now than it was in the 1930s.
2. Films are widely consumed in venues other than cinemas, for example:

Roger Silverstone has written about television texts and of the television set itself as transitional objects;<sup>11</sup>

video and DVD permit repeated viewings of films, allowing the viewer to pause, skim, and so on: the film text itself thus becomes a different sort of object – one of mastery, perhaps, rather than of subjection.

3. Today many forms of entertainment are available, many of them new: for the 1930s generation, cinema was the “main attraction;” now it is one among many and is not usually regarded as cutting edge in the way it was in the 1930s.
4. New modes of delivery of films and new technologies for their delivery make possible a range of different bodily relationships with the physical or the material means of consuming film texts. To the extent that these are potentially more tactile, more immediate, the relationship between films and viewers perhaps becomes more like that between toys and their users.
5. The consumption of films and cinema today involves distinctive modes of sociability and relationships to places. For example, home consumption and the attendant organisation of domestic space has implications for the negotiation of separation issues (bedroom culture, etc.). On the other hand, going out to see a film in a cinema today is perhaps more like 1930s cinemagoers’ relationship to cinemas in the second category – those remembered as other, placeless or distant, outside the everyday.

- \* This essay is based on a talk given at Colloquium for Screen Studies, "Cinema - Dead or Alive?," Senate House, University of London (February 14, 2003).
- 1 Annette Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), p. 36. The de Certeau reference is from: Michel De Certeau, *L'Invention du quotidien*. 1. *Arts de faire* (Paris: Union Générale d'Édition, 1980); trans. *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
- 2 Edward Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 183-184. Emphasis in original.
- 3 For details, see A. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, Chapter 2.
- 4 Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", in *Pelican Freud Library*, Vol. 11 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984); see also Anni Bergman, "From Mother to the World Outside: The Use of Space During the Separation-individuation Phase," in Simon A. Grolnick, Leonard S. Barkin (eds.), *Between Reality and Fantasy: Winnicott's Concepts of Transitional Objects and Phenomena* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1995), pp. 147-165.
- 5 D.W. Winnicott, "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena," in *Through Pediatrics to Psychoanalysis: Collected Papers* (London: Karnac Book, 2002).
- 6 Christopher Bollas, "The Aesthetic Moment and the Search for Transformation," in Peter L. Rudnytsky (ed.), *Transitional Objects and Potential Spaces: Literary Uses of D.W. Winnicott* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 40-49. The quotation is from p. 48.
- 7 Gilbert Rose, "The Creativity of Everyday Life," in S. A. Grolnick, L. S. Barkin (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 347-62. The quotation is from p. 355
- 8 *Cinema Culture in 1930s Britain Archive* (hereafter CCINTB) 95-232-1, Raymond Aspden, Lancashire, to Valentina Bold, n.d. 1995.
- 9 CCINTB T95-158, Tessa Amelan, Manchester, 28 May 1995.
- 10 CCINTB T94-12, Thomas McGoran, Glasgow, 30 November 1994. For further examples see A. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, Chapter 9.
- 11 Roger Silverstone, *Television and Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 1994).

# “YOU HAVEN’T SEEN IT UNLESS YOU HAVE SEEN IT AT LEAST TWICE:” FILM SPECTATORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF REPEAT VIEWING

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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 film 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),<sup>2</sup> or on the traces left of film reception in literary texts (Yuri Tsivian's),<sup>3</sup> 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).<sup>4</sup> 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.”<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup>

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").<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup> 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 re-issue 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*).<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup>

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.<sup>25</sup> 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).<sup>26</sup> 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.<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup>

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."<sup>36</sup> 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).<sup>37</sup> 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.<sup>38</sup>

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.<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup> 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.<sup>41</sup> 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).<sup>42</sup> 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,<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup> 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.<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup> 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.<sup>48</sup> 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.<sup>49</sup>

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.<sup>50</sup> 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).<sup>51</sup> 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.<sup>52</sup>

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.<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup> 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.<sup>55</sup> 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.<sup>56</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup>

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.<sup>58</sup> 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.<sup>59</sup> 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).<sup>60</sup>

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 were 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.<sup>61</sup> 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.”<sup>62</sup> 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.<sup>63</sup>

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.<sup>64</sup> 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."<sup>65</sup> 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.<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup> 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."<sup>68</sup> 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. On 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.<sup>69</sup> 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."<sup>70</sup> 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."<sup>71</sup> 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."<sup>72</sup> 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.<sup>73</sup>

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.<sup>74</sup> 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.<sup>75</sup> 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.<sup>76</sup> 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.<sup>77</sup> 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 "Exhibits 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, Repeats. 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. Tsvian, *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 Erlbaum Associates, 2000), p. 417.
- 55 Cf. Harold Vogel, *Entertainment Industry Economics*, 4<sup>th</sup> 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/clo499/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.

## TOWARD A SPATIAL MATERIALISM OF THE “MOVING IMAGE:” LOCATING SCREEN MEDIA WITHIN CHANGING REGIMES OF TRANSPORT

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During the summer and fall of 2002, the Japanese automaker Toyota ran a television advertisement in the U.S. for its latest mini-van. The ad begins while the mini-van, idling at a stoplight, is joined in the adjacent lane by a 1960s-vintage Chevrolet Impala, an icon of a by-gone genre of “family car” and of a once proud stage of American auto-mobility (mythologized in films such as *American Graffiti* and the TV-series *Happy Days*), and subsequently an icon of the subaltern “hood,” the Mexican-American “low-rider” and gang-banger. The ad contrasts the owners/drivers of the two vehicles. The owners/drivers of the van are a white, middle-class (presumably) nuclear family – a middle-aged man (presumably the father) behind the steering wheel, a woman of the same age (presumably his wife) seated in the front passenger seat, and the barely discernible heads of (presumably) their children in the backseat. Seated in the retro-vehicle aside the van are two shadowy male figures. After exchanging furtive glances, the drivers of the Chevy demonstrate their road prowess, making their vehicle rock and gradually elevate slightly by means of a hydraulic suspension system, in the fashion of “car-dancing” and “car-hopping.” The van’s driver, not to be outpaced in the display of bravura, responds by elevating his van completely off the pavement before it accelerates skyward, leaving the Chevy’s occupants to stare in amazement. The source of the van’s spectacular feat of pure auto-mobility (the purely transported self) – the van’s true guiding, “intelligent” force/driver – is revealed to be the extra-terrestrial being from Steven Spielberg’s *ET*, who blinks naively between the two children in the back seat. All three of the back-seat passengers are spectators not only of this street-scene but of the Spielberg film, which they were watching on the van’s backseat video screen. The van’s turbo-charge, its secret street-weapon (capable of distancing the van from the potential perils of urban encounters with more primitive road technology) turns out to be, after all, its ability, through the most “intelligent” technology, to accommodate a more fully transported self – the well-behaved family-vehicle, the parents whose extra-terrestrial road-freedom, hyper-mobility, and transcendence of urban gridlock relies upon the integration of a back-seat video monitor for managing the behavior of the children.

This essay’s intervention/contribution to a special issue about media-in-“transition” has only partly and peripherally to do with screen media and their spectators. Furthermore, while the essay is interested in the historical “transition” of cinema and media that this ad represents by constructing various differences (between a film blockbuster and its twentieth-anniversary re-release, between cinema, television, and the “moving image” then and now, between futurist and retro-fitted forms of “transporting” spectators through cinema/media), the essay considers a somewhat different set of questions than have driven film or media studies/histories, which have directed so

much attention to the relation between representation and a mode of production or between representation and ideology, which have understood cinema/media only or primarily in terms of consumption and/or spectatorship, and which overemphasize the distinctiveness – the discrete history and “transitions” – of media or cinema. The Toyota-ad certainly does capitalize on a new regime of production and distribution that is about delivering consumers from one media site or one media industry to another, here linking television advertising to promotions for films (and a film whose eponymous character, ET, was used twenty years earlier in television ads for another product, Reese’s Pieces candies). The ad therefore affirms a common theme from histories of a post-1960’s Hollywood system of production and distribution: the ad’s televisuality as yet another instance of product tie-in, of delivering consumers/spectators from one medium (TV) to another, and of the corporate and technological synergy for linking one medium into another (what are the differences between TV and cinema any longer?). There also is a longstanding vein of film/media criticism and historiography that would explain this ad and its power/effects in terms of its ideological or hegemonic work, read through the ad’s formal/representational practice (e.g., the play of gazes in and of the ad, or the ad’s construction of a set of differences and identities recognizable to viewers/consumers). However, that Gramsci saw U.S. automobile production, “Fordism,” as a way of describing a stage of capitalist production, distribution, and consumption, or that the (global) dispersion of U.S. automobile production over the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century often serves as an example par excellence of a post-Fordist stage of capitalism, or that the ad’s or movie’s narratives of the transported spectator could be said to define a set of ideological-subject positions within changing/converging media forms, or that the ad represents the emergence of new media convergence as a new ideological apparatus, or that the ad epitomizes the Baudrillardian analogy of the “smart car” as the purest conflation of virtual and physical forms of transport (where the screen becomes the scene) do not allow me to address a set of questions about the “transitions” of cinema (or screen media) that my brief essay is interested in discussing because this vein of media critique tends to understand cinema/media as technologies whose capacity for control, for producing effects, for mattering, has mostly to do with the particular economy, form, and history of cinema and/or media. One alternative model or counter-point to this tendency is what I have called elsewhere a spatial materialism of screen media.<sup>1</sup>

A spatial materialism of screen media directs attention to the place of screen media within an arrangement of social/activity spaces. There are several implications of this heuristic that deserve brief (albeit schematic) clarification. One concerns the conception of the social. Rather than considering the social purely or primarily in terms of media practices, and rather than understanding the social as an ideological formation or as its opposite (material conditions of social relations), a spatial materialism understands the social as a spatial distribution/production of resources and facilities that are themselves a condition for social meaning, agency, and control. A spatial materialism, in this respect, builds upon Henri Lefebvre’s conception of social space as produced (in part by capitalist economy and by cultural representation) and as productive of various practices.<sup>2</sup> In describing social space as productive, Lefebvre thus gestures toward an alternative to the base-superstructure binarism upon which various forms of modern social theory and cultural criticism have relied. Social formation and agency cannot be reduced to a single motor or condition, space being produced – and made productive –

through multiple social practices. Furthermore, a spatial materialism is not about substituting a spatial for a historical conception of the social, or about seeing geography and history as binary categories, but about recognizing the historical contingencies of the social as spatial arrangement and about the spatial distribution/arrangement of resources and facilities as productive of historical possibilities – as a condition for “making history.”

A spatial materialism of screen media not only begins with the question of locating media – of discovering where media matter – but, in so doing, it de-centers the screen as the primary or only locus of attention for media studies. There are at least two ways of thinking about the implications of this. One is somewhat methodological, focusing on the screen as part of a built environment rather than discussing screen practices purely as matters of form, representation, meaning, and ideology, and of culture understood in those terms. A spatial materialism of the televisual, for instance, would consider how particular technologies of televisuality are integral to the material construction of particular sites – room, houses, malls, parking garages, retail stores, bars, airports, fitness facilities, sports facilities, or (as I want to discuss below) cars.<sup>3</sup> Recognizing that any site of televisuality matters in its connectedness to other sites (as part of “networks”), a spatial materialism also would recognize how these sites pertain to larger scales or technological zones,<sup>4</sup> such as suburbs, cities, regions, or global networks. A spatial materialism also would assess the instrumentality or mattering of media/communication technologies through these sites and zones, considering how their spatial organization and governance relied upon the particular – strategic and tactical – emplacement of technologies therein. What, in other words, has the material construction of domiciles and the running of suburban households around televisual technologies to do with the spatial organization and management of urban parking garages through video surveillance monitors? How does these become co- or inter-dependent spaces within an environment built upon/through the strategic/tactical emplacement of screen media?

A second implication concerns the question of subjectification. In de-centering (or attempting to locate) screen media, a spatial materialism of screen media is concerned with spectatorship mostly as a momentary engagement within the paths and relative mobility of social actors. While the screen may be increasingly part of life in early 21<sup>st</sup> century societies, its uses are not uniform, nor is the screen ubiquitous (despite the pronouncements of some epochalist/postmodernist accounts). Spectatorship is, in other words, not merely the only way of understanding spectators, who perform other activities in their everyday lives, nor is spectatorship purely a function or a matter of one’s engagement with a general screen technology (there are, for instance, different applications of screens and fenestration).

Most importantly, however, a spatial materialism’s focus on the site where screen media are engaged within the routes of the everyday lives of social classes, bodies, and populations moves away from the question of the power of screen media over a subject-spectator to a question of the relative physical access and relative mobility of social classes and populations to and from these sites – across an environment and within a socio-spatial arrangement of screen media “facilities” (i.e., those places/zones that are available to these classes and populations). What, for instance, was involved in making nickelodeons available to women, or women with children, or middle-class women, during the early twentieth century in the U.S.<sup>5</sup> And what did that accessibility have to do with the regulation of women’s mobility and access through places outside the

movie theater, i.e., from home, and through cities or particular zones of cities previously unavailable to them? How did the emplacement and distribution of movie theaters across particular zones of U.S. cities during the 1950s (e.g., drive-in movie theaters in the new predominately White, middle-class suburbs, as counterpoints to movie theaters for African-Americans in other parts of the city – away from the suburbs) contribute to a socio-spatial arrangement – a dispersion of facilities, and a social-governmental contract about where particular classes and populations could and should go, where they felt secure and thus capable of enjoying themselves, of recreating. The question of how, for instance, television came to matter within the construction of the suburban house/household during the 1950s and 1960s in the U.S. had to do with a set of possible sites available or unavailable to different classes and populations outside homes and across cities. A spatial materialism, in this respect, is not just about the emplacement of screen media but of how mobilities become productive of social space and of broader socio-spatial arrangements that govern the lives (the movements and intersections) of various classes and populations. As I intend to explain below, social mobilities/travelings are productive of social space and the distribution/arrangement that regulates access.

Both of these implications point to historical as well as spatial considerations. A spatial materialism's concern about how spaces are produced, fashioned, organized, secured, and managed, or how spaces become productive of livability, recreation, privacy, security, and governance for particular classes and populations, both involve figuring out how the production of space has occurred amidst emerging and residual distributions/arrangements that relied partly upon screen media technology. That movie theaters in the old downtown areas of U.S. cities during the 1950s became sites of struggle over practices of racial segregation had everything to do with a changing forms of access and mobility by different classes and populations in different zones of these cities. Or that the struggles at these sites contributed to the transformation during the early 1970s of certain downtown theaters into facilities where young White and African-American movie-goers watched Blaxploitation and Kung-fu films,<sup>6</sup> or that urban movie theaters were transformed between the 1960 and 1980s into various cultural facilities (discos, coffee shops) that sustained/hastened program of urban gentrification which displaced an underclass and racial populations that occupied these zones during the period of mass suburbanization, all are examples of how the formation of new social spaces occur through/over prior ones, and how social spaces become productive of changing paths and mobilities.

The historical issue of the technological transition (transformation) of screen media that this special issue takes as its object of study is not a separate matter from the question of transit – of access and mobility, and just as importantly of how screen media have been integral to forms/technologies of mobility, of how screen media move and transport bodies in their relation to available forms and technologies of mobility. The Toyota advertisement offers one way of thinking about this issue not only because it recasts the automobile (or more precisely the mini-van, which has its own cultural pedigree and social history in the U.S.) as a theater on wheels, but also because it makes explicit the changing relation between the house (as an enclosed, relatively fixed sphere of watching screen media) and the forms of transport such as the automobile on which a particular regime of housing and household have relied. If the domestic sphere has been a space from which one is connected to other sites through television, then

how has it produced, and been produced by, social uses and cultural forms of transport outside the home? That the TV ad for the Toyota mini-van represents the relation between cinema/television and mobility as new, as a "new media convergence" perpetuates an epochalist impulse (evident also in writing about new information technology) that ignores the longstanding (albeit changing) relation of screen media and spectatorship to regimes of mobility, and the even more longstanding relation between communication and transportation, which has been central to the organization and governance of modern societies.<sup>7</sup> In this sense, it also is worth recognizing how the ad's formulation of a new convergence occurs through changing regimes of mobility.

In a certain sense, these were questions and issues that Raymond Williams addressed in his argument (against McLuhanism and a technological determinism of "media") that television emerged, when it did, where it did, the way it did, and as rapidly as it did, within new regimes of privacy and mobility – what he termed "mobile privatization."<sup>8</sup> Williams's introductory chapter about technology and society is instructive for this special issue on the "transitions" of screen media because he emphasizes television as a technological assemblage of emerging and residual technical devices that coalesced into a "social technology" and a broad set of social investments. Williams's account of television's historical relation to mobile privatization is decidedly an account of a new socio-spatial arrangement wherein domestic life was increasingly situated "at a distance," though Williams is more interested in explaining television than in explaining television's instrumentality within this arrangement. Nor did he elaborate substantively the various forms of mobility to which the expression "mobile privatization" refers. Although Williams's account of television recognizes the role of tele-technologies such as television (technologies for sensing/knowing over distance) in articulating privacy and domesticity to mobility, the account stops short of considering the changing relation between technologies of mobility and the tele-visual technologies (the social technologies of screen media), or of considering how tele-technologies were becoming integral to the emerging ideal in the U.S. of the "mobile home" and privatized mobility.

Lynn Spigel, has suggested that the emergence of portable television in the U.S. (a rapid development over the 1960s) marked a new relation between the interiority and exteriority of the domestic sphere as well as a new relation to self. Discussing the new relation between interiority and exteriority of home, she concurs with Williams's account that television developed as a means of bringing the outside world into the home, of fashioning the home as theater, but she notes that particularly during the 1960s television's portability was represented as part of an emerging mobility associated with home-life and life from home – a transformation of the "home theater" into the "mobile home" and a "vehicle of transport:"

While early advertising promised viewers that TV would strengthen family ties by bringing the world into the living room, representations of portable receivers inverted this logic. Rather than incorporating views of the outdoor world into the home, now television promised to bring the interior world outdoors.<sup>9</sup>

Spigel suggests that the representation of television's portability, in relation to fashioning the home as mobile (i.e., transporting oneself outside through a new television design-concept), contributed to a new social ideal and investment: "privatized mobility." While inverting Williams's term may not substantively change his term's reference

to a new regime of privacy and mobility, Spigel rightly demonstrates the importance not only of locating television on the paths to, from, and within households, but of considering how tele-technologies became integral to the movement of bodies that defined the relation of home to itself and to an outside. Furthermore, portable TV as “privatized mobility” (understood as a new relation between the interiority or exteriority of domesticity) suggests for Spigel a new relation to self, the smaller scale of portable TV representing and actualizing the personalization of TV-watching in a period before narrowcasting. (The personalization of the TV through its miniaturization and portability was, in this respect, a condition for the subsequent emergence of satellite/cable-TV and narrowcasting.) Elaborating the implications of a new relation to domesticity’s interiority/exteriority and of a new relation to self, Spigel thus devotes considerable attention to the house as a “vehicle of transport”<sup>10</sup> in order to discuss gendered forms of access and mobility at home and from home. Her essay’s focus on television in the domestic sphere, however, stops short of considering a development that was crucial to refashioning television and the home as conjoined/interdependent “vehicles of transport” (portable TV as an accouterment of mobile bodies and of homes designed for them): how the relation between transport and communication (a regime of tele-technologies such as television) pertained to auto-mobility as a broad social investment and ideal.

As Williams’s account of television affirmed, television’s rapid emergence was integral to and dependent upon a new relation between transportation and communication. Though he never specifically mentions the automobile and highway/freeway system as technologies shaping the new regime of mobility and privacy of tele-visibility in everyday life, it is not difficult to extrapolate from his account that television’s rapid and particular development, in relation to programs of mass suburbanization, occurred through these and other mechanisms and practices of transfer – a broad socio-spatial arrangement predicated upon these mechanisms.<sup>11</sup> By “auto-mobility” I refer not simply to the car. The car has become easily the object most often identified with the term automobility. I am more interested in “auto” as a reference to the self (e.g., automatic/self-acting, auto-mated/self-generating, auto-nomous/self-sufficient) and in the articulation of “auto” to various practices, knowledges, and rules pertaining to mobility – to the transported self. In this sense, the car is one technology of the (transported) self which relied upon other technologies of transport (such as television) to accomplish – to shape the capacities of – particular forms of corporeal access and mobility through a socio-spatial arrangement.<sup>12</sup> How, in this respect, did the car, in its relation to television and other tele-technologies, support auto-mobility as a social investment and civic ideal (a form of active citizenship and a technology of “free individuals” and self-sufficiency), particularly in the U.S. after World War Two? This question does not presume that auto-mobility abruptly developed as an ideal after World War Two or only in those regions where television rapidly and massively became part of everyday life; on the contrary, it directs attention to the historical and geographic relation between the car and various tele-technologies such as television in part to rethink television’s historic relation to the home or other enclosed, relatively immobile spheres of activity. The portability of television (as part of new relation between the interiority and exteriority of domestic life, and as part of a new relation to self) pertained to auto-mobility as a new, dominant social investment and civic ideal.

By considering auto-mobility (and tele-visibility and the car) this way also calls attention not only to the house as a “vehicle of transport” but to the car as a technology of



communication – as media understood within a different logic of mediation than has tended to drive media studies' emphasis upon the transformation of media within media practices. There are several points to make briefly on this issue. First, the car has always been an assemblage of communication technologies (e.g., tail-lights, turning indicators, license plates) that became part of car-design and use even before the advent of car-radios in the 1930s. Many of these devices have linked the freedoms of automobility, as driving, with programs and techniques of surveillance and governance – with driving as a form of ethical behavior (road conduct) and thus as a form of citizenship.<sup>13</sup> Second, in certain respects the application of the radio in cars (as a form of auto-mobility) preceded the emergence of television's application to the domestic sphere. Throughout the 1930s the radio in civilian cars became a portable/personalized form of entertainment, and by the late 1930s, the radio was a standard feature of cars in the U.S. Furthermore, as a portable technology of listening, linked to a technology of transport (that itself was used for numerous social activities), the car radio became linked with a technology of visibility. The car windshield, windows, and mirrors made driving with the radio a new form of personalized/privatized tele-visibility (i.e., visibility over distance). Third, the car in the U.S. could accommodate a number of passengers and by the 1930s was becoming a form of family-travel. Following the Second World War, cars increasingly were designed and promoted as family-vehicles (vehicles of a historical, social model of family). The station-wagon, for instance, was one of the technologies adapted to a new regime of mobility for a post-World War Two model of family-travel and family-touring. However, as the number of cars per family in the U.S. increased over the 1950s (i.e., as women and youth acquired their own vehicles), transportation became further personalized. The portability of television, therefore, pertained to a regime of mobility that surrounded – that lay outside – the house, even as the portability of television was linking the design and uses of the (suburban) house with driving. As a social investment and a civic ideal – as a practice of freedom, governance, and security – watching television and driving became inter-dependent technologies of citizenship suited for a new socio-spatial arrangement predicated upon a new regime of (automobility). While the sociality and civic ideals of the "family television" and the "family car" survive, rearticulated (as the Toyota-ad demonstrates) to a new convergence of communication and transport, their survival occurs in relation to the forms/technologies of portability and personalization of both media/communication and driving.

Spigel rightly notes that television's portability adhered to the ideal of "active citizenship" formalized in part through Kennedy's New Frontier-era programs (e.g., of physical fitness and social involvement), but active citizenship was nothing short of a new way of enacting/performing citizenship through technologies of mobility that emphasized or were seen as "freeing" the self (and through portability and technologies of transport, as posing a new set of governmental questions/problems about governing and making safe bodies in motion). The transported self and its concomitant forms of citizenship (freedoms, self-governance, self-security) occurred as much through television's portability as through the personalization and portability of other media technologies and through various technologies of transport – in short, a regime of automobility. In this respect, the link between active citizenship and auto-mobility has been integral to a changing reasoning in the U.S. about freedom and governance – about the reinvention of liberal governance. While tracing the historical trajectory of neo-liberalism lies beyond the limitations of this essay, my account of that trajectory would

emphasize both the contradictions of “active citizenship” during the 1960s (how the 1960s negotiated forms of social responsibility through a new entrepreneurialism) and the re-articulation and deepening of active forms of citizenship, along with the portability and personalization of communication/media technologies, after the 1960s. The television ad for Toyota is significant in this respect because it represents how the driving- and televisual-self converge at a new intersection of urban and suburban life as well as a new relation in the twenty-first century with the legacy/inheritance of forms of portability, personalization, and active citizenship – a regime of mobility and privacy – from the 1960s. The ad’s promotion of new installations of screen media in the family-vehicle are about reinventing the “mini-van,” as the 1980s version of the 1950s station-wagon (after the 1960s articulation of the van with the freedoms of “liberation-movements” and a “counter-culture”), but the ad also promotes a self/citizen/consumer whose possibilities depend upon navigating a changing socio-spatial arrangement (suburb, city, street, and the mobility of particular classes/populations) through a new convergence between media and transportation technologies. Auto-mobility in the 21<sup>st</sup> century U.S. refers to the articulation and hardwiring of physical and virtual travel, such that a July 2003 newspaper ad for the latest General Motors products uses the headline, “Putting the Pedal to the Microchip: Today’s GM Cars and Trucks Are as Much about Brainpower as They Are about Horsepower,” to list the numerous ways that their vehicles are improved through media/communication technology: “From DVD players that entertain the kids, to XM Satellite Radios that entertain you, [in addition to Global Positioning technology] we use technology to make driving better.”<sup>14</sup>

“Improving” the car – making the car, video, and driver “smart” – is, in these examples, nothing short of a program for improving citizens as drivers of media and transport, of fashioning a new, inter-active consumer/citizen/self, and thus of advancing liberalism onto a changing socio-spatial arrangement wherein freedom, governance, and security are questions of how and where one can travel.

- 1 James Hay, “Piecing Together What Remains of the Cinematic City,” in David B. Clarke (ed.), *The Cinematic City* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 209-229; James Hay, “Locating the Televisual,” *Television and New Media*, Vol. 2, no. 3 (August 2001), pp. 205-234.
- 2 Henri Lefebvre, *La Production de l’espace* (Paris: Anthropos, 1974); trans. *The Production of Space* (London: Blackwell, 1991).
- 3 Anna McCarthy, *Ambient Television* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).
- 4 Andrew Barry, *Political Machines: Governing a Technological Society* (London: Athlone, 2002).
- 5 Lauren Rabinovitz, *For the Love of Pleasure* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999).
- 6 See James Hay, “Rethinking the Intersection of Cinema and Youth,” *Scope*, <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/film/journal/> (June 2002).
- 7 Armand Mattelart, *L’Invention de la communication* (Paris: La Découverte, 1994); trans. *The Invention of Communication* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).
- 8 Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1992).
- 9 Lynn Spigel, “Portable TV: Studies in Domestic Space Travel,” in *Welcome to the Dreamhouse*:

Popular Media and Postwar Suburbs (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 71.

10 Ibid., p. 65.

11 See John Hartley, *The Uses of Television* (London: Routledge, 1999).

12 James Hay, Jeremy Packer, "Crossing the Media(n): Auto-mobility, the Transported Self, and Technologies of Freedom," in Nick Couldry, Anna McCarthy (eds.), *Media/Space* (London-New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 209-232.

13 Ibid. See also James Hay, "Unaided Virtues: The (Neo-)Liberalization of the Domestic Sphere and the New Architecture of Community," in Jack Bratich, Jeremy Packer, Cameron McCarthy (eds.), *Foucault, Cultural Studies, and Governmentality* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2003); Jeremy Packer, *Mobility without Mayhem: Mass Mediating Safety and Automobility* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, forthcoming).

14 *New York Times* (July 17, 2003), pp. 14-15.

## ETHICS AND ETIQUETTE OF THE NEW FORMS OF FILM SPECTATORSHIP

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Contemporary spectatorship must therefore also be considered in the light of changing audio-visual technologies. The cinema in its long-heralded specificity now seems to be dissolving into the larger bistream of the audio visual media, be they photographic, electronic, or cybernetic, changing non only the “identity” of the cinema, but also that of those who consume it.  
Robert Stam, Ella Habiba Shohat

At first cinema was viewed on television. Then music was downloaded from the Internet and listened to on the PC. Today the digital TV decoder is used to connect to the Internet. In the increasingly near future football matches and, why not, films will be viewed on mobile phone displays.

The digitalisation of media environments, the slow but inevitable process of equipment confluence and the mobility and permeability of the borders between mass communication systems, that create ever greater zones of overlap and interference, are deeply and irreversibly changing the status of what by now we should refer to, with a generic term, as the final user. No longer spectators or television spectators, radio listeners or internet surfers, but a single hyper-consumer able to access a vast deposit of information and contents through any media channel. There has been a movement from the primitive constitution of platforms, that is interconnected systems within which content could travel from one medium to another, assuming different formats each time and adapting to specific usage modes to inter-operativeness that implies a total inter-exchangeability of the equipment both on the contents and functions level.<sup>1</sup> Therefore a PC, for example, can also become a terminal for television or radio programs or, as already happens, the screen with which to view films and so forth. And, in parallel, digital television can be used as the interface to surf the web.

A scenario that is still certainly in the future but we can already see its strong signals. First of all the substantial diffusion of digital technologies that are replacing analogue equipment, constituting an out and out “re-conversion plan.” Between July 2002 and January 2004, the number of broad band connections activated in Italy rose from 500 thousand to 2.7 million, with a population penetration of 4.7%.<sup>2</sup> In parallel there has been a substantial increase in the sale of digital equipment: in 2002 in Italy there were 1.5 million DVD players only (excluding players in PCs), compared with 100 thousand in 1999. A figure that should be tripled in 2004. Still in 2002, the sale of 16:9 TVs grew by

27% compared to the previous year and the sale of Home theatres increased by 222%.<sup>3</sup> The sale of plasma screens, liquid crystals screens and digital cameras are also on the rise. Similarly terrestrial digital has grown rapidly, thanks to State incentives. Even though the estimates are still provisional, there are a million digital decoders in 2004, with around 80 % already interactive.<sup>4</sup>

These are significant figures that confirm and confer the synergetic process that is already underway with an institutional authority. Simply using Internet to download, reassemble and use audio and video files, a phenomenon that is still mainly underground and unregulated, but that has taken such relevant proportions, in correspondence with the diffusion of broad band connections, that it is having repercussions on the music and cinema industry balance sheets.

The convergence of functions naturally also determines a transformation of the mass media usage models. Along with the growth of the equipment's potential there is the extension of the wealth of skills required to use them and a, sometimes radical, transformation of the modes, times and styles of encountering and interacting with the media product. Watching a television program with a digital TV set-top-box can mean, for example, interacting with the broadcaster by sending in answers or comments or acquiring additional information on the program or even supervising, without zapping, what the networks are offering in order to navigate through the program schedule and make the best choice. An attentive and focused use and a viewer that is aware and involved has replaced the monitored or idling viewing and the careless and wondering consumption, typical of analogical television.<sup>5</sup> The experimental phase in which the terrestrial digital is in, in Italy (the patchy distribution and especially the limited forms of interaction available), still do not allow for conclusive assessments.<sup>6</sup> Safer to look at another situation whose discontinuity features, in respect to the analogical media system, are less evident but that nevertheless already allows the identification of certain directions in which the status of the viewer is evolving.

### Dispersion and Multiplication of the Film Viewing Situations

The transformation of the viewing spaces and conditions in the cinema is a process that is well underway and part of a general re-launch strategy of the film show.<sup>7</sup> Since the mid 1980s the cinema has introduced substantial modifications to film presentation, loosening the traditional spectatorship rules (the dark, lack of motion, the exclusive concentration on the screen)<sup>8</sup> and configuring unprecedented relations with the film. These range from the optimisation of the technology used in cinemas and their refurbishment according to innovative quality standards of audio and video,<sup>9</sup> to the building of new viewing spaces and the promotion of domestic film viewing systems.

The first and most evident fact that emerges is the multiplication and differentiation of the contexts in which the meeting between film and viewer takes place. From the second half of the 1980s viewing films has progressively migrated from the cinema to other spaces, starting from the domestic environment, not controlled and disciplined by an apparatus. The new context for the enjoyment of films has produced heterodox viewing situations, different both in terms of phenomenology (times, proxemics, style) and in terms of the relation with the filmic text. Once viewed as a whole without interruptions (unless introduced by the apparatus) the film is now viewed intermittently,

imposing accelerations and pauses to its development, jumping sequences or reviewing them often (as can happen when viewing a film in VHS or DVD), or even reassembled (as can happen, virtually at least, when downloading a film from the Internet and reassembling it on the computer). The viewer moves in numerous situations, no longer immersed in homologous viewing spaces that condition his actions to a single canon, dislocated and dispersed in a multiplicity of locations that require different ceremonies and rules of behaviour.

This complexity and variability also invests institutional viewing spaces: just think of the variety of experiences that a viewer encounters inside a multiplex and in a single screen cinema,<sup>10</sup> but also of the experience specificities that the latest generation of multiplexes aim to offer its public. A differentiation that adopts new strategies. Not so much the programming selection, that the high number of screens, the restrictions imposed by the production companies and the need to balance the management costs for the complex render it difficult to have a precise cultural policy, as the design of a strongly characteristic space, such as themed bars and restaurants, children's recreation areas, shops with strong brand identities that, as Anne Friedberg says,<sup>11</sup> build around the cinema a chain of methodical references that the viewer's experience follows. The video walls in the foyer that show images of the "coming soon," the posters that cover the walls of the spaces in front of the cinemas, the sophisticated window dressing that announces the release of a particularly awaited film or the previews and photographic exhibitions held in the connecting spaces and the many shop windows that enrich and render the stay in the cinema unique.

The awareness of the close relationship between viewing the film and other experiences that the viewer can have outside the cinema is nevertheless recent and grown with the progressive emergence of a competitive scenario. As of today in Italy there are 69 multiplexes, structures with at least 8 screens, of which 3 megaplexes, complexes with at least 16 screens,<sup>12</sup> 18 of which in Lombardy, for a total of 153 screens, mainly concentrated in the urban area surrounding Milan.<sup>13</sup> A thriving market considering that in 2003 multiplex and megaplex cinemas totalled 31.5 million viewers in attendance, equal to 36.04% of the market, thus containing and inverting the recession tendency.

The integration between film and other symbolic products, even if still at an early stage, defines a complex viewing context, that requires articulated behaviour from the viewers and that in exchange offers them a rich experience both in terms of emotions and in terms of expertise. Within the multiplex the viewer learns to manage the overabundance of stimuli, learns to relate with technologies, refines expectations and tastes and defines styles of enjoyment that he then transfers in other environments, starting from the domestic.

## Viewers and Consumers

The neo-cinema viewer is trained in a protean scenario featuring a maximization of the stimuli both inside and outside the cinema.

Dolby Stereo and now Dolby Digital EX and DTS, that through the segmentation of the acoustic signal and the multiplication of the diffusion channels guarantee an unprecedented quality of the audio experience<sup>14</sup> and the wall to wall screens that enve-

lope the viewer given him the feeling of being in the film, as well as the multiple stimuli and incentives outside the cinema all create an hyperbolic, intense and involving experience for the viewer. However, as previously mentioned, if the improvement of the visual and audio technologies is by now a given, even for the majority of multi-screens and single screen cinemas, the synergy between film and ancillary services is an objective that many cinemas have yet to achieve. The awareness of the potential of the services that surround cinemas has been rather recent. Even if in Italy the location strategies for the multiplex took into account the attraction capacities of existing or neighbouring commercial structures (hypermarkets, shopping malls, etc...), only seldom has this initial care been followed by a policy of interaction and synergy. The lack of a common regulation, management and opening times of the cinema and the businesses;<sup>15</sup> the limited possibility to influence the use of the spaces outside the cinema (rarely the manager of the multiplex is also owner of the building), the competitive relation between services inside the cinema and those outside it, especially refreshments, have often compromised the possibility of a profitable interaction between structures.

Despite these difficulties, the collaboration between cinema and commercial and public businesses located in the same space has steadily grown. This is demonstrated by the presence of references to ancillary internal and external services in the multiplex promotional material (from the leaflets with the weekly program and film releases, to the web site), as well as the references to the cinema and its symbolic universe in the commercial area. The effort of making the cinema interact with other services is revealed with greater evidence by the adverts that certain multiplex chains screen before the film, in which cinema icons (for example famous cartoons characters) invite the viewer to use the snack bars, restaurants or themed shops located around the cinema.

Even when planned, the juxtaposition between cinema and other forms of entertainment, refreshments and purchasing is not always fruitful. Even if in Italy, more than in the rest of Europe, the entertainment and shopping formula is generally successful (the Italian consumer visits a shopping centres 14 times a year compared to the European average of 9 times), the integration between services is functional only when the experience offered is attuned with the film experience and reproduces its ways, values and character. Unsurprisingly the most successful public and commercial businesses are themed shops, that market gadgets or products strictly tied to the film world (from books to DVDs), followed by businesses with a marked playful-escapist character (for example, amusement arcades) or ones able to generate identification (shops with a strong brand reference) or ones that favour socializing (restaurants, bars as well as the many conversation zones found in the cinema connection and access areas). In this context the phenomenon of the multiplex is an interesting indication of the tendencies and fashions that shape the social space and is a privileged observational point to reconstruct the dynamics assumed by cultural consumption. Dynamics that anticipate the principle of inter-operativeness of the new digital systems: one single content provider (the multiplex, or rather, the structure housing it) that satisfies different needs and that demonstrates, at the same time, the establishment of unprecedented consumption logics, no longer tied exclusively to commercial strategies, manageable within traditional marketing (in which the frequency of contacts is, for example, proportional to the advertising build-up), but regulated by emotional attraction principles of proximity

that are much more difficult to arrange. The concept that is taking hold is the one of retail entertainment centre, a place in which it is not a product that is bought, even if symbolic, but an experience or a set of experiences that focus on and rotate around viewing the film. We must not forget that the multiplex represents the main source of revenue in the centres it operates in (except for hypermarkets) as well as, as already stated, the factor that brands and thematizes the consumption experience.

The combination of film with other goods does not seem to depauperate or distort the viewer's experience but, in fact, strengthens the impact of the cinema and films and their ability to leave a mark on the collective imagination. Emblematic the recent opening in Italy of the first cinema theme park and IMAX Cinema.

The commodification of film and the risk of reducing spectatorship into pure consumption (consumer spending)<sup>16</sup> seems to characterise a different type of viewing context, where there is an elimination of any surrounding element and the neutralisation of the frame. This is the case of the recently launched Easy Cinema chain that adopts the tried and tested aeroplane and car formula (Easy Jet e Easy Car) and the hotel business (Easy Dorm). The business aims to reduce prices by eliminating all additional services (no frills), from the refreshments to the foyer (computerised ticket sales). The commercial strategy is reflected in the basic architectural structure and furnishings: a Spartan and highly branded consumption space (dominated by the "Easy" group orange) where films are viewed as some sort of fast food. A concept of viewing space that recalls the first generation of multiplex cinemas that blossomed in the United States in the second half of the eighties, that featured a functional logic at the expense of a spectatorship experience that Douglas Gomery calls "minimalist moviegoing."<sup>17</sup>

## The Syntax of the Viewer-film Relationship

The experience that the viewer lives inside the multiplex establishes a relationship with the filmic text that presents unprecedented features and that can be taken as indicative of a more complex re-definition of the syntax of the relationships between consumer and media products.

First of all the focus of the viewer's experience is not the film but the viewing situation,<sup>18</sup> the quality of the frame within which the meeting with the work takes place. It is not simply (nor always) the case of having the best and latest visual and audio technologies but more trying to find an agreement between the viewing frame and the viewing experience required by the film. A strong connection is therefore established between viewing space and types of product. There are films that must be viewed in specific contexts. Films that enjoy greater success in multiplex cinemas, in terms of time shown and takings, are not surprisingly, highly spectacular films. A fact that is in part influenced by distribution logics that tend to favour new viewing spaces to present the most expensive and high impact products to the public. But this is also confirmed in other contexts. The diffusion of DVD players and Home Theater systems, for example, has markedly modified the hiring logics in Italy. It has increased considerably, compared to the VHS lending market, the percentage of action movies, horror and science fiction films, that is films that use many special effects, borrowed by families, as against a reduction for the hire of cartoons, comedies and so called life action films, comedies that are aimed to a prevalently family audience.<sup>19</sup> This is not the occasion for a reflec-



tion on the consequences that this data foreshadows on the relationship between family and media but it is nevertheless evident that the changing viewing situation, under the pressure of updating television sets and more generally of domestic technologies has introduced a disturbance in the already delicate relationship between mass communication apparatus and family dynamics, highlighting the tendency for an essentially personal use (or nevertheless destined for specific segments of the domestic nucleus) of the equipment at the expense of collective viewing moments. The long-term consequences that the transformation of the cinema viewing spaces can have on the public's preferences have still to be assessed.

The centrality of the viewing situation, as mentioned earlier, does not always coincide with the technological advances pushed by the spaces. The neo-viewer seems to take up a profoundly ambivalent position with regards to technology. On the one hand the possibility of using or even better, owning technologically advanced equipment represents a new fundamental factor of social distinction. Digitalisation, as is well known, is reproducing the problem of "digital divide" amongst those that can access, and those that are excluded from the new media system.<sup>20</sup> Klinger describes the new film buff as a "technophile", that not only aims to own the films, but also to collect them in their best format and manifests technical skills in terms of the latest viewing supports and equipment.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand the aim of the viewer is that of establishing a direct and involved relationship with the text, ideally devoid of mediation, that would be disturbed by the presence of a bulky apparatus requiring attention. Certain cinemas equipped with the THX system feature a clip that shows off the sound power of the space ("Audiences are listening" says the catch line at the end of the clip), some others show the speakers and amplifiers system located behind the screen. The technology that blows its own trumpet. The spatial frame is nevertheless literally removed as soon as the film's images start rolling. The positioning of the seats, the prevalently dark colours of the walls and furniture, the acoustic isolation produced by the stereophonic sound force, and allow, the viewers to focus their attention exclusively on the screen.

Something similar happens on the web. The possibility of downloading films from the Internet, not only blockbusters, but also products not distributed or works in original version (for example with added sequences), comes up against the sense of dispersion and disorientation due to too many possibilities available. Which file to download? Where to find the desired films? The presence and the use of ever more powerful means lives side by side with the need for simplicity and, as we shall shortly see, proximity. It is that paradoxical tension that Bolter and Grusin try to explain with the dialectic between hypermediation and hypo-mediation, between hypertrophy of the apparatus, "technophilia" and the search for an authentic and primordial relationship with reality.<sup>22</sup>

## Heterotopies

Sensory shock, frenzy of the senses, involvement and intimacy, assurance, wellbeing. From the essential ambivalence and schizophrenic nature of the viewing experience emerges a final element that contributes to the portrait of the neo-viewer. The effort of reconciling going to the cinema with one's own lifestyle, whilst still retaining its special and festive character.

The strategy adopted by certain companies for their spaces of providing stylistic and

architectural solutions aimed at making viewers feel at home such as including in their complexes references from fashionable locations (public and meeting bars) for their catchment area (as is, in Italy, the case of UCI) or recreating a “living room” atmosphere inside the cinema, with many sofas and lampshades (as is the case of UGC) is well known.<sup>23</sup> The first multiscreens with an extreme technological feel (with the extensive use of steel and glass), have been followed by more welcoming environments, warmer and able to delight and envelop the viewer. The promise is no longer just that of the sensorial stimulation or, as Barbara Klinger calls it referring to the new powerful domestic viewing and audio technologies, the frenzy of the senses,<sup>24</sup> but of an astonishing experience that will make you feel dizzy and that you can give in to in the certainty of being in a safe place.<sup>25</sup> Safety becomes the key word and the real strong point along with the spectacular aspect offered by the new viewing spaces. Michel Foucault,<sup>26</sup> would define them as heterotopic spaces, necessary means of escape from the daily order and ordinariness. Controlled suspensions from social rules. A sort of liberation from the alienation and sense of restriction of relationships disciplined by an apparatus (the cinema too). An emotive revenge, to be more precise,<sup>27</sup> that is borne from the possibility of reducing the overabundance of sensorial stimuli to a personal project. The program schedule effect, produced by the multiplication of the film offer and their repetition, contributes to increasing the feeling of greater freedom of action and constitutes, not accidentally, one of the main factors that attracts the public to the multiplex.

A need to be reflected and for proximity, therefore, that is also revealed at a macroscopic level. Suffice it to think of the numerous projects for the urban migration of multiplex cinemas and their location within a network of relationships and locations with an established identity. An interesting initiative has been promoted by some single or multiscreen cinemas located in the centre of an important town in Lombardy. To counter the competition of multiplexes that have sprung up close to the city, 7 businesses have created a consortium called “Città Multisala” (multiscreen city).<sup>28</sup> It is an agreement that allows the viewer to purchase at any one cinema tickets for showings in any other cinema. The circuit also offers other reductions and services typically found in multiplex, but at a lower price: for example, the possibility of booking the ticket and seat with no mark-up on the price of entry. The many initiatives aimed at developing cinemas located in historic city centres are moving in the same direction, through increased public transport and lengthening of the opening hours of restaurants and shops. In both cases the most interesting aspect is the reversal of the relationship between cinema and traditional spaces of interaction (square, historic city centre).

The initial investments in multiplex as structure able to re-launch the territory by acting as centre for aggregation and exchange, has now given way in Italy to a more cautious attitude. The enthusiasm with which the local administrations of the suburbs of large cities at first welcomed the proposals to build multiscreen complexes, within the context of re-launching and improvement policies, has often come up against the superficiality of contacts: an impressive amount of attendances that never translated into a revitalisation of the social networks and in resources for the community. From here the change of direction that tends to bring closer, and as far as possible, to incorporate the structures in the urban space. The advertising launch of the last multiplex to open in the area around Milan used the slogan: “The Multiplex goes to town,” to stress the privileged ties of continuity (not only spatial) with the surroundings.

The failure of certain territorial marketing projects for the construction of multiplexes must be specified. They were often first generation multiplex cinemas, that sprang up in a general situation of deregulation of licence concession and without a precise awareness of the characteristics of similar complexes. Before the promulgation of the Urbani law (January 2004), that in Italy regulates the cinema production and distribution, the construction of multiplexes was subject to the local town plan and designed, in an inevitably inadequate perspective, for the potential of the structures and unable to bear in mind the extent of their range of action. At the same time the assessment of the multiscreen complexes construction projects was based on the same criteria used for shopping centres. In the Italian case, it is exemplary the choice locating multiplex cinemas close to the main arteries into city centres, in order to catch the flow of commuters or in positions able to exploit the attraction abilities of previous structures (so called hook up multiplex cinemas).

We must not forget that the effort to establish ties, create occasions for interaction, provide locations and means that stimulate comparison undoubtedly represents a distinctive element of new cinema businesses. Not least for economic reasons, to make the most of the public's stay in the complex to induce other consumptions (with the booking system, viewers are encouraged to reach the cinema on average 40 minutes prior to the start of the film), the new viewing spaces feature large welcoming and aggregation structures: connective spaces that become meeting points and places for exchange and debate.

## A Final Comment

The experience of the Italian viewer today is the expression and a clue to the broadest transformations taking place in the media system and in the social and cultural context, highlighting some of the directions along which the relationship between mass communication equipment and social subjects is evolving. A change that concerns both the etiquette, therefore how one should behave and the modalities of use and which the most opportune forms of relation with the equipment and its products and the ethics, which are the moral, but also aesthetic and epistemological, guidelines that are required to safely explore the new territories opened by the digital realm.

A change that implies a twofold bet. That of acquiring the skills for an integrated and synergic use of the media products, that exploits the advantages offered by a unique, and therefore simpler and more direct, access to the contents, preserving nevertheless the ability to differentiate them and recognizing their specificities and value. Iter-operativeness therefore, but without homogenisation. And the ability to exploit the wealth of knowledge and possibilities of socialization and contact revealed by the communication systems, knowing how to refer them back to a personal life project. Therefore globalisation or democratisation but without the loss of identity. Demanding challenges on which depends the possibility of establishing a form of dialogue, meeting and exchange with the media that is authentically worthwhile and for the media the possibility of devising development and production policies that have a social, ethical and cultural aspect and not only an economic value.

[Translated from Italian by Robin Ambrosi]

- 1 Paolo Ferri, *Fine dei mass media. Le nuove tecnologie della comunicazione e le trasformazioni dell'industria culturale* (Milano: Guerini, 2004).
- 2 Agcom Source – European Commission.
- 3 Data from the Univideo Report – GFK and ANIE sources.
- 4 For DTT development in Italy see Lisa Di Felicianantonio, Michele Mezza, *Switch Over. Scenari e obiettivi della Tv al tempo del digitale terrestre* (Milano: Guerini, 2004).
- 5 James Lull, *Inside Family Viewing* (London: Routledge, 1990); tr. it. In *famiglia, davanti alla tv* (Roma: Meltemi, 2003).
- 6 It must also be said that the initial qualitative research on the use of new technology reveals the tendency to maintain a traditional style and forms of approach. Also the results of the research into satellite television, at least in the Italian case, reveal a resistance to the full use of the potentials offered by the technology and a tendency to apply the analogical television viewing styles and forms.
- 7 An exemplary case study about sites of film exhibition and distribution and their transformations with social and cultural changes can be found in Mark Jancovich, Lucy Faire, with Sarah Stubbings, *The Place of the Audience. Cultural Geographies of Film Consumption* (London: BFI, 2003).
- 8 Jean Louis Baudry, "Cinéma: effets idéologiques produits par l'appareil de base," *Cinéthique*, no. 7-8 (1970), pp. 1-8; Id., "Le dispositif. Approches métapsychologiques de l'impression de réalité," *Communications*, no. 23 (1975), pp. 56-72; Steven Heath, Teresa de Lauretis (eds.), *The Cinematic Apparatus* (London: Macmillan, 1980); Christian Metz, *Le Signifiant imaginaire. Psychoanalyse et cinéma* (Paris: Union Générale d'Édition, 1977); tr. it. *Cinema e psicoanalisi* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1980).
- 9 The introduction of the THX certification, aimed at guaranteeing an optimal quality of audio reproduction, at the beginning of the 1980s.
- 10 The term multiplex refers to cinemas with at least 8 screens, that are not the result of dividing a single screen cinema, and are characterized by high viewing and comfort standards, by the ease of access and presence of parking spaces, the availability of ancillary services and the activation of booking and prepaid services. For an analysis of the classification criteria of multi-screen, multiplex and megaplex please refer to Elisabetta Brunella's essay in the introduction of the *European Cinema Yearbook* (2003), pp. 121-125. For the stages of the evolution of the multiplex on the American market refer to Douglas Gomery, *Shared Pleasures: An History of Movie Presentation in the United States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992). For a concise reconstruction see also Kevin J. Corbett, "The Picture: Theatrical Moviegoing, Digital Television, and Beyond the Substitution Effect," *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 40, no. 2 (2001), pp. 17-34.
- 11 Anne Friedberg, "Spectatorial Flânerie," in Ina Rae Hark (ed.), *Exhibition. The 'Film' Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 173-181.
- 12 Data up to date as of March 2004 (MEDIASalles and ANICA sources).
- 13 "La mappa dei multiplex," *Box Office. Il mondo del cinema e il suo business* (April 2004).
- 14 Cf. Gianluca Sergi, "The Sonic Playground: Hollywood Cinema and its Listeners," in Melvin Stokes, Richard Maltby (eds.), *Hollywood Spectatorship. Changing Perceptions of Cinema Audiences* (London: BFI, 2001), pp. 121-131.
- 15 Businesses are regulated by the Bersani law, that limits opening times and days, at a national level; public businesses (cinemas, restaurants, amusement arcades) are regulated at the provincial level.
- 16 Gary Edgerton, "The Multiplex. The Modern American Motion Picture Theatre as Message," *The Journal of Popular Film and Television*, Vol. IX, no. 4 (1982), pp. 158-165.

- 17 D. Gomery, *Shared Pleasures*, op. cit.
- 18 The viewing situation concept has been examined in-depth by Francesco Casetti. Cf. Francesco Casetti, *Communicative Negotiation in Cinema and Television* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2002).
- 19 In Italy both the Home Video sales and hire percentages have grown considerably from 1999 to the present day. Between 2001 and 2002 there has been an above average increase compared to previous years determined, according to the observers by the introduction of DVDs. In 2002 the sale and hire of DVDs counter for 40% of the total Home Video turnover in Italy (Simmaco data).
- 20 Reference is made to the digital divide, to highlight the social difference produced by the introduction of the digital, an updating of the knowledge gap theories of the seventies developed by Tichenor, Donohue and Olien.
- 21 Barbara Klinger, "The Contemporary Cinephile: Film Collecting in the Post-Video Era," in M. Stokes, R. Maltby (eds.), op. cit., pp. 132-151.
- 22 Jay David Bolter, Richard Grusin, *Remediation. Understanding New Media* (London-Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999); tr. it. *Remediation. Competizione e integrazione tra media vecchi e nuovi* (Milano: Guerini, 2002).
- 23 About contemporary cinema architecture development cf. Edwin Heathcote, "The Development on the Modernist Cinema. Sideshow to Art House," *Architecture + Film II* (2002), pp. 70-73.
- 24 Barbara Klinger, "The New Media Aristocrats: Home Theater and the Domestic Film Experience," *The Velvet Light Trap*, no. 42 (1998), pp. 4-19.
- 25 About dialectic between public and private sphere and the mass media role in the collapse of boundaries cf. David Morley, *Home Territories. Media, Mobility and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000).
- 26 Please see Michel Foucault, "Des espaces autres," *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*, no. 5 (October 1984), pp. 46-49; tr. it. Alessandro Pandolfi (ed.), *Archivio Foucault. Interventi, colloqui, interviste*, Vol. 3, 1978-1985. *Estetica dell'esistenza, etica, politica* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1998), pp. 307-316.
- 27 Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought. The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); tr. it. *L'intelligenza delle emozioni* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004).
- 28 <http://www.monzacinema.it>.



NEW STUDIES





# THEATER AND CINEMA IN THE “AGE OF NERVOUSNESS”: *DER ANDERE* BY PAUL LINDAU (1894) AND MAX MACK (1913)\*

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## Introduction

In the closing sequence of Max Mack’s film *Der Andere* (1913), we see the protagonist, the public prosecutor Hallers, suffering what can only be described as a momentary relapse into the insanity that the audience thought he had overcome. Hallers has just returned from a country sanatorium, where he had hoped to cure the bouts of hysterical somnambulism that transformed him from a representative of the law into the “Other” of the film’s title: a shady Berlin criminal (Fig. 1). But as he sets out to marry his



Fig. 1. Albert Bassermann as Hallers in *Der Andere* (1913)

beloved Agnes and begin his new life in the final scene of the film, it becomes clear that Hallers has not, in fact, been cured. During their engagement party, we see an intertitle reading “Agnes fears a relapse,”<sup>1</sup> followed by a close-up of Hallers’ face, whose empty gaze into the distance reveals a momentary return to the somnambulistic state that his trip to the sanatorium was supposed to cure. “The Other” that had taken control of Hallers, viewers can only conclude, can and will return in another film.

With this ominous ending, Mack’s film from 1913 offers an early example of what would become a standard closing sequence of the “not quite dead yet” variety in 20<sup>th</sup> century horror film. It also reveals a significant departure, on Mack’s part, from his theatrical model: Paul Lindau’s 1894 stage play *Der Andere*. Lindau’s dramatic representation of a case of urban pathology had ended far more optimistically with Hallers’ departure for the sanatorium and his promise to return to Berlin a cured man and marry Agnes.

This discrepancy, I would suggest, points to a different reading of Mack’s film from that often met in film historical accounts. As the first and best known example of the German Autorenfilm genre of the 1910s – in which established stage writers such as Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Gerhart Hauptmann and Max Reinhardt for the first time collaborated with film makers – *Der Andere* is generally seen as emblematic of an effort to lift early cinema into the realm of “high culture” by reproducing the experience of the theater on the screen for middle and upper class audiences. To this day, Mack’s film – for which he hired not only Lindau but also the most respected theater actor of the day, Albert Bassermann, to play the part of Hallers – continues to figure as a quintessential historical example of an effort to tame early film in accordance with the demands of bourgeois morality.<sup>2</sup> And yet, that view misses much of what was at stake in the intermedial relation between theater and film in Germany at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Precisely on account of its subject matter of urban pathologies, *Der Andere* offers an excellent example with which to gain insight into this relation, as well as a fascinating test case for investigating the cultural and discursive determinations of different media. Examining both Lindau’s play and Mack’s film in relation to the discourse on urbanization and nervous illness, this essay suggests a reading of both works as reflections on their respective media, and specifically on the function of those media in the modern urban environment. Far from transforming the cinema into a surrogate theater, I argue, Mack’s film in fact sought to transform Lindau’s play into a form of urban entertainment appropriate to modern nerves.

### Theater and Cathartic Therapy

Appearing at the midst of the intense urbanization that transformed Berlin in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Lindau’s drama of 1894 centered on the dangers of daily life in what Lindau’s contemporaries called the new “age of nervousness” (*Zeitalter der Nervosität*).<sup>3</sup> From the opening scenes of the play, Hallers appears as the prototypical nervous city dweller; excitable, overworked and hyperstimulated, Hallers has clearly exhausted his nervous reserves before the play even begins. As his neurologist Dr. Feldermann makes clear in the play’s central monologue, moreover, Hallers’ own symptoms form part of a veritable epidemic of nervous illness in modern times, attributable directly to the growth of urban life:

Only a fool would be surprised by the frightening spread of nervous illness in our times. In reality, one should rather wonder that we haven't all gone absolutely insane. [...] The depopulation of the countryside and relentless growth of cities is wreaking absolute havoc. It is terrifying to contemplate the extent to which we have lost touch with nature. Even today, the Indians can still perceive the slightest sound over great distances. But anyone who wishes to make himself heard in the deafening noise of our urban culture – amidst the rattling din of streetcars, the pumping and hammering of machines, and the whistling and churning of locomotives – has to bang out his message on giant drums and tam tams. [...] Lighting that would have struck our grandparents as extremely bright hardly suffices any more for us to see. Our spoiled eyes can hardly make do even with electric bulbs. And let us not forget the extremely rapid tempo of our existence, that feverish haste. Each day, people send and receive thousands upon thousands of telegrams and engage in thousands of telephone conversations from city to city. [...] All are caught up in an endless pursuit of success, a search for quick profits, which exposes them to ever more intense forms of excitation. Is it any wonder that our generation has become nervous? Is it any surprise that new forms of nervous illness emerge daily to attract the attention of science?<sup>4</sup>

I cite Feldermann's monologue at length here to underscore the extent to which Lindau's play relied on a specific medical interpretation of modernity. From his description of the hyperstimulation occasioned by noise and bright lights to his warnings about the excitations accompanying the new urban tempo, Feldermann's diagnosis could have appeared in any number of the numerous publications on neurasthenia and industrialization around the turn of the century.<sup>5</sup> In his study *Nervosität und Kultur* (1902), to take one example, the psychologist Willy Hellpach would cite all of the same factors as Feldermann, focusing especially on "noise," "bright lights" and hectic tempo of urban life.<sup>6</sup> An 1888 caricature from the satirical journal *Die fliegenden Blätter* entitled *Nervös*, also suggests the extent to which contemporary observers associated city life with excitement and sensory overload (Fig. 2).

Hallers, for his part, conforms precisely to Feldermann's diagnosis of the visual and acoustic hyperstimulation afflicting modern city-dwellers. In one exchange, when he tells Agnes that he misses the sound of her piano coming from the apartment upstairs, Agnes responds: "An apartment resident who complains that I don't play enough piano – one doesn't see that very often!"<sup>7</sup> Agnes's ironic comment makes sense only when read against the contemporary discourse on the nervous effects of noise in the city.<sup>8</sup> Central to this debate on noise and nervous hygiene were the complaints about what contemporaries labeled the "piano plague" (*Klavierpest*) afflicting urban apartment buildings.<sup>9</sup>

In Lindau's play, it is precisely at the moment at which Agnes begins playing the piano that Hallers suffers his transformation into the somnambulist "Other," and it is no accident that Mack would later place Hallers' final relapse in a scene in which Agnes again sets out to play the piano at their engagement party. And if Hallers appears to conform to Felderman's fears in his apparent need for ever greater noise, he also displays a singular inability to make due with the old gas light<sup>10</sup> still used in his house, as he repeatedly complains to his servant Ewald:

HALLERS: Light the candles in the candelabra. The lanterns are malfunctioning again. I can't work in this twilight.

EWALD: But the lanterns have never functioned differently. There's really no way they could give off any more light.

HALLERS: (impatient) Do as I tell you!<sup>11</sup>

In this and other similar scenes, Lindau's hero appears blasé in the precise physiological sense – his overstimulated nerves refusing to react with anything like their “natural” capacity and thus craving ever stronger stimulations.

If Feldermann's diagnosis of urban hyperstimulation inscribes Hallers' story within a specific discourse on nervousness and industrialization, so too does his critique of the “feverish tempo” of modern life, with its unbridled “pursuit of success.” As Andreas Braun has shown, the sense of an increasingly hectic tempo, outrunning the capacities of the human organism to keep up, infiltrated nearly all areas of experience in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> Most directly, of course, this question of tempo was related to the imperatives of punctuality brought on by the spread of mass transportation and the emergence of ergonomics and Taylorist systems for regulating factory work, which would figure centrally in such films as *Metropolis* (F. Lang, 1927) and *Modern Times* (Ch. Chaplin, 1936). In this sense, nervousness resulted largely from the subjective toll of what recent scholarship on urban culture – following the analyses of figures such as Georg Simmel



Fig. 2. “Nervös”: caricature from the *Fliegende Blätter* (1888)

and the historian Karl Lamprecht – has called “inner urbanization,” the attempt to adapt the psyche to the new conditions of urban life, and above all the imperatives of punctuality.<sup>13</sup>

In non-manual, middle-class work of Hallers’ type, the new discourse on nervous tempo referred to what Lindau’s contemporaries perceived as a frantic new work ethic inaugurated by the liberal culture of the late-19<sup>th</sup> century and characterized by unbri-dled competition and the struggle to get ahead at any price. In many ways, the discourse on neurasthenia represented an attempt to come to terms with the effects of this new work ethic upon the bourgeoisie in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century. In his study *Über gesunde und kranke Nerven* (1888), for example, the psychiatrist Krafft-Ebing summed up this diagnosis when he offered the following portrait of the typical neurasthenic:

Extreme exertion all day long at work – hardly any time to eat – time is money after all – a constant struggle with the competition, enormous responsibilities and demands on the job. [...] The most disastrous characteristic of our time is the desire to rise above the competition and get ahead at any cost, even if this means sacrificing health, family life and one’s character to the curse of ambition.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, in his treatise *Über die wachsende Nervosität unserer Zeit*, which appeared the same year as Lindau’s play, the neurologist Wilhelm Erb offered the following assessment of the typical modern neurasthenic: “The patient keeps extending his working hours, turning his nights into days; pressing tasks demand his attention, and thus he races onward until his forces are exhausted.”<sup>15</sup> Writing with hindsight in 1913 (the year of Mack’s film), the economist Werner Sombart would later take recourse to the same image of the overworked neurasthenic in an attempt to take stock of the transformations in work at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. “Everyone is familiar with the sight of those people who work until they go mad,” Sombart asserted in his study *Der Bourgeois*:

Whether entrepreneurs or manual laborers, such people share the general characteristic of living constantly on the verge of collapse from overexertion. They are always excited and in a hurry. Tempo, tempo! That has become the catchword of our epoch. The peculiarity of today’s generation lies in its insistence on this frantic race forward.<sup>16</sup>

Precisely these transformations stood at the center of Lindau’s 1893 play, where Hallers sacrifices all other forms of happiness on the altar of his professional ambitions. Throughout the play, Hallers’ secretary Kleinchen never tires of warning him of his impending collapse. “It’s no wonder if you’re nervous,” Kleinchen tells him in one scene. “You really work too much!”<sup>17</sup> Indeed, not only is Hallers singularly unable to put down his work as public prosecutor, but in his manic pursuit of success, he also throws himself into politics, attempting to make a name for himself as city council member. “If only this accursed election were over!” Hallers cries out at one point to Kleinchen, who answers: “But then you’ll only find something else to do. It never stops!”<sup>18</sup>

Eventually, Hallers’ nervousness does develop into a full-blown case of insanity, when he begins to imitate, in a somnambulist state, the very criminal behavior that he has been observing in Berlin’s underground bars in preparation for his latest book.<sup>19</sup> In attributing Hallers’ outbreak of somnambulist criminality to the nervous exhaustion occasioned by city life, Lindau’s play also took up a broad cultural anxiety about nervous

illness and crime in the modern metropolis. The premiere of Lindau's play in 1893 came in the midst of an explosion of publications on pathological criminality, such as Max Nordau's *Entartung* (1892) and the German translations of Havelock Ellis's *Crime and Criminality* (1894) and Cesare Lombroso's *L'uomo delinquente* (1890-96).<sup>20</sup> This is not to argue that one should see in Lindau's protagonist a literary illustration of the "born criminal;" on the contrary, precisely in showing how a figure of such authority as a public prosecutor could succumb to criminal insanity under the strain of overwrought nerves, Lindau underscored his critique of urban life. Rather, as Andriopoulos has suggested with reference to Mack's 1913 film, Hallers' case exemplifies a discourse on the dangers of crimes committed in a state of divided consciousness and hypnotic compulsion.<sup>21</sup> In particular, Lindau's play took up a late-19<sup>th</sup> century anxiety about the phenomenon of "crime by imitation" (*Nachahmungsverbrechen*), whereby the representations of crime in an increasingly widely circulating mass press would have a suggestive effect on nervous readers, inciting them to imitate the actions they read about or saw in pictures.<sup>22</sup>

In taking up the debates on nervous illness and crime, Lindau's play was concerned, above all, with the question of individual autonomy. When Agnes' brother Arnoldy argues for the plausibility of somnambulistic crime, Hallers insists that such medical theories fly in the face of all concepts of moral justice, which rely per force on the supposition of a morally responsible individual: "For the love of God, what would we come to if we tried to apply such hypotheses in practical cases? As long as a subject isn't completely crazy, then in my opinion, he still possesses a high enough degree of self-determination to be made responsible for his actions and shortcomings."<sup>23</sup> Hallers will, of course, be forced to reverse this opinion when he experiences the loss of autonomy on his own body.

Indeed, Hallers' process of self-dispossession will find its symbolic expression in the very nature of his crimes. During his debate with Arnoldy, Hallers describes the theory of split consciousness disdainfully as a sort of infraction or "break-in" into the boundaries of the autonomous self:

Do you mean to tell me that some inexplicable force can break into me [bei mir einbrechen] and shut down my consciousness? And that this burglar [Einbrecher] can extinguish my moral personality and enable the evil guy perhaps cowering somewhere inside me to perform deeds that my better self rejects? What nonsense!<sup>24</sup>

In his guise as the Other, however, Hallers will act out the very process of psychic "burglary" he mockingly describes here; returning to the criminal bar in his somnambulistic state, Hallers succumbs to an irresistible compulsion to lead the master criminal Dickert on a break-in into his own house. For a member of the high bourgeoisie such as Hallers, the home ought to represent everything that the nervous space of the underground bar does not: specifically, the values of autonomy and self-determination Hallers so vigorously defends.<sup>25</sup> In this sense, Hallers' "break-in" reproduces, on an objective level, the very dispossession his nervous illness performs on a psychic one.

While Hallers' theft of his own possessions clearly has no justification in terms of personal gain,<sup>26</sup> it does follow a certain logic of hysteria by now familiar to readers of Josef Breuer's and Sigmund Freud's famous case studies in hysteria from 1895. In the preface to their study, Breuer and Freud developed the theses of Pierre Janet to interpret hysteria precisely as a rudimentary form of the kind of split-consciousness afflicting Lindau's protagonist:

The more we studied these phenomena, the more convinced we became that this psychic splitting, so conspicuous in the well-known classic cases of "double conscience," exists in a rudimentary form in every case of hysteria; the tendency toward dissociation, and thereby toward the display of abnormal states of consciousness which we will designate as "hypnoid," is the basic phenomenon of this neurosis.<sup>27</sup>

The specific actions carried out in such "hypnoid" states, Breuer and Freud further argued, functioned precisely as displaced repetitions of the traumatic experience at the root of the hysterical disorder itself. In one significant example, they told of an employee who suffered from attacks that caused him to throw himself to the ground and writhe about: "When we succeeded in provoking the attack under hypnosis, the patient explained that he was reliving a scene in which his superior had insulted him verbally on the street and struck him with a cane."<sup>28</sup> Building on examples such as this one, Breuer and Freud referred to hysterical attacks as "memory symbols"<sup>29</sup> or "allegories."<sup>30</sup>

Clearly, Hallers' criminal "break-in" during his bouts of somnambulism carries a similar allegorical significance. And one can also observe this allegorical logic at work in Hallers' other principal somnambulist crime: the theft of Agnes' watch. When Hallers asks Agnes' brother Arnoldy for Agnes' hand in marriage, Arnoldy refuses, citing Hallers' complete subjection to the new regime of urban tempo and his lack of time for anything but his career:

ARNOLDY: [...] If a man who knows no other ambition and no other passion than work, more work and work without end, a man whose work utterly dominates his life, allowing for no other activities and alienating – yes alienating! – him from his best friends... if such a man asks me whether he should bind the destiny of a good and faithful girl to his own, then I can only answer no! You don't have any time for domestic happiness [Sie haben keine Zeit zum häuslichen Glück].

HALLERS (nodding slowly in agreement): Yes, it's true! I have no time for happiness! [...] I'm beginning to see now that I've tried to take on too much! I feel exhausted and overstimulated. [...] I need to give myself more time for happiness as well!<sup>31</sup>

In his subjection to the new regime of tempo, Hallers has in fact lost his time – specifically, the qualitative time necessary for a traditional mode of experience Arnoldy here calls the "domestic" or the "homely" (häusliches Glück). As the two objects of modernity's nervous assault in Lindau's play, time and the home come to function as signatures of an imaginary autonomy lost to the inhabitants of the new industrial culture. In stealing Agnes's watch, then, the "hypnoid" Hallers acts out, as it were, the very theft of qualitative time inflicted on him by modern urban tempo.

Hallers' compulsory acts of theft, then, offer precise allegories of the broader loss at stake in Lindau's critique of the nervous, urban culture. And it is this urban culture itself that Dr. Feldermann blames for the new nervousness at the end of the play. "Above all," he tells Hallers, "you must get out of the big city! Solitude, calm and silence are the medicine you require!"<sup>32</sup> In placing Hallers' story within the context of Dr. Feldermann's broader cultural critique, Lindau sought to offer an exemplary figure for coming to terms with the cultural experience of urbanization and industrialization in late 19<sup>th</sup> century Berlin.

In so doing, I would suggest, Lindau also sought to use the medium of the theater in

order to provide a kind of vicarious therapeutic experience. In their own efforts to delineate a method for treating hysteria, Breuer and Freud adapted a central category of theatrical experience when they argued for the efficacy of what they termed the “cathartic” cure. The successful abreaction of the hysterical agent, they argued, could occur only when the subject re-experienced the affective or traumatic experience at the root of the condition through the conscious medium of the word: “We discovered that the individual hysterical symptoms disappeared immediately and without recurrence [...] when the patient narrated the [traumatic] events as thoroughly as possible and thus put his affect into words.”<sup>33</sup> As the representative of rational, discursive thought, language was the medium, for Breuer and Freud, for the exorcism of the affects at the root of hysteria.<sup>34</sup> The ending of Lindau’s play offers precisely such a moment of verbal abreaction. Coming to his senses, Hallers will put into words what he has been acting out pathologically throughout the drama when he recognizes in himself the very *Einbrecher* whose presence he had denied. Gesturing with one hand toward his forehead and with the other toward his heart, he exclaims: “The other is here! He has been stealing my appearance and leading me God knows where! Yes, the burglar is here! [Da ist der Einbrecher!]”<sup>35</sup> Lindau’s play thus reaches its climax in a moment of “catharsis” in both the classical, dramatic sense – like Oedipus, Hallers recognizes that he is the criminal he has been pursuing – and in the therapeutic sense outlined by Breuer and Freud; having expelled his psychic “burglar,” Hallers can depart for his rest-cure in a country sanitarium with the expectation of returning to marry his beloved Agnes.

Given the intimate connections between Breuer and Freud’s therapeutic model and classical drama theory, it should hardly be surprising that the modern theater itself might be envisioned as a forum for the abreaction of nervousness and hysteria. Among the readers of Breuer and Freud’s study, the Austrian writer and critic Hermann Bahr recognized the significance of their work for imagining the public role of the theater in the age of nervousness. In his fictive “Dialogue on the Tragic” (*Dialog vom Tragischen*) (1904), Bahr had his main character (the “theater director”) expound a view of ancient Greek tragedy precisely as a ritual of collective nervous therapy: “Yes, the Greeks were insane, and it was for this reason that their sages invented the tragedy as a form of treatment, a cure for the nation.”<sup>36</sup> Comparing such a collective cure to the model of “cathartic” therapy recently expounded by Breuer and Freud, Bahr’s theater director stresses precisely the role of language in the abreaction of suppressed memories: “The patient is healed as soon as he puts his experience into words.”<sup>37</sup> Such a cure, Bahr argues, was already the very purpose and end effect of ancient tragedy itself, which sought to provide a symbolic outlet for man’s dangerous atavistic drives in order to free spectators from their tyranny:

Tragedy actually has no other goal than that of these two doctors. It serves to force a people made sick by culture to recall things they do not wish to remember: i.e., the dangerous affects they have hidden away and the savage human being from earlier times that still cowers and growls within the educated men they play. Tragedy tears the chains from this savage beast, allowing it to roam free and vent its fury so that modern man might return to his moral self, purified of his creeping, fuming gases and stilled by all of this excitement.<sup>38</sup>

In his *Dialog*, Bahr clearly drew the consequences of the discourse on nervousness and hysteria in modern life for a conception of the theater as a therapeutic ritual of public exorcism.



As I have tried to show here, Lindau had already suggested a similar notion of a therapeutic theater a decade earlier in *Der Andere*, where the theatrical representation of Hallers' illness and his cure was meant to function as a kind of symbolic abreaction of the nervousness of modern life. At stake, in Lindau's play, is the question of whether something like the "homely happiness" and the traditional experience of time it required were still possible in the industrialized world of nervous tempo. Despite the alarming tone of Dr. Feldermann's discourse, Lindau's play finally answered this question in the affirmative, ending with the restoration of Agnes' watch and, along with it, the restoration of Hallers' lost time. As Hallers regains his calm after his cathartic abreaction and prepares to depart for the country sanatorium, it becomes clear that he will, in fact, obtain the homely happiness that urban life had threatened to destroy:

HALLERS: I want to save time... time for happiness as well [Ich will Zeit gewinnen... auch zum Glück]. (He turns toward Agnes with an expression of intimacy and she moves toward him).

AGNES: (Looks down at the ground).

HALLERS (Takes her hand in gratitude and kisses it).<sup>39</sup>

With this ending, Lindau's play sought to provide a therapeutic experience of the theater. In telling the story of a representative modern hysteric and his cathartic cure, *Der Andere* was not simply about modern nervousness but also about the curative power of the theater itself.

### Cinema, Popular Entertainment and Modern Nerves

Coming some two decades after Lindau's play, Mack's 1913 film would, as we saw above, decidedly challenge its therapeutic tendency. Mack retained the allegorical significance of Hallers' somnambulist crimes, visually emphasizing his theft of Agnes' watch (Fig. 3) and his break-in into his own house (Fig. 4). But by extending the story to show Hallers' relapse in the final sequence, he entirely undermined the restorative closure of Lindau's play. This transformation from drama to film, I would suggest, had everything to do with the transition between the two media. Where the theater could take recourse to a model of therapeutic catharsis, by the time Mack set out to film Lindau's play, the cinema had come to embody the very urban nervousness that the play sought to exorcize.

One can see this most clearly, perhaps, in the writings of the cinema reform movement that emerged in Germany in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For the educators, psychologists and criminologists spearheading the calls for "reform," the increasing popularity of cinemas was indelibly linked to the spread of nervous illness in the urban environment – and this by virtue of the very aesthetic qualities of the filmic medium as such.<sup>40</sup> With its bright light, its flickering screen and above all its aesthetics of rapidly alternating scenes and perspectives, the cinema condensed, in a particularly potent way, the nervous hyperstimulation already endemic to urban experience as such. Paradigmatic, in this respect, were the experiments carried out in 1913 – the same year in which *Der Andere* appeared on the market – by the cinema reformer Nado Felke; choosing three subjects of varying "nervous constitutions," Felke placed them all before



Fig. 3. Hallers displays Agnes's stolen watch in *Der Andere* (1913)

non-stop cinematic presentations in order to test how long the human body and psyche could withstand the rapid flux of images and the bright light emitted by films before collapsing with nervous exhaustion. Publishing his results in an article for *Die Umschau*, Felke argued:

When I speak of the damage that cinema does to one's health, I am not simply referring to the fact that a large number of people sit packed together in what are often truly inadequate and unsanitary spaces lacking sufficient air. I am referring to the damage that cinema does to the eyes and the nerves. The images shown there give off a significantly more intense light than phenomena seen in nature. In addition, the scenes alternate far more rapidly and, since they typically serve to portray exciting and tense situations, exert a much greater strain on the eyes than do events in nature.<sup>41</sup>

According to Felke, the maximum amount of time during which a human being could withstand film's nervous aesthetic was five hours and fifty minutes. But he underscored the dangers of such a prolonged exposure by describing at length the utter delirium of the "winning" subject, who collapsed with nervous exhaustion upon leaving the cinema house.<sup>42</sup>

For Felke, as for most reformers, the significance of such experiments was clear: "As experiments teach us, frequent and lasting trips to movie theaters will inevitably have devastating results. This ought to demonstrate extreme damage to the eyes and the



Fig. 4. Hallers breaks into his own house with the master criminal Dickert in *Der Andere* (1913)

nerves, and for reasons of health, we ought to applaud any and all limitations imposed on the cinema industry.”<sup>43</sup>

While this discourse on hyperstimulation itself recalls Hallers’ story, as Andriopoulos has shown, the reform movement also took frequent recourse, in their campaign against the cinema, to the very debates on hypnosis and crime at the center of Lindau’s play.<sup>44</sup> Taking up the 19<sup>th</sup> century discourse on crime by imitation, the reformers sounded an especially dire warning about the influence of crime films, arguing that spectators’ nervous exhaustion before cinematic representations would leave them susceptible to the suggestive effects of the images they saw on the screen. A criminologist by trade, Hellwig was particularly virulent in his warnings about the cinema’s suggestive power: “That popular crime films constitute a great danger,” he wrote in one article from 1911, “is a fact that no one familiar with the drive to imitation (*Nachahmungstrieb*) and the role it plays in criminality would deny.”<sup>45</sup> Mack – who had already used the trope of psychic automatism a year earlier in his film *Zweimal gelebt* to tell the story of a housewife who leaves her husband for a second life in a state of hysterical somnambulism – was clearly aware of the reformers’ arguments. As Andriopoulos rightly argues, it is no accident, given this connection between film, hypnosis and crime, that so many silent films in Germany – from Mack’s *Der Andere* to *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (R. Wiene, 1919) to *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler* (F. Lang, 1922) – dwelt on themes of somnambulism and hypnosis; and he rightly reads the representations of suggestion and hypnosis in these films as, at least

in part, allusions to the uncanny power of the cinema itself as understood in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>46</sup>

To be sure, not everyone shared the reformers' dire prognoses of film's ability to unleash an epidemic of hysterical criminality. Still, even for its proponents, the cinema seemed to embody, more than any other medium, the nervousness of modern life. In particular, the rapid alternations characterizing cinema shows – both of shots within individual films and between the short films themselves – offered an aesthetic objectification of the nervous tempo of modern life.

As Egon Friedell described it in an introductory lecture to a film screening in Berlin in 1912, the cinema was the appropriate medium for an age that had lost all time for “idyllic repose:”

[T]he cinema is short and rapid, almost as if its presentations were written in code; and it stops for nothing. [...] These characteristics correspond very well to our epoch, which is one of extracts. For nothing, today, do we have less of a feel than for idyllic repose, for an epic lingering over precisely those objects that once counted as poetic. We are no longer able to relax cozily among such things. Our entire civilization embodies the principle: *le minimum d'effort et le maximum d'effet*. Already in school we begin our training in the art of the extract. We absorb extracts of philology, extracts of the natural sciences, extracts of world history – never the science itself, only the extract. We no longer travel in coaches, but in speeding trains, capturing only hurried snatches of the landscape as we pass.<sup>47</sup>

As the art of the extract par excellence, film thus appeared as a medium ready-made for people who had lost their time. Utterly opposed to any notion of idyllic contemplation, film shows offered, as Strobl pointed out in an article from 1911, one of the “most perfect expressions” of the nervousness of modern life:

The cinema is one of the most perfect expressions of our time. Its quick, distracted tempo corresponds to the nervousness of our lives; the restless flickering of the scenes flitting by lies at the opposite end of the spectrum from the confident persistence of a regular stride. Before these wild images it becomes apparent that the present has no room for the idyllic. The camera man's technical requirements tolerate no lingering; they condense all events under the strongest imperative. [...] The cinema preserves only extracts of events, sketches of life, realities dressed up and trimmed. The cinema's principle is captured in the American principle that Peter Altenberg proclaimed for the theater: “Reduce the whole fox to a pot of beef extract.”<sup>48</sup>

More akin to the condensed impressionist sketches of the Viennese writer Peter Altenberg (or Charles Baudelaire's prose-poems that inspired them) than to any extended dramatic or narrative mode, the cinema's aesthetics of tempo seemed to capture the experience of an age definitively separated from the sort of qualitative time Hallers so desperately wished to regain in Lindau's play.<sup>49</sup> “Like vaudeville,” wrote another anonymous writer in 1912, “the cinema accommodates our nervous impatience. We desire rapid developments: extracts, concentrations, three-minute novels (Heinrich Mann wrote one).”<sup>50</sup>

It was precisely the status of film as a nervous medium, moreover, that opposed the cinema to the theater in the eyes of Mack's contemporaries. In Germany, the transition

from the "cinema of attractions" to narrative cinema in the years leading up to WWI coincided with the rise of a new filmic genre, the Kinodrama, of which Mack was one of the undisputed masters.<sup>51</sup> Certainly in comparison with the cinema of attractions that preceded it, the development of the Kinodrama borrowed much from the realm of theater. But it would be a mistake to see this process as a one-way imitation. On the contrary, when one examines the discourse on the theatrical and filmic dramas from the time, one has the impression that at no time were observers more concerned to highlight the differences between the two media and than precisely during this transition in the years leading up to WWI. In the eyes of Mack's contemporaries, those differences revolved around the question of nervousness and tempo. As the theater critic Hermann Kienzl described it in an article entitled "Theater und Kinematograph" from 1911, the new film drama catered – unlike the more long-winded representations of the live theater – to the demands of over-exerted and over-stimulated city-dwellers, audiences in need of a jolt to the nerves but unable to spare large quantities of time and energy:

The psychology behind the cinema's triumph is urban psychology. [...] City-dwellers generally lack the requisite stamina and concentration for affective and intellectual absorption, not to mention the necessary time – especially in Berlin, this metropolis gripped with work-fever. [...] And since city-dwellers have grown just as accustomed to nervous stimuli as the drug addict to his poison, they are especially grateful for films involving crimes or some other exciting story told à la minute. The film drama is a drama after the city-dweller's heart. Here, he can experience Othello or Richard III in less than 10 minutes. What a savings in time! All "superfluous" (that is, poetic) elements have been eliminated. There remain only the exciting situations, the spine-chilling deeds. This is the path from plays to films, from the theater to the cinema.<sup>52</sup>

With its continuous procurement of nervous stimulations, its extraction of all "superfluous" poetic elements and its adaptation of classical literature to the modern dictates of tempo, the cinema would thus conform to a new "urban psychology" of precisely the Hallers type.

Max Mack shared this view of the cinema as a medium appropriate to the new urban psychology, as he would explain in his books *Die zappelnde Leinwand* (The Jittery Screen, 1916) and *Wie komme ich zum Film?* (The Path to Cinema, 1918). In a critique aimed specifically at the cinema reformers – who sought largely to limit the use of film for educational purposes – Mack argued that the main social function of film was precisely to provide a dose of nervous energy for exhausted and overworked city-dwellers:

Audiences go to the movie theater to be entertained. [...] What they expect from the cinema are films that stroke the nerves as lightly as possible; these films should arouse a state of excitement, but one that does not go too deep; and they should make no demands on all of the spectator's mental energies that have been expended and exhausted during the day's work. The cinema reformers cannot accept this simple insight. In their lack of familiarity with worldly matters, they are completely convinced that man is always ready to learn something.<sup>53</sup>

If Mack agreed with most contemporaries in viewing on the cinema as a source of nervous stimulation rather than a forum for intellectual or artistic contemplation, he

also agreed that the essence of film's nervous aesthetic lays in its tempo. Like Friedell and Strobl, Mack saw the rapid alternation of scenes and perspectives as the *sine qua non* of effective entertainment film, a view that led him to a very different sort of experiment in spectatorship than those of Nado Felke:

Theoretically, it is very difficult to define tempo. But anyone who has ever seen a film has experienced it. [...] The secret of tempo lies in the rapid alternation of shots and scenes. I have an unflinching method for determining whether or not a film has tempo. If I close my eyes for a few seconds during the film's projection, a noticeable transformation should have taken place on the screen by the time I open them again. If the image has remained by and large the same, then I can be sure that the film has not maintained its tempo.<sup>54</sup>

The importance that Mack ascribed to rapid alternations, moreover, helps to explain why he saw the activity of cutting as the key component of filmmaking. As Prümm has shown, later film theorists of the 1920s such as Béla Balázs would avoid metaphors of cutting altogether in their effort to lend film an organic and quasi-mystical status.<sup>55</sup> But Mack celebrated the scissors as the film director's primary tool. As he explained in a section of *Die zappelnde Leinwand* entitled "The Director's Scissors" (*Die Regieschere*): "Experienced directors claim that cutting is the most difficult task of filmmaking. [...] Bad directors cut too little. This destroys the film's tempo, the rush of events and inner suspense; it makes of film an empty drama."<sup>56</sup> No doubt, Mack understood this aesthetics of the cut as one corresponding to the nervousness of the times. For the effort to lend a film tempo, he pointed out, was precisely an effort to hold the attention of a public increasingly distracted and unable to linger:

The process involves a constant change of scenery or, to put it in film-technical terms, of successive shots. Within such a configuration, the use of sophisticated close-ups can obtain an effect of surprise, and this includes close-up shots of supporting characters – an old servant, for example, silently laying down a cigar. Or the director chooses some seemingly insignificant detail and has it performed by an extremely important film actor. Then we see a shot of a giant hand removing a ring from its finger or some other significant situation, which captures the viewer's attention for a second by means of bold shots. It is a constant struggle to maintain the audience's attention.<sup>57</sup>

Where the reformers condemned this flood of images as an etiology in the spread of modern nervousness, Mack celebrated it as the aesthetic expression of a distracted age.

Mack, too, saw this question of tempo as the key to understanding the difference between the cinema and the theater. Unlike stage acting, in which the actor has the time to develop an individual character with all of her or his psychological nuances, the tempo of film allows only for the most basic urban types. "The film role lacks everything that makes a characters on the stage so charming and life-like," he wrote in *Die zappelnde Leinwand*:

The man in a film has no character; he is a single-celled type lacking all complexity. Thus the meticulous construction and the psychological unfolding of a role is superfluous. [...] My God, we simply have no time in film. On the stage, actors can take minutes to act out a complete psychological transition. [...] Film demands absolute concentration, the extraction of

the essential and the shedding of all the rest. Actors who do not relearn their trade will only transform the film role into a traditional drama and fill their audience with boredom! [...] Film has nothing in common with the stage. If I may be permitted the expression, a sequence that would take three minutes on the stage must be reduced to two seconds on film.<sup>58</sup>

Long before Ernst Jünger described the transition from theater to film as symptomatic of the social transformation from bourgeois individuals to mass types in *Der Arbeiter* (1932),<sup>59</sup> Mack – himself giving voice to a much broader discourse on film – already saw the rise of the new medium as implicating the replacement of complex individuals by types in the 1910s.

Hallers' pathology, of course, can be read precisely as the story of a transition from a responsible bourgeois individual to an automated urban type. In this sense, it is surely not by chance that no scene in Mack's film more fascinated and horrified the critics than that of Albert Bassermann's on-screen transformation, which Mack was able to highlight with close-ups in a way that theater never could (Fig. 5). The theater critic Ulrich Rauscher, for example, who in every other respect condemned Mack's film, conceded that he had been mesmerized watching Bassermann change his personality in close-up on the screen: "This ability to transform from one person to another amidst painful twitches and convulsions like a chrysalis who struggles to shed his cocoon while transforming into a butterfly, is more terrifying than anything I have seen among



Fig. 5. Hallers transforming into "The Other" in *Der Andere* (1913)

humans.”<sup>60</sup> Or as a reporter for the Berlin daily *Der Tag* described it, “In [Bassermann’s] eyes, we could see health and sickness, we could clearly observe the transition from a condition of consciousness to one of unconsciousness and vice versa.”<sup>61</sup> No doubt, the critics’ overwhelming attention to Bassermann’s facial play was driven in part by Bassermann’s reputation as one of the greatest physiognomical actors of his day. But as many observers recognized, Bassermann’s performance was also particularly informed by the well-known iconography of criminal types familiar from Lombroso’s *L’uomo delinquente* (*Der Verbrecher*). As a reporter for the *Göttinger Anzeiger* described it, much of the horror came from Bassermann’s ability to transform his features into those of a criminal type: “The gradual transformation of the prosecutor into a typical criminal [typischen Verbrecher] was truly overwhelming.”<sup>62</sup> Similarly, a reviewer for the *Kölnner Zeitung* explained:

The transformation from a noble man of society into a distinct criminal type [ausgeprägten Verbrechertypus] was quite an experience; when this aristocratic face takes on the half bestial, half idiotic expression, when these terribly strange eyes stare emptily out into nothingness [...], then even the strongest man is overcome with terror and shudders internally before the dark and secret powers cowering in the originary depths of the human psyche – powers which, when awoken by some chance occurrence, turn the body into their willless slave.<sup>63</sup>

Writing for the *Vossische Zeitung*, the theater critic Alfred Klaar was even more specific in his description of the transformation scene, concentrating in particular on “the way in which his whole body stiffened and the tight, drawn-out facial wrinkles, the widening mouth, the protruding, hard chin and the white eyes transformed this head of a playboy into a criminal physiognomy (*Verbrecherphysiognomie*).”<sup>64</sup> All of the traits mentioned by Klaar – the prominent wrinkles, the hard, protruding chin, the white eyes and the wide mouth – can all be found in Lombroso’s study as typical characteristics of criminal physiognomies (Fig. 6).<sup>65</sup>

As a number of Mack’s reviewers pointed out, moreover, it was precisely in this pathological moment of deindividualization that Lindau’s play proved most appropriate to filmic representation. In the words of Klaar, “Lindau’s play does not move along the normal dramatic tracks, but rather rests entirely on criminal and pathological sensation. It consists of a series of scenes from which individual responsibility, the soul of all dramatic action, is completely excluded.”<sup>66</sup> Of course, as we saw above, Lindau’s play from 1893 was in fact all about the effort to regain the sort of individuality and responsibility Klaar here claims it eliminated. But if we take Klaar’s words as a description of Mack’s adaptation, his comments nonetheless go straight to the point. In underscoring the pathology of Lindau’s play but placing its therapeutic gesture into question, Mack transformed the story of the overcoming of modern nervousness into that of an urban psychology that was decidedly incurable by 1913. Where the self-reflexive moment in Lindau’s play resided in Hallers’ cathartic cure, in Mack’s film, Hallers embodies the filmic medium precisely in his nervous illness. Hallers’ on-screen transformation, that is, not only played on the anxieties of the cinema reformers but also functioned, against the background of the cinema debates in the years leading up to WWI, as an allegory for the very media transformation Mack undertook in filming Lindau’s stage play. In Mack’s film, Hallers’ psychic split represents at once the split between two media, between that associated with autonomous individuality and that of the nervous, auto-



mated type of modern city-dweller.

Such an understanding of Mack's adaptation of Lindau sheds new light on the emergence of the Autorenfilm in 1913. What particularly bothered the defenders of traditional theatrical drama about the new Kinodrama was precisely the cinema's appeal to the nerves through images, which they opposed to what they saw as the theater's use of the word to appeal to the spectator's intellect. As one angry critic described it:

The dramatist who foregoes the tool of words is like a painter without hands. [...] The cinema can only offer a series of images with no mediating transitions between them. In order to retain the spectator's attention, it must cultivate shocking effects and frightening scenes that play with his nerves.<sup>67</sup>

The anxiety of the theater world over the increasing popularity of cinema dramas reached something of a critical mass in 1912 when, in an annual meeting of the various German theater associations on March 18<sup>th</sup>, the Theater Union (Bühnenverein), the League of German Playwrights (Verband Deutscher Bühnenschriftsteller) and the Society of German Theatrical Workers (Genossenschaft Deutscher Bühnengehöriger) all agreed to a proposal forbidding their members from any professional collaboration with the cinema industry (a gesture repeated shortly afterward by the



Fig. 6. "Criminal Types" from Lombroso, *Der Verbrecher* (1890-1896)

Goethebund in Weimar).<sup>68</sup> Before the proposal could be ratified, however, the League of German Stage Writers would perform a complete about-face, forming a partnership of interest on November 11, 1912 with the largest society of cinemas, Die Union. *Der Andere* represented, as it were, one of the first works to come from this new collaboration between certain stage writers and film directors. As such, it represented less of an effort to lift the cinema up into the sphere of “high art” than a public staging of the film drama’s “triumph” over traditional theater.

If Mack were seeking to anger traditional theater critics with this collaboration, he could hardly have found a more effective way of doing so than by choosing Albert Bassermann to play the role of Hallers. In the eyes of Mack’s contemporaries, Bassermann – who had been awarded the prestigious Iffland ring for best stage acting in 1912 – represented the quintessential subtle theatrical actor, embodying everything that the cinema did not. In no small part, the aura of genius surrounding Bassermann was largely the result of his own self-fashioning. Unlike most actors, Bassermann absolutely avoided the public sphere, rigorously forbidding the press from taking or printing his photograph and even suing those papers that tried.<sup>69</sup> He also invented a unique, quasi-phonetic orthography in which he meticulously wrote all of his correspondence. For Bassermann’s admirers such as the theater critic Julius Bab, his aversion to cameras and his insistence on a private orthography were symptomatic of a deep-seated desire to maintain his individual genius in the face of Berlin’s mass culture.<sup>70</sup>

Whatever Bassermann’s real reasons for refusing to be photographed and for his about-face decision to act in Mack’s film, they are less important for my purposes here than is the legend surrounding Bassermann and the way in which Mack exploited it to create a filmic event. As Helmut Diederichs correctly points out, the real sensation for the press and the public at the premiere of *Der Andere* on January 21 in Berlin was none other than Bassermann.<sup>71</sup> This is largely because, in the public eye of the 1910s, Bassermann was the last stage actor that anyone expected to defect to the cinema. As one writer for *Die Woche* put it in a prelude to the premiere, Bassermann had been “conquered” by moving pictures:

Illuminating the development of a human destiny like photographic flashes, all of these mosaic-like moments pass before our eyes in hundreds of thousands of images. [...] In addition to their artistic importance, the interest of these images also lies in another factor: they are the first public photographs of an artist whose peculiarities – alongside a self-made orthography for his private use – have to date included the aversion to any photographic apparatus. Even Bassermann, one of our greatest actors, has now been conquered [erobert] by the cinema.<sup>72</sup>

Indeed, no reporter attending the premier of Mack’s film in 1913 failed to mention the significance of the fact that the one actor who had refused to be photographed had now submitted to the technical reproducibility of cinematography. As an anonymous writer described in an article for the *Berlin Tägliche Rundschau* significantly entitled “*Der andere Albert Bassermann*” (“The other Albert Bassermann”): “Bassermann had, for some time, resisted any photographic reproduction or other representation of his person. But one day this aversion to publicity disappeared and he decided to go before the cinema camera.”<sup>73</sup>

In recruiting Bassermann for the role of Hallers, Mack had clearly speculated on the

sensational effect of winning the greatest and most reserved stage actor for the cinema. Indeed, in an almost symbolic staging of Bassermann's "conquering" for the visual realm, Mack handed out stills from the film to every viewer at the film's premiere.<sup>74</sup> According to a later memoir by Mack's colleague, Rudolf Kurtz, the choice of Bassermann was hardly fortuitous:

Bassermann himself in film – that would be the sensation of all sensations. Mack told me: "As I came back to Berlin, I had sworn an other not shave until I had Bassermann before the camera. [...] I had no illusions. Bassermann, who never allowed himself to be photographed under any circumstances, who separated himself from his fellow men by means of an extremely personalized orthography, would certainly not jump into my arms. I needed a strategic plan."<sup>75</sup>

Nor, according to Mack's own account from *Wie komme ich zum Film?*, did he simply use film, as has sometimes been suggested, to highlight Bassermann's stage talents. On the contrary, as Mack would have it, far from simply filming Bassermann as a stage actor, he had to teach Bassermann how to act filmically, and this meant above all acting with tempo:

The first time Bassermann tried his hand at acting in the studio, the entire film industry came to watch him. Since he was playing Othello in the Deutsches Theater that season, we told him to prepare a scene from this role. He performed the scene in six minutes. Then I showed him how to play the same scene in two.<sup>76</sup>

For Mack's critics from the theater, Bassermann's entry into the nervous medium of the cinema represented an affront precisely to his aura of originality. Numerous were the complaints such as those of Julius Bab himself, who – after seeing Mack's film – argued that film actors could never represent individuals without "the irreproducible breath of living human nature."<sup>77</sup> In the absence of the living voice, Bab argued, a film such as *Der Andere* could be "no intellectually richer than 'European Slaves,' 'The Terror of the Black Hand,' 'Lost in the Big City' and all the rest of them."<sup>78</sup> Other reviews were more virulent. Recounting his first trip to the cinema to see Bassermann in *Der Andere* for the *Berliner Tageblatt*, the art critic Max Lehrs complained:

My God! I can think of nothing more devoid of style and contrary to art than this incessant jumping from image to image, this utterly unjustified change of scale and perspective, to which the eye is forced to adjust in all haste. In his role as public prosecutor, Bassermann can be seen taking tea in the salon of his colleague Arnoldy. Suddenly, his isolated head appears cut out from the scene and six times larger than life. Why? So that the spectator can observe the artist's facial play once again as if under the microscope. And then, this head is transformed into that of a Moor by shadows which in no way conform to the lighting of the room – only to appear shortly afterwards as a brightly lit grimace. This constant change of scale, perspective, lighting and tempo gradually places the spectator into a state of nervous hyperstimulation [einen Zustand nervöser Überreizung]; he has the same sensation one experiences when reading trashy novels: that of being excited by scenes which might satisfy some lewd desire for sensation, but which extinguish any of the more subtle feelings necessary for the appreciation of a dramatic work of art.<sup>79</sup>

As Lehrs describes his inability to adapt his theatrical eyes to the rapid alternation of

images and perspectives on the screen, he not only points to the formal transformations Mack made to Lindau's play with the insertion of close-ups, perspective changes and all sorts of scene changes impossible to perform on the stage. He also signals precisely what was at stake in this intermedial transformation. Where Lehrs saw all of this nervous aesthetic as "utterly unjustified," I am suggesting that the aesthetic of nervousness was itself, in large part, the point. At the same time, reading Lehr's review, one can wonder whether he himself did not understand the reflection upon the media implicit in Mack's adaptation of Lindau – even as he criticized it. As he continues, Lehrs describes his impression of Bassermann on film as that of an "other:"

Only eight days earlier, I had just admired Bassermann's talents on the stage. But in the cinema, he appeared strangely... nervous, and this nervousness lasted throughout the five acts of the drama that followed. Was this a result of the flickering light or the acting or both? I still don't know. Suffice it to say that this wonderful artist [...] suddenly appeared to me as an other [erschien mir plötzlich als ein anderer]. [...] Distracted from the real drama, all I could think about was this horrible transformation that had taken place between the stage theater and the cinema theater.<sup>80</sup>

Distracted from the "content" of the play by Bassermann's nervous, flickering movements on the screen, Lehrs focused, wittingly or not, on the transformation that mattered most in Mack's collaboration with Lindau: that between two media bound up in very different ways with the age of nervousness.

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- 1 All translations from the German are mine unless otherwise stated.
- 2 In one reading of Mack's film, for example, Jung and Schatzberg describe Hallers' engagement to Agnes at the end of the film as an ideological "happy ending," in which Mack, bending to the pressure of the censors, suppressed Hallers' libidinal outbreak and restored the "conservative-bourgeois ideal of marriage and family" at the last minute. See Uli Jung, Walter Schatzberg, "Zur Genese eines Filmstoffs. *Der Andere* von Max Mack (1912) and Robert Wiene (1930)," *Filmwärts*, no. 28 (1993), p. 39. This reading, however, fails to mention that the ideological resolution of Hallers' conflict in the bourgeois ideal of domesticity was (as I explore below) already central to Lindau's drama; more importantly, Jung and Schatzberg's account leaves unmentioned the most important shot in the final sequence – and the one that ambiguously places all of the hope for domestic happiness in question. Many of Mack's contemporaries certainly understood the significance of this shot. Klaar, for example, described the "closing moment, in which the hero has to struggle against a similar transformation threatening to overcome him" as one of the most memorable in the film. See Alfred Klaar, "Paul Lindau als Filmdramatiker," *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 22 (January 1913), p. 2.
- 3 For a history of modern nervousness, see Joachim Radkau, *Das Zeitalter der Nervosität. Deutschland zwischen Bismarck und Hitler* (München: Propyläen, 2000).
- 4 Paul Lindau, *Der Andere* (Stuttgart: Reclam, [n.d.]), pp. 24-25.

- 5 See J. Radkau, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-230.
- 6 Willy Hellpach, *Nervosität und Kultur* (Berlin: Johannes Råde, 1902), p. 29.
- 7 P. Lindau, *op. cit.*, p. 14
- 8 The key text here was Theodor Lessing, *Der Lärm. Eine Kampfschrift gegen die Geräusche unseres Lebens* (Wiesbaden: Bergmann, 1908). However, the debates on noise began much earlier. For an excellent overview of the discourse on noise pollution and its nervous effects, see Klaus Saul, "Wider die 'Lärmpest.' Lärmkritik und Lärmbekämpfung im Deutschen Kaiserreich," in Dittmar Machule, Olaf Mischer, Arnold Sywottek (eds.), *Macht Stadt Krank? Vom Umgang mit Gesundheit und Krankheit* (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 1996), pp. 151-192.
- 9 See Th. Lessing, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-72.
- 10 Electric lighting was first introduced in Berlin in 1879. As Wolfgang Schivelbusch reports, the first reactions to the new type of bright light involved precisely the fear that the eyes would no longer be able to see in the old natural light emitted by gas. See Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Lichtblicke. Zur Geschichte der künstlichen Helligkeit im 19. Jahrhundert* (München: Carl Hanser, 1983), p. 116. In Lindau's play, this effect proves detrimental to Agnes, who describes how, when a stranger stole her watch on the street (the mysterious figure will later turn out to have been Hallers himself), she couldn't identify her assailant "in the bad lighting of our desolate street" (P. Lindau, *op. cit.*, p. 15).
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 12 See Andreas Braun, *Tempo, Tempo! Eine Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte der Geschwindigkeit im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt/M: Anabas, 2001).
- 13 See Gottfried Korff, "Mentalität und Kommunikation in der Großstadt: Berliner Notizen zur 'inneren' Urbanisierung," *Schriften des Museums für deutsche Volkskunde Berlin*, no. 13, Theodor Kohlmann, Hermann Bausinger (eds.), *Großstadt: Aspekte empirischer Kulturforschung* (1985), pp. 343-362; Michael Bienert, *Die eingebildete Metropole. Berlin im Feuilleton der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1992), pp. 72-78; Lothar Müller, "Modernität, Nervosität und Sachlichkeit. Das Berlin der Jahrhundertwende als Hauptstadt der 'neuen Zeit,'" in Knut Hickethier (ed.), *Mythos Berlin: zur Wahrnehmungsgeschichte einer industriellen Metropole* (Berlin: Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 1987), pp. 79-92; Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).
- 14 Richard Freiherr von Krafft-Ebing, *Über gesunde und kranke Nerven*, 5th ed. (Tübingen: Laupp, 1903), p. 10. See also p. 13.
- 15 Wilhelm Erb, *Über die wachsende Nervosität unserer Zeit* (Heidelberg: Gustav Koester, 1894), p. 17.
- 16 Cited in A. Braun, *op. cit.*, p. 28. Other important studies here were Hellpach's *Nervosität und Kultur* and the last volume of Lamprecht's *Deutsche Geschichte* (1903), in which Lamprecht interpreted the increase in nervousness specifically as a product of late-19th century economic liberalism and the "entrepreneurial" ethos it fostered. See Karl Lamprecht, *Zur jüngsten deutschen Vergangenheit. Zweiter Band: Wirtschaftsleben - soziale Entwicklung*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1922).
- 17 P. Lindau, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 19 That Hallers' observations are the source of his own criminal behavior is suggested in numerous comments in the play. Even before suspecting anything about his own somnambulist adventures, Hallers hints at this source when he complains to Dr. Feldermann: "In den letzten Monaten habe ich mein Buch über gemeinsame und Einzelhaft abgeschlossen; ich habe

zu dem Behufe Verbrecherkreise und Verbrecherlokale aufsuchen müssen. Das hat mich wohl auch nervös gemacht" (ibid., p. 20). Similarly, in a later scene, Agnes's former maid Amalie (who had gone to work at the criminal bar after being discharged), tells Hallers: "Es wird wohl zu Ihrem Geschäft gehören, die Leute aufzusuchen, aber nicht jeder kann's vertragen. Mich hat die Gesellschaft da zuerst auch ganz krank gemacht, ich habe nicht schlafen, nicht essen können, [...] und es hat lange gedauert, bis ich mich daran gewöhnt habe" (ibid., p. 82). Reviewers of Mack's filmic version of the story tended to interpret the etiology of Hallers' criminal compulsions in similar terms, as one reviewer for *Die Woche* described it: "Als dieser 'Andere', im Traumzustand seiner kranken Psyche, sucht er die Verbrecherkreise in jenen Spelunken auf, in denen er einige Zeit vorher zu Studienzwecken weilte, um dort Eindrücke für ein Buch zu sammeln, an dem er schrieb. Als dieser 'Andere' wird er zum Gefährten und Helfershelfer des Einbrechers, der bei ihm – dem Staatsanwalt – nächtlicherweise einen Raubzug unternimmt und mit ihm die Beute teilt." See Hyeronimus Lorm, "Das Theater der Illusionen," *Die Woche*, Vol. 14, no. 52 (1912), pp. 2206-2208.

- 20 See Max Nordau, *Entartung* (Berlin: Carl Duncker, 1893); Havelock Ellis, *Verbrecher und Verbrechen*, trans. Hans Kurella (Leipzig: Georg H. Wigand, 1895); Cesare Lombroso, *Der Verbrecher (Homo delinquens) in anthropologischer, ärztlicher und juristischer Beziehung*, trans. Hans Kurella (Hamburg: 1890-96).
- 21 See Stefan Andriopoulos, *Besessene Körper: Hypnose, Körperschaften und die Erfindung des Kinos* (München: Fink, 2000), pp. 102, 104.
- 22 See for example H. Ellis, op. cit., p. 190: "Es liegen zahlreiche, unanfechtbare Beweise dafür vor, dass eine besondere, den Verbrecher verherrlichende niedrige Art von Literatur, soweit die durch Zeitungen verbreitete eingehende Kenntnisse des Verbrecherhandwerks sehr oft dazu beiträgt, junge Verbrecher heranzubilden. [...] [N]ach jedem berühmten oder ganz besonders wilden Verbrechen kommt es vor, dass schwachsinnige, suggestible junge Personen ein ganz ähnliches begehen, oder dass sie sich der Polizei stellen, in der festen Meinung, sie hätten das Verbrechen verübt." In France, one finds this notion in the writings of the eminent criminologist and assistant to Jean-Martin Charcot, Charles Féré, who explained the potential dangers of *idées fixes* as follows in his 1887 study *Sensation et mouvement*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1900), p. 16: "La nécessité de l'action, quand l'idée est suffisamment intense, rend compte physiologiquement du rôle nocif de la presse par la narration des crimes, des procès scandaleux, etc."
- 23 P. Lindau, op. cit., p. 27.
- 24 Ibid., pp. 27-28.
- 25 A characteristic assessment can be found in an article by Noack published in *Die Aktion* (1912): "Die Wohnung – der engste Rahmen der individuellen Lebensführung. Das häusliche Heim – die von fremder Kontrolle freieste soziale Lebenssphäre. Denken, man sei zu Hause, gleichbedeutend mit Abstreifen jeglichen sozialen (gesellschaftlichen) Zwanges. Das Individuum daheim zeigt sein wahres Gesicht." See Victor Noack, "Wohnung und Sittlichkeit," now in Jürgen Schutte, Peter Sprengel (eds.), *Die Berliner Moderne 1885-1914* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987), pp. 141-2. Noack, incidentally, was also a committed adherent of the cinema reform movement (see below), and published one of the most vitriolic attacks on the cinema the same year in the same journal. See Victor Noack, "Der Kientopp," *Die Aktion*, Vol. 2, no. 29 (1912), pp. 905-909. For more on the importance of the home in the turn-of-the-century bourgeois imagination, see Aelheid von Saldern, "'Daheim an meinem Herd...' Die Kultur des Wohnens," in August Nitschke, Gerhard Ritter, Detlev J.K. Peukert, Rüdiger vom Bruch (eds.), *Jahrhundertwende. Der Aufbruch in die Moderne*, Vol. 2 (Reinbeck bei

- Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1990), pp. 35-60.
- 26 As Hallers explains to Amalie when the latter attempts to prevent him from accompanying Dickert to the break-in, his crime carries no personal benefit whatsoever, but rather follows the logic of an irrational compulsion: "Es muß geschehen! Weshalb bin ich hergekommen? Meinst du, daß ich mich mit den Leuten wohlfühle? Ich muß kommen! Ich brauche sie. Was liegt mir an dem Kram, den ich beim Staatsanwalt jetzt holen werde? Nichts! Aber ich muß es haben!" (P. Lindau, *op. cit.*, p. 52).
- 27 Josef Breuer, Sigmund Freud, *Studien über Hysterie* (Frankfurt/M: Fischer, 1991), p. 35.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 314.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 294.
- 31 P. Lindau, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 86.
- 33 J. Breuer, S. Freud, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
- 34 "[I]n der Sprache findet der Mensch ein Surrogat für die Tat, mit dessen Hilfe der Affekt nahezu ebenso 'abreagiert' werden kann" (*ibid.*, p. 32). See also p. 297, where Freud sees language as a remedy to unconscious images: "Ist einmal ein Bild aus der Erinnerung aufgetaucht, so kann man den Kranken sagen hören, daß es in dem Maße zerbröckle und undeutlich werde, wie er in seiner Schilderung desselben fortschreite. Der Kranke trägt es gleichsam ab, indem er es in Worte umsetzt."
- 35 P. Lindau, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
- 36 Hermann Bahr, *Dialog vom Tragischen* (Berlin: Fischer, 1904), p. 14.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- 38 *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.
- 39 P. Lindau, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
- 40 In this context, see also Ben Singer, "Modernity, Hyperstimulus and Popular Sensationalism," in Leo Charney, Vanessa Schwartz (eds.), *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 72.
- 41 Nado Felke, "Die Gesundheitsschädlichkeit des Kinos," *Die Umschau*, Vol. 17, no. 13 (1913), p. 254.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 255.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 See S. Andriopoulos, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-128. This essay is greatly indebted to Andriopoulos's arguments about hypnosis in early cinema, even as I attempt to go beyond Andriopoulos to examine the connection between that debate and the discourse on film and tempo.
- 45 Albert Hellwig, "Schundfilms und Filmzensur," *Concordia*, Vol. 18, no. 9 (1911), p. 19. Hellwig's belief in the suggestive power of film to elicit crimes by imitation was shared by the majority of cinema reformers – as one can see, for example, in the pages of one of the central journals of the cinema reform movement, *Die Hochwacht* (1910-1921). Writing for the journal in 1913, for example, one reformer reported: "Zunächst ist an mehreren Schulen beobachtet worden, daß Kinder in Nachahmung der Indianer- und Räuberdramen sich Waffen – Revolver, Beile und dgl. – verschaffen hatten und mit diesen Waffen ein recht gefährliches Spiel trieben, dem die Schule unausgesetzt und ernstlich entgegenarbeiten mußte." See Schmitz, "Kino und Großstadtjugend," *Die Hochwacht*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (1913), p. 29. This discourse on cinema and the suggestive power of violent images also stood at the heart of Serner's famous notion of "Schaulust" (the "pleasure of looking"), which he formulated in an article also published in 1913. The real "pleasure" of seeing violent crimes on the screen,

- Serner argued, stemmed from the reactivation of the spectator's atavistic, savage drives. See Walter Serner, "Kino und Schaulust," *Die Schaubühne*, Vol. 9, no. 34-35 (1913), pp. 807-811. On the hypnotic effects of the cinema, see also Robert Gaupp, "Die gesundheitlichen Gefahren des Kinematographen für die Jugend," *Die Hochwacht*, Vol. 2, no. 11 (1912), p. 267.
- 46 Mack's film itself elicited worries like those of Hellwig among the Berlin censors, who – as one can read on the film's censor card – required cinemas to apply for a special permission to show the film: "Die öffentliche Vorführung des Films wird nicht allgemein zugelassen. Es ist vielmehr für jedes Kinotheater eine besondere Erlaubnis einzuholen, da der Film nur in besseren Kinotheatern mit einem gewählten Publikum, das sich aus besseren und urteilsfähigen Kreisen zusammensetzt, vorgeführt werden darf." See: *Der Andere*, Zensurkarte (February 13, 1913), *Schriftgutarchiv der Stiftung deutsche Kinemathek*.
- Concretely, the censor's ruling meant that *Der Andere* could be shown only in the more upscale Berlin cinema houses such as the Lichtspieltheater on Nollendorfplatz where it had its premiere, and not – as one reporter explained – "in the small movie theaters [Kientöppen] in the city outskirts." See "Der Andere," *Die Welt am Montag* (January 27, 1913) [n.p.].
- 47 Egon Friedell, "Prolog vor dem Film," *Blätter des deutschen Theaters*, Vol. 2, no. 32 (1912), pp. 508-512.
- 48 Karl Hans Strobl, "Der Kinematograph," *Die Hilfe*, Vol. 17, no. 9 (1911), pp. 137-138. The English translations of the Friedell's and Strobl's essays will be published in the forthcoming: Anton Kaes (ed.), *The Cinematic Turn: Film and Modern Life in Germany 1907-1933* (Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming).
- 49 Although less well known today apart from scholars of Viennese modernism, Altenberg (1859-1919) was most famous for his claim to have developed, in his condensed literary sketches, a style corresponding to the age of the telegram. As he explained in the introduction to his collection *Was der Tag mir zuträgt*: "Es sind Extracte! Extracte des Lebens. Das Leben der Seele und des zufälligen Tages, in 2-3 Seiten eingedampft, vom Überflüssigen befreit wie das Rind im Liebig-Tiegel! [...] Ja, ich liebe das 'abgekürzte Verfahren', den Telegramm-Stil der Seele!" See Peter Altenberg, *Was der Tag mir zuträgt*, 9th ed. (Berlin: Fischer, 1921), p. 6.
- Like Strobl, Friedell would also later associate Altenberg's literary "telegram style" with the rapid, concentrated aesthetic of early cinema in his *Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit* (1931): "Es ist der 'Telegrammstil', der dem Zeitalter der Blitzzüge, Automobile und Bioskope entspricht. Bezeichnend für Altenbergs leidenschaftliches Streben nach Kürze sind zum Beispiel seine 'Fünfminutenszenen', die aber gar nicht fünf, sondern höchstens zwei oder drei Minuten dauern." See Egon Friedell, *Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 2000), pp. 1456-7.
- 50 "Die Karriere des Kinematographen," *Lichtbild-Bühne*, Vol. 3 (1912).
- 51 On the cinema of attractions, see Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," in Thomas Elsaesser (ed.), *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative* (London: BFI, 1990), pp. 56-62.
- 52 Hermann Kienzl, "Theater und Kinematograph," *Der Strom*, Vol. 1, no. 7 (1911), pp. 219-220.
- 53 Max Mack, *Wie komme ich zum Film?*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Berlin: Reinhard Kühn, 1919), p. 30.
- 54 M. Mack, *Wie komme ich zum Film?*, cited in Michael Wedel (ed.), *Max Mack: Showman im Glashaus*, *Kinemathek 88* (Berlin: Freunde der deutschen Kinemathek, 1996), pp. 80-81.
- 55 See Karl Prümm, "Die beseelte Maschine. Das Organische und das Anorganische in der 'Kino-Debatte' und in der frühen Filmtheorie," in Hatmut Eggert, Erhard Schütz, Peter Sprengel (eds.), *Faszination des Organischen. Konjunkturen einer Kategorie der Moderne* (München: Iudicium, 1995), p. 168: "In Balázs' fürsorglicher Verlebendigung büßt der Film schließlich



- seinen Character ein. Das technische Element verschwindet im organischen Kontinuum und sinkt in den Lebensströmen. Balázs' Umgang mit Montage und Schnitt ist dafür paradigmatisch. Der Begriff 'Montage' taucht im ganzen Buch [Der sichtbare Mensch] nicht auf, 'Bilderführung' nennt Balázs diesen handwerklich-konkreten Vorgang und führt hier die Transformation des Technisch-Operationalen ins Anthropomorphe beispielhaft um: 'Die Bilderführung ist der lebendige Atem des Films, und alles hängt von ihr ab.'
- 56 Max Mack, *Die zappelnde Leinwand*, cited in M. Wedel (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 71. The centrality of cutting also marks another similarity between filmic aesthetics of tempo and the *kleine Form* as it was practiced around the turn of the century. In an essay on the *kleine Form* in literature and *feuilleton*, Polgar devised the following formula for writing in the age of tempo: "Aus hundert Zeilen zehn [...] machen." See Alfred Polgar, *Orchester von Oben* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1927), p. 10.
- 57 M. Mack, *Wie komme ich zum Film?*, cited in M. Wedel (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82.
- 58 M. Mack, *Die zappelnde Leinwand*, cited in *ibid.*, p. 59.
- 59 See Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter. Herrschaft und Gestalt* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1981), pp. 134: "Man [sucht] beim Schauspieler die Individualität, die Auffassung zu spüren, während diese Individualität beim Filmschauspieler gar nicht zu den Voraussetzungen gehört. [...] Der Filmschauspieler untersteht einem anderen Gesetz, insofern seine Aufgabe in der Repräsentation des Typus liegt. Daher verlangt man von ihm nicht Einmaligkeit, sondern Eindeutigkeit."
- 60 Ulrich Rauscher, "Der Bassermann-Film" (1913), in Fritz Güttinger (ed.), *Kein Tag ohne Kino. Schriftsteller über den Stummfilm* (Frankfurt/M: Deutsches Filmmuseum, 1984), p. 142.
- 61 "Der Andere," *Der Tag* (January 22, 1913), p. 3.
- 62 "Der erste Bassermann-Film," *Göttinger Anzeiger* (January 21, 1913), [n. p.].
- 63 "Der Andere," *Köllner Zeitung* (February 23, 1913), [n. p.].
- 64 Alfred Klaar, "Paul Lindau als Filmdramatiker," *Vossische Zeitung* (January 22, 1913), p. 2.
- 65 On the various visible stigmata of criminals, see the third volume of Lombroso's *Der Verbrecher*, where Lombroso printed most of his tables of criminal physiognomies with explanations of their pathological traits. Among the most common traits Lombroso thought to have identified were strong facial wrinkles and enormous chins or jawbones. In his commentary to the portrait of one murderer, for example, Lombroso writes: "Mörder. Stenokrotaphie, starke Runzeln, enorme Kiefer und Jochbeine, Lemurenfortsatz. Vollständigster Typus." C. Lombroso, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 8.
- Mack's reviewers understood the implications of cinematography for the study of pathology. As a reporter from the *Nationalzeitung* described it, Bassermann's physiognomical performance provided an invaluable source not only for actors but also for psychologists: "Jede Wandlung aus dem einen in das andere Dasein gab [Bassermann] mit allen Übergängen und mit einer Sorgfalt, die ihm der Mimiker und der Psychologe (der hier ruhig vor dem leuchtenden Bild seine Anmerkungen machen kann) danken wird." See "Große Kino-Premiere," *Nationalzeitung* (January 22, 1913), p. 3.
- 66 A. Klaar, *op. cit.*, p. 2. Nearly all of the critics commented on the way in which the pathological elements of Lindau's play made it an appropriate choice for the cinema. For the critic Paul Lindenberg, for example, the mixture of crime and pathology in Lindau's play made it an ideal candidate for filmic adaptation: "Das Stück, vor etwa zehn Jahren hier mit Erfolg gegeben, ist allerdings außerordentlich geeignet, 'im Film' dargestellt zu werden, denn in seiner Vereinigung von Psychiatrischem und Kriminellem bringt es in steter Steigerung eine Fülle von packender Ereignisse und übt von Anfang bis zum Ende eine Spannung aus, der

sich jeder willig hingibt." See Paul Lindenberg, "Berliner Stimmungsbilder" (Berlin: c. 1913, n.p.). Bassermannachlass, Archiv des Instituts für Theaterwissenschaft, Freie Universität, Berlin. See also "Große Kino-Premiere," op. cit., p. 3; Fritz Engel, "Der veredelte Film. Lindau und Bassermann in den 'Lichtspielen,'" Berliner Tageblatt (January 22, 1913), [n. p.].

- 67 Heinrich Stümcke, "Die deutschen Dramatiker und das Filmtheater," *Bühne und Welt*, Vol. 15, no. 5 (1912), p. 207. In their drive to distinguish the theater from the cinema, the cinema's critics insisted on defining the theater primarily as a medium of the word (downplaying, in the process, the role of such visual elements of stage sets, costumes, gestures and facial expression). With the elimination of speech, they argued, the cinema eliminated thought as such. As Oesterheld described it in an article reprinted in *Die Aktion* in 1913: "Die Filmwirkung ist die bewusste und notwendige Ausschaltung von Gedanken und Wort, gibt nur Raum und Vorgang, gibt nur Bild im Bilde, ist also eine schematische Veräusserlichung jener Kunstform, an der Genie und Geist von Jahrhunderten gearbeitet haben." See Erich Oesterheld, "Wie die deutschen Dramatiker Barbaren wurden," *Die Aktion*, Vol. 3, no. 9 (1913), p. 264.

Or in the words of another writer for *Die Volksbildung*: "Es ist ein Uning, dramatische Vorgänge, die sich auf das Innenleben eines Menschen beziehen, ohne Wort darstellen zu wollen. [...] Alles Innerliche, alles im Kern der Sache Dramatische, ist dem Kino verschlossen." See Walter Asmus, "Das veredelte Filmdrama," *Volksbildung*, Vol. 43, no. 8 (1913), p. 146.

On this point, the cinema's theatrical critics were in agreement with the reformers; as Adolf Sellmann described it in an article from 1914: "Die Dichtkunst wird mißhandelt durch die Sensationsdramen, die wegen des Mangels jeden Dialogs und Monologs ohne geistigen Inhalt sind." See Adolf Sellman, "Kinematograph und Jugendpflege," *Die Hochwacht*, Vol. 4, no. 9 (June 1914), p. 242.

- 68 See Stümcke, op. cit., 204.

- 69 See Julius Bab, *Albert Bassermann. Weg und Werk eines deutschen Schauspielers um die Wende des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Erich Weibezahl, 1929), pp. 101-102: "Sein höchst ungewöhnlicher Fanatismus im Kampf gegen das Photographiertwerden ging so weit, daß er ein Blatt, das irgendwie doch ein Bild von ihm erwischt hatte, verklagte und den Prozeß durch alle Instanzen führte."

- 70 Again and again in his biography of Bassermann from 1929, Bab depicts his subject as a solitary artist bent on maintaining his distinction from the urban masses: "Ein junger Schauspieler kommt nach langen Jahren Kleinstadtengagements nach Berlin, er hat eine verhältnismäßig gute und sichere Position. [...] Was wird geschehen? Wird ihn nicht selbstverständlich der Betrieb der Weltstadt anziehen? [...] Wird es nicht Künstlerstammtische geben, angenehme und auch nützliche Beziehungen zu Malern, Literaten und Journalisten, die einen jungen Ruhm vorwärts treiben? – Nichts von alledem geschieht. Die Luft von Einsamkeit, die bereits den jungen Schauspieler in Meiningen spürbar umgab, fängt in Berlin an um den Dreißigjährigen immer, immer undurchdringlicher zu werden" (ibid., p. 97). See also Bab's description of Bassermann's private orthography: "Denn die Schrift ist ja nur ein Verständigungsmittel, eine rein soziale Funktion. Und es kommt im Grunde genommen gar nicht darauf an, wie geschrieben wird, sondern nur, daß alle Beteiligten innerhalb dieses Schiftbereiches gleich schreiben. [...] Wenn also diese höchst persönliche Schreibweise Albert Bassermann's überhaupt mehr als eine drollige Marotte bedeutet, so kann diese Bedeutung [...] nur gefunden werden in diesem Trieb zur Isolierung – in einem Hang zur Einsamkeit, der fast unvermeidlich auch in einigen Punkten zum Eigenbrödlertum führen

- muß." *Ibid.*, p. 104.
- 71 See Helmut Heinz Diederichs, *Anfänge deutscher Filmkritik* (Stuttgart: Robert Fischer-Uwe Wiederoither, 1986), pp. 54-65.
- 72 H. Lorm, *op. cit.*, p. 2009.
- 73 "Der andere Albert Bassermann," *Tägliche Rundschau* (January 22, 1913), p. 2. Speculating on why so many reporters had rushed to the premiere of *Der Andere*, another reporter for a Berlin daily answered: "Erstens aus Schadenfreude: um zu sehen, wie einer, der sich jahrelang gegen eine photographische Aufnahme sträubte, nun stundenlang in effegie hingeleitet." See "Der Andere," *Berliner Börsen-Courier* (January 22, 1913), p. 5.
- 74 According to one review, "Jeder von den Premièrgästen erhielt eines der hunderttausend Bilder aus diesem Film zum Andenken mit." See "Große Kino-Premiere," *op. cit.*, p. 3. One week after the premiere, Bassermann himself published an interview in the *B. Z. am Mittag*, in which, in a description that could have been referring to *Der Andere* itself, he admitted his secret love for scandalous sensational films: "Die nordischen sind uns im Kino noch ein Stück voraus; ebenso gewisse Franzosen, weil sie schon langjährige Übung haben. Schade, daß sie fast ausnahmslos Schauersensationsdramen spielen, die ich – zu meiner Schande muß ich gestehen! – am liebsten sehe, die eben aber ganz entschieden den Geschmack der Allgemeinheit, den wir auf der Bühne Gott sei Dank einigermaßen gehoben haben, wieder herunterbringen." Cited in M. Wedel (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 92.
- 75 Rudolf Kurtz, *Berlin, die Filmstadt und Max Mack*, cited in *ibid.*, p. 136.
- 76 M. Mack, *Wie komme ich zum Film?*, cited in *ibid.*, p. 116.
- 77 Julius Bab, "Die Kinematographen-Frage," *Die Hilfe*, Vol. 19, no. 18 (1913), p. 281.
- 78 *Ibid.* Another writer for *Die Schaubühne* similarly complained that film robbed Bassermann of his most individual element, the voice: "[E]in Blinder hätte von Bassermann unendlich viel: diese Stimme, die nicht zum zweiten Mal existiert, und in der die ganze Seele liegt. Ein Tauber dagegen hätte von Bassermann wenig: eine Mimik, die gewiß nicht durchschnittlich, aber ebenso gewiß nicht einzigartig ist." "Stucken und Bassermann," *Die Schaubühne*, Vol. 10, no. 5 (1914), p. 137. Here, too, Mack essentially shared his critics' understanding of film as a medium that sacrificed the soul, although he did not share their negative assessment. One sees this, in particular, in Mack's comments on film acting and film characters. "Der Film ist vor allem Photographie," he wrote in *Wie komme ich zum Film?*. "Das heißt, [der Schauspieler] bringt nicht die schöne Seele auf die Leinwand, sondern den materiellen Körper, das Äußere. Und das Problem des Äußeren ist die erste, die Kernfrage, um überhaupt im Film einen Erfolg zu erringen." Cited in Wedel (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 77.
- 79 Max Lehrs, "Als ich zum ersten Mal im Kino war," *Berliner Tageblatt* (March 16, 1913), p. 1.
- 80 *Ibid.*

## URBAN AND RURAL SPACE. ITALIAN AND AMERICAN CINEMA IN THE 1930s

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During the period between the second half of the 1920s and the end of the following decade, both Italy and the United States witnessed a debate focused on contrasting city and countryside, rural life and urban life. While this phenomenon occurred in parallel terms chronologically, it involved the social and intellectual circles in different ways. In the United States, reflections on the metropolitan dimension were made, on the one hand, by sociologists and urbanists, who tried – during a period in which territorial expansion and demographic growth of cities were constant, primarily due to both internal and external immigration – to analyze the risks associated with the social aggregations in small spaces typical of urban life. They also attempted to produce models for alternative development capable of bringing the relationship between individuals and their environment back to a principle of harmony. On the other hand, public morality groups also reflected on the issue, but in a less understated and more ideologically oriented manner, seeing big cities as a place of corrosion and corruption of the founding values of American society – mutual aid, mutual solidarity, individual and collective ethics – values which they instead found present in their highest form of expression in small towns and the countryside. As such came a dual reproof of the city: the urban life not only determined a behavior marked by immorality and egotism in its inhabitants, but also, due to the equal fascination it held over people living elsewhere, spurred a phenomenon of gradual depopulation of rural and provincial areas.

In Italy, the debate instead essentially involved a more homogeneous sector of intellectuals and particularly literary scholars, and was thus based not upon field studies or moral prejudices, but upon a precise ideological contrast that saw the countryside – in perfect compliance with fascist ideals – as the headquarters of “italianità” or italianness, and of the values that shaped the identity of our people. The city was instead seen as the center of intellectual cosmopolitanism and technological development from which Italian culture could, according to its position and its specific point of view, either benefit or by which it could be dispersed. Upholders of the so-called “Strapaese”<sup>1</sup> were for the most part connected with the editorial staffs of two journals, *Il Selvaggio* and *L’Italiano*, founded respectively in July of 1924 and January of 1926, and both of possessing a clearly fascist orientation. Though the celebration of values linked to the rural dimension was explicit and constant, only sporadically did it accompany attacks or tirades on big city lifestyle, which was, at most, generically accused of giving space to artistic modes, trends, and phenomena of Anglo-Saxon influence: “We alone” – wrote Mino Maccari in 1927 in *Il Selvaggio* – “as the harmony of our centuries-old cities is disturbed by obscene monuments, and while trends like jazz, condoms, and the sayings of Pittigrilli are taken to the most remote villages, we alone have dared to call our-

selves wild, country, rural, Italian at any cost.”<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, big cities were actually indirectly upheld because, above all, they were seen, first, as emblematic of the machine civilization and its dynamic effects upon daily life, which were so dear to the futurists. Second, big cities were considered home to processes of modernization and the freeing from provincialism, much invoked by Bontempelli and the editors of *Novecento*: a journal founded in 1926, which often referred to the “Stracittà”<sup>3</sup> movement, though it never printed any articles in the defense of metropolitan life, defending at most metropolitan culture.<sup>4</sup>

The difference with the American debate can essentially be explained by the social and intellectual identity of those involved. In the United States, the debate took place between academics and men of the church, established scholars and simple moralists. It resulted in a condemnation of the urban condition which initially proved almost unanimous, as only later was it accompanied, in certain circumstances, by a pure and simple demonization of the metropolis or by an attempt to find solutions to alleviate its harmful effects on the individual. In Italy, the polemic was instead exquisitely intellectual and dealt only with the specific function of the city – positive for some, harmful for others – which allowed certain cultural tendencies to prosper. Thus, in the Italy of the 1920s, a big city was not considered a place of corruption and depravation, a revised and updated version of the ancient Babylon. It was instead a place that at most, according to the editors of *Il Selvaggio* for example, required purification of certain aspects that risked contaminating the foundations of Italian tradition.

The different nature of this debate and the consequent heterogeneity of its results also had a profound effect upon cinematic representations of the city on the two sides of the ocean. In Hollywood, the celluloid metropolis tended to be infused with a “mystical value,” to use the words of James Hay,<sup>5</sup> or in rather absolute terms, primarily as a potential disrupter of ethical, family, and community values. At the end of the 1920s, with the advent of sound, Hollywood studios intensified their production of films belonging to the gangster genre, into which all negative characteristics attributed to the metropolis would soon converge exemplarily: individualism taken to the extreme, greed, violence, illegality, the break-up of the family, sacrificed for luxury and high life. From this perspective, the gangster movie constituted a veritable morality play on the perils of the big city, the dangers hiding behind its allurements, which were even greater when they reached the innocent eyes and ears of newcomers.

It was no coincidence that all gangsters were characterized as Italian or Irish immigrants. As Robert Warshow keenly noted, the gangster is ultimately a tragic hero: his course (a gradual rise, an abrupt and sudden fall) must be emblematic, his end (a violent death with no possibility for redemption or repentance) exemplary, because both must constitute a warning to all those who look to the urban condition with longing or envy.<sup>6</sup> Something analogous was also seen in another genre, the musical, where in these years we can find a condensation of the themes and issues emerging from the debate over the city. There, the problem centered no longer on individual ambition and the anxiety for success, but on the tendency of urban life to fuel, aid, and legitimize behavior focused on transformation, deceptive appearances, and the tendency to take on unsuitable roles. In the end, what is a gangster if not an individual who cannot resist the temptation of wearing the shoes of a rich, successful man, of illegitimately being someone other than himself?

Where sociologists and public morality groups both insisted, though with different

emphases and goals, upon the process of depersonalization that befell those who entered the urban dimension, the musical took the tendency to the extreme, to the threshold of paradox: no longer, or rather not just the spectacle of the city, but the city as spectacle, an object reworked scenographically and choreographically on film. Films like *Forty-Second Street* (1933) or *Gold Diggers of 1935* (1935), which both centered around putting on a show that incorporated the metropolis itself, provided a stylized and concise reading of its architecture and social phenomena. Where the gangster movie took on the role of a moral allegory in respect to the big city and to the negative impulses it provoked in its newcomers, the musical had the task of sublimating discourse on disintegration of individual identity. It set up a narrative, scenographic, and choreographic framework capable of diluting the most dramatic aspects of the question, making them converge into a system where it was all show, and where certain values from the American tradition – such as group spirit enhanced by working together towards a goal – are even accompanied (and spurred on) by a collective tendency towards pretending, staging, interpreting a role. From this perspective, affirmation of the two genres during the first half of the 1930s can also be traced back to their precise value as social and cultural mediator for an audience which, during that time, had a strong need to tame the image of the city and make it readable. This explains, for example, the persistent recourse to stereotypes and symbols seen both in the characters – the gangster and the gold-digger as exponents of metropolitan ambition – and in the iconography: the skyscraper as emblem of the big city, which at that point needed no further localizations.

The urban imaginary of Italian cinema during those years showed entirely different characteristics. As it was not as urgent to narratively or visually mediate the devastating impact of the metropolis on its inhabitants, there were not genres specifically dedicated to that issue, such as the musical or gangster movie. The description of city life, and its eventual contrasting with rural life, was equally present in the two most popular and established genres, the melodrama and especially the comedy. However, neither genre was narratively or thematically characterized by a tendency to polarize discourse on the metropolis around strongly condemning situations in ethical terms, as it did occur in Hollywood. The city remained, like in American cinema, a place of unbridled ambition, of longing for glory and wealth. However, at the same time it was the ideal scenario for transformations, metamorphoses, identity games that led characters to play roles quite distant from their own. Nonetheless, in compliance with the rules of the genre, such tendencies were not always portrayed negatively, and they were rarely accompanied by a tragic epilogue. On one hand there were films like *Il signor Max* (1937) and *Napoli d'altri tempi* (1938), in which a protagonist of humble beginnings (a newspaper vendor in the first case, a home house-painter in the second) successfully courts a high society lady, aspiring to establish himself stably in her world. In the film by Camerini, we also see exemplary references to the city (the film is set in Rome) as cosmopolitan, a place pervaded with that the Anglo-Saxon culture which that was detested by the upholders of “Strapaese” and defended by the upholders of “Stracittà.”

The story that leads Gianni, the newspaper vendor, to take on the role of Max, an aristocratic gentleman, includes an immersion in American lifestyles: he struggles to stammer out a few words of English; he walks around with a copy of *Time* or *Esquire* under his arm; he pretends he knows how to play tennis and bridge. Initially his uncle's admonishments are to no avail in their attempt to bring Gianni back to classical tradition (the summer vacation Gianni's uncle plans for his nephew centers around a visit

to the Parthenon, which will later be sacrificed for a few days in Sanremo in the company of Paola, the noblewoman) and Italian culture (at his uncle's insistence Gianni sings in the tram drivers' company chorus, which we see performing Verdi's *Va' Pensiero*). The contrasting of the two cultural models accompanies and supports the characterization of the protagonist, who initially, as James Hay keenly noted, "experiences the allure of American modernity", only to gradually become aware of the "reprehensibility of this desire."<sup>7</sup> Though reprehensible, such ambition is nevertheless easily corrected: Paola's maid, Lauretta, seems to be there on purpose, so that Gianni can finally focus his sentiments on someone of his own level. In the last scene, he takes her to his uncle's house, confirming his return to a familial (as well as social and cultural) environment that seems to definitively reject "American modernity", after having tested out its lack of substance.

With the absence of an exemplarily dramatic ending, *Napoli d'altri tempi* also provides space to for the repentance of the protagonist. Here, after becoming a famous musician, the protagonist lives a brief romance with a girl from a noble family, only to return to the arms of Ninetta, daughter of fishermen, who had seen him through hard times at the beginning of his songwriting career. Moreover, like in *Il signor Max*, the protagonist's sentimental curve has both social and cultural implications: the music he writes is popular, drawing on a repertory of traditional Neapolitan music, therefore it requires a cultural background that he can access only through Ninetta – who he runs into again, by no coincidence, at a traditional town festival. In both films, the city is the privileged setting for the aspiration of rising to a higher social class, with all that implies in terms of wealth and prestige, but also in terms of adaptation or change of the characters' original personality. However, the characters' choices do not embody an illegitimate desire, nor a plan doomed to failure. Instead, they represent a perhaps necessary and inevitable phase, which helps the characters to better understand the depth of the values they had hurriedly left behind. As a place where opposites (tradition/modernity, aristocracy/working class, wealth/indigence) coexist, the city helps the main characters to gain personal and cultural enrichment that allows them, as holders of an unusually rich bank of experiences, to make shrewd and well considered life choices.

Such choices can also go the other way: social climbing spurred on by emotions also takes place in *Batticuore* (1938), set in Paris, and *Il carnevale di Venezia* (1939), but it ends in matrimony. The main character, female in both films, is courted by a member of the local aristocracy whom she ends up marrying. Once more, the theme of identity plays a crucial role: in *Batticuore*, the girl is an aspiring thief, enlisted by an ambassador to play the part of a noble woman in a scheme designed to unveil the presumed infidelity of his wife. As such, she makes the acquaintance of a diplomat who falls in love with her and decides to marry her even once he's learned her true identity. In *Il carnevale di Venezia*, the main character Tonina is an aspiring singer and daughter of musicians. Against her will she agrees to become engaged to a baker, though she is actually dating and in love with a count. Initially, the social distance between the two love-birds seems insurmountable, but – with the aid of a celebration commemorating the Carnival tradition, organized by the local aristocracy and including a singing vocal performance by the girl to be aired over loudspeakers throughout the streets and piazzas – the situation comes together. When the time comes for the girl to sing her song, she is overcome by emotions and cannot get a sound out. Her mother thus takes

her place, and without anyone noticing the switch, gains much acclaim for her performance. While the crowd carries Tonina triumphantly, the mother turns to her husband, the only person who has caught on to the trick, with the words, "Now he'll marry her." In this way, she establishes a strong relationship between her scheme and the happy ending. This relationship could seem implausible, since Tonina's emotions shouldn't, in principle, constitute an obstacle for the count's love. However, such an ending proves instead quite consistent when related to an image of the city not only as a place of social opportunities and changing identities, but also and primarily as a place of possibilities linked to the way opportunities and identities are mutually related. This is an important aspect, because it deals first of all with an attempt on the part of Italian cinema to mediate the audience's relationship with modernity and progress, of which the city will remain the center for all of the 1930s. By confirming a link between technology (the radio), social ambition (the daughter of musicians marries a nobleman), and depersonalization (the girl finds herself, so to say, "borrowing" her mother's voice), and then taking the road to a happy ending, the film somehow confutes the idea that these elements, which belong to the urban dimension, can be harmful to the individual.

At the beginning of *Batticuore*, there is a very significant scene in this sense. The protagonist has stolen a tie pin from a man standing in front of her on the elevator, and the theft victim is now pursuing her. She seeks shelter in the darkness of a movie theater, and when the man sits down beside her, trying to get his pin back, she begs for pity: "I beg you sir, don't turn me in, I'm lost and alone in this big city," using the same words pronounced onscreen at that very moment by a woman standing before a judge. This scene lends itself to a dual reading. First, it bears witness to an objective affinity between social practices and film content. Second, it refers ironically to the cinematic stereotype of a city that squashes the individual, oppressing and corrupting the weak and defenseless. However, these two aspects are not as contradictory as they may seem, especially considering that the mediation of urban experience constructed by this film, and more generally by Italian cinema of those years, leaned towards a refutation or even a reversal of that stereotype: not only did the big city not oppress individuals, leaving them "lost and alone," it actually allowed them to live a fuller range of experiences, otherwise impossible in small towns or countryside, and, far from corrupting them, it enriched their personalities.

Differently from what happened in Hollywood, representations of the city in Italian cinema of the 1930s were not marked by moral oppositions or by an emphasis on the city's spectacular nature, and this aspect also conditioned the urban iconography. Whereas in the United States, the image of a skyscraper or of a busy street had enough symbolic force to connote the space in a generic yet unequivocal manner, in Italy abstraction of the "big city" was often forgone in favor of a more precise geographic localization of the setting. Rather than being the object of a morally and ideologically oriented discourse, the city had characteristics that coincided with its most famous attractions (Vesuvius and the port for Naples, St. Mark's and narrow streets in Venice, the Cathedral and the fair for Milan). Moreover, when associated with an urban scenario, the spectacular element was never based on stylization, but instead remained solidly anchored to the image of the city and its local traditions. The sequences regarding the festival of the Redentore in *Il carnevale di Venezia* and the *Piedigrotta* festival in *Napoli d'altri tempi* portray places that, by land and by sea, gradually fill with peo-



ple who participate enthusiastically in the festivities. Hence, instead of representing the city as a spectacle celebrated in Hollywood musicals, we have here the spectacle of the city itself, coming to life in a precise manner, marked by a body of rituals and ceremonies that are connected to its past and traditions, and that consequently strengthen its identity.

Thus, in Italian cinema, the urban condition did not necessarily set off a process of depersonalization of individuals, or disintegration of their cultural roots. Even with cosmopolitan air blowing through city streets, it was still possible to take shelter in tradition and history, to which the city was not foreign but an integral part. Naturally, this also relativized the opposition of city and countryside, dissolving the antitheoretical accent between urban modernity and rural tradition that, beyond the echoes produced in magazines, struggled to find solid motivations. To this end, I would like to consider two films that deal with this issue in different ways, and whose results are analogous from a narrative perspective, but entirely opposite in thematic terms.

The first, *Il fu Mattia Pascal* (1937), opens on an idyllic scene in the countryside: Mattia Pascal and his girlfriend Romilda stretch out in a wheat field, cuddling and speaking of their coming marriage. The strong impression of youth and light-hearted life conferred by these images is reinforced by the following scenes, where we see the male protagonist walking through the fields with a butterfly net (after his identity change into Meis, he speaks of Mattia Pascal as someone who “went butterfly catching”), letting himself go in sudden and instinctive bursts of happiness (“Life is beautiful!” he tells his aunt, who answers him with an insult). However, he is dominated, before and after his wedding, by both his and Romilda’s relatives, who consider him irresponsible and incapable of providing for his family. The immaturity of the character, his difficulty with entering into adulthood, is confirmed particularly by his inadequacy at managing money. For example, during his wedding reception, when faced with an insistent merchant asking for payment in full of the champagne bill, he can find no better response than to go to his aunt. Later, when hired by the mayor of Miraglio as the town librarian, he quite gratefully accepts a much lower salary than his predecessor without hesitating. With what follows in terms of individual maturation, the coming of age of For Pascal/Meis is marked by a path that leads him away from the countryside and into the city. First he goes to Monte Carlo where, having won a large sum of money at the gambling-house, he is forced to take some responsibilities, or rather, to make some decisions about how to use the money (“I’ll buy back the house, free my wife, and make the old Pescatore my slave”). Rome is next, where the his circumstances force him into a form of community life among the guests in a boarding-house; there he takes part in the small social rites – from meal preparation to séances – that characterize their daily life. For the heterogeneous age and characters of the guests, the microcosm of the boardinghouse seems to refer to the multiform nature of urban life. Indeed, the protagonist experiences urbanity at its worst when, during his stay, he is first tricked and then actually robbed.

Therefore, the individual who later sits on the banks of the Tiber river, meditating seriously on death, or the possibility of “killing” Meis in order to let Pascal live, is a very different person from the one we saw at the beginning who could roll in a wheat field, run through the fields with a butterfly net, and make joyous exclamations on the beauty of life. What differentiates Mattia Pascal from Adriano Meis, beyond the name, is their inner condition: the former was a boy, the latter is a man. We therefore encounter

a change in substance rather than in form, that is made possible by living in the city, depicted here as a place of initiation into the duties (imposed by the community) and the unexpected and malicious events (linked to the centrality of the theme of money) of the adult world.

In the other film, *Partire* (1938), the protagonist, Paolo, is also trapped within an adolescent condition despite that he lives in Naples, a big city, rather than the countryside. Happily unemployed, Paolo considers work a calamity, and is therefore a prototypical flâneur: he strolls about town with a friend, and favors to go to places like the port and the train station, where ships and trains leave for the exotic places he would like to visit, but that remain inaccessible to him in the absence of a job or salary. The situation changes when he visits the owner of a farm machinery company, in order to return a satchel that the man had lost the night before. The man, amazed by the young fellow's wit but at the same time vexed by his imperviousness to work, comes up with a scheme to hire Paolo. When he finds himself at work for the man, Paolo initially attempts to get himself fired. However, Paolo suddenly wakes up to the work and sacrifices that mark the daily life of farmers when he moves to the countryside, living on a farm that belongs to a man who has decided to buy the farm machinery to speed up his field work. The machinery doesn't arrive as expected, which puts the crops at risk; when the men face the storm to go harvest the wheat, Paolo joins them, proving his maturity, which finally leads him to an awareness of the duties that go along with his condition as an adult man. After his return to the machinery company, he discovers that he has been finally fired; but now, however, he rebels, because he has fully understood the value and meaning of work. His pathway is analogous to that of Pascal/Meis in Chenal's film, but the value attributed to the places has changed radically. In *Il fu Mattia Pascal*, it is the city, in contrast with the countryside, that constitutes a place of renewal and maturation, while whereas in *Partire*, the roles are diametrically opposite: only by abandoning the urban space to live in the countryside can the protagonist gain access to adult life.

In the Italian cinema of the 1930s, the framework employed in this last film is in fact the most frequently seen. James Hay has noted how the image of the city as a "gateway to the bel mondo", despite the fascination it usually held over people from the countryside, lacked any "readily identifiable characteristics that audiences could associate with italianità."<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to note how films in which the urban image hinged upon cosmopolitanism and the presence of Anglo-Saxon trends and customs were somehow balanced, within national film production during those years, by films – *Palio* (1932), *Il Carnevale di Venezia*, *Napoli che non muore* (1938), *Napoli d'altri tempi*, just to name a few – where the representation of the city recovered and emphasized the notion of "italianità." These films accomplished "italianità" through storylines full of references to local traditions, from the dialect spoken by the people, to the use of to picturesque locations. This confirms how contrasting city and countryside did not center on a series of well-defined, narrative and figurative oppositions, as in Hollywood films. It instead entered into a more complex and multifaceted discourse that, while linking country life to certain values of Italian culture, still celebrated certain aspects of that same culture that were strictly linked to the history and tradition of Italian cities.

[Translated from Italian by Debra Lyn Christie]

- 1 Translator's note: "Strapaese," literally "super-country," was a literary movement in Italy during the period following World War I, which was inspired by traditional Italian life and culture and which shunned all aspects of cosmopolitanism and xenophilia.
- 2 Orco Bisorco, "Gazzettino ufficiale di Strapaese," *Il selvaggio*, no. 9 (May 15, 1927), p. 33. Here, as on many other occasions, Maccari wrote under a pseudonym.
- 3 Translator's note: "Stracittà," or "super-city," was an opposing literary movement to "Strapaese," which opened itself to the more modern forms of European culture.
- 4 In reference to Italian journals of the 1920s and on their role in the cultural panorama of that era, see: Luciano Troisio (ed.), *Strapaese e Stracittà* (Treviso: Canova, 1975).
- 5 James Hay, *Popular Film Culture in Fascist Italy* (Bloomington-Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 111.
- 6 Robert Warshow, "The Gangster as Tragic Hero," in *The Immediate Experience* (New York: Atheneum, 1970).
- 7 J. Hay, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 149

# HYPERREAL SPACE AND URBAN EXPERIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY GREEK CINEMA

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## Introduction

During the past two decades, a growing interest in the study of space and geography has become prominent in numerous academic fields. In film studies, an increasing number of publications explore the different connections between film and architecture: from the construction of space in particular films, to the representation of public/private places, to the different modes of structuring the look.<sup>1</sup> In order to investigate the different urban experiences that diverse social groups have in contemporary Athens, this paper will focus on some examples found in contemporary Greek cinema. By comparing and contrasting three quite dissimilar films, I will bring to the surface their similarities and oppositions, as well as highlight their various allegories and the cognitive mapping that they create. Moreover, borrowing Pallasmaa's concept of "lived space" and Abbas' typology of "urban space," I will examine the different modes of representing the characters' lived space and their ways of looking at the city. As Athens constitutes a discursive space with a wide range of possibly volatile meanings within the cinematic discourse,<sup>2</sup> my paper aims to investigate these meanings and reconstruct the contemporary image of Athens in recent Greek cinema.

## *From the Edge of the City* (1998)

Directed by Konstantinos Yannaris, a young Greek filmmaker, and screened at numerous film festivals around the world, *From the Edge of the City* portrays the story of a group of young immigrants from the former Russian Republics<sup>3</sup> who live with their parents in Menidi, a poor suburb at the edge of Athens. Omonoia Square becomes their base at night where they engage in various petty crimes, such as stealing cars, taking drugs and gambling. The central character, Sasia, leads us into the world of these young delinquents who are struggling to establish their lives and identities in the Greek environment. Sasia gives up his job at a construction site and takes up a career both as a pimp and as a male prostitute for gay men. Similarly, all his friends earn their living from prostitution and have the chance to ride inexpensive cars and receive free doses of cocaine. The bleak reality of their lives progresses from bad to worse leading to deaths, murders and arrests by the police. Despite the obviousness of the theme, however, the filmmaker manages to treat his subject with respect and a significant amount of humour. Sasia opens and closes the film by looking at the camera

and introducing himself: “My name is Pont, Rosopont.” Furthermore, an interview with the filmmaker, whose voice we hear without ever seeing him, runs parallel to the stories that are depicted to simultaneously act as punctuation and commentary. In terms of narration and style, Giannaris borrows heavily from the neorealist agenda: the use of non-actors and location shooting, combined with the explicit social concerns, are some of the key distinctive features of the film. At the same time, he juxtaposes these neorealist elements with numerous art-cinema stylistic conventions such as discontinuity editing, fast and slow-motion, multiple protagonists and episodic structures, subjective realism, flashbacks and flash-forwards.<sup>4</sup> The employment of this art-cinema vocabulary, however, should not be considered as a belated manifestation of a Greek art-cinema, the so-called New Greek Cinema.<sup>5</sup> While the international art film of the 1960s and 1970s sought to express a new national consciousness and was identified with new forms of national identification, as in the case of the New Polish Cinema or the New Hungarian Cinema, Giannaris creates a cognitive map of contemporary geopolitical life and seeks to adapt the old formula to new social experiences.<sup>6</sup> The representation of contemporary urban space is one of his central sites in which he pursues this project.

The city of Athens plays a significant part in the story, as if it were an additional character in the script, affecting and shaping the lives of the protagonists. The references to the city are everywhere, from the title of the film to the smallest discussions among the young immigrants. For them, the city is a constant point of fascination and living in the heart of it, at Omonoia Square at night, makes them feel superior to their parents who live more or less excluded in a suburb at the city’s edge. They take pride in knowing all parts of the city well, as if this is enough to be considered cosmopolitan.

Most of the film is shot on location and the exterior night-time scenes seem to dominate the story. The interior spaces are therefore almost invariably depictions meetings with the upper-middle class Athenians who use the immigrants for sex and also friendly company. While the mainstream social life of the natives takes place in bars and clubs, the immigrants develop social activities in the open public space such as skating in the streets, dancing and hanging out in an open theatre or getting stoned by the beach. In addition, mobility is a typical aspect of the protagonists’ lives as they move from one place to another, from the edge of the city, to the centre and back. Although they usually walk or take the bus, they occasionally indulge in free car rides when they manage to borrow their customers’ expensive cars.

Despite the fact that the city occupies a central position in the film, the portrayal of the actual urban space is carried out in a fragmented way: the director avoids filming the famous monuments and spots that make Athens famous around the world. To a certain extent, it could be any big city, even Los Angeles, according to a Los Angeles Times reviewer.<sup>7</sup> Giannaris tried meticulously to circumvent all the stereotypical images of the Greek capital in order to convey various urban experiences with a global undercurrent. His editing style tries to capture the experience of the city, not by means of classical, realistic conventions, but through fragmented shots, lack of establishing shots, de-centred compositions, fast and slow motion, step-printing photography and abrupt changes in the rhythm. In a way, this strategy effaces the real city and replaces it with fleeting glimpses that create a hyper-real cityscape. Before going deeper into this issue, however, I would like to bring two other films into the discussion.

*The Mating Game* (1998) and *Risotto* (2000)

These two films were directed by a young female director, Olga Malea, who has been quite popular with Greek audiences. *The Mating Game* depicts the story of three sisters playing the mating game, each with different rules. They conspire among themselves to change each other's lives with dubious yet amusing results. The other film, *Risotto*, deals with the issue of female emancipation in Greek society. It questions whether women in Greece have really made progress since they achieved the right to work outside the home and whether it has led to their subsequent economic independence and sexual liberation. *Risotto*'s leading characters are Eugenia and Vicky, two colleagues in a fashion magazine who become allies in the war against their husbands. In contrast to *From the Edge of the City*, these films comply faithfully to all the principal characteristics of classical narration, such as linear and clear development of the story, goal-oriented characters, montage sequences and continuity editing.

In addition, due to the different social status of the protagonists, the presence of the city in Malea's films changes considerably. The very urban milieu is indicated by the various settings in which the action takes place: expensive restaurants, office buildings, ultra-modern houses, clubs, gyms and hospitals, for example. Moreover, that the characters live in Athens is signified by the way that their behaviour is coded by class. Yet, the city is not overtly part of the stories' *mise-en-scène*. Consequently, most of the scenes are shot indoors. The peculiarity of both films, therefore, lies in the construction of the public space in the few exterior shots that are included. When the characters are in their cars or when they enter buildings, the spectator realises that the open space is dominated by construction sites in *The Mating Game* and by huge advertising billboards in *Risotto*. The blatant artificiality of these public places creates a surreal landscape and invites certain interpretations, as I will demonstrate further down.

## Inside-Outside Dichotomies

By closely examining the three films, we realise that we are not dealing with the classical opposition of "city vs. countryside", a dichotomy deeply grounded in Hollywood and other cinematic traditions. Instead, we quickly remark we are dealing with oppositions from within the city itself and with the different social groups that inhabit it. A film like *From the Edge of the City* demonstrates that Greek cinema can no longer fictionalise its metropolis, Athens, without the marginal, oblique gaze of its "immigrant" populations, to paraphrase Homi Bhabha.<sup>8</sup>

From a comparison between the films, it becomes evident that the city, as a public space, is the territory of the immigrants; they are free to explore the streets day and night, walk under the hot sun, skate and dance in the open. On the other hand, the upper-middle-class Athenians spend all their time indoors and never seem to find an opportunity to be out in the city streets. For them, Athens is merely a conjunction of "places" that they can visit for specific purposes. This is the case in all three films: in Giannaris' film, for example, Nikos is a rich native who works in a big record company and owns an expensive apartment in Glyfada with a view to the sea. We always

see him in this space, in the club where he goes at night, or in his car, waiting to pick up Sasia or other Russian Pontian kids. It is striking that even during his sexual encounters in the apartment, the young boys prefer to look at the view, to stand in the balcony and look at the sea, whereas Nikos is in the background in the kitchen or the living room. Furthermore, it is worth noticing that the young immigrants occasionally borrow an expensive convertible car in which they may relish the fresh air as they drive through the empty streets at night, whereas the Athenians who only use their big cars as a substitute for their home or office. For instance, the characters in *Risotto* are often seen in their cars, talking on their mobiles and arranging their busy schedule.

For the native residents of the Greek capital, Marc Augé's concept of "non-places" would be quite apt to describe the world they inhabit. According to Augé, "if a place can be defined as relational, historical, and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place."<sup>9</sup> In non-places, people, like the characters in the films, are always in transit as passengers and not as travelers.

They have specific destinations and specific needs to serve, such as transport, commerce or leisure. Athens, therefore, is no longer a historical place with a particular identity but an enormous non-place where images prevail and solitary contractuality is the essential framework for social relations. Augé also claims that "perhaps the reason why immigrants worry settled people so much is that they expose the relative nature of certainties inscribed in the soil."<sup>10</sup>

This pertinent statement explains why the young immigrants – in contrast to the natives who occupy a non-place world – are constantly pre-occupied with their relation to space in both the city and their homelands, as well as acknowledge the uncertainties and effects that space has on people's lives.

Overall, the inside-outside dichotomy that characterises the relation the different social groups have to their urban space also functions as an allegory in the characters' cognitive mapping. Fredric Jameson uses allegory as a conceptual tool for understanding how people make sense of their urban surroundings, their social realities and, by extension, their position in the world.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, if we look at the spatial dichotomies in an allegorical way, we will realize that the immigrant populations are bound to remain outside and to maintain their status as outsiders in the Athenian society. In all three films, the immigrants can come inside only if their wealthy customers/employers invite them to do so. In the *Mating Game*, for instance, the rich mothers use women from the Philippines as housemaids, as companions and as subjects for their paintings.

In *From the Edge of the City*, one of the young boys becomes emotionally attached to Nikos and tries to get into his apartment in Glyfada while he is away. As he jumps from the roof onto the balcony, he falls down and is killed. This incident demonstrates plainly that the violation of the rule "you need permission to come in" can only result in heavy punishment. With the help of Jameson's cognitive mapping, these individual actions and trajectories can be easily related to the more general social processes that try to exclude and exploit at will the immigrant populations. The individual stories become thus indispensable for representing the collective politics of our times.

## Lived Space and Hyperreal Experience

Lived space is space that is inseparably integrated  
with the subject's concurrent life situation.  
We do not live separately in material and mental worlds;  
these experiential dimensions are fully intertwined.  
Neither do we live in an objective world.  
We live in mental worlds, in which the experienced,  
remembered and imagined, as well as the past,  
present and future are inseparably intermixed.  
Juhani Pallasmaa

The concept of “lived space,” as Pallasmaa defines it,<sup>12</sup> plays an important role in all three films while various technical means are employed in order to capture the characters' sense of their lived space on film. On the one hand, Malea's films construct the urban landscape as a continuous, homogeneous space, which either consists of ubiquitous construction sites or advertising billboards. This constitutes a metaphorical representation of the characters' lived space since they do not have the time to really see what is around them, therefore experience an imagined combination of the external space and their concomitant life situation. According to Ackbar Abbas,

As people in metropolitan centres tend to avoid eye contact with one another, so they now tend also to avoid eye contact with the city. When the visual becomes problematic because it is too complex, too conflicting, too unfamiliar, or too manipulative, then different ways of seeing the city – different scopic regimes – have to be brought into play.<sup>13</sup>

Abbas' typology of scopic regimes includes: a. “real” cities, which have preserved a historical context and encourage a regime of the visible or seen; b. “surreal” cities, where urban elements are mixed up without regard for historical context, thus encourage a regime of the subliminal and uncanny, or half-seen; and c. “hyperreal” cities, which are devoid of context and based on fiction or artifice, therefore encouraging a regime of the televisual, or quickly seen.<sup>14</sup> Although all three regimes can exist simultaneously and may offer various choices, it seems that the characters in Malea's films experience the public space as hyperreal, certainly devoid of context and populated with artificial and fictional elements. Both *The Mating Game* and *Risotto* try to represent this scopic regime of quick visibility, where the unfamiliarity of the construction sites or the billboards is no longer a provocative dimension of the familiar, but becomes itself, through instant replays, all too familiar.

But what about the lived space of the young immigrants? Regardless of the inside-outside dichotomies that are established by a comparison between the lives of the upper-middle class Athenians and the young immigrants, the latter's experience of the city is equally hyperreal. Despite living outdoors and having a wider experience of the urban surroundings, the hyperreality of such contemporary space is inescapable even for the young Russian, Pontians. In contrast to Malea's filming strategy and her manipulation of the profilmic space, Yannaris tries to convey the hyperreal scopic regime of his characters by manipulating the filmic space, i.e. through editing techniques. The discontinuity editing – jump-cuts, de-centred compositions, fast motion – and the self-reflexiv-



ity of the image track transforms the city into a hyperreal space where time becomes speed, where the context is obliterated and where human experiences can only be disjointed and fragmentary.

On the whole, I would like to conclude this paper with one final observation. The three films and their representation of life in modern Athens that I have discussed here demonstrates that some contemporary Greek filmmakers have become more sophisticated and sensitive to current Greek reality and have therefore aimed to create a filmic discourse that can accommodate contemporary urban experience. Instead of displaying the historical monuments and landmarks of this undeniably historic city, the filmmakers take another direction in order to more faithfully approach not the experience of a tourist or a passer-by, but that of the local residents and their different uses of the public space in a contemporary world.

- 1 Some interesting anthologies include: David B. Clarke (ed.), *The Cinematic City* (London: Routledge, 1997); Myrto Konstantarakos (ed.), *Spaces in European Cinema* (Exeter: Intellect, 2000); Mike Shiel (ed.), *Cinema and the City. Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).
- 2 Colin McArthur, "Chinese Boxes and Russian Dolls: Tracking the Elusive Cinematic City," in D. Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 20
- 3 They are Russian Pontians, people of Greek ancestry from the Black Sea area of Kazakhstan who returned to their ancestral homeland in 1990 only to find themselves strangers in their new country.
- 4 For a comprehensive description of the art-cinema conventions, see David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (London: Routledge, 1986), pp. 205-233
- 5 The New Greek Cinema of the 1970s and 1980s, which could be loosely characterized as a type of art-cinema, was epitomized in the works of the Greek auteur, Theo Angelopoulos, who veered more towards the style of Antonioni than Godard. The discontinuous editing, the fast pace and the self-reflexivity found in Giannaris' film have been extremely underprivileged in the entire history of Greek cinema.
- 6 This observation was made by Burgoyne in relation to Manchevski's *Before the Rain* (1994). There seems to be a current trend in World Cinema, which shares these geopolitical concerns and tackles them through the art-cinema vocabulary. See Robert Burgoyne, "Before The Rain: Ethnic Nationalism And Globalization," *Rethinking History*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (Summer 2000), pp. 129-134
- 7 K. Thomas, "From the Edge of the City," *Los Angeles Times* (December 15, 2000). Online at: <http://www.calendarlive.com/movies/reviews/cl-movie001214-1.story>
- 8 Homi K. Bhabha suggests, "the historical and cultural experience of the western metropolis cannot now be fictionalized without the marginal, oblique gaze of its postcolonial migrant populations cutting across the imaginative metropolitan geography of territory and community, tradition in culture." Cited in C. McArthur, *op. cit.*, p. 35
- 9 Marc Augé, *Non-lieux* (Paris: Seuil, 1992); eng. tr.: *Non-Place. An Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. by John Howe (London: Verso, 1995), pp. 77-78
- 10 M. Augé, *op. cit.*, p. 119
- 11 Frederic Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic* (London: BFI, 1992), p. 3 and Colin MacCabe, "Preface," in *Ibid.*, pp. xiv-xv.

- 12 Juhani Pallasmaa, *Architecture of Image: Existential Space in Cinema* (Helsinki: Rakkenustieto, 2000).
- 13 Akbar Abbas, "Building on Disappearance: Hong Kong Architecture and Colonial Space," in Simon During (ed.), *The Cultural Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 157
- 14 Ibid.

## ABSTRACTS & PROJECTS

# PIERRE COLOMBIER, DEUX DECENNIES DE COMEDIE DANS LE CINEMA FRANÇAIS (1920-1939)

Frédéric Binet/Ph.D. Thesis Abstract  
Université de Paris I

Hormis quelques études ponctuelles concernant les burlesques français, les genres populaires restent majoritairement méprisés par la recherche en histoire du cinéma. Si l'on excepte Sacha Guitry ou René Clair, le domaine de la comédie représente un vaste réservoir d'investigations dans lequel peu d'étudiants et de chercheurs se sont aventurés. Le premier objectif de ma recherche était donc, pour reprendre l'appellation chère à Francis Lacassin, de contribuer à écrire une "contre-histoire du cinéma". Plus précisément, mon idée était de rompre avec une certaine tendance visant à penser la recherche sous l'angle unique de la notion d'auteurisme.

Pierre Colombier constituait un cas intéressant à traiter. En effet, sa carrière (1920-1939) épouse presque la période de l'entre deux guerres. Par ailleurs, il fait partie de ces rares cinéastes à s'être exclusivement consacrés à la comédie en France. Ma problématique était donc de le considérer comme objet d'étude à part entière, mais aussi comme indicateur d'un genre qu'il s'est attaché à servir tout au long de son parcours de metteur en scène. Ainsi, au travers de sa filmographie, il importait de déterminer des constantes observables dans le genre pris globalement. Etant exclue toute notion d'auteur le concernant, Colombier s'étant lui-même toujours défini comme un simple amuseur, il était d'autant plus aisé de tisser des liens avec la comédie dans son ensemble.

Essentiellement structuré sous forme chronologique, mon travail s'est d'abord attaché à systématiquement contextualiser les films réalisés, que ce soit dans le domaine socio-politique (des films tels que *Ces messieurs de la Santé*, 1933 ou *Charlemagne*, 1933 ne peuvent être pleinement lisibles sans le rappel de la grande instabilité de cette fin de Troisième République et des nombreuses affaires frauduleuses qui voient le jour) ou économique (notamment la forte concurrence américaine induisant une satire souvent très connotée et une coloration "bien française" dans le cadre des intrigues mises en scène). Il importait également de largement insister sur l'environnement de production, déterminant dans les orientations artistiques et la morphologie attendue des films réalisés. Chacune des firmes avec lesquelles Colombier a collaboré (Gaumont, Albatros, Pathé-Natan ou Les Films Modernes) a largement conditionné les choix de mises en scène, des collaborateurs et des thèmes développés. Enfin, cette contextualisation passait par l'analyse des codes dramatiques identifiables dans les bandes de Pierre Colombier. Il était ainsi indispensable de se pencher sur le vaudeville, sa construction et ses codes syntaxiques, sa réappropriation par le cinéaste (par exemple, *Ignace*, 1937 se structure véritablement sur la base du vaudeville en couplets tel qu'il était écrit au dix-huitième siècle), mais également de restituer un historique du Théâtre de Boulevard, tant du point de vue de ses auteurs, des thèmes récurrents que de l'évolution de son public. La compréhension de la dramaturgie passait aussi par la

présentation des différentes collaborations (Yves Mirande, Louis Verneuil, René Pujol, Léopold Marchand, tous auteurs à succès et souvent personnalités charismatiques capables d'influer sur les mises en scène). Enfin, Pierre Colombier étant souvent parti d'une base de pièces à succès, essentiellement à partir des années trente, il était intéressant d'analyser les textes utilisés ainsi que leurs aménagements successifs sur les planches et au cinéma.

Certains thèmes reviennent de manière récurrente dans la carrière du cinéaste. D'abord, le chassé-croisé amoureux. A la base de tout vaudeville, il se présente comme une déclinaison de situations amoureuses qui engendrent des stratégies de la part des différents protagonistes. La femme est bien souvent au centre du dispositif: objet de convoitise (*Une femme chipée*, 1934; *Une gueule en or*, 1936), femme délaissée (*Taxi 313 X7*, 1923), capable de générer une volonté de dépassement de la part du mari ou de l'amant (*Amour et carburateur*, 1925; *Le Roi des resquilleurs*, 1930), révélatrice des aspirations de vie de l'amant (*Par dessus le mur*, 1923), "outil" de séduction pour servir les intérêts du mari (*Monsieur Lebidois propriétaire*, 1922). Le sport est aussi une donnée importante des fictions de Colombier. S'il est souvent un élément décoratif, il peut véritablement devenir le moteur de l'action (*Amour et carburateur*, 1925; *Le Roi des resquilleurs*, 1930; *Les Rois du sport*, 1937), et détermine fréquemment la coloration sociale du film. Ainsi, dans les comédies parisiennes et mondaines des années vingt pratique-t-on plutôt l'aviation, le tennis ou le golf, dans les années trente, le football, le cyclisme ou la boxe. D'une manière plus générale, les intrigues mises en scène voient souvent la confrontation des différentes classes sociales. Plus précisément, ce sont des stratégies d'ascension qui sont développées, pouvant mener à l'échec (*Petit hôtel à louer*, 1923) ou à la réussite (*L'Ecole des cocottes*, 1935). Ces stratégies amènent alors le cinéaste à traiter de la fraude ou de la manipulation, quand il ne s'agit pas d'échanges peu moraux (titres de noblesse contre position argentée dans *Le Roi*, 1936). Au delà des différentes classes sociales, c'est aussi l'étranger qui est objet d'une satire plus ou moins virulente, qu'il soit américain (*Paris en cinq jours*, 1925; *Les Transatlantiques*, 1927), arabe (*Tricoche et Cacolet*, 1938) ou simplement provincial (*Le Pendentif*, 1921). Par ailleurs, filmer des comédies mondaines et parisiennes implique la mise en scène d'un environnement conforme à la réalité sociale des personnages. Ce sont d'abord les espaces d'habitation (hôtels particuliers, villas de banlieue ou de provinces, châteaux où se déroulent des chasses à courre), mais aussi les lieux de loisirs, de jour (*le Pré Catelan*, les instituts de beauté), de nuit (les cabarets et bars louches) et enfin, les centres de villégiature à la mode (*Deauville*, la Côte d'Azur).

Enfin, les acteurs constituent une des principales données du cinéma de Colombier. Ils sont souvent au centre du dispositif de mise en scène, le cinéaste s'attachant tout particulièrement à fixer leur naturel à l'écran, minimisant en cela les indications de jeu. Les duos de comédiens sont ainsi remarquables de spontanéité, qu'il soit question de Jules Berry / Elvire Popesco, Raimu / Renée Saint-Cyr, Victor Francen / Gaby Morlay ou de Fernandel / Duvallès. Cet amour de l'acteur se combine avec une belle intuition dans la découverte de talents (*Colette Darfeuil*, *Dolly Davis*, *Danièle Parola* ou *Georges Milton*).

## RECONSTRUCTION D'UN CHANTIER INTELLECTUEL.

JEAN EPSTEIN 1946-1953

Chiara Tognolotti/Ph.D. Thesis Abstract

Università di Firenze

L'œuvre cinématographique et théorique de Jean Epstein a subi une étrange destinée. Lors de sa mort, en 1953, Epstein avait tourné quarante-cinq films (courts et longs métrages) et écrit neuf tomes d'études théoriques. Sa carrière d'écrivain et de cinéaste s'est développée sur plus de trente ans: son premier film, *Pasteur*, sort en 1922, et le dernier qu'il ait achevé, *Les Feux de la mer*, en 1948; ses premières études, *La poésie d'aujourd'hui* et *Bonjour cinéma*, paraissent en 1921, et les deux dernières sont composées dans la première moitié des années cinquante (*Esprit de cinéma* sera publié posthume en 1955, *Alcool et cinéma* ne paraîtra qu'en 1975).

Malgré tout, l'historiographie cinématographique a presque toujours lié le nom d'Epstein à sa participation au mouvement de l'avant-garde impressionniste des années vingt, en négligeant sa production successive. En revanche, cette thèse vise à lire le corpus epsteinien dans son intégralité à partir de *La Poésie d'aujourd'hui* jusqu'à *Alcool et cinéma* et, parallèlement, de *Pasteur* jusqu'aux *Feux de la mer*, selon un parcours qui va bien au-delà de la leçon des avant-gardes, si importante soit-elle.

Cette recherche fondée sur l'analyse des films ainsi que des essais d'Epstein a reçu un enrichissement décisif avec la consultation du Fonds Epstein de la Bibliothèque du film (BiFi) de Paris. Ce fonds garde les notes de lecture manuscrites qu'Epstein a laissées de l'après-guerre jusqu'à sa mort, dans lesquelles il résumait et annotait toutes les œuvres qu'il lisait. Leur remarquable étendue porte à mesurer l'ampleur des études conduites par Epstein dans les dernières années de sa vie, et donne un tableau complet de ses réflexions dans leur dernière élaboration.

L'itinéraire tracé par les lectures d'Epstein donne une lumière nouvelle à la pensée théorique de ses écrits publiés comme à l'ensemble de sa production cinématographique. Dès ses débuts, la pensée epsteinienne tourne – en synthèse – autour de deux concepts fondamentaux: d'une part, dans les écrits, la recherche d'une nouvelle méthode de connaissance qui ne soit pas seulement rationnelle, mais qui comprenne aussi la dimension de la non-rationalité, une méthode qu'Epstein appelle "lyrosophie"; et de l'autre part, dans ses films, la recherche continue de la "photogénie", c'est-à-dire de la qualité intime de l'image cinématographique.

Or, l'analyse approfondie des documents du fonds témoigne de la volonté du metteur en scène de relire sa pensée sur le cinéma et sa traduction en images pour les inscrire dans le champ plus général de la spéculation philosophique. En d'autres termes, à travers les études que révèlent les notes de lecture, dont l'ampleur ne ressort qu'en partie dans les écrits publiés, Epstein replace les idées de lyrosophie et de photogénie dans un cadre de références théoriques remarquablement complexes qui vont de la philosophie (Nietzsche et Bachelard surtout), mais aussi l'existentialisme du Sartre des Temps modernes ainsi que la révision cri-

tique de Descartes) à la psychologie et à la psychanalyse (Freud et les études sur la psychophysiologie), à la physique (à travers une série des lectures qui analysent les découvertes einsteiniennes et leur conséquences sur la qualité de vérité absolue de la science), à la littérature et à la linguistique (la reprise de l'expérience surréaliste, l'analyse de la crise du langage verbal) jusqu'à l'anthropologie (les idées de sacré propres à Callois et à Bataille).

L'examen des fiches de lecture souligne donc l'approfondissement et l'élargissement des bases de la pensée d'Epstein; unie à l'étude des écrits édités et des films, cette analyse permet de reparcourir toute la pensée de Jean Epstein jusqu'à sa dernière élaboration, à savoir une réflexion sur la possibilité de formuler à nouveau les catégories gnoseologiques du réel à travers un instrument, le cinéma, défini explicitement comme un agent de réflexion philosophique, à la lumière de deux concepts fondamentaux de photogénie et lyrosophie; c'est précisément l'hypothèse sur laquelle le travail présent se fonde.

À mon avis, en effet, les idées de photogénie et de lyrosophie d'Epstein peuvent être vues comme deux mouvements parallèles à la recherche d'une nouvelle connaissance du réel. En d'autres termes, pour Epstein, la photogénie est une investigation à l'intérieur des figures du film qui vise à envisager la composition double du cinéma, tendue entre récit et évocation, rationalité de l'esprit et raisons du sentiment, science positive et lecture mythologique, comme le démontre le film-essai *Le Tempestaire*, qui, comme figé dans le signe figuratif, résume tout le parcours intellectuel d'Epstein. La photogénie explore donc l'ailleurs de l'image, son être autre en plus et au-delà de la signification qu'on peut raconter; la lyrosophie traduit le même problème en termes théoriques et l'applique non seulement au cinéma, mais à la réalité tout court, en proposant une connaissance ouverte aux apports de la rationalité et de la non-rationalité – cette dernière s'articulant selon les différentes inflexions suggérées par les lectures, qu'elles soient de nature physiologique (la sensation de la douleur), philosophique (le "dionysiaque" de Nietzsche), littéraire (l'onirisme surréaliste), anthropologique (l'idée de sacré comme le voyait le Collège de sociologie).

Donc, lyrosophie et photogénie sont dans mon interprétation deux parcours parallèles, l'un qui vit à l'intérieur des images, l'autre qui réfléchit sur les images, qui visent tous les deux au même objectif: découvrir la nature du film aussi bien que celle du réel. En ce sens, le cinéma d'Epstein se configure à mon avis comme un voyage au bout de la réalité déterminé par l'interrogation, réalisée dans le cinéma, sur ce qui reste au-dessous des phénomènes qu'on peut comprendre par la raison.

Ce voyage ne peut s'accomplir qu'à travers une transformation de la vision cinématographique en tant que moyen de connaissance. En effet, pour Epstein, connaître par la vision ne signifie pas seulement utiliser un regard sensible - comme veut la tradition de Platon à Descartes – en tant qu'auxiliaire de la vraie vision, qui réside dans l'esprit. Il s'agit plutôt de transformer la vision en une méthode d'apprentissage qui "regarde, flaire, palpe": c'est l'idée d'une véritable pensée de l'œil, qui sache ajouter aux acquis de l'intellect les déterminations de l'univers sensoriel en devenant matérielle et concrète, presque tactile. C'est une vision qui rend plus faible la distance entre le sujet et l'objet, voire l'annule quasiment, pour tâcher d'obtenir une connaissance plus complète, car intellectuelle et organique aussi, intellectuelle en même temps que sensible.

L'analyse de l'œuvre d'Epstein dans son intégralité – les films, les écrits publiés et les documents inédits du Fonds Epstein – s'achève donc sur une idée de cinéma bien complexe, d'une profondeur philosophique considérable, qui suggère une nouvelle ouverture vers une attention critique portée sur le cinéaste, pour reconsidérer sa position dans l'histoire des théories du cinéma.

# CINEMA DE SYNTHESE ET CINEMA DES PREMIERS TEMPS: DES CORRESPONDANCES EXAMINEES A LA LOUPE DU SYSTEME DES ATTRACTIONS

Viva Paci/Ph.D. Thesis Project  
Université de Montréal

Il existe une façon de considérer le cinéma qui n'a pas été suffisamment privilégiée dans les études théoriques depuis leur entrée en force parmi la recherche universitaire: celle qui valorise la dimension d'émerveillement générée par le cinéma. C'est avant tout sur la capacité, et les diverses façons de raconter dont le cinéma dispose, que les études se sont concentrées (capacité qui est congénitale selon certains, acquise ou greffée sur le modèle des arts plus anciens selon d'autres), notamment avec la contribution des démarches sémiologiques et narratologiques.

Il existait par contre aux origines mêmes de la réflexion et de la théorie cinématographiques, une racine commune d'enthousiasme pour l'éclosion d'une nouvelle connaissance toute visuelle et émotive, de l'ordre de l'émerveillement, que seul le cinéma savait créer. Si on veut alors repenser autrement le cinéma, dans le but d'en récrire l'histoire, c'est en s'appuyant sur la valeur épistémologique du concept d'attraction qu'on pourra l'effectuer.<sup>1</sup> Ce concept assume dans ma recherche une portée heuristique qui m'aidera à parcourir un fil tendu qui traverse l'histoire du cinéma, et qui se manifeste avec une force majeure dans certains moments, périodes, genres, films; des moments où règne une expérience filmique de la temporalité disjointe et ponctuelle basée sur la présentation et l'exhibition visuelle, et dont la manière de fasciner le spectateur se démarque fortement des configurations cohérentes de la narration. À travers l'attraction, on pourra saisir l'importance et surtout la spécificité (et en même temps les traits en commun) de ces différents moments de l'histoire du cinéma. Je me servirai en particulier de la clef de voûte que l'attraction parvient à constituer ainsi pour présenter le cas spécifique du cinéma de synthèse. C'est justement dans le cadre d'une histoire du cinéma non évolutive et non linéaire, mais parsemée de ces moments où l'attraction règne, que le cinéma de synthèse peut être considéré selon ses caractéristiques propres et non comme le plus récent des perfectionnements du cinéma. Le cinéma de synthèse constitue une étape privilégiée de l'histoire du cinéma scrutée à la loupe des attractions, où le caractère de nouveauté et d'éphémère sont des termes centraux, un moment où stupéfaction pure, fascination visuelle et temps discontinu sont des caractéristiques premières.

Les succès récents des productions d'images de synthèse nourrissent et transforment l'imaginaire commun, développent de nouvelles habitudes esthétiques et accroissent les possibilités de réception du public, tout en influençant les moyens de production de l'industrie culturelle. Une réflexion globale sur cette nouvelle étape dans la vie de l'image, entre avènement et institutionnalisation, s'avère de plus en plus importante. Surtout dans la mesure où la nouvelle façon de représenter le monde qui se rattache aux images de synthèse est présentement au centre d'un discours pas trop prophétique et peu rigoureux.



Une étude comparée du cinéma de synthèse avec le cinéma des premiers temps permettra de mettre en perspective la nature du premier à l'aide des acquis que l'historiographie du cinéma a déterminé pour le second – c'est bien dans l'étude du cinéma des premiers temps que le modèle d'histoire linéaire et évolutionniste a été abandonné. Je propose de mener une étude comparative, d'une part, de la nouveauté que le cinéma a constitué lors de son apparition à la fin du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, et d'autre part, de la nouveauté introduite par l'animation par ordinateur au sein du paysage médiatique contemporain, en particulier dans le cinéma. Et cela, en me basant sur l'analyse des films et des discours critiques synchrones.

Le concept d'attraction sera ainsi le pivot de cette démarche. L'avènement du cinéma s'inscrit dans l'euphorie de la modernité. L'exotisme, le voyage en train, l'extension des facultés de la vision et le perfectionnement de l'optique fantastique avaient déjà eux-mêmes nourri l'imaginaire commun, développé de nouvelles habitudes esthétiques et accru les possibilités de réception du public au tournant du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle:<sup>2</sup> le cinématographe vient s'inscrire dans ce paradigme avec une plus grande force d'attraction. Il s'agira, autrement dit, d'essayer de prendre un point de vue historique et comparatiste sur le phénomène de rupture qu'une nouvelle technologie peut introduire au sein d'une société: l'analyse comparative du cinéma des premiers temps et des nouvelles technologies d'animation devrait ainsi permettre de mesurer à la fois la similitude entre les différentes transformations technologiques au sein de la modernité, mais aussi leur caractère spécifique. Le point de vue historique de la thèse suivra un parcours diachronique, non linéaire, non seulement pour faire rejoindre dans une même histoire l'animation par ordinateur et le cinéma des premiers temps, mais aussi car le caractère éphémère que leurs respectives nouveautés représentent ne s'épuise pas complètement et définitivement, mais il revient sous d'autres formes, il (re) jaillit par-ci par-là, dans l'histoire du cinéma. Une fois déterminées et étudiées les correspondances entre cinéma des premiers temps et cinéma de synthèse, il sera possible de mieux réfléchir à l'évolution de l'animation par ordinateur en repérant ce qui est devenu éphémère du cinéma des premiers temps après la concrétisation du dispositif cinématographe et l'institutionnalisation du cinéma. Des catégories comme celle de prototype, de démo, de novelty et d'éphémère (qui se trouvent être des catégories de la modernité et à la fois des caractéristiques de l'attraction) me serviront pour l'analyse de l'animation de synthèse. Dans la perspective que je privilégie, celle de Tom Gunning,<sup>3</sup> un fil conducteur unissait déjà le cinéma des premiers temps au cinéma spectaculaire; et ce qui passe dans ce fil conducteur est bien de l'ordre de l'attraction. Mais la démarche de Gunning, de même que celles qui s'inscrivent à sa suite, n'analysent pas le fonctionnement des attractions dans le cinéma contemporain, ni le rôle qu'elles y exercent. Un terrain propice pour en étudier le fonctionnement sera justement celui de l'animation 3D, servant ainsi à développer un exemple paradigmatique.

1 Le concept d'attraction, comme nouvelle perspective, pour comprendre mieux la spécificité du cinéma des premiers temps, a été une précieuse ouverture à l'histoire et la théorie du cinéma, proposé désormais déjà il y a presque vingt ans par André Gaudreault, Tom Gunning, "Le Cinéma des premiers temps: un défi à l'histoire du cinéma", in Jacques

Aumont, André Gaudreault, Michel Marie (sous la dir. de), *Histoire du cinéma. Nouvelles approches* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1989), pp. 49-63.

- 2 La science de son côté, entre le XVIII<sup>ème</sup> et le XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, avait continuellement étendu le royaume du connaissable et du visible en mesurant, représentant, révélant, en utilisant le télescope, le microscope, les thermomètres, les rayons X. Du point de vue de la science la photographie et le cinéma et en fin la modélisation digitale peuvent être considérés comme ultérieurs développements.
- 3 “Clearly in some sense recent spectacle cinema has reaffirmed its roots in stimulus and carnival rides, in what might be called the Spielberg-Lucas-Coppola cinema effects”, Tom Gunning, “The Cinema of Attractions. Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde”, in Thomas Elsaesser (ed.), *Early Cinema, Space, Frame, Narrative* (London: BFI, 1990), p. 61.

MULTIPLE AND MULTIPLE-LANGUAGE VERSIONS.  
A RESEARCH PROJECT  
III MAGIS – GRADISCA INTERNATIONAL FILM STUDIES  
SPRING SCHOOL

Gradisca d'Isonzo, March 10-19, 2005

The practice of producing films from the same plot in different versions, each in a different language, sometimes with the same directors and actors, sometimes with actors and directors of different nationalities, is generally assumed to be limited to a specific historical period: the transition from the silent era to talking pictures. In actual fact it relates to a much wider period. For instance, there was something similar to multiple versions during the silent period, and the practice continued up to the 1950s and beyond. Multiple versions, as well as not being solely confined to a more or less limited historical circumstance, also bring to light a dimension of cinema that has a lot to tell us about its original theoretical statute.

Apart from the pioneering work of Herbert Holba, the contributions of Mario Quargnolo, the research and proposals of CineGraph (Hamburg) and of Il Cinema Ritrovato (Bologna), the archival investigation into the early 1930s has never been systematically pursued. The practice of producing multiple versions requires an in-depth examination and a detailed assessment, as it deals with a general period of reorganisation of the whole cinema industry internationally. The reconstruction of this peculiar stage seems all the more necessary, as it can shed a light on many features of the production and representation methods that underwent reorganisation during the 1930s.

Multiple versions are critical for the following areas of investigation:

- film philology and restoration
- sound and filming technologies
- international production and distribution policies
- national and international consuming practices
- directing and star models
- national and international narrative models
- changes of the notion of author and art-work.

The first aim of the research into multiple versions, in order to achieve a basic filmography, is to involve the greatest number of film archives, to initiate a census of the number of copies of films that have one or more versions in other languages. At the present date, the project is co-ordinated by Università degli Studi di Udine, CineGraph and Národní filmový archiv (Prague).

The second stage of the project will identify a series of films, according to the selection made by each film archive involved, which will be restored in its different versions.

The results of the restorations will be shown at the major international festivals (Il Cinema Ritrovato, Bologna; Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, Sacile/Pordenone; CineGraph Congress, Hamburg).

The final stage of the project will focus on an extensive European retrospective, dedicated to multiple versions and presented in the major European capitals. A book summarising the work carried out and the results achieved will also be published. The filmography and material related to it will be made available at a specifically created website.

The project will be developed through a series of events and initiatives:

- MAGIS-Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School. The “School” of Gradisca (Gorizia), brings together every year, since 2003, professors, graduates and young researchers from a network of European universities (Paris III, Amsterdam, Bremen, Valencia, Lugano, Prague, Udine, Milano-Cattolica, Pisa) and other institutions: CineGraph (Hamburg), Cineteca del Comune di Bologna, Cineteca del Friuli (Gemona), Film Archiv Austria (Vienna), Národní Filmový Archiv (Prague) and other European archives. The ANAI-Associazione Nazionale Archivistica Italiana (Italian National Archival Association) and the Museo Nazionale del Cinema are also involved. The subject of multiple versions is examined through a series of presentations, workshops, work groups, projections and discussions. The Gradisca “Spring School” will, in 2005 (10-19 March 2005), examine the following sub-topics: the migration of people working in the film industry, multiple versions and national identity, cinema and other media. The fourth issue of the journal *CINEMA & Cie.* published the transcripts of the presentations given at the 2003 MAGIS edition. The transcripts of the presentations given in 2004 will be published in two subsequent issues of the same magazine.

- CineGraph Conference (Hamburg). The conference held in November 2005 will be dedicated to the subject of multiple versions and will host an extensive retrospective.

- A series of books dedicated to the restoration of the single films (in their different versions).

- Publication of the filmography in a specific website.

During Il Cinema Ritrovato 2004 a meeting among film archives was held. The following archives took part in it: Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv (Berlin), Cinémathèque du Luxembourg, CNC-Service des Archives du Film (Bois d'Arcy), Film Archiv Austria (Wien), Magyar Nemzeti Filmarchívum (Budapest), Münchner Filmmuseum (Munich), Murnau Stiftung (Wiesbaden), National Film and Television Archive-BFI (London), as well as the Italian major archives, as La Cineteca del Comune di Bologna, Cineteca Nazionale (Rome) and Museo Nazionale del Cinema (Turin), and the Associazione Nazionale Archivi Italiani.

The meeting decided to establish a common platform of exchange among the archives, through which materials and informations circulation and film detection could be eased. In particular, the present archives decided to implement the data con-

tained in the filmography actually edited by the MLVs Project, and to actively contribute to the detection of the single versions of MLVs present in the respective collections, in order to develop restoration programs. It was also stated that the common restorations will bring to a European retrospective, to be promoted in the single film archives movie theatres, and to publishing editions, including different versions restored on DVD and books containing documentation and materials.

Deadline for proposals:

November 15, 2004

Information at:

MAGIS – Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School

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## NARRATING THE FILM. NOVELIZATION: FROM THE CATALOGUE TO THE TRAILER

XII International Film Studies Conference  
Udine/Gorizia, March 7-9, 2005

Crossings, migrations and rewritings. From the cinema to the page, from the screen to the television or monitor, from the image to the written, even spoken, and narrated word. Since its origins cinema has been a privileged place in which numerous and various forms of passages across different media have taken place.

The cinema adaptation, in the most common sense of the term (the cinematic transposition of literary works), is undoubtedly one of the most practised research fields. The opposite trend, from the cinema to literature, is much less researched. The progressive increase of exchanges across different media, alongside this “U turn,” is extremely significant. The term novelization can be applied to all the processes that follow this trend of adapting the cinema and television product into the most different and disparate narrative forms.

Alongside the by now well established (and in some cases even forgotten) forms of novelization, such as the novel or the Cinéromans, there are numerous other no less significant phenomena of transmigration of the narrative and linguistic forms from the “film environment” to numerous other “narrative environments:” action figures, radio, comics, videogames and the Internet. Naturally non-narrative environments (or not exclusively narrative) can also feature migration between different media. We can in fact hypothesise that some forms of novelization (the catalogue and the trailer for example) function on the basis of a process of selection/isolation of heterogeneous and crucial sections of the film, that are re-arranged and presented according to a logic that might not always be narrative. Udine’s XII International Film Studies Conference is dedicated to the broad and complex panorama of novelization.

Up to now there has been no historical and theoretical systemization of the argument, even though the phenomenon has occurred in a multiform and continuous manner throughout the history of cinema ever since its beginnings. Forms of novelization have been, for the most part erroneously, considered as operations that flatten, simplify and minimise the cinematic material and therefore subject to very little research and consideration by cinema studies. The vastness of available material, along with the continuous renewal of the forms and ways in which the passage between different media occurs, opens the field today to an investigation that can reveal original results both on the historiographic and on the theoretical and methodological fronts. Particular attention will be given to early cinema, as is customary for the conference, without forgetting new aspects suggested by contemporary situations.

Some possible ideas:

## Novelization and trans-textuality. Intersection/Overlap

Can novelization be studied through the application of categories (intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality, hypertextuality) developed by Genette to study the relations between texts? Can we consider novelization in the same way as a meta-text? Which are the specific/distinctive elements of forms of novelization in respect to paratextuality and specifically epitextuality?

## Novelization and intermediality

In the broad context of forms of crossing different media can novelization provide a specific perspective capable of producing new results? Certain elements evidently stand out, such as the migration of characters, settings, linguistic strategies from the big screen to other forms of narrative: the novel, naturally, along with the comic or the Cinéromans, but also the radio novelization in its most disparate forms, from reviews to the promotional launch including cinema programs. The migration towards other forms of image driven narrative seems extremely relevant, in the contemporary context, such as the ones favoured by the small screen, often consisting of serial products.

## The catalogue

In the context of early cinema, the catalogue is undoubtedly one of the fundamental epitextual components. As well as outlining and identifying the films through the title, the catalogue presents and “represents” them by providing, as well as certain essential information (price and length of the film, for example), a first re-elaboration of the contents in the form of a brief synopsis. The catalogue is therefore the privileged inaugural place for novelization. What are its specific characteristics compared to subsequent forms of novelization? What are the presentation/exhibition strategies employed? And, more specifically, which ones of these are beyond a narrative logic?

## The trailer

If the catalogue of the origins “sold” the film to the exhibitor/tradesmen, the trailer is aimed directly at the spectator. Even if they share the same promotional function, they differ in terms of whom the communication is aimed at. The enunciative dimension must be stressed to stimulate the spectator directly, with a subsequent dissemination of strong modes of address. The enunciative dimension is, therefore, stronger, than the narrative integration, in the organization of the contents in a markedly “attractive” process of repeated spectator stimulation (probably accentuated, today, by the need to make the trailer stand out from the indistinctive television production). Selection of the information, destructuring meaning, processes of re-combination and re-elaboration: these are the fundamental syntactic operations in the construction and spreading of the meaning of the trailer, supported by different strategies that can play on the appeal of the author, the star, belonging to a genre and to the expectations that this can

generate. But if the narrative is not the structuring principle of the trailer, it can constitute its subject: the trailer thematizes and promises the narrative act, producing and inducing an authentic “narrative desire.”

## Novelization/Author/Genre

How do cases of “genre novelization” and “author novelization” differ? Do they carry out different functions? What type of role can they have in terms of the expressive forms of different media? What specific usefulness can the study of novelization have in terms of understanding the poetics of an author or the mechanisms of a genre?

## Novelization and reception theories

Novelization can be seen as an opportunity for a negotiation between the audience and the filmic text. It can reveal the skills of the popular audience and can be considered as a sort of “active reading,” that produces meaning and it can have a pedagogic function too: that of learning the cinematic language. The forms of novelization multiply vertiginously, especially in the contemporary media situation, thanks also to the potentials offered by new media that guarantee a diffusion and a facility of (active and passive) access, that were unthinkable just a few years ago. In this context extremely relevant phenomena, such as the fan fiction, are still to be explored.

## Stories for the spectator/The stories of the spectator

The cinema critic seems to take on the role of privileged spectator since his “story of the film,” as against the one of the common spectator, assumes a unique importance by obtaining a widespread diffusion: what is, therefore, the role of the critic towards the reception of a film? Does the “story of the film,” from the critical point of view, contribute to determining the success or failure of a film? What happens when alongside the story of the film there is a “moral” assessment, as is the case with the pastoral assessments produced by the Italian Centro Cattolico Cinematografico? Can similar experiences be found in other social/cultural contexts?

Even the spectator’s stories offer interesting ideas: in what forms can they be traced? Can the narrations of the bonimenteur from the origins of cinema be included? Is the bonimenteur a “privileged spectator” too? Even if today it seems possible to access numerous channels that allow, a somewhat limited, “visibility” to the spectator’s stories (Internet, pages dedicated to reviews by readers on specialised magazines, etc.), what diffusion did this form of film narration have in the past? Which are the privileged forms of its circulation?

## The playbill

The playbill is a hybrid case that boasts a direct hereditariness from the customs and



traditions of the theatre and opera. It sits halfway between the trailer (and all that is relevant to the film's promotional and launch strategies) and the studies on reception. What are the differences and analogies between the catalogue and the trailer? What type of information can we glean from them about the practices and modes of film enjoyment and consumption? As they are aimed not so much at a potential spectator but rather to one that is already "conquered," can they be considered a promotional tool of the movie house rather than the film? Alongside an informative function (as well as a plot that often wants to have a strong aesthetic and literary significance, the playbill shows photos from the set, anecdotes on the making of and stars' biographies) and celebratory (of the value of the film, author and star), the playbill also has an absolutely crucial "emotional" function: that of stimulating and managing the memory of the film. The playbill not only prepares the spectator for the viewing but also provides him with elements to manage the parting from the show that he has just seen.

Deadline for proposals: November 15, 2004

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SELECTED BY

## SELECTED BY: RICHARD ABEL

Mark Garrett Cooper, *Love Rules: Silent Hollywood and the Rise of the Managerial Class* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003)

For a book whose text runs just slightly more than 200 pages, *Love Rules* is quite ambitious and provocative in its overall argument, extremely useful for its summaries of theoretical issues and debates, consistently insightful in its analyses of specific films – and yet also a bit maddening.

Basically, Cooper argues that the “the commonsense form of Hollywood narrative” was the visual love story, established during the feature film’s development in the 1910s and 1920s, a story in which “a particular kind of couple,” and the family which it founded, eventually was located in “a particular kind of space.” In this way, Cooper continues, Hollywood movies “made classification by race and gender essential means of determining where various individuals belonged,” and according to what “rules,” within a new national culture. Moreover, by securing the authority (in a rising professional managerial class [PMC] and its “teams of information specialists”) for how the spatial arrangements that the couple’s safety and prosperity required would be managed, the Hollywood love story contributed “to the shift that occurred, roughly speaking, between 1880 and 1930, when the America of industrial capital and ‘island communities’ gave way to a corporate America at once more tightly knit by mass media and more vocally subdivided into diverse groups.”

Of particular interest, for me at least, is the alternative this book offers to the paradigm that has dominated histories of American cinema, most recently and influentially in Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson’s *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*:<sup>1</sup> that is, historians have tended to “distinguish the Hollywood feature film from other types of films

and chronicle the relationship between its formal development and the organization of its production” through their “investigation of shots” as “the privileged units of analysis”. Although Cooper does not engage with Miriam Hansen’s current conceptual reworking of classical Hollywood cinema as “vernacular modernism” – in which “the hegemonic mechanisms by which Hollywood succeeded in amalgamating a diversity of competing traditions, discourses, and interests on the domestic level [...] accounted for at least some of the generalized appeal and robustness of Hollywood’s products abroad”<sup>2</sup> – his argument complements hers, especially in that it seeks to frame quite differently what, “on the domestic level,” from quite early on, was specifically American about American cinema. Indeed, Cooper works from this assumption: that “the distinctive patterns through which Hollywood tells that most familiar of narratives” are “spatial in character” – that is, “the love story does not happen in space so much as to space.” Consequently, it progresses, from an incorporeal vantage point, through “the opposition, transformation, and reconciliation of different kinds of spaces,” in order to restore “the lovers’ mutual gaze within a clean, well-lighted space” (the masculinist connotations of that reference are telling). In other words, the love story inspires the viewer’s desire “not for more and more visual information, but for the proper arrangement, stability, and mastery of dangerous differentiation,” reducing “the visual field to the space surrounding the socially reproducible couple.”

Cooper is especially persuasive in exploring certain ramifications of this argument in his analysis of specific films, from *Enoch Arden* (1911) to *The Wind* (1928) or *The Crowd* (1928). First of all, he extends and condenses the modifications that have long accrued to feminist psychoanalytic theory by arguing that “the privilege accorded the heroine’s face” through lighting, camerawork, and mise-en-scene does not simply objectify her as the figure “to-be-looked-at” by the hero but

presents her as “both part of a space and the site of a soulful interior,” an alluring image that suggests a subjective depth with the “power to signify an invisible source of desire.” As a crucial, paradoxical component of the lovers’ mutual gaze – for instance, in *La Bohème* (1926) – the woman’s face implies “a desirable, because desiring, consciousness, behind it.” Second, he deftly explains how the normative desire associated with “the face of love” is made “white” through the management of racial and ethnic differences, in relatively obvious cases such as *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and in much more complicated ones such as *The Jazz Singer* (1927). Third, as a corollary, he demonstrates how sound could be used to organize space according to patterns already established by silent features, so that, in *The Jazz Singer*, for instance, Al Jolson’s Jewish voice serves to resolve his character’s struggles through the unconventional (at the time) technique of musical numbers. Specifically, whereas “*Kol Nidre*” places that voice in the synagogue and locates its American audience (through his intended fiancée Mary) in the Jewish parlor, “*Mammy*” creates a new arrangement by seating his Jewish mother Sara in a Broadway theater to hear her son. “In bringing together these differences” and softening the boundaries between them, Cooper concludes, “the Jewish voice enriches America without losing its identity.”

Cooper also includes extremely useful discussions of a number of theoretical issues that ground the book’s argument. One, of course, is the historical relationship between the concepts of race and ethnicity in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which he traces through the influential writings of Horace Kallen, Robert Edward Park, and W. E. B. Du Bois. Although ethnicity generally came to designate a more palatable cultural difference, it supplemented rather than supplanted race: one category was hardly intelligible without the other. A second is the historical relationship between the concepts of private, public, and mass. If 19<sup>th</sup> cen-

tury print media’s configuration of those concepts grounded the bourgeois nation-state in the proposition that “reading and writing would allow the masses to rule themselves,” early 20<sup>th</sup> century visual media’s reconfiguration exposed that proposition as faulty. Here, Cooper offers a lengthy yet invaluable reappraisal of Walter Lippman and John Dewey’s landmark 1920s debate, out of which he teases a “state-of-the art theory of mediation.” A third is the rise of the PMC (first analyzed by Barbara and John Ehrenreich) and its acquisition of authority, chiefly through “new institutions of producing and disseminating knowledge” that “transform the division of labor and provide the basis for management’s power.” Wielding that authority, Cooper argues, depended on creating “what the public wants” through such means as advertising, controlling a commercial aesthetics that feminized the public as consumers, and managing reformist institutions and their discourse in such a way as to incorporate “critics in a nationwide public relations apparatus.”

Although the overall argument of *Love Rules* is provocative as an intervention in writing early American cinema history, the individual sections are consistently cogent and intriguing, and the concluding paragraph a model of concision, what I find a bit maddening is how tenuous sometimes are the links that hold the book together. For instance, the Lippmann-Dewey debate, the dangers of racial and ethnic difference, and the rise of the PMC are yoked together through what seems sheer homology in order to read the allegory of the Jewish movie mogul. More important, why the visual love story and its “clean, well-arranged, and illuminated space,” and not some other story or stories, became the prerogative of Hollywood’s PMC and its means of ordering the world and defining a new national culture remains a crucial, unaddressed question. Here, Richard Ohmann’s study of mass magazines at the turn of the last century,<sup>3</sup> which Cooper cites approvingly in his introduction, may have

provided more of a model for Love Rules, especially since Ohmann argues that the “paradigmatic story of courtship” in such magazines as *Munsey’s*, in the 1890s, extolled a particular kind of American modernity, constructed a secure place within it for two supposedly autonomous selves, and through both character and narrative voice “naturalized” the outlook of the PMC and its new corporate order.

- 1 David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (London: Kegan & Paul, 1985).
- 2 Miriam Hansen, “The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism,” in Christine Gledhill, Linda Williams (eds.), *Reinventing Film Studies* (London: Arnold, 2000), pp. 332-350.
- 3 Richard Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazine, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (London: Verso, 1996). See especially chapter 10: “Fiction’s Inadvertent Love Song,” pp. 287-339.

## SELECTED BY: FRANÇOIS ALBERA

Jean-Claude Milner, *Le Pas philosophique de Roland Barthes* (Lagrasse: Verdier, 2003)

L’hypothèse que poursuit Milner dans ce petit livre à l’argumentation serrée, situe la pensée de Barthes dans une problématique née dans la caverne de Platon. Lieu des apparences mais surtout du sensible, des sensations, la caverne doit-elle être quittée pour aller contempler les Idées, débarrassées des faux-semblants des cinq sens? Barthes postulerait que non et se serait efforcé, via Sartre, puis le marxisme, enfin la sémiologie, d’élever les qualia du sensible au rang d’idées, avant d’“aménagement” la caverne avec le plaisir du texte et, constatant l’inanité de cet hédonisme

proclamé, en sortir dans la lumière du “souverain Bien” qui n’est que le chagrin de la perte, lieu de retour du passé, chambre d’échos, cette chambre claire du souvenir où désormais les images, les apparences, sous les espèces de la photographie, s’éclairent dans l’aura. Ces points d’appui de Milner “parlent” suffisamment aux spécialistes de cinéma – mythe de la caverne, camera oscura, christologie de l’image, aura – pour éveiller leur intérêt. Plus encore le fait que Milner déclare avec tranchant l’incompatibilité de cette pensée barthienne de l’image reproductible, la photographie, et de la pensée benjaminienne: “Il n’est pas un paragraphe de La Chambre claire qui ne prenne le contre-pied de L’Œuvre d’art [à l’époque de sa reproduction mécanisée]. En sens inverse, il n’est pas une proposition de L’Œuvre d’art qui ne porte en elle la condamnation de La Chambre claire.” (p. 28).

La doxa – dont Milner définit si bien la nature et la fonction dans son étonnante réévaluation non dupe du structuralisme – répugne à repérer du discord, du différend entre les références qu’elle s’oblige à révéler. Dans “le Journal”, comme dit le mallarméen Milner, et dans l’exercice académique qui le flanque, on cite volontiers ensemble des noms inconciliables. On dit Deleuze et Derrida, Bazin et Benjamin, Barthes... Affaire de cadrage, de consensus. Après l’épisode structural, en effet qui ne cessait de diviser, on rassemble, c’est la politique de l’apaisement, sans enjeux, on énumère (mille e tre..., principe du catalogue celui-ci doublant l’exposition ou l’étalage, formes devenues dominantes dès lors qu’on répugne à l’articulation).

Ce mince et dense ouvrage dérive en quelque sorte des deux chapitres consacrés à Barthes dans *Le Périple structural*. Le pas reprend et détaille l’évocation qui y est faite de l’itinéraire barthésien du Degré zéro à L’Empire des signes et surtout, il la poursuit jusqu’à La chambre claire. Dans *Le Périple*, on s’arrêta à L’Empire des signes – où le pluriel qui affecte le mot “signe” indique une sortie de l’épistémologie minimaliste du structuralisme. Il

avait fait sa force. Barthes, qui l'avait adoptée au sortir des *Mythologies* (à l'articulation de Sartre et du marxisme), en percevait désormais la faiblesse.

Pour Jean-Claude Milner, la perspective philosophique de R.B., évidemment reconstruite depuis la fin de l'itinéraire – du périple –, c'est la recherche des qualités sensibles, des *qualia* et la volonté de les hisser au rang des Idées. Elle s'enracine dans la phénoménologie qui "autorise" à s'intéresser au sensible dans le détail de ses qualités, en particulier par le moyen de l'épithète, promotion de l'adjectif au rang de nom (le lisse, le sec, l'obtus) dont Barthes est prodigue. Chez Sartre – dans *L'Être et le Néant* –, ces *qualia* sont à la fois reconnues, nommées et situées au lieu du répulsif (l'obscène, le poisseux, le visqueux, le pâteux: la nausée en un mot, "témoignage... du réel de la Caverne. De son réel physiologique"). Comment se situer dans la Caverne, y nommer le sensible sans "vomissement"?

Le Michelet est une première tentative d'accueil des *qualia* sous la forme d'un catalogue d'idées; mais cela ne suffit pas. Le geste qui permet de s'en sortir est de se délivrer de la topologie du profond, du "vertige des profondeurs" (Sartre a une visée de psychologie existentielle) et de s'en tenir aux surfaces. Et comment appréhender des qualités sensibles sans les référer au profond, sinon en les envisageant dans l'espace du nommable, en considérant le langage comme la clé, via "le Signe et [...] la structure que le Signe autorise". (p. 38) Une science des surfaces, une science "galiléenne", mathématisable, celle instituée par Saussure, ramassée encore par Hjelmslev sur des procédures plus serrées – et promise à une extension –, la sémiologie. Mais à l'entreprise linguistique savante (Jakobson, Martinet), voire à l'entreprise structuraliste (Lévi-Strauss, Dumézil), Barthes donne une inflexion: comme Lacan et Althusser dans leurs champs propres, il vectorise sa sémiologie par rapport à l'idéologie et (donc) la méconnaissance.

A la fin des *Mythologies* qui voit advenir le Barthes "de la maturité", apparaît la question

de la langue comme lieu du travestissement idéologique des *qualia*. Au-delà de Sartre, inattentif, qui n'envisage que les contenus, Barthes entend doter le matérialisme historique – qui n'en dit rien mais doit l'accueillir – de cet apport décisif. La langue "à l'ère de la reproduction technique", la langue de la société de masse, "la langue reproductible fournit à l'idéologie son moyen le plus matériel et le plus puissant" (p. 49). Au paradigme optique de Marx concernant l'idéologie ("image renversée de la réalité") se substitue le paradigme du stéréotype (slogan, littérature, idée reçue), un fait linguistique "imperceptible", une "pseudo-physis" (qui se situe hors de l'histoire, hors de la langue) qui requiert, pour engager une démythification: une/la sémiologie. Le structuralisme paraît donc capable d'appréhender les *qualia* par le classement et le système (opposition, commutation, etc.) et par le recours "atomistique" à la notion de signe. Grâce à ce dernier l'antinomie entre *qualia* et science est surmontée, ainsi que l'antinomie entre la science et le "monde moderne", celui de la vie quotidienne contemporaine, celui du *thesei* (distinct du *phusei*). Mais l'exemple d'application, *Système de la mode* est une impasse, un exercice académique (: une thèse) dont seul le titre fait mouche: "A la jérémiade des obscurs: le structuralisme est une mode", R.B. répond: "Oui, justement; à ce point une mode que la mode est son objet; à ce point son objet que seul convient pour en désigner le traitement [...]: le nom de système" (p. 126).

La sortie du structuralisme et la réaction au retour du politique en 1968 (que R.B. s'était efforcé de déplacer dans une politique du signe désormais en panne) s'opèrent du côté du plaisir et du texte. Mais ce n'est qu'une étape ou (encore) une impasse quoique R.B. lui doive sa gloire (les suiveurs se multiplient, mais le voilà sans interlocuteur). C'est alors qu'intervient *La Chambre claire* dont l'intérêt – et peut-être l'importance – pour nous – provient d'une part de son lieu d'émission, la collection "Cinéma" que Gallimard confia brièvement aux Cahiers du cinéma,

d'autre part de son objet – la photographie et non le cinéma mais confrontée à lui (disposition qu'on trouve aussi chez Bazin) – et enfin du décalage que le texte apportait à la théorie d'alors de l'image. Barthes, manifestement “à contre-courant”, ne développe dans ce livre ni – bien sûr – l'approche dite “des pâtes Panzani” envisagée dans la perspective d'une “rhétorique de l'image” (et depuis lors devenu le pont aux ânes des discours de publicitaires-sémiologues, l'une des figures instituées, hélas!, au retrait de la “vague” structuraliste),<sup>1</sup> ni celle de “l'obvie et l'obtus”.<sup>2</sup> Cette dernière, partie du photogramme, abordait de biais le cinéma, par une opération forte, d'un point de vue analytique, puisqu'elle postulait que la levée des contraintes du mouvement et du temps (l'arrêt sur image) étaient sans doute la pré-condition d'une définition du filmique. Ce positionnement, peut-être l'ultime disposition d'une méthode structurale, est, on le sait, tombée à plat dans le milieu de la réflexion critique, son seul écho étant venu des praticiens Godard et Gorin dans *Letter to Jane* (et, plus tard, dans les travaux vidéo de Godard-Miéville: *Sur et sous la communication, France / Tour / Détour / Deux enfants*). Les deux livres de Deleuze venant, au contraire, “libérer”, “soulager” les critiques de ce surmoi structural en restituant le mouvement et le temps comme indissociables de “l'image” du film<sup>3</sup> – qui ne relève pourtant pas le différend Barthes-Deleuze – et, en tant qu'effet aveugle de cette omission, l'exposition Roland Barthes du Centre Pompidou fin 2002-début 2003, qui préféra illustrer les articles de *Mythologies* “sur” le cinéma ou susceptibles d'être illustrés “par” le cinéma que de s'affronter à cet article.

Milner – qui ignore l'épisode “Troisième sens” pourtant explicitement en butte à la question du dépassement du *studium* dont *Le Système de la mode* est l'aboutissement – envisage *La Chambre claire* comme une “palinodie” (le mot est de Barthes), une “rétractation” de la séquence post-structuraliste: “Il me fal-

lait convenir que mon plaisir était un médiateur imparfait:” “Dix ans de divertissement et de travaux se trouvent annulés” (p. 69).

On a vu tout à l'heure que l'entrée de Barthes dans la perspective sémiologique se faisait dans le prolongement d'une activité critique, démystificatrice (celle des *Mythologies* et des articles de *Théâtre populaire*) par le biais du concept (forgé en l'occurrence par Milner) de “reproductibilité” de la langue. Milner introduit donc tôt dans son livre cette proximité avec une notion attachée au nom de Walter Benjamin, pour en marquer très vite aussi la différence. Reproduction “de la langue” n'est pas reproduction “de l'œuvre d'art”, bien que le même acteur soit au centre du processus: la masse. Car, tandis que chez Benjamin la masse “peut être confondue avec le prolétariat”, elle est, chez Barthes, “la bourgeoisie anonyme”. Il n'est pas indifférent, en effet, que l'entreprise sémiologique se soit développée au sein du Centre d'étude des communications de masse que dirigeait Edgar Morin et qu'elle jouxtât sans la croiser la démarche benjaminienne, faisant sans le dire écho à un autre différend aigu des années 30, celui qui oppose Benjamin-Brecht-Eisler à Adorno-Horkheimer.<sup>4</sup>

Parvenu à la question de la photographie, la confrontation entre W.B. et R.B. s'impose à nouveau, or Milner l'a dit sans ambage: Barthes prend l'exact contre-pied de Benjamin dans *La Chambre claire*. “A l'endroit de Benjamin la condamnation est pleine et entière”, Barthes “renverse” les Thèses sur l'histoire (l'ange de l'histoire contemple les décombres d'un passé qui n'est pas le sien, tandis que chez Barthes les morts, nos morts sont devant nous, notre passé), surtout, concernant la technique photographique, il renverse les thèses sur la reproduction. Là où Benjamin demandait: qu'arrive-t-il à l'œuvre d'art à présent que commence l'ère de sa reproductibilité? Barthes répond: il ne lui arrive rien, “puisque ce qui est photographié ne cesse pas de devenir ce qu'il est – unique”, puisque “la photographie le fait être unique”



(p. 75), “Si l’aura dénomme la postulation d’unicité d’un être, alors il n’est rien arrivé à l’aura à l’ère de la reproductibilité technique” (ibid).

Il n’est pas sûr que Milner ne “force” pas un peu sa lecture en usant comme il le fait du terme de “reproduction”, en déniaut que Benjamin ait envisagé les êtres vivants photographiés et non seulement les objets, enfin sur le sens de la notion d’aura chez lui. Mais tenons-nous en à Barthes. Ainsi le chagrin de la perte de la mère induit-il une conception de la photographie comme auratique in se: quand on retrouve la photo – les ombres, les apparences – dans la caverne où redescend celui qui a contemplé le vrai à la lumière des Idées, l’unique s’y produit, inentamé par la reproduction qui devait le périmé, sous les espèces du manque.

Serge Tisseron avait remis en cause la base même du dispositif barthésien dans le lien à la perte, au deuil,<sup>5</sup> mais il s’interrogeait surtout d’un point de vue psychanalytique. Milner n’évite évidemment pas cette question, le modèle de La Chambre claire est pour lui le retour d’Ulysse et en particulier le séjour qu’il fait au royaume des morts à la rencontre des spectres des siens, de sa mère en particulier qu’il tente par trois fois d’étreindre (la proximité de cette référence avec le texte de Gorki de 1896 sur le cinématographe n’est pas alléguée, mais est néanmoins frappante). Mais sur cette base non discutée, Milner donne une signification plus générale à ce texte, “universelle”. Le tour de force de Barthes n’est-il pas de “retrouver” sa mère enfant?

Tisseron distinguait également dans son livre les notions de “trace” et d’“empreinte” le plus souvent confondues. En situant la photographie du côté de la “trace”, il introduisait un principe actif, relevant de l’intention d’un sujet. Il est vrai que depuis l’affirmation malencontreuse de la photographie comme “message sans code” (qui marqua le “jeune Metz”), jusqu’à son modèle tripartite des niveaux de signification de l’image photographique (calqué, dirait-il, sur celui de l’iconologie de Panofsky), Barthes a toujours privilégié la

dimension d’empreinte jusqu’à celle, sublimée, de la mère perdue dans La Chambre claire. En se situant d’un point de vue plus élevé, Milner explique que pour Barthes, “le répétable de l’image [est] noué à l’irrépétable de l’être” et a “pour paradigme éminent le Christ, de Véronique au Suaire de Turin”: “La photographie est christologie perpétuelle” (p. 78). Ces formulations qui résonnent, pour nous, en liaison avec “l’ontologie de l’image photographique” de Bazin, marque pour Milner “la cause réelle de la fracture qui le sépare de Benjamin, porteur, dans la modernité imagéante, du judaïsme sans images” (p. 78).

On a laissé de côté jusqu’ici l’adjectif qui donne pourtant son sens au titre de ce livre: philosophique. Le “pas” de Barthes serait philosophique. Peut-être peut-on, jusqu’à un certain point, “se passer” de cette inscription dans un champ dont la frontière avec la théorie n’est pas toujours très nette (le livre de Chateau l’atteste par ses incertitudes mêmes à se donner son objet propre, recrutant Bazin ou Mitry parmi Bergson et Merleau-Ponty). D’autant que tant L’Imaginaire de Sartre que tel ou tel ouvrage de Marx ne se présentent pas comme “de la philosophie”. Quoi qu’il en soit, pour Milner, à en rester à ces références, “on manque un repère plus essentiel et plus secret: Platon” (p. 23), le Platon du Parménide, du Phèdre, de la République.

Barthes a explicitement dit son extériorité avec la philosophie, mais il y a cependant recouru. Or “le recours à la philosophie”, “le détour par la philosophie est-il aussi un pas dans la philosophie?” demande l’auteur qui répond “oui” (p. 22). C’est là un “pas” au sens de la marche (un bon pas), du degré même (la marche d’escalier) ou du seuil (franchir le pas) voire de la trace. Mais outre qu’il puisse s’agir d’un “faux pas” (“contre-pied” est-il dit plusieurs fois), il est permis de lire chez le linguiste Milner logicien de surcroît et lacanien, le “pas” de la négation, sinon l’opérateur logique qui transforme une proposition en sa contraire...

1 “Rhétorique de l’image”, *Communications*, n° 4

- (1964).
- 2 “Le Troisième sens”, *Cahiers du cinéma*, n° 222 (1970).
  - 3 *Sur le soulagement, voir Dominique Château, Cinéma et philosophie* (Paris: Nathan, 2003).
  - 4 *Il faut lire à cet égard le livre de Bruno Tackels, L’Œuvre d’art à l’époque de Walter Benjamin. Histoire d’aura* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1999). Et ce à quoi il ouvre aussi du côté de *Musique de film*.
  - 5 Serge Tisseron, *Le Mystère de la chambre claire* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1996).

## SELECTED BY: SANDRO BERNARDI

Gian Piero Brunetta, *Guida alla storia del cinema italiano. 1905-2003* (Torino: Einaudi, 2003)

I problemi che incontra chi si accinge a studiare o a scrivere una storia del cinema generale o del cinema italiano sono davvero molti. Anzitutto se sia possibile scriverla. Le storie del cinema tradizionali, rigorosamente specialistiche, si presentano spesso come elenchi sterminati di titoli, nomi, apparecchi e date, di consultazione assai più che di lettura, elenchi privi di un pensiero centrale. Mancano di prospettive storiche allargate o di contestualizzazioni, per cui ogni fenomeno, autore, film o movimento che sia, è visto nella sua singolarità specifica, invece di essere integrato con il contesto culturale e sociale. In secondo luogo c’è il problema se esista una cinematografia nazionale, o se anche questa sia semplicemente una parte della storia del cinema generale. In certi casi sembra che i contesti nazionali dialoghino intensamente fra loro, stimolandosi e rispondendosi, altre volte appaiono profondamente differenti (è il caso in cui si diceva solitamente che un paese era “rimasto indietro”, ma indietro rispetto a che cosa?, e poi che vuol dire “avanti” e “indietro”?). In terzo luogo, corollario dei precedenti, c’è il rapporto fra la storia del cinema e la Storia generale, la legittimità di una distinzione fra le due rimane un proble-

ma. In quarto luogo, allargando quello precedente, nasce il problema del rapporto fra storia e cultura, fra movimenti cinematografici e movimenti culturali, un aspetto spesso mancante (per esempio la ricchissima Storia del cinema e dei film di David Bordwell e Kristin Thompson dedica molto spazio agli aspetti industriali di ogni cinematografia nazionale, e maltratta invece i più grandi movimenti artistici del Novecento, tanto che il Dadaismo diventa un “caotico assemblamento di eventi”, mentre il Surrealismo raccontava “storie anomale e spesso sessualmente allusive, che seguissero l’inesplicabile logica dei sogni.”)<sup>1</sup>

Il problema di una storia del cinema è proprio questo, far avvicinare testo e contesto, illuminare la rete di connessioni culturali e di consumo in cui sta immesso il cinema e nello stesso tempo non perdere di vista le singolarità dei paesi, degli autori, delle opere o dei movimenti, trattare il rapporto fra il cinema e le altre arti, ma anche quello fra la storia del cinema e la Storia che, con i suoi eventi politici, economici e sociali, viene elaborata, trasformata e “precipita in cultura”; oppure il difficile e spesso dubbio rapporto fra produzione d’autore e produzione commerciale di consumo. Si tratta di fare quadrare il cerchio insomma, considerando sia l’insieme nella sua complessità sia i singoli film nella loro specificità, e il dialogo che i testi intrecciano con altre opere e con il contesto.

Per raggiungere una visione così ricca, unitaria e diversa, complessa e molteplice come quella che troviamo nel libro di Gian Piero Brunetta, occorre davvero avere studiato per decine di anni il cinema e la Storia. Con la semplicità e la chiarezza delle grandi opere, sotto un titolo umile come *Guida alla storia del cinema italiano*, Brunetta pone subito sul tavolo questi problemi: esiste un cinema italiano? È possibile individuare un rapporto fra cinema e identità nazionale, sia in senso culturale, sia in senso sociale generale? La risposta è positiva: il cinema italiano, osserva Brunetta è un cinema che “ha sempre manife-

stato un forte senso d'indipendenza e d'insofferenza rispetto a ogni tipo di condizionamento esterno, che ha rivendicato da subito le sue ascendenze culturali alte, i suoi geni artistici e letterari, che ha cercato di stabilire dei ponti con le tradizioni letterarie, teatrali, pittoriche" (p. XVIII).

Dopo avere annoverato le fonti che un ricercatore dovrebbe avere presenti, soprattutto le nuove fonti che hanno rivoluzionato la storiografia del cinema muto negli ultimi venti anni, Brunetta ci indica alcuni aspetti che, sia pure nel gioco di continuità e discontinuità di tutte le storie, sembrano informare di uno spirito unitario i molteplici processi inventivi ed espressivi, riportandoli spesso a "matrici, modi, forme, miti, anime comuni" (ibid.).

Il primo tratto nazionale è un atteggiamento negativo nei confronti della tendenza alla normalizzazione industriale: "Di certo quello di non essersi mai dato un vero assetto né di avere mai metabolizzata e fatta propria una cultura industriale", per cui Brunetta conia, a proposito dell'ultimo settantennio, ovvero di tutto il periodo sonoro, la geniale formula di "industria senza industriali", che definisce un cinema sempre sospeso fra industria e artigianato. Non è cosa da poco, dal punto di vista storiografico, trasformare un atteggiamento negativo e un'assenza in un punto di forza, non credo che molti ci avessero pensato, ma è vero: agli occhi di chi studia le strutture, la mancanza insistente di strutturazione diventa un rifiuto sistematico e culturale, una scelta più che mai significativa.

Il secondo punto di forza è di avere elaborato, nel dopoguerra, ovvero nel periodo della ricostruzione, un modello, quello della "bottega rinascimentale", ovvero il modello della collaborazione, che non solo ha aiutato il cinema a rilanciare in modo originale e a superare le aporie del cinema d'autore o quelle altrettanto forti dei generi, ma che proviene dalla profonda e radicata cultura nazionale: sono ben note le pagine di Roberto Longhi sulla esperienza e sul concetto di "bottega", che ci hanno insegnato a guardare alla storia

dell'arte italiana in modo diverso rispetto alle vecchie impostazioni e all'attribuzionismo secco. In questo modo Brunetta, che riprende qui un'idea su cui ha lavorato da lungo tempo, ci propone di guardare al cinema italiano non solo come un cinema diverso, ma anche, in quanto tale, da considerare con una prospettiva e una metodologia differenti rispetto alle altre cinematografie. Cambia quindi il metodo insieme con l'oggetto. Architetti, costumisti, scenografi, sceneggiatori, hanno fatto parte e creato botteghe da cui sono usciti tanti film, così che il loro lavoro si cala dentro il ricco e vivo tessuto della cultura nazionale, producendo uno "stile italiano" che va ben oltre i vecchi dieci o dodici registi su cui si costruiva la storia del cinema italiano.

Il terzo carattere distintivo nazionale è l'interlocuzione particolarmente viva e forte con il contesto critico e intellettuale: allo sviluppo, alle modificazioni o, secondo i casi, al suo mantenimento hanno contribuito molto più che altrove i critici, le riviste, i festival, gli organizzatori culturali, gli interessi governativi, le associazioni, le rassegne. Mai come in Italia i cineasti hanno tenuto d'occhio le pratiche discorsive sul cinema. Brunetta cita come caso esemplare il ruolo interlocutorio di Cinema Nuovo, ma mi verrebbe da aggiungere che forse il dialogo viene proprio dall'esistenza in Italia del Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, dove teorici e cineasti s'incontravano, lavoravano e a volte anche crescevano insieme.

Fra i caratteri più specificamente nazionali Brunetta ne individua alcuni che senza dubbio fanno pensare: si tratta di un cinema che ha sempre costituito un luogo privilegiato per la memoria storica di un paese così giovane (e questo vale anche ora, fino ai film che vediamo in questi giorni sugli schermi – si pensi a *Bellocchio a Benvenuti o a Giordana*). Poi l'eredità teatrale che forse, come tante volte è stato lamentato, pesa sul nostro schermo, ma d'altra parte anche lo mantiene continuamente nuovo, in un ancoraggio con la tra-

dizione, dato che il rinnovamento è solo e sempre rielaborazione delle proprie radici. Fra le ascendenze teatrali poi la Commedia dell'arte costituisce una vera e propria morfologia e tipologia che il cinema italiano sembra avere pienamente metabolizzato e spesso riprende e rielabora, anche senza saperlo, anzi soprattutto quando non lo sa. E infine anche la direzione opposta, quella verso la realtà, con la metabolizzazione a tutti livelli, dal più alto e rarefatto cinema di poesia a quello più schiettamente commerciale, dei generi, dove la grande esperienza neorealista, come disse Alberto Farassino, ha "sporcato" il cinema italiano.

Il resto è la storia. Ma, partendo da questo assunto e con questo teorema da dimostrare, le altre cinquecento pagine diventano una affascinante e avvincente sfida, una corsa attraverso gli anni e i film, che leggiamo quasi d'un fiato passando dagli autori alle strutture alle leggi, alle cadute ai rilanci, ai fallimenti ai successi, arriviamo al cinema di ieri. Dal Pinocchio di Antamoro a quello di Benigni, dalla Presa di Roma al caso Moro di Bellocchio.

Un cinema che sa coniugare il realismo e i modelli teatrali, sia in forme alte che in forme basse. Scusate se è poco.

1 David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, *Film History. An Introduction* (New York: Mc.Graw-Hill, 1994); trad. it. *Storia del cinema e dei film* (Milano: Il Castoro, 1998), vol. 1, p. 255.

## SELECTED BY: FRANCESCO CASETTI, MARIAGRAZIA FANCHI

Mark Jancovich, Lucy Faire, with Sarah Stubbings, *The Place of the Audience. Cultural Geographies of Film Consumption* (London: BFI, 2003)

"The following study is an attempt to move beyond the analysis of how audiences inter-

pret text and to open up ways of studying film consumption as an activity" (p. 3).

Film Studies have long included the study of the audience among their fields of research, recognizing an essential role to reception practices in the understanding of cinema. Yet the experience of vision, with its complex intertwining of relations with the context, is still relatively unexplored. The concept of cinematic experience emerges in the field of filmology after World War Two, mainly to indicate the psychological aspects involved in vision, from the "need" of cinema to the "belief" in the represented reality. More recently it has grown to a larger field of references, up to including cultural processes as well as the historical conditions underlying vision. Through a renewed reading of Benjamin, cinematographic experience has appointed the place where cinema and its consumption acquire meaning within daily life practices (Thomas Elsaesser has presented a dense paper on this theme at the Conference of Ascona in honour of Noelle Brinkman). The study by Jankovich and Faire, with the collaboration of Stubbings, marks a significant advancement in this direction: not only for the quality of their case history, but also for the thesis underlying the research: the usefulness of an enlargement of frame in order to understand why and how the spectator approaches the film.

The activity of film consumption in Nottingham is the object of the research, from the first appearance of the filmic spectacle in the city fairs to the recent construction of a futuristic multimedia centre. Transitions are interpreted on the background of the changes that invested the geography of the city, particularly urban transformation and the new forms of relations brought by it. These transitions are described keeping in consideration the complex of actions involved in the spectator's experience, including the choice of the medium for film viewing. Those actions reflect not only personal instances but also life style, social class, gender, the ties and pressures of the social system, and they thus high-

light how movie going has an exemplar value within the environment and circumstances where it takes place. Besides the suggested periodization and the detailed analysis of each phase, the work of the authors has the merit of introducing some new or less explored issues. Let's take as an example the topic of security and social control.

In 1910 a law is issued in Great Britain, named Cinematographic Act, in order to guarantee the audience's safety against the dangers of fire. The application of the law brings as a result the construction of specific sites for cinema viewing, a practice that thus moves from city fairs and cafés to the Cinematographic Theatres. But to a close look the act leads to even larger consequences. The distribution of licences shows a precise intent of social control over the spectator's experience, one example being the setting of theatres in upper class city areas, another being the imposition of a strict separation between the filmic spectacle and other forms of consumer goods, such as food and alcoholic beverages. The regulation of the filmic spectacle is a clue to the understanding of the growing popularity of cinema at the beginning of the century, but also of the discomfort and social tension produced by the urbanization process over the previous decades. Security and control re-emerge in the study's historical overview also in later phases: in the fifties and sixties, for example, the perception of a deregulation of the suburbs contributes to the abandonment of local cinemas; or, more recently, the building of a multiplex, attracting crowds of young people, in the same area as the theatre and music hall, is perceived by the local population as a destabilizing factor.

We insisted on control and safety because it represents an essential element of the cinematographic experience. We could go further: movie going can be seen as characterized by the intervention of a series of "disciplines" in the sense given to the term by Foucault. These are of course disciplines of a different nature from those defining seventeenth and eighteenth

century modernity: they do not have a repressive character, but they equally make use of techniques such as spatial division, serialization of behaviour, definition of programs of action, and so forth... Their intervention aims at making the body of the spectator meek, in a situation where at the same time a wide range of freedom is guaranteed, favoured by the darkness of the theatre and the participation in a strongly identifying spectacle. Thus we can well say that "discipline" and freedom are both present in cinema, and that the consumer activity sets itself as the site where the two terms literally negotiate their reasons. We will not go further in this suggestion, which is at the centre of the ongoing research of the authors of this review.

Getting back to Jankovich and Faire, we must add to the appeal of their book the conjunct use of more traditional sources of reference, such as local newspapers, and personal remembrances, collected with an advanced and aware use of the ethnographic method.

Therefore, this work presents itself as a virtuous example also in its ability of creating a dialogue between different approaches and disciplines.

## SELECTED BY: LORENZO CUCCU

Vito Zagarrío, *Cinema e fascismo*. Film, modelli, immaginari (Venezia: Marsilio, 2004)\*

\* Lorenzo Cuccu si scusa per non aver potuto inviare la sua recensione.

## SELECTED BY: THOMAS ELSAESSER

Heide Schönemann, Paul Wegener. *Frühe Moderne im Film* (Stuttgart-London: Axel Menges, 2003)

It has always been axiomatic – and not only thanks to Lotte Eisner's *The Haunted Screen* –

that if you look for a typically “German” film genre, the most likely candidate is the fantastic film. What is less evident – especially in light of Siegfried Kracauer’s *From Caligari to Hitler*, where the fantastic film is treated as the unconscious emanation of a troubled epoch and a people – is the extent to which this genre originated with a single individual, namely Paul Wegener. A celebrated Max Reinhardt actor before he came to make films, Wegener gave, between 1913 and 1918, decisive impulses to the fairy-tale film, which in turn provided the templates also for the film of the fantastic and the uncanny. Best known, of course, is *Der Student von Prag* (1913), which, although nominally directed by the Dane Stellan Rye and scripted by Hanns Heinz Ewers, was the brainchild of its cinematographer Guido Seeber and its leading actor, Paul Wegener, in the role of the impoverished student and his fateful double. After the film’s enormous success, Wegener acted in, co-wrote and co-directed *Der Golem* (1914), which became the prototype of many subsequent “ambivalent-benevolent” creature feature films, not only in Germany. There followed *Rübezahls Hochzeit* (1916), *Der Yoghi* (1916), *Hans Trutz im Schlaraffenland* (1917), *Der Rattenfänger* (1918) and several other films exploiting the rich vein of German Romantic legends and folk-myths.

One of the reasons why, in film history, Wegener’s pioneering role has not always been fully appreciated may be that his exploration of sorcerers, demiurges, tyrants and giants already the 1910s contradicted the idea of the German fantastic film as a post-World War One phenomenon, to fit the political thesis of fascist premonitions. But more worrying has been Wegener politically compromised position during the Nazi era. Between 1933 and 1945 he directing no fewer than seven feature films (among them, *Ein Mann will nach Deutschland* [1934]; *Moskau-Schanghai* [1936]; *Unter Ausschluss der Öffentlichkeit* [1937]) and starred, as a high-profile, celebrated “State Actor,” in twenty more (including such infamous ones as *Hans Westmar* [1933]; *Der Grosse*

*Herrscher* [1942] and *Kolberg* [1945]). And yet, to think of him as a convinced Nazi, or even an opportunist fellow-traveller neither captures his philosophy of life, nor is it confirmed by his biography. Born in West-Prussia in 1874, into an upper-middle class protestant family, Wegener died in 1948 in Berlin. One of his last great roles was as Nathan, the Wise in G.E. Lessing’s eponymous play, German literature’s most eloquent plea for multi-ethnic tolerance and religious emancipation.

Thus, it is a rather patchy picture that we have of Wegener, apparently full of contradictions: one of Germany’s foremost film pioneers, who throughout his life remained above all a man of the theatre; passionate about modern cinematic technology, but using it to give body to pre-industrial romantic and fairy-tale fantasies; a free spirit of vast erudition and culture, but seemingly willing to lend his talents to a Fascist and racist regime. The much-needed re-assessment of Wegener has now begun in Germany, and a bright shaft of illuminating light is cast on part of his early work by Heide Schönemann’s new book. Following on from her equally path-breaking study *Fritz Lang Filmbilder-Vorbilder* (1992), the large-format, quality-produced and well-illustrated volume does not set out to be a biography, explaining or reconciling the tensions just mentioned. Instead, it painstakingly and with great aplomb, reconstructs the life-worlds of the images, the ideas and friendships that animated this restless intelligence, by tracing a dense network of cross-references between art-history and esoteric religion, between a collector’s passions and colonial fantasies, between a generation’s questing spiritual aspirations and an age of increasingly self-confident media technologies.

For film historians, Wegener’s work in the teens is crucial for at least two reasons: he was attracted to fantastic subjects partly because they allowed him to explore different cinematic techniques, such as trick photography, superimposition, special effects in the manner of Melies’ feeries, but with a stronger nar-

rative motivation. For this, he worked closely with one of the early German cinema's most creative cameramen, Guido Seeber, himself a still underrated pioneer whose many publications about the art of cinematography, special effects and lighting are a veritable sourcebook for understanding the German style of the 1920s. But Wegener's fairy tale films also promoted the ingenious compromise which the Autorenfilm wanted to strike between countering the immense hostility shown towards the cinema by the intelligentsia and the educated middle-class (manifested in the so-called Kino Debatte) and exploiting the cinema as a popular medium.

Schönemann, from a slightly different, more art-historical perspective, sees Wegener as the chief exponent of what she terms "early Modernism in film," situated by her in a European context (Symbolism, Art nouveau, Jugendstil, Arts and Crafts, as well as the Scandinavian painters, novelists and dramatists of anti-naturalism). Consequently, she concentrates on the years from 1913 to the 1920s, culminating in Wegener's (third) Golem film (*Der Golem wie er in die Welt kam*, 1920), and concluding with a picture epilogue of *Lebende Buddhas*, a film from 1923/25, presumed lost, since only a fragment has survived, along with a series of production stills, reproduced over twenty-four pages. Not unexpectedly, Schönemann considers Wegener's early work to have inspired Fritz Lang (*Der müde Tod*, 1921), F.W. Murnau (*Der Knabe in blau*, 1919), Arthur Gerlach (*Zur Chronik von Grieshuus*, 1925), as well as G.W. Pabst's *Der Schatz* (1923). She also mentions Victor Sjöström and Mauritz Stiller, as well as Febo Mari's *Il fauno* (1917), claiming in all cases a common artistic sensibility rather than direct "influence."

Although an art historian by training, Schönemann, is generally less interested in (classical) links of influence, (modernist) citation or (postmodern) appropriation. The strength of her method – derived from Erwin Panofsky and recalling Aby Warburg – is to iso-

late visual moment, compositions or facial expressions in the films, and then try to identify (in the vast and surprisingly diverse archive which is modern art) the recurrence or migration of these same iconic or pictorial motifs. Thus, for instance, she shows how certain of the mirror scenes in *Der Student von Prag* have echoes in the drawings by Alfred Kubin and Max Klinger, how body postures in Wegener's films recall dance poses of then famous dancers such as Gertrud Leistikow, Dora Brandenburg or Gret Palucca, and how important for his sense of lighting and surface texture was his collaboration with Lotte Reiniger (she did the intertitles for *Der Rattenfänger* and a film-within-a-film for *Der verlorene Schatten*). Reiniger in turn, felt inspired by Wegener's cinema fairy-tales to extend her own silhouette work into feature-length films.

Famous names from the art world that turn up – apart from the usual suspects Pieter Breughel, Albrecht Dürer, Caspar David Friedrich – are Felix Vallotton, Lovis Corinth, Hans Thoma, Ferdinand Hodler, Moritz von Schwind, Heinrich Vogeler and many other artists now barely remembered. Lotte Eisner had already done similar work, notably on the films of Lang and Murnau, comparing motifs in painting and film. Where Schönemann extends and also differentiates Eisner's conventional method of tracing influence, is in her deeper analysis of such networks – pointing out biographical as well as philosophical links – and secondly, by giving more attention to spatial composition and architecture.

To cite an example of the first: one of the many filiations that bind Wegener to his generation of artists is the monumentality and singularity of his own appearance. From early on, the massive body and above all, the striking face identified Wegener as a star, a towering presence, destined to distinguish himself. His face was often seen as "Asiatic" or "Slav," with all the cliché associations of inscrutability, of erotic danger and allure, of lurking cruelty and the hidden access to supernatural wisdom as well as power. Schönemann is able to docu-

ment how this face became a kind of icon or brand-name, caricatured in the newspapers or featured on posters by the artist Zajac, his silhouette made famous by not only Lotte Reiniger's paper cut-outs, while the actor's head served almost a dozen sculptors as their model. It notably haunted Ernst Barlach, who did several busts of Wegener. Not satisfied with enumerating these instances, Schönemann digs further and produces evidence from Wegener's correspondence and private papers (to which she had unprecedented access) that he himself was profoundly troubled by his own face. This, she interprets as the source for his choice of career (he broke off his studies as a lawyer to train in acting, much to the disappointment of his father) and for his life-long fascination with mirror-images, doubles, split personalities and the "Other" within the self. Finally, the striking face of Wegener elicits a meditation on the emergence of a new aesthetic type – what Schönemann calls the "new ugliness." There, she detects a fundamental shift in the canons of (not only) masculine beauty, away from the Greek or Nordic type to the more earth-bound, chthonic physiognomies, with Slav, Asian (and Jewish) faces receive a new, positive valorisation in the arts of the teens and early twenties – in contrast to the revival of the Nordic type in the thirties by Nazi artists such as Arno Breker or Josef Thorak.

The second example – a closer consideration of architecture and design – would be the chapter on *Der Golem, wie er in die Welt kam*. The highlight of the book, it is a genuine tour de force. Schönemann's detailed description of architect Hans Poelzig's plans, and the analysis of the narrative meanings encapsulated in every building, the streets and the interior elements (stairs, balconies, windows and arches) are a model of textual analysis in the language of architectural style and plastic forms. Embedded into her account of the provenance of the film's formal repertoire are biographical vignettes, such as Poelzig's use of a spiral motif ascribed to Hermann Obrist, a vegetal door frame cross-referenced to the Finnish architect

Saarinen, or her discussion of a grave in Dresden designed by Max Taut and decorated by Otto Freundlich, which suddenly opens up into a brief but harrowing account of persecution and death. That Schönemann can raise the delicate question of the "typically Jewish" iconography in Poelzig's designs, without skirting the question of (negative) stereotyping indicates her sensitivity and sure historical grasp, while leaving open to what extent the legend of the Golem can be interpreted as a creation myth, a robot story with anti-semitic traits, or as a narrative of Jewish "survival" in a hostile, intolerant environment, retracing the heroic – and historic – struggle for Jewish emancipation around the figures of Rabbi Löw and the Emperor Rudolf II. In the chapter on *Der Golem* – although it deals with Wegener's most important and best-known film (attesting to the dignity, sympathy and respect the director had for the central figure) – Schönemann, perhaps surprisingly, makes Wegener the director recede into the background, barely visible in the tapestry she weaves of references and echoes that easily cross from architectural theory to narratology, from German-Jewish relations to theatre history.

One welcome consequence of Paul Wegener *Frühe Moderne im Film* is that it further helps to disengage early German cinema from its traditional role as merely the precursor of Expressionism, giving both narrative and visual elements their own stylistic signature as part of a distinct neo-Romantic legacy, with roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and its diverse image cultures. From the methodological point of view, her "thick" biographical description of professional networks, friendships and personal contacts, combined with an equally exacting eye for Warburg's "pathos-forms" enriches film history with a new historical depth, and adds texture to our current preoccupation with "visual culture." Convincingly demonstrating how motifs can migrate between the period idioms and across the arts, the book stresses the subtly modifying but also amplifying resonances that such



transpositions engender in cultural meanings. Whatever the heady mix of a difficult personality (he was married five times) and of cloudy metaphysics (Northern Protestant attracted to Buddhism), Wegener's enabling role in the arts of his time and his curiosity for the technical media which brought so many other creative forces into the films, ensure that his work contributes to a modernity in many ways just as radical as Expressionist storm-and-stress, while cautioning us from conflating his philosophy with the "reactionary modernism" of the late twenties and early thirties.

It would be pleasing to think that Paul Wegener *frühe Moderne im Film* could find a publisher able and willing to produce also an English (or French or Italian) edition. While waiting for such an eventuality, funds should be found to translate at least the chapter on *Der Golem*, for it is difficult to think of the work of many other scholars working in the field, perhaps with the exception of Yuri Tsivian, who like Heide Schönemann combine an extensive knowledge of art history and cultural studies with such a fine eye for filmic images and their multiple reverberations.

## SELECTED BY: ANDRÉ GAUDREULT

Jacques Malthête, Laurent Mannoni sous la dir. de, *Méliès, magie et cinéma* (Paris: Musées, 2002)\*

\* André Gaudreault apologizes for being unable to send his review.

## SELECTED BY: TOM GUNNING

Mark Garrett Cooper, *Love Rules: Silent Hollywood and the Rise of the Managerial Class*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003)

*Love Rules* offers a rather unique contribution to current American film history. This work poses a rather unique situation, uncommon in our somewhat young field of film history, of a work whose thesis I feel is ultimately wrong, but whose clarity in stating this thesis, depth of research in arguing it, and careful analysis of film form as part of its argument makes it a book which would be dismissed by our field only at the peril of ignoring one of the more serious and ambitious forays into American film history made in the last decade.

Recent works on American film history have shown a certain modesty and mostly have maintained a clear separation between stylistic evolution and the social uses of film as a medium. Thus we have on the one hand laudable works like Charlie Keil's recent *American Cinema in Transition* that provides an excellent and nearly quantifiable survey of the changes in narrational style during the period from about 1907 to 1913. On the social front, the continued feminist concern with film history, including such fine works as Shelly Stamp's *Movie Struck Girls*, has investigated not only issues of representation, but also film-going practices and uses of cinema in the transformations of gender occurring at the same time as film radically altered its social identity. But no one has offered the sort of overview of cinema's relation to society in a manner which takes as seriously the evolution of film form as Cooper does whose thesis gives film form a crucial role in shaping American attitudes.

The book simultaneously describes changes in American society in the late 1910s and 1920s, which the author relates primarily to the rise of the professional managerial class, and the establishment of the Hollywood feature film which the author claims achieved stability in this era through a particular visualization of a romance plot. The romance plot, which Cooper claims rules the vast majority of American feature films, consists not only of the traditional formula – sep-

eration (or threat of separation) followed generally by re-union of a white couple (Cooper emphasizes the racial aspect of the romantic union) – but involves a very specific visualization of this drama based in cinematic editing and composition. Love is expressed in the American cinema in terms of lover's glances and longing looks, which are united by eye-line match editing or simply off-screen looks. Cooper sees the final re-union of lovers, after overcoming the obstacles that have separated them, not simply as a plot device, but as an essential visual resolution in which the lovers are placed in a safe, well-lit uncluttered space, in which it is indicated their love will be safe and will be fostered. Cooper's other narrative deals with the rise of the managerial class and the transformations in American society in the 1910s and 1920s, especially the new concept of the public sphere this entails. Cooper provides a detailed discussion of the debate between Walter Lippman and John Dewey in the 1920s over the role of a new class of experts in transforming American democracy from a direct expression of the people's will into a society heavily dependent of a class of professionals both in setting social agenda and proposing solutions to social problems.

Cooper's book asserts a relation between the romance scenario of the cinema and this fundamental change in social values through which a managerial class of professionally certified experts in a range of areas (medicine, business organization, education, social science) gained unprecedented power over the daily life of citizens. It is here that Cooper's book is most daring, and, in my opinion, runs into the most difficulty. Cooper asserts the visual presentation of the romance scenario (and hence its cinematic uniqueness) does not simply represent the changes in American society, but plays a crucial, and apparently causal, role in bringing them about.

This bonding together of film analysis and social analysis marks a major contribution and charts the ambition of Cooper's work.

Revisiting his description of the romance scenario, one must introduce another key point of his analysis: the sense of what I would call an omniscient narrator in resolving the separation of lovers and creating the place of safety which fosters their love. Underlying the union/separation of lovers through eyeline matches is what Cooper describes as a spatial problem – most literally the separation of the lovers. However, the editing of the film brings lovers together even when they remain spatially separate, as if the film's style could "see" a resolution the couple cannot. Apparently the crux of Cooper's argument rests on an analogy between this omniscient narrative agency (an impersonal force which possesses more knowledge than the characters or viewer) and the new reliance of experts for social agenda and solutions. Thus Cooper claims:

Although the rise of public relations, market research, polling data, and sociology all clearly affected what it meant to represent the "public," these fields of information arguably would not be able to compete and collaborate in the ways they do had cinema not first established as common sense the proposition that private individuals are incapable of representing their relationship to a larger social whole (p. 106).

But if the cinema did establish the proposition that "private individuals are incapable of representing their relationship to a larger social whole," how was this done? Cooper's basis for this assertion is a narratological analysis that finds a sense of order in films larger than an individual character's perception. But can we move from this description of a form of narration to a claim about the nature of society? Even if the use of an omniscient narrator did indicate a desire for an impersonal authority, does this order necessarily take the form of professional expertise? More importantly, if the cinema actually tutored audiences to accept an expertise

beyond themselves to manage their affairs, wouldn't someone would have commented on it? No one ever made this analogy, not even commentators like Lippman or Dewey. This lack of recognition of the true cause of a social transformation needs to be explained. Was it repressed?

This lack of commentary could indicate an unconscious ideological process, but then Cooper needs to explain the model of the unconscious he is relying on. It could involve other mediating factors, but Cooper doesn't explain what they might be. He rests his argument primarily on the formal analogy between a narrative form with an impersonal regulator and the adoption of experts dedicated to impersonal professional roles. In other words, there is no real causal argument here at the center of the text. This is the crucial problem, indeed failing, of the book, but as much as it calls into question its central thesis, it does not lead me to dismiss it. Rather a new project of research opens up: figuring out what aspects mediate between a public's response to a new narrative form that gains unprecedented influence over a population and the types of transformations that society undergoes at the same time.

To my mind this attempt to relate film form to social change remains a bit premature and ultimately unsuccessful, but nonetheless brilliant in its conception of what could be the major issue of a serious cultural film history: how do cinema's specific resources for narration and fantasy construct a subject that relates broadly to the transformations in modernity? Cooper establishes some important issues for such an investigation and his treatment of Lippmann and Dewey provides a good entry to the issue. However, a more complex conception of the way the effects of a medium actually appear in society is needed, one rooted in actual discourse and discussions of the period, not simply in formal analogies. I think Cooper relies too much on a concept of similarity between the forms of film and the forms of social organization. This work needs

a complex theory of social spectatorship. That Cooper does not supply this may call his thesis into question, but does one expect such a theory from a scholar's first published book? This important emerging scholar has raised the issue of the relation between narrative form and social change with a new urgency and in a new context – and he has raised the stakes in the investigation of American film history.

## SELECTED BY: FRANÇOIS JOST

Fernando Andacht, *El Reality show: una perspectiva analítica de la televisión* (Buenos Aires: Grupo editorial Norma/Enciclopedia Latinoamericana de Sociocultura y Comunicación, 2003)

Depuis plusieurs années, parallèlement à mes recherches sur le début du cinéma, je consacre beaucoup de mon temps à travailler sur la télévision. Invité à choisir un livre pour rédiger une note de lecture à l'intention de CINEMA & Cie, je m'interroge: est-ce qu'une recension d'un livre sur la télévision a un rapport quelconque avec le thème de notre revue? Le plus simple serait sans doute de répondre non. Pourtant, je sens bien que ce serait aussi trompeur que de répondre par l'affirmative. Que la télévision soit à des années-Lumière (!) du cinéma, en tant qu'objet, n'empêche que l'apparition de nouveaux formats comme la priorité accordée à la catégorisation générique obligent tout chercheur curieux (ce n'est pas un pléonasme) à interroger une fois de plus la relation de l'image à la réalité et la relation du chercheur à sa méthode. C'est animé de ces interrogations, en tout cas, que je tiens d'une main le petit livre, récemment paru en Argentine, de Fernando Andacht, *El Reality show*, et de l'autre mon stylo (l'exercice est acrobatique...).

La première chose qui me frappe, de ce point de vue, est l'étrange parallélisme entre

la situation de la télévision d'aujourd'hui et le début du cinéma, en ce qui concerne la globalisation des formats audiovisuels. De même que Pathé, par exemple, inondait le monde de ses produits filmiques, en particulier en direction de l'Amérique, une entreprise européenne, Endemol, a réussi à vendre à l'ensemble du monde un dispositif télévisuel unique, Big Brother, dont le principal attrait a été pour les téléspectateurs l'impression de toucher la réalité, d'entretenir un rapport haptique avec le réel, un peu comme les spectateurs de 1895 s'émerveillaient de trouver dans le grammophone ou dans le cinéma des moyens nouveaux de garder la mémoire du vivant.

C'est bien sous cet angle de l'appel du réel, ce qu'il appelle l'*index-appeal*, qu'Andacht s'intéresse aux deux versions, argentine et brésilienne, de Big Brother. Pour être plus exact, même si ce concept l'emporte sur tous les autres, le chercheur uruguayen va développer une approche peircienne du phénomène télévisuel, qui met notamment l'emphase sur ce type de signe particulier qu'est l'indice. L'ensemble du livre se fonde plus généralement sur la tripartition qui pense la relation du signe à l'objet, icône, indice, symbole, qui permet d'envisager une triple dimension du sens à l'œuvre dans cette émission:

- l'irruption brutale et irréversible des indices du réel;

- le surgissement du qualitatif, l'attraction iconique;

le guide du symbolique, qui relève des instructions données au téléspectateur pour bien interpréter ce qu'il voit.

Voyons ces éléments point par point.

Pour Andacht, toute la force d'El gran hermano tient à son *index-appeal*, à sa nature profondément indicielle, au sens où, pour Peirce, l'indice est un choc externe, "el sentido de una colision." Quoi qu'il en soit des soupçons de manipulation ou d'arrangement, reste, pour le téléspectateur, cette tangibilité du programme, que lui confère notamment le

direct. Grâce à elle, l'animateur peut promettre "Es la vida misma", promesse qui n'est rien d'autre, je le remarque en passant, que celle de Gaumont qui proposait, au début du siècle, des séries de films intitulés La Vie telle qu'elle est. Le public interpréterait ce lien indiciel comme "l'irruption possible, toujours brutale, de l'incontrôlé." A n'en pas douter, il y a dans ce temps télévisuel une différence majeure avec le temps capté, enregistré une fois pour toutes, du cinéma... A condition que la promesse soit tenue jusqu'au bout, ce qui n'était pas le cas de Loft Story en France, où un décalage constant de 2'45" permettait au producteur d'intervenir en cas de catastrophes ou de dérapage incontrôlé. Ce décalage explique à lui seul que je "relègue à l'excès cet aspect indiciel – comme le signale Andacht – dans une tentative louable pour démasquer le pouvoir diversifié de l'appareil industriel qui patronne le programme, mais qui n'explique, pas selon moi, la réception du programme, ni ici ni en aucune partie du monde" (p. 69).<sup>1</sup>

Le second niveau de sens de l'émission est celui de la qualité, de l'icône. Dans ce règne de l'expresor (Meyrowitz) les gagnants sont ceux qui sont télégéniques, qualité explorée jadis pas Bazin, c'est-à-dire ceux qui savent "jouer à être soi", ce qui, pour Andacht, qui s'appuie sur des analyses fines fondées sur la sociologie de Goffman, relève presque de la sainteté! De même que les martyrs du début du siècle faisaient des efforts surhumains pour exhiber des qualités admirables, les candidats du Gran Hermano acceptent de mettre au premier plan les "coulisses" (au sens de Goffman). Les "bons" candidats sont au fond ceux qui savent construire une "signification iconique du personnage" (par exemple, un mélange de force physique et sexuelle et une fragilité d'enfant). Toute cette analyse repose évidemment sur le postulat que le corps ne ment pas.

Le niveau symbolique, enfin, se trouve dans le dispositif de l'émission de prime-time. D'un côté, le décor avec son grand œil, véritable

autel d'où l'animatrice prêtresse conseille à tous les futurs prisonniers d' "être eux-mêmes"; de l'autre, les familles, qui nous parlent des candidats. L'animatrice est chargée de donner la clé interprétative du show (ce que j'appelle sa "promesse"), qui sera sentimental, doux et amer à la fois, ce qui mettra le téléspectateur dans une position de "témoin de l'allégresse et de la tristesse."

Le grand mérite de ce livre est de développer, avec une rigueur rare, une analyse sémiotique d'obédience peircienne, qui sert parfaitement son objet. De ce point de vue, le livre d'Andacht appartient à ce nouveau courant d'études de la télévision, qui tentent de la constituer en objet théorique et non plus seulement en objet (de) critique. Comme tous les systèmes cohérents, les effets qu'ils provoquent vont pourtant au-delà du domaine analysé. Après la lecture d'El Reality show, on peut se demander, par exemple, si les trois niveaux – iconique, indiciel, symbolique – ne permettraient pas de regrouper des phénomènes très différents du début du cinéma: l'icônicité des vues, bien sûr, qui n'est plus à commenter (les feuilles des arbres qui bougent...), mais aussi l'index-appeal du film comme document, qui amenait les opérateurs Lumière à mettre sur les écrans ce que les spectateurs côtoyait au quotidien, comme si le cinéma touchait mieux que tout autre média la réalité, et sa lecture symbolique que le bonimenteur était chargé de faire passer...

De même qu'on ne se baigne pas deux fois dans le même fleuve, la seconde fois que l'on voit foncer une locomotive sur soi, on recule plus de la même façon... Vit-on "l'index-appeal" avec la même intensité à la seconde saison de Big Brother ou regarde-t-on l'émission comme un feuilleton parmi d'autres? Plus généralement, qu'en est-il, de la seconde fois? Voici une question qui pourrait être aussi un programme de recherches pour comprendre comment s'instaure la croyance aux médias.

1 Il fait allusion à François Jost, *L'Empire du loft* (Paris: La Dispute, 2002).

## SELECTED BY: LEONARDO QUARESIMA

Siegfried Kracauer, *Werke*, Band 6, *Kleine Schriften zum Film*, Hg. von Inka Mülder-Bach unter Mitarbeit von Mirjam Wenzel und Sabine Biebl (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 2004), 3 Bd.

Iniziata nel 1971, la pubblicazione delle Opere di Kracauer in Germania (realizzata da Suhrkamp) non è stata ancora condotta a termine. Lo stesso editore ha riprogettato ora l'impresa, proponendo un nuovo piano dell'opera, in nove volumi, che dovrà completarsi entro il 2008. La nuova edizione farà riferimento ai materiali del fondo dell'autore conservati nel Deutsches Literaturarchiv di Marbach am Neckar e si avvarrà di nuove traduzioni. Nuovi scritti, per lo più inediti, sono stati inclusi nel piano, i testi già noti saranno disponibili in vere e proprie edizioni critiche e, per i lavori americani, il lettore potrà contare su una nuova versione tedesca. I primi titoli sono usciti nel maggio scorso: l'edizione in tre volumi delle recensioni cinematografiche (da cui questa segnalazione prende le mosse) e una raccolta di alcuni scritti giovanili, risalenti agli anni 1913-1919, e rimasti inediti.<sup>1</sup> L'opera si chiuderà, fra quattro anni, con una nuova edizione tedesca di *From Caligari to Hitler*.

Se i volumi con i saggi giovanili contengono testi unanimemente ritenuti fondamentali (il saggio su Simmel del 1919, innanzitutto, il cui primo capitolo, soltanto, fu incluso da Kracauer, nel dopoguerra, nella raccolta *Das Ornament der Masse*, 1963) e altri semiconosciuti, ma non meno importanti per la valutazione del lavoro dell'Autore (come lo studio sull'espressionismo del 1918), quelli dedicati alle recensioni e agli scritti brevi cine-

matografici rappresentano un vero e proprio avvenimento. Annunciati ben oltre dieci anni fa, preceduti da raccolte limitatissime, ci offrono ora il corpus completo dell'attività critica e pubblicistica in questo campo, dagli articoli usciti sulla *Frankfurter Zeitung* negli anni '20 e '30 (il primo intervento è del maggio 1921, la prima recensione del mese successivo, si riferisce al *Danton* di Buchowetzki con Jannings), ai testi scritti per riviste francesi e soprattutto per i quotidiani svizzeri *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* e *National Zeitung* nel periodo dell'esilio a Parigi, e ancora per la *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* e varie riviste americane e anche europee (tra cui *Cinema Nuovo*, che tra il 1953 e il 1957 preannuncia alcune parti della *Theory of Film*) negli anni d'oltreoceano. Sono esclusi dalla raccolta gli studi pubblicati su commissione (come quello del 1943, sui cinegiornali nazisti: *The Conquest of Europe on the Screen: The Nazi Newsreel 1939-1940*), riuniti in un altro volume, e gli articoli che anticipano opere maggiori (tutti meno uno, ad esempio, quelli di *Cinema Nuovo*). Ma vi si trovano, generoso compenso, le recensioni e gli interventi rimasti inediti e reperibili nel suo lascito. I testi scritti in inglese sono (con pochissime eccezioni, legate a particolari varianti) tradotti in tedesco – e ciò dà origine a un piccolo rimpianto, ma un altro risarcimento ci arriva, inaspettato, proprio nelle ultime pagine: tre soggetti scritti durante i primi anni '30. Per una serie di cortometraggi sonori, per un altro cortometraggio e per una "große Filmkomödie" da realizzarsi a partire da *Tartarin sur les Alpes* di Daudet.

L'interesse delle recensioni "tedesche" si impone immediatamente, ho avuto già occasione di sottolineare, anche solo per il confronto che se ne può fare con le argomentazioni di From Caligari to Hitler. Quelle scritte negli anni dell'esilio, dedicate a film francesi e americani soprattutto (i classici degli anni '30 e '40: dalle opere di Vigo, Renoir, Clair, Carné, Duvivier a quelle di Vidor, Capra, Sturges, Wyler, Siodmak, Welles), costituiscono un territorio non meno ricco e stimolante, e forse

ancora di più per la "novità" della applicazione dello sguardo critico kracaueriano a sistemi abitualmente considerati esterni al suo raggio d'azione. Tra le (molte) recensioni inedite, colpisce ad esempio quella di Paisà, scritta nel marzo del 1948 (pp. 395-404). Ancora il film alla nozione di dignità (*Würde*: ma la recensione è scritta in inglese, ci manca il testo originale...) dell'uomo, tanto più apprezzata in quanto svincolata da indicazioni politiche o orientamenti ideologici e, più in generale, da ogni sistema di idee preformate (una situazione particolarmente cara alla concezione "fenomenologica" dell'Autore). Mette quindi in relazione la stessa struttura a episodi con questa impostazione (una delle proposte più originali della lettura): "Se l'umanità si realizzasse solo sotto l'egida di un principio ci verrebbe proposta un'unica, strutturata, storia [...]. Ma l'umanità è elemento e parte della realtà e deve pertanto essere rintracciata in luoghi diversi" (p. 399). E su questo punto costruisce una minuziosa opposizione con il cinema sovietico, con la sua tendenza a partire da posizioni predeterminate, a presentare personaggi simbolici. Rossellini "volge invece volutamente le spalle alle idee" (p. 401), "Rossellini osserva pazientemente, laddove Ejzenštejn, zelante, costruisce" (p. 402). Kracauer vede nel film uno "stile documentario", che ricollega ai maestri del genere, e, nominandone la "specificità cinematografica" si affaccia sul terreno della riflessione che condurrà nella *Theory of Film*. Evoca anche dei tratti nazionali entro cui il film e le attitudini di Rossellini si collocerebbero, ma il terreno qui si fa sdrucchioloso e l'argomentazione finisce col lambire un determinismo sociologico (il rimprovero al film di allontanarsi dal mondo delle idee e della politica) che entra subito in contraddizione con gli stessi assunti di partenza.

Un'altra novità di rilievo, sempre in Germania, è costituita da un numero della rivista del *Filmmuseum/Deutsche Kinemathek* di Berlino *Filmexil* (n. 19, maggio 2004) dedicato per gran parte a Kracauer. Contiene due saggi (di Johannes Riedner e Ethel Matala

de Mazza, rispettivamente), su problemi legati all'esilio dell'autore e, la parte più originale, uno studio sui rapporti tra Kracauer e Hans Richter negli anni americani (1943-1947), di Mirjam Wenzel. Da uno scambio di lettere (una, di Kracauer a Richter, del 4 aprile 1945, è riportata integralmente) emergono con chiarezza i contorni di due importanti progetti comuni: a un'idea di Kracauer il cineasta si ispira per la cornice del suo *Dreams That Money Can Buy* (!), seppure lo studioso pensava ad un'impostazione fiabesca vicina ai caratteri del racconto fantastico alla Hoffmann (e forse a quelli del cinema fantastico tedesco degli anni '10) e della slapstick americana e certo lontana dall'operazione di "ricapitolazione" dell'esperienza dell'avanguardia degli anni '20 che caratterizza il risultato finale del film. Entrambi avrebbero dovuto poi lavorare (ma nessuna lettera ci è rimasta al riguardo) a un *Project of a Test Film* che si inseriva nel quadro di una ricerca sui pregiudizi dell'antisemitismo promossa dall'*Institut für Sozialforschung* di Adorno e Horkheimer: "The most satisfactory method of experimentation appears to be the use of certain films to be presented to subjects of different regional and social groups. Reactions of the subjects will be obtained partly by observations of their behavior during the performances, partly by interviews, partly by their written reports of their impressions".<sup>2</sup> Dal progetto scaturì un soggetto, *Below the Surface*, che restò irrealizzato.

Di recente pubblicazione è anche un altro carteggio: Helmut G. Asper, Hg., *Nachrichten aus Hollywood, New York und anderswo. Der Briefwechsel Eugen und Marlise Schüfftans mit Siegfried und Lili Kracauer* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2003). Le testimonianze dell'operatore sono utilizzate in *From Caligari to Hitler*. I due si erano conosciuti sulla nave che li portò da Lisbona a New York nell'aprile del 1941 e rimasero in stretto contatto negli anni successivi. Schüfftan sarebbe dovuto diventare il produttore di un film tratto da un soggetto che Kracauer aveva

realizzato già nel periodo parigino, ispirato al suo libro su Offenbach, pubblicato nel 1937, e il cui successo aveva spinto la MGM ad acquisire un'opzione per portarlo sullo schermo. Il film non si fece mai, il soggetto ("motion picture treatment") può essere letto ora nel libro curato da Asper.

Nell'aprile 2004, infine, è stata allestita a Ludwigsburg (Studio der Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg) una mostra "Du mußt Caligari werden!" Siegfried Kracauer und der Deutsche Stummfilm im Reich der Schatten in occasione della quale è stato pubblicato un numero del *Marbacher Magazin* (*Im Reich der Schatten. Siegfried Kracauers From Caligari to Hitler*, N. 105, 2004). Non si tratta di un semplice catalogo, ma di un vero e proprio studio monografico, composto da due ampi saggi. Che hanno il pregio (soprattutto quello di apertura di Christoph Brecht) di avviare, finalmente, una riapertura dei conti, in Germania, con *From Caligari to Hitler*.

- 1 S. Kracauer, *Werke*, Bd. 9, *Frühe Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, Hg. von Ingrid Belke unter Mitarbeit von Sabine Biebl, Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp 2004, 2 Bd.
- 2 Cfr. S. Kracauer "Research Project on Antisemitism", in *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, IX, 1941, p. 142.

## SELECTED BY: LAUREN RABINOVITZ

Mark Garrett Cooper, *Love Rules: Silent Hollywood and the Rise of the Managerial Class*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003)\*

\* Lauren Rabinovitz apologizes for being unable to send her review.

## SELECTED BY:

## VICENTE SÁNCHEZ-BIOSCA

Alfonso Puyal, *Cinema y arte nuevo. La recepción fílmica en la vanguardia española* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2003)\*

\* Vicente Sánchez-Biosca apologizes for being unable to send his review.

## SELECTED BY: IRMBERT SCHENK

Guntram Vogt, *Die Stadt im Film. Deutsche Spielfilme 1900-2000* (Marburg: Schüren, 2001)

Voglio segnalare all'attenzione dei ricercatori che si occupano di cinema tedesco un volume uscito già nel 2001 in Germania che tratta della rappresentazione filmica della (grande) città attraverso l'analisi di un vasto corpo di film di finzione del cinema tedesco di tutto il secolo. Questo libro rappresenta, soprattutto nella parte centrale, un fecondissimo strumento di lavoro per coloro che si occupano del rapporto tra cinema e città. Per oltre settecento pagine troviamo descrizioni e analisi di film, che si aprono con un capitolo sintetico sugli spettacoli cinematografici prima del 1913. Il libro passa poi a trattare ottantatré film tra quelli realizzati entro il 2000. Lo schema dell'analisi è sempre lo stesso: sintesi delle sequenze principali, informazioni sulla produzione, sul linguaggio cinematografico, sul cast (regista, direttore della fotografia, attori, ecc.), sulla ricezione critica, sulla città in cui il film è stato girato. Soprattutto per quanto riguarda quest'ultima categoria, l'autore fa il tentativo (di grande interesse, ma non sempre riuscito) di combinare l'analisi del testo filmico con un discorso storiografico generale sulla rappresentazione cinematografica della città, includendo nella sua argomentazione un'ampia gamma di riferimenti alla bibliografia secondaria. A complemento dei testi compaio-

no moltissime foto, in gran parte fotogrammi che illustrano ottimamente le scene decisive.

Meno sistematica appare invece la parte teorica dell'imponente libro, concentrata soprattutto nelle prime sessanta pagine. Questa parte assume più che altro una funzione introduttiva. Vi si trova un accenno alla costruzione cinematografica della città, che si avvale di svariati rimandi alle altre arti, dalla letteratura all'architettura, dalla sociologia alla storia della cultura e del cinema. Tali riferimenti offrono osservazioni talvolta molto stimolanti per un approfondimento teorico, ma al contempo risentono della mancanza di una reale riflessione teorica; sono prive per esempio di una prospettiva di ricerca attenta alla connessione storica (più che analogica e fenomenologica) fondamentale fra la formazione della grande città e l'avvento del cinema nel Novecento. Il discorso, qui frammentario, non riesce purtroppo a costruire una visione d'insieme delle dinamiche medialità sociali e urbanistiche, ma resta – del resto con onestà – entro il concreto limite del suo titolo: la città nel film, cioè all'interno delle immagini filmiche. In conclusione si tratta comunque di un lavoro molto meritevole, un ottimo strumento e forse uno stimolo per portar avanti il dibattito teorico sulla relazione fra cinema e città/cultura/società.



**Premio Limina Città di Gorizia / CINEMA & Cie. International Book Award**  
**Premio Limina Città di Gorizia / CINEMA & Cie. International Publisher Award**

On the occasion of the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Udine International Film Studies Conference (March 15-18, 2004), the board of the Conference and the Editorial Board of CINEMA & Cie awarded for their remarkable results an author and a publisher with Premio Limina Città di Gorizia/CINEMA & Cie.

The awards are meant to honour an author and a publisher whose books, published in the last three years, have had a particularly meaningful contribution within the film studies context.

The members of CINEMA & Cie editorial board compose the jury and propose a selection of titles to a final jury, who awards the final winner of the two different sections. The final jury was composed by: Hans-Michael Bock, Charles Musser, Angel Quintana, Vivian Sobchack, Pierre Sorlin.

The books selected by the editorial board of CINEMA & Cie:

Martin Barnier, *En route vers le parlant*, 2002

Livio Belloi, *Le Regard retourné*, 2001

Helmut H. Diederichs (Hrsg.), *Geschichte der Filmtheorie. Kunsttheoretischen Texte von Méliès bis Arnheim*, 2004

Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*, 2003

Aida Hozic, *Hollyworld: Space, Power, and Fantasy in the American Economy*, 2001

Thomas Koebner (Hrsg.), *Diesseits der "Dämonischen Leinwand". Neue Perspektiven auf das späte Weimarer Kino*, 2003

Paulo Antonio Paranaguá, *Tradición y modernidad en el cine de América Latina*, 2003

Philip Rosen, *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory*, 2001

Jeffrey Shaw, Peter Weibel (eds.), *Future Cinema: The Cinematic Imaginary After Film*, 2003

The winner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Premio Limina Città di Gorizia / CINEMA & Cie. International Book Award was:

Mary Ann Doane's *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*.

Jury's motivations:

The author considers here a very complex theme: philosophical changes in the concept of time. She points out how cinema is a product of one such change which took place at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Essentially, she sets aside the technological question of the pre-history of cinema in order to discuss the philosophical question of the birth of cinema.

The winner of the 1<sup>st</sup> Premio Limina Città di Gorizia/CINEMA & Cie. International Publisher Award was:

British Film Institute Publishing, London.

Jury's motivations:

For their long tradition of publishing fundamental writings on cinema, included the journal *Sight and Sound* and various reference books;

For the continuous, systematic effort to explore the new trends of film studies, an open-minded policy of publishing theoretical works as well as historical and economical ones, a large variety of interests, an exceptional care about editing work;

Their recent series of books on filmmakers and films is excellent and fills a major gap in the kinds of monographs most publishers are putting out.

In occasione dell'XI edizione del Convegno Internazionale di Studi sul Cinema (Udine, 15-18 marzo 2004), il comitato di redazione di CINEMA & Cie in collaborazione con la Consulta Universitaria del Cinema ha attribuito il II Premio Limina Città di Gorizia per libri di saggistica cinematografica italiana pubblicati negli ultimi due anni.

I membri della CUC hanno premiato i seguenti cinque libri:

Gian Piero Brunetta, *Guida alla storia del cinema italiano*, 2003

Ivelise Perniola, *Chris Marker o del film-saggio*, 2003

Francesco Pitassio, *Attore/Divo*, 2003

Anita Trivelli, *Sulle tracce di Maya Deren*, 2003

Laura Vichi, *Jean Epstein*, 2003



Ricerca nazionale interuniversitaria Cofin 2002 ex 40% - La tecnologia del cinema. La tecnologia nel cinema/Technology of the Cinema. Technology in the Cinema  
Unità di ricerca dell'Università di Udine: La tecnologia e il cinema italiano negli anni Venti e Trenta. L'avvento del sonoro. Le rivoluzioni delle avanguardie, dal Futurismo alla contemporaneità / Technology and Italian cinema in the 1920s and the 1930s. The Birth of Sound Cinema. The Revolutions of Avant-garde, from Futurism to the Contemporaneity  
Unità di ricerca dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano: Le tecnologie e il cinema popolare italiano negli anni Cinquanta e Sessanta. Tra processi simbolici e pratiche culturali / Technologies and Popular Italian Cinema in the 1950s and 1960s. Between Symbolic Processes and Cultural Practices



# Association Française de Recherche sur l' Histoire du Cinéma



L'AFRHC rassemble des universitaires, chercheurs, archivistes, cinéphiles du monde entier. Sa revue *1895* publie des articles sur tous les aspects des études cinématographiques. Ses champs d'investigation variés, et sur une large période historique, englobent des perspectives esthétiques, économiques, techniques et institutionnelles.

Ces perspectives concernent aussi bien l'archéologie du cinéma que l'histoire des studios, l'exploitation des salles, les films documentaires, scientifiques, les réalisateurs, acteurs, producteurs ou techniciens, l'avènement du son, de la couleur, de la musique de film, etc. Elle publie des filmographies, révèle des fonds d'archives peu connus, traite des problèmes liés à la conservation, l'historiographie, rend compte des événements, colloques, festivals et publications historiques au niveau international.

L'AFRHC a consacré des numéros thématiques de sa revue aux archives, à la musique de film, au film documentaire, à l'année 1913, à la collection Will Day, aux sociétés Éclair et Pathé, à l'histoire des trucages, aux cinéastes André Antoine, Christian-Jaque, René Clair, Louis Feuillade, Jacques Feyder, Abel Gance, Jean Grémillon, Max Ophüls, Léonce Perret, Jean Durand. En collaboration avec des institutions patrimoniales, des centres de recherche ou des festivals spécialisés, l'AFRHC a édité d'importants ouvrages. Parmi les plus récents: *Cinéma et Alsace*, *Le CinémaScope entre art et industrie* et *La Firme Pathé Frères*.





CINEMA & CIE

International Film Studies Journal

Where next?/Par où continuer?, Edited by François Jost  
(No. 1, Fall 2001, pp. 160).

Dead Ends/Impasses (+ The Tactile Screen/Lo schermo tattile),  
Edited by Leonardo Quaresima  
(No. 2, Spring 2003, pp. 206 + XVI).

Early Cinema, Technology, Discourse/Cinéma des premiers temps,  
technologie, discours, Edited by Rosanna Maule  
(No. 3, Fall 2003, pp. 134).

Multiple and Multiple-Language Versions/Versions multiples, Edited by  
Nataša Đurovičová  
(No. 4, Spring 2004, pp. 152).

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Arti Grafiche Bianca & Volta, Truccazzano, Milano.



