Acta Universitatis Sapientiae

Film and Media Studies

Volume 11, 2015

Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania
Scientia Publishing House

Acta Universitatis Sapientiae
Film and Media Studies
Vol. 11, 2015

Figurations of Intermediality, Space and Embodiment

A selection of essays written for the international conference *"Figurations of Intermediality in Film"* organized by the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, on the 24th and 25th of October 2014, within the framework of a research project on intermediality supported by the National Research Council and the Executive Agency for Higher Education Research and Innovation Funding in Romania (CNCS-UEFISCDI, project nr. PN-II-ID-PCE-2012-4-0573).

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DE GRUYTER OPEN

Acta Univ. Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies, 11 (2015) 7–27

DOI: 10.1515/ausfm-2015-0013

Real Bodies in (Un)real Spaces: Space, Movement, and the Installation Sensibility in Lech Majewski's *The Mill and the Cross*

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Abstract. Live-action bodies traverse digitally-constructed and digitized spaces in Lech Majewski's *The Mill and the Cross* (*Młyn i krzyż*, 2011). Majewski, a Polish artist who has worked across media, imagines his film as an animation of the world represented in Pieter Bruegel's painting, *The Procession to Calvary*. His unprecedented blending of real and painted bodies, spaces, and worlds in *The Mill and the Cross* draws attention to the necessity of acknowledging space and movement in contemporary approaches to embodied spectatorial experience. This essay considers how the film imagines and treats its space(s) and the relations it establishes between the film-as-text, painting-as-text, and the museal space that traditionally contains painting—but also, with increasing frequency, cinema. It proposes a reframing of the terms of discussion in intermediality, shifting from *painting/cinema* to *installation/cinema*. Finally, it explores a long-neglected notion of art and its space (and the possibility of inhabiting that space) as they (re-)emerge in contemporary expanded cinema.

Keywords: expanded cinema, painting, installation, space, spectatorship.

> "*In the cinema the impression of reality is also the reality of the impression, the real presence of motion*" (Metz 1974, 9).
>
> "*The world of a painting is not continuous with the world of its frame; at its frame, a world finds its limits. We might say: a painting* is *a world; a photograph is* of *the world*" (Cavell 1979, 24).

From its inception until very recently, cinema has existed in the condition of pastness. This admittedly rather general claim is, I should think, also a fairly uncontroversial one. Academic film studies has, at least since Bazin, viewed cinema's claims to realism as emerging out of an indexical argument, which in turn derives from the ontology of the photographic image.[1] The cinema available

1 English-speaking audiences encountered this most famously via the Hugh Gray translations of

to theoreticians at the time was, after all, little more than the photograph blurring past twenty-four frames per second. Most of the ontological and epistemological claims about this form of cinema accordingly emphasized its distinction from the other arts: painting, sculpture, performance. The fracturing of the familiar cinematic dispositive around the middle of the twentieth century, followed by the rapid and successive ascents of television, video, and "new media" (which for the purposes of this essay I will use to refer to digital technologies, techniques, and the moving-image works produced by them) posed fundamental challenges to most of these claims, thereby destabilizing long-held attitudes toward cinematic realism.

I do not intend in this paper to rehearse those familiar debates, nor to comment on them. Rather, I want to consider how a recent film, made by an artist known for his work in the expanded field of cinema and video art, allows us to move from thinking about the problem of cinema's relation to the other arts to considering the cinematic artwork's shifting position today – when the moving image has been incorporated into the institution of art – within what the art historian David Joselit has characterized as "heterogeneous configurations of relationships or links" (2013, 2). *The Mill and the Cross* (Lech Majewski, 2011) is a feature-length animation[2] of Pieter Bruegel's famous painting of 1564, *The Procession to Calvary*. Majewski, a Polish artist born in 1953, has been widely recognized for his work across media. A mid-career retrospective held at the Museum of Modern Art (New York) in 2006 introduced his work to a North American audience with his experimental film, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (2004), playing across theatres in New York the same year. Subsequent releases of many of his earlier moving-image works have by now ensured his status in the commercial art world, even if critical opinion remains more guarded (something that may have to do with the fact that Majewski does not seem to espouse any coherent philosophy concerning his art, which can at times hew close to music-video aesthetics).

What is so fascinating about *The Mill and the Cross* is its blending of painted space with "real" space, digitized bodies with live-action figures, in order to construct a world that is at once utterly artificial and yet undeniably real in the

André Bazin's essays. In recent years, successive reassessments of Bazin's original works have shown how his meaning was in many instances lost in translation. Timothy Barnard's invaluable new translations of some of Bazin's best-known essays (2009), the edited volume by Dudley Andrew and Hervé Joubert-Laurencin (2011), and Daniel Morgan's forceful re-reading of the *Ontology* essay via Cavell (2006) are all worth noting. Morgan's essay, in particular, clarifies several points in Bazin's essay that for a long time remained confusing or contradictory, while also offering a convincing argument for how better to understand Bazin's sense(s) of realism in cinema.

2 I don't intend this term in its common usage within film and media studies, as will be evident later.

Bazinian sense. What is the question to which this striking artistic decision is a response? Majewski's technique in this film is, as far as I know, unique in the history of cinema. It deviates sharply from standard rear-projection practices as well as other notable efforts at commingling painting and cinema (as, for instance, in Eric Rohmer's 2001 film, *The Lady and the Duke* [*L'Anglaise et le Duc*]). In fact, as I suggest later in this essay, *The Mill and the Cross* recalls in certain ways the spatial relations articulated in some of Georges Méliès's films.

This essay argues, following some recent claims by Tom Gunning, that cinema under the sign of new media compels us to pay closer attention to space and movement even as it discourages a fetishization of the index. Examining the way in which *The Mill and the Cross* builds space and figures movement within that space, this essay considers the historicity of the (digital) cinematic image. History, as Didier Maleuvre has suggested in his remarkable *Museum Memories*, "is not a discourse about the present, but rather a way of conceiving one's alienation from time, a way of suffering the disjointedness of consciousness in time" (1999, 271). Developing Maleuvre's logic, I conclude by suggesting that the film's figurative closing movement out of the space of painting and into the space of the museum needs to be read in terms of an expanding discourse that acknowledges, without nostalgia, the passing of a certain (idea of) cinema and turns instead toward its afterlife "with curiosity and lack of alarm" (Hansen 2012, 279).

In/Out: The World of a Painting and the World of its Frame

Two camera movements, their vectors opposed, bookend *The Mill and the Cross*. One, at the beginning of the film, figures our entry into the space – the *world* – of the painting we know as *The Procession to Calvary*. The other, at the end of the film, figures our exit from that world – from the painting – and entry into the world of which that painting forms a part. And, as I will argue, this concluding movement itself figures an opening-onto, a passage into art's circulation within a larger space of media relations.

In the opening shot of the film, the camera tracks right slowly, smoothly, letting us glimpse what appears to be an animated *tableau vivant*. [Fig. 1.] In the foreground, people shift positions, fix their dresses, or simply maintain their assigned poses with the faintest hints of movement. Having reached the far end of this composition, the camera lingers on an artist describing the plan and progress of his work to his patron, who looks over his shoulder. Then, the

camera reverses its motion, tracking left almost all the way back. The artist walks toward the left while remaining in front of the camera before he moves to adjust a stray dress on the ground. A quick cut moves the camera backward, and an impossible image is revealed.

The artist now appears diminutive, moving along the very bottom of the screen's edge, in front of what at first appears to be an immense painted canvas. [Fig. 2.] It is *The Procession to Calvary*, by Pieter Bruegel, completed in 1564. [Fig. 3.] The painting depicts Christ carrying the cross to Golgotha. Bruegel famously included some five hundred human figures within the painting, placing Christ roughly in the centre of the canvas and making him all but insignificant. Across this complex painting, intricate narratives suggest themselves as we scan it visually. The artist, evidently, is Bruegel himself (played by Rutger Hauer). This is a film about a painting. More specifically, this is a film about how a painting came into the world (our world), and it takes up this question by constructing an imaginative journey through the world of the painting.

The attraction of this shot does not lie in the visual plenitude of the painting's content, but rather in the seamless way in which what originally appears to be an ordinary live-action scene in a "real" setting (whether studio or on-location) turns out, instead, to belong literally within the world of a painted canvas. Off in the distance, we see Bruegel's figures, digitally animated, moving about; in the far left, a group of three children engage in play while horses shift back and forth toward the centre middle ground. Tiny figures – it is impossible to tell if they are real actors or digitally animated figures from Bruegel's painting – move to and fro, closer to the circle at Golgotha. It is likewise impossible to discern where real ground ends and painted ground begins. Conventional relations of figure and ground do not apply to this space, for real bodies are here imagined – and represented – as one with the digitally scanned bodies and the world of Bruegel's painting.

Over the course of the film, we will follow disparate narratives that take up the (imagined) activities of various individuals from the painting through that momentous day. We will repeatedly see a seamless blending of real and painted spaces. At the end of the film, a second camera movement, as though in response to the one that marks the start of the film, calls attention to itself. Following a fade-out at the end of the previous scene, we begin with the camera focused closely on the mourning figure of Mary – but this time, it is clearly focused on the material surface of the painting called *The Procession to Calvary*. The camera then zooms smoothly backward, gradually revealing the whole painting, in its frame, hung in its gallery at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. The camera's movement

continues, emphatically positioning *this* painting as one amongst numerous *other* paintings within a museum, before we fade to black.

We might read these two movements of the camera as performative utterances, after J. L. Austin.[3] The opening movement declares a certain set of relations by mapping out the spatial relations between us spectators, the material artwork we know as *The Procession to Calvary*, the world represented within its frame, the film we know as *The Mill and the Cross*, the film-world of *The Mill and the Cross*, and the sets of figures common to both the painting and Majewski's film. That is to say, we are spectators figuratively immersed within the imagined world of a painting even as we accompany the process of the creation of that very painting, which will subsequently be extruded from this fiction and into the reality to which we belong.

The scanning movement of the camera roughly emulates our typical response when we encounter a painting in the gallery. We approach it, we try to take it all in at once, and then we move closer to the painting to scan it for details. As far as the discursive space of *The Mill and the Cross* is concerned, the camera's opening movement – our first glimpse of the film – makes evident the ambition of this film when it reveals, in a single cut, the entirety of *The Procession to Calvary* and allows us to leisurely observe the various moving parts of this painting (that is, once we overcome our initial visceral response to the visual attraction this striking image offers). When the credits sequence ends, we are drawn into the world of the painting – that is now also the world of the film – as indicated by the absence of a self-conscious mixing of painted space and real space.

It is logical, therefore, that the concluding movement of the camera declares a different set of relations by withdrawing from the world of the painting and into the world of which the painting is a part. We had just spent an hour and a half immersed in an imaginative journey through the possible world of a painting, inhabiting its spaces, moving amongst its people. But now we are returned to a different spatial system in which *The Procession to Calvary* is a two-dimensional painting, framed and hung on a wall with many other artworks like it in a museum space. The status of this film has changed, and so has its implied relation to history. I will return to the question of the (cinematic) artwork's relation to history, but for now I want to linger with the spaces and bodies of *The Mill and the Cross*.

If, for Stanley Cavell, the world of a painting finds its limits at the frame, how might we account for the film's figurative journey into that world? I want to think

3 Austin's formulation of the concept of performative utterance appears in *How to Do Things with Words* (1975).

about this by way of a brief excursus on an installation by the Canadian artists Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, titled *The Paradise Institute* (2001). In its typical setting, the work comprises a large wooden chamber, split in two levels, with stairs and doors that allow for entry and exit. [Fig. 4.] Installed within the clean, minimal white cube of the gallery space, it looks distinctly out of place. It is not reminiscent of Minimalist sculpture, nor does it recall the discourse of Minimalism (inflected as it was with the echoes of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology). In this sense, at least, we cannot seek recourse to modernist critiques of Minimalist art to help us make sense of this work.

Entering this chamber, we see theatre seats and headphones placed on them. Donning them and seating ourselves, the soundscape of the gallery is silenced as the chamber doors close. At the same time, a new soundscape begins in the darkness: Cardiff and Miller's binaural soundtrack recorded specifically for the installation. This soundtrack, as Andrew Uroskie's discussion of the installation notes, includes the noises of "conversations of people who seem to surround us […] people rustling in their seats, taking off items of clothing, and whispering to one another" (2014, 2). Binaural audio, Uroskie points out, makes for an emphatically *locational* soundscape, which overlaps with natural ambient sounds of our fellow spectators inside this work, leading to a confused (dis-) location of our auditory faculty.

Now a screen lights up, illuminating a "miniature diorama of seats, a proscenium, and a balcony, at the far edge of which we might understand ourselves to be seated. Cardiff and Miller have here constructed an alternate universe, a heterotopia in miniature" (Uroskie 2014, 2). The nature of this installation becomes clearer. As visitors to a gallery, we have walked into a recreation of the classic "black box" of cinema. And as Uroskie suggests, "we can give ourselves over to the spectacle because we are secure in the knowledge that it *is* a spectacle and that we are situated on the outside of that spectacle, looking in" (2014, 3). *The Paradise Institute* is an artwork that encourages the spectator to literally enter the space of its art. In this sense, it shares its address with numerous recent media installations which similarly encourage visitors, spectators, and users to leave behind "their" world and to travel, literally and imaginatively, within the artwork's space – which is to say, an *othered* space.[4]

4 I borrow the concept of an "othered" space from Erika Balsom, who adapts Raymond Bellour's notion of an "other cinema." Balsom means, by the concept, a "site where cinema has become other to itself […] the cinematic *dispositif* [...] has shattered into its aggregate parts, which are now free to enter into new constellations with elements once foreign to it" (Balsom 2013, 16). For Raymond Bellour's development of the idea of an "other cinema" see Bellour (2003, 41).

The movement of my discussion from painting and its discursive space to that of installation art is intended to signal a conceptual reorientation that I believe might more fully account for Majewski's film, which in my view belongs to a certain late-twentieth century sensibility that seems to repurpose the historical archive of images without any great attention to medium-specific concerns. (This, by the way, seems to me one reason why contemporary art criticism often becomes confused when speaking of expanded screen practices such as those seen in the recent works of Douglas Gordon, Peter Greenaway, Jane and Louise Wilson, and Philippe Parreno, among others. More often than not, accounts of their works try to invoke a critical genealogy indebted to Minimalist art theory and criticism, or else an even more familiar framework of immersion and spectacle.[5] Neither of these modes seems adequate, precisely because their work moves freely across forms of media without remaining bound either to medium-specific criticism or the attractions of immersion.)

Let us consider, then, the conceptual space of *The Mill and the Cross* not as that of a digitized painting but rather as that of an installation, which is what it appears if we attempt a more embodied, haptic engagement. Let us treat its space as one that can be entered, traversed, and experienced at a level beyond the purely visual.

The Mill and the Cross rejects standard rear-projection practice (which predates digital cinema anyway) as well as most compositing techniques common to digital cinema nowadays. For instance, whereas the average film that relies significantly on digital imagery (let's say, Joss Whedon's *The Avengers*, 2012) completes most of its principal photography in front of a green screen and then incorporates environmental reconstruction in post-production with digital techniques, *The Mill and the Cross* showcases a tripartite approach.

Not only was a green screen involved, physical locations as well as a highly detailed, large-scale reproduction of *The Procession to Calvary* were used. This process is at the heart of the distinctive look of the film, particularly the seamless nature of its mixed-media world. Rear projection in a Hitchcock film, for instance, marks itself off as separate from the rest of the action which proceeds before it. Painted backdrops, generally speaking, remain backdrops: their spaces

5 The press release for Philippe Parreno's forthcoming exhibit in New York's Park Avenue Armory underscores my point. Consider the title and first paragraph, for instance: "Artist Philippe Parreno Orchestrates Monumental Multi-Sensory Installation At Park Avenue Armory This June." See *Park Avenue Armory*, March 5, 2015. *http://resnicowschroeder.com/rsa/upload/Headline/_Filename_Parreno%20at%20Park%20Avenue%20Armory_FINAL.pdf*. Last accessed 28. 05. 2015.

cannot be traversed. However, it is common in *The Mill and the Cross* to see real bodies make their way over painted hills and through painted valleys. Likewise, live action and physical landscapes in the foreground might yield without self-conscious artifice to painted landscapes and a mix of live and digitally-animated figures in the background. It is in this sense that the world of *The Mill and the Cross* is also the animation of the frozen space of *The Procession to Calvary*, even as that painting is itself in the process of being produced within that world.

In a recent discussion of Martin Scorsese's use of Hitchcockian rear projection in *Shutter Island* (2010), Elisabeth Bronfen makes an intriguing claim. She suggests that the "visual instability produced by rear projection indicates that something in excess of the cinematic representation of the otherwise unrepresentable is at play: foregrounding the artificiality of the film image also makes for its effect" (2015, 24). Rear-projected backdrops remain at a remove from the real bodies that move before them; in this sense, Bronfen's claim is justified, for it is clear when watching a rear-projected scene that there is more at work in the scene than what is represented.

However, the difference between spatial construction in *The Mill and the Cross* and classical rear projection lies not precisely in the theatrical division between evident artifice and real space, but rather the impossible intersection between the two.

Artifice and reality are inseparably entwined (while remaining clearly perceptible in their difference) in *The Mill and the Cross*. Real bodies exist in (un)real spaces, and within their relations emerges an aesthetic play. This film's artifice is more than just its effect; it is its *raison d'être*. Unlike the most typical usage of rear projection, the spaces of *The Mill and the Cross* are conceived as being both painted *and* volumetric. It thus reworks a centuries-old tradition of endowing the two-dimensional image with volume and movement, something we find in pre-cinematic screen practices like the shadow play and early cinema's fascination with *projection par transparence*, but also – and more spectacularly – in the "looming" movement of images produced by the Phantasmagoria.[6] In short, this aesthetic play creates a sustained tension between flatness and depth, between painting and volume, and ultimately between its world and ours. The tension extends to the spectator a particular proposal: you may enter this (aesthetic) space.

6 See the fascinating discussion of transparent projection in cinema's first decades in Jennifer Wild: *The Parisian Avant-Garde in the Age of Cinema, 1900–1923* (2015, 11). Although Wild does not reach back as far as the Phantasmagoria of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the dialectic between flatness and depth, two-dimensionality and volume in projected images must begin with the Phantasmagoria – the first projection technology that allowed for such an illusory effect.

I am arguing that *The Mill and the Cross* articulates an emergent sensibility concerning the spaces of cinema. I understand this sensibility to come into self-awareness generally in the late twentieth century, perhaps principally in the workings of post-1989 expanded screen practices and the architectures they generate. Although a nuanced historiography of this sensibility – call it the *spatialization of cinema* – needs to be theorized at length, it lies outside the immediate scope of this essay.[7] Instead of recalling the traditional model of cinema's genealogy, which generally tracks through the camera obscura, the magic lantern, and then the cinematic image as a window onto the world, we might instead position *The Mill and the Cross* in the realm of what Antonia Lant has called "haptical space," thereby reinforcing my proposed shift in the terms of discussion of the film's intermediality from *painting/cinema* to *installation/cinema*.

Lant's account of haptical space in early cinema is grounded upon a Riegl-inflected theorization of the "haptical and optical properties of art" and the "role of Egyptian art in making this distinction" (1995, 50). I am concerned here with the first part of Lant's article, particularly her discussion of certain early films. In *The Palace of the Arabian Nights* (George Méliès, 1905), Lant discerns an "engagement with the novel spatiality of cinema, an utterly flat medium of presentation, insubstantial, without texture or material, and yet evoking, in a wafer, a fuller illusion of physicality and exactness of human beings than any prior art" (1995, 45). Lant finds in some other Méliès films "motifs that probed or highlighted the alluring yet illusory depths of the cinema, the impossible compressions and expansions of far and near, the unclear identities of figure and ground" (1995, 46). Méliès achieves these effects by "interleaving painted flats with moving actors, by animating or constituting paintings through trick effects of stop motion, splicing, and double exposure, [and] by creating a giant magic lantern that produces both still and animated projections" (Lant 1995, 46). Such explorations, Lant argues, show that "the spatial properties of representation and

7 Very recently, Thomas Elsaesser has proposed that we view the 18th-century Phantasmagoria as "conceptually [the] most challenging precursor of cinema" (Elsaesser 2015, 69). Such a move would contest practically the entire history of cinema, which has tended to privilege the magic lantern. Elsaesser's argument is that "the lineage of the Phantasmagoria […] initiates a form of cinema that does not project itself as a window on the world, nor requires fixed boundaries of space like a frame. Rather, it functions as an ambient form of spectacle and event, where no clear spatial divisions between inside and outside pertain" (Elsaesser 2015, 69–70). Thus, he would position the Phantasmagoria as "the dispositive that […] most closely approximates the genealogical ancestor of […] installation art" (Elsaesser 2015, 70). In fact, the ambience and architecture of the Phantasmagoria have long been overlooked, despite being quite crucial to structuring the phenomenological experience of visitors – a logic of spatiality that recent media installations recover and rework in different ways. See Elsaesser 2015, 45–74.

their relation to an observer, indeed as defined by the observer's perception, was a formulation of art theory coincident with cinema's appearance" (1995, 47).

As the relatively historically-stable categories of cinema and painting shift in order to negotiate new formations at the turn of another century, it makes sense to me to try and account for *The Mill and the Cross*, a film about painting and cinema, created by a media artist (and thus not, in the traditional sense, a filmmaker), in an expanded context. Space and the visitor's embodied experience of it seems to matter in art as never before. It is perhaps most obvious in the rapid proliferation and near-ubiquity of screen-based architectures and installations in galleries and museums. Moreover, and at a more foundational level, we can also recall recent discussions concerning art's *relocation* and *circulation* made by Francesco Casetti (2015) and David Joselit (2013).

Both appear convinced that what is at stake in contemporary art is not temporality – which had been a driving concern for both cinema and the other arts for much of the twentieth century – but rather *spatiality*. In other words, we must consider not so much what (the specificity of) a given artwork is, but rather *where* it is – in terms of its address to the spectator as well as the forms of experience it enables. *The Mill and the Cross* offers cinematic spectatorship that works like *The Paradise Institute* and many other media installations offer the visitor to a gallery or museum today: an invitation to be part of the space of the artwork. In this sense, it joins recent efforts across expanded cinema to once again investigate "the spatial properties of representation and their relation to an observer […] as defined by the observer's perception" (Lant 1995, 47) a century after Méliès.

Ductus: The Space(s) of Art

It makes a certain kind of sense to read *The Mill and the Cross* not within the conceptual framework of painting and cinema but rather that of installation and cinema because of the way the film imagines space and movement. By foregrounding the obvious artifice of real bodies traversing (un)real spaces within the imagined world of a painting that comprises this moving-image artwork, *The Mill and the Cross* resembles an installation space that we may traverse and from which we may, eventually, depart. Within this space, a form of spectatorship emerges that emphasizes movement and affect over critical distantiation; this is an aesthetic space that promotes affective, embodied responses. We enter this space in order to move, and in turn to be moved.

This moving aesthetic calls to mind Tom Gunning's recent comments on the need for a renewed attention to cinema's relationship to motion. Gunning argues that "spectatorship of cinematic motion" (2007, 39) can raise interesting concerns that sidestep the either-or impasse that is the almost inevitable conclusion of any account of cinema that grounds itself upon photographic indexicality. Gunning wants to emphasize the obvious but much-neglected fact that "film spectators are embodied beings rather than simply eyes and minds somehow suspended before the screen" (2007, 39),[8] and he mobilizes one of Metz's earlier essays to support his polemic. Metz, in *On the Impression of Reality in Cinema*, tries to acknowledge the titular "impression of reality" that cinema produces by approaching it phenomenologically. "Participation" constitutes a key concept for Metz in this essay, for it turns out to be "affective and perceptual" (Metz 1974, 4), and relates to film's "*appeal* of a presence and proximity" (Metz 1974, 5). But how to achieve this sense of participation? As Gunning notes, Metz identified movement as instrumental toward this participatory spectatorship. It is our ability to perceive motion and the effects that has on our sensorium that, for Metz, forms the basis of spectatorial participation.[9]

Whereas Gunning discusses Metz's ideas in relation to Henri Bergson's writings on motion, I want to look at the points he raises from a different perspective. There is another, older history that addresses the profound connection between movement and the art of viewing, especially as they pertain to the embodied experience of visual art. Giuliana Bruno has addressed this directly in her efforts to (re)locate the emergence of cinema within heterogeneous cultural practices of image collection designed to provoke affective recollection. In her account, the practice of exhibiting cinema coalesced around various "sites of public viewing" such as "cabinets of curiosity, wax museums, panoramic and dioramic stages […] and view painting" (Bruno 2007, 17). She claims that "what turned into cinema was an imaginative trajectory requiring physical habitation and liminal traversal of the sites of display" (Bruno 2007, 18). Cinema is thus reconceived as a cartographic practice that not only figures a physical and metaphorical journey in order to construct affect, but one that was always already marked by an attention to space and movement.[10]

8 This is something Brigitte Peucker has argued for and theorized across two books: *Incorporating Images: Film and the Rival Arts* (1995) and *The Material Image: Art and the Real in Film* (2007).

9 All quotes from Gunning 2007, 29–52.

10 This is developed in greater depth in Giuliana Bruno's *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film* (2002).

Well before Bruno, Sergei Eisenstein had likewise characterized cinematic spectatorship in his day as an "imaginary path followed by the eye and the varying perceptions of an object that depend on how it appears to the eye" (Eisenstein 1989, 116). He subsequently reminds us that "in the past […] the opposite was the case: the spectator moved between […] carefully disposed phenomena that he observed sequentially with his visual sense" (Eisenstein 1989, 116). Eisenstein adduces two examples: the Acropolis at Athens and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, where the eight reliefs of Urban VIII's coat of arms by Bernini are set in a specific sequence such that their significance only accretes and articulates itself when the sequence is "activated" by a physical traversal of the architected space.

I want to claim that Metz's conception of spectatorial participation can be extended to intersect both with Bruno's media archaeological effort to position cinema as a practice of emotional mapping, as well as Eisenstein's identification of a link between architectural space and spectatorship. Crucially, all three accounts consider *motion* as somehow key to the embodied experience of art. And in their reliance on motion, they unconsciously point back to the concept of *ductus* that was fundamental to medieval attitudes toward making and experiencing art.

In medieval art historiography, as Mary Carruthers clarifies, *ductus* "analyze[s] the experience of artistic form as an on-going, dynamic process rather than the examination of a static or completed artwork. *Ductus* is the way by which a work leads someone through itself: that quality in a work's formal patterns which engages the audience and then sets a viewer or auditor or performer in motion within its structures, an experience more like traveling through stages along a route than like perceiving a whole object" (2010, 190). In short, the medieval conception of an artwork was that one would "travel through [its] composition […] led on by the stylistic qualities of its parts and their formally arranged relationships" (Carruthers 2010, 190). It is a quality of the artwork, but also something more: it is the very performance and process of one's (imaginative but possibly also literal) traversal. The address of the artwork, and the affect it induces, is developed in the course of this moving art of viewing. Thus, Carruthers concludes, "through its formal disposition *the work* in and of itself 'directs' movement […] The work does not transparently 'express the author's intentions.' Its formal arrangements themselves are agents, which cause movements, mental and sensory and – as in the case of architecture – physical" (2010, 201).

By way of an example, the art historian Paul Crossley's discussion of the architecture of the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres in France provides a wonderful glimpse of how medieval art and architecture mobilized *ductus*.

Crossley emphasizes in his account an intertwining of movement and affect, each playing off the other. He excavates the "cognitive map" of Chartres, which in its architected space achieved effects we (re-)discover in recent moving-image installations. His comment concerning the "sacred topography" of Chartres, "its altars, chapels, shrines, screens, miraculous images, between which its laity and clergy moved, sometimes informally, at other times in a more or less prescribed order" (Crossley 2010, 216) is especially worth noting. The full discussion (which I will not rehearse further here) demonstrates convincingly the ways in which the figures of martyrs, apostles, confessors, and saints were strategically positioned throughout the cathedral, such that they articulated a particular rhetoric – one that is activated precisely by means of recollection in motion, in the process of one's "con*duct*" through the cathedral's interior space. *Ductus*, in the medieval context, is "essentially about performance, or […] 'performativity'" (Crossley 2010, 215).

The "installation sensibility" – if I may call it that – of *The Mill and the Cross* recalls the architected spaces common to recent expanded screen practices. Its skillful weaving-together of the flatness of painted space with the voluptuousness of real bodies, layering them in ways that simultaneously hint at illusionistic space without ever disguising their artifice, consistently displaying a paradoxical spatial construction, ultimately resists being subsumed to immersive spectacle. This film boldly wears its *architexture* on its sleeve.[11] It articulates a discourse on motion on two levels. First, there are specific camera movements that call attention to themselves; two of these coincide with displays of *tableaux vivant*.[12] One of these, as I have argued, serves as a figurative passage between the spaces of painting and cinema, and thus also tells us something of how this film conceives of space, movement and spectatorship. The third, which makes for a figurative movement out of the space of *The Mill and the Cross* and into that of the museum containing *The Procession to Calvary*, consists of a cut and a lengthy

11 The term comes from Giuliana Bruno, who develops it across *Atlas of Emotion* (2002) and the recent *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media* (2014). Somewhat frustratingly, she does not provide a clear definition of the term (it is developed instead as a neologism grounded on poetics). However, as far as I can tell, she intends the term to combine the senses of an architected, aesthetic space that is also profoundly a *haptic* space, eliciting an embodied engagement that operates along touch as much as, or perhaps more than, sight. In the case of *The Mill and the Cross*, I have in mind the distinctive painted "skin" of the image as opposed to the standard, volumetric illusion proffered by the more conventionally "cinematic" image.

12 The second appears at the moment of narrative climax, when Bruegel, challenged by his patron to explain how he hopes to capture the enormous complexity of the painting's subject, signals to the miller high up on the tor. As the miller brings the mill blades to a grinding stop, narrative time itself slows and then stops. The camera then slowly tracks through this scene. It is a spectacular reiteration of a very similar effect at the beginning of the film.

zoom backward from the surface of Bruegel's painting. It mirrors the cut that had placed us within the world of the painting at the start of the film, and introduces the second aspect of the film's conception of the spaces of art.

In the final scene of the film, we observe a group of townspeople at a communal dance. They cavort upon real grass, while the painted blades of the painted mill, high up on the painted tor, turn slowly as painted clouds move across a painted sky. Real bodies move seamlessly within (un)real spaces. With the final cut to black that ends this scene, what was a single film effectively becomes two. If, until this point, we had been part of the world of *The Procession to Calvary*, if the film we knew as *The Mill and the Cross* existed within the boundaries of that world (which, after Cavell, we should consider as being identical to the boundaries of the frame of that painting), we are now part of a different space, one which exists not within the world of the painting, but rather the world in which that painting is simply one of many paintings adorning a museum wall.

With the cut, we are ejected from the world of Bruegel's painting, for the next shot shows a close-up of the figures around Mary. But it is clear that we are looking at a flat, two-dimensional painting that is most definitely not animated. Gradually the camera pulls back, revealing the entirety of the painting. It continues to retreat, revealing part of the layout of the Kunsthistorisches Museum. Slowly, it withdraws down a corridor as the film fades to black. [Fig. 5.] This prolonged withdrawal at the conclusion of the film is striking in its deliberate intensity, and demands to be considered carefully. How might we read Majewski's choice to delineate the spaces of his two central texts – Bruegel's *Procession to Calvary* and his own film *The Mill and the Cross* – while carefully elaborating their relation to each other, all within a work that itself unfolds a sustained play of spatiality and spectatorship?

Of Museums, Memory, and Media

The museum, writes Didier Maleuvre, is "*essentially* historical" because it "participate[s] in a historical production of history" through its acts of "putting forward an image of the past and managing the handing on of tradition through artworks and artifacts" (1999, 9). The artwork in the museum, therefore, is not ahistorical. In fact, it is the outcome of a specific set of ideological operations that imbue those works to be found within museum walls with political agency. The great trick of the museum, however, is that it obscures these operations, "neutraliz[ing]" art by containing it within itself while also "[reifying] collective identity by confining it to a set of seemingly eternal traits, thus neutralizing conflicting or errant

tendencies" (Maleuvre 1999, 10–11). The museum as a site of political operations of memory thus reveals itself as "representing the progress of history through diversity, yet doing it from the standpoint of a supra-historical, transcendental notion of what this history is" (Maleuvre 1999, 11). Such is the environment within which we encounter *The Procession to Calvary*. But the museum, which has been home to painting and other arts for more than two centuries, now has a new resident of more recent vintage. Within the museum, we also encounter with increasing regularity that "invention without a future" – the cinema.

Cinema within the museum, much like the museum itself, "owes its existence to modern consciousness's sense of acute separation from the past" (Maleuvre 1999, 270), perhaps even in a unique sense. Cinema is – and has been for a while – in the process of being memorialized in the museum, which as Theodor Adorno for one has remarked, exhibits a discomfiting proximity to mausoleums and death.[13] Indeed as Maleuvre claims, it is the "deadness of the past" that "shines through the museum piece." When Majewski's camera leaves behind the world of *The Mill and the Cross* and enters (returns to) the world of *The Procession to Calvary*, a rhetorical act of doubling occurs. If, until this point, the film was content to trouble spaces of representation by emphasizing its distinctive architexture, it now asks us to consider the film that was always an animation of a painting that is itself held within a museum. This reorientation puts the film-as-text in relation to the painting as another text, both existing in a specific relation to each other within those larger "heterogeneous configurations of relationships or links" that for David Joselit are now incorporated within art itself.

Maleuvre has argued that "history [disconnects] itself from time" within the space of the museum. In fact, it is precisely the emplacement of an artwork within the museum that wrests it outside time itself, he thus argues that "history […] is a way of conceiving one's alienation from time, a way of suffering the disjointedness of consciousness in time" (1999, 271). In the museum, confronting the artwork we also confront its remoteness from us – a remoteness felt not just temporally, but also, I would argue, spatially. The museum object is other to us. And yet, it is exactly the operation of the museum – its "act of wresting" – that simultaneously reinforces the concept of pastness. Or, in Maleuvre's words, "the historical past does not precede its transplantation in the present: history is precisely the recognition that the past does not exist outside of the reminiscing present" (1999,

13 Adorno discusses the German word "museal," which for him has "unpleasant overtones." He proceeds to discuss museums alongside mausoleums and the general conditions of death and dying. See Theodor Adorno (1988, 175).

271). *Reminiscence* is precisely what might be an appropriate mode of relating the discursive space of cinema to that of the other arts as they negotiate the museum space that today contains them all. Cinema's entry into the space of the museum itself reinscribes the historicity of the cinematic image. Cinema cannot exist in the museum without having itself passed through modernity and into history (a process that is by no means completed yet). It therefore constitutes a particularly vibrant site of resistance to what Maleuvre criticizes as the museum's will toward supra-historicism and the neutralization of art.

In the preface to *Cinema and Experience*, Miriam Hansen discusses the origins of the Committee for Cinema and Media Studies at the University of Chicago, noting that the name "was meant to designate a broad diversity of media; to encourage critical inquiry into cinema's interactions with other forms and institutions, artistic and vernacular, traditional and experimental; and thus to apprehend cinema in its intersections with (or disjuncture among) different histories, aesthetic and technological, social and political" (Hansen 2012, xvi). It is this openness of cinema to other media, to other images, spaces and technologies that distinguishes its address to the spectator. My claim is that in recent years, an "installation sensibility" has become evident across numerous films made, coincidentally, by artist-filmmakers who routinely work within an expanded field of cinema. In their vision, cinema is more than an historical artefact to be exhibited in the museum; it is rather the beginning of a reimagining of spatial relations between cinema and the other arts. Thus, for instance, the *mise-en-scène* of Peter Greenaway's *Nightwatching* (2007) often recalls photographs or mini-walkthroughs of gallery, museum and other installation set-pieces.[14] [Fig. 6.] And, as I've argued through this essay, the spatial configuration that is evoked when watching *The Mill and the Cross*, the viewing positions that are figured by distinctive camera movements at crucial moments, and the unusual blending and animation of real and (un)real spaces variously recall the spaces and practices of media installation rather than, and indeed beyond, the familiar binaries of painting and film.

What recent developments in expanded screen practices and intermedial filmmaking share is a keen interest in movement. In the architected spaces of expanded screen practice, this movement is often literalized. It is always a

14 As Brigitte Peucker has noted, Peter Greenaway, although trained early on in painting, is "primarily a curator of exhibitions, an installation artist, a filmmaker whose films exhibit paintings; feature painters as well as writers; juxtapose time-based arts with spatial arts and analog with digital images; and create intermedial palimpsests that layer painting, literature, photography, architecture, landscape architecture, and dance." (See her *Foreword*, in Angela Dalle Vacche, ed. 2012, x).

double movement, for in such contexts our physical traversal is designed to stimulate an affective response. In the case of recent intermedial cinema, as I hope to have shown in my discussion of *The Mill and the Cross*, it is camera movement and compositing technique that figures our journey into and out of the spaces of artwork(s). In these spaces, we visitors enact a performance common to the medieval spectator: we traverse the spaces of the artwork. As the jarring shift in spatial relations at the end of *The Mill and the Cross* suggests, this traversal must account not only for the space within the artwork, but also the spaces that contain that artwork in the real world. Only by considering this other, larger space can we hope to continue to – despite the politics of the museum – account for cinema's encounters with "different histories, aesthetic and technological, social and political." Perhaps most poignantly, it is within the space of the museum that we discover a true compass to guide our movement in thought: a reminiscence that is also the inscription of cinema's own historicity.

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Figure 1. Opening animated *tableau vivant* of Majewski's *The Mill and the Cross* (2011).

Figure 2. Bruegel (Rutger Hauer) is dwarfed – he is to the left, in profile – by the scale of the painting. Although most of the figures in immediate foreground are those of real actors, the shot also shows moving figures – animated or otherwise – in the distant background.

Figure 3. *The Procession to Calvary* (Pieter Bruegel, 1564).

Figure 4. Installation view, *The Paradise Institute* (Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, 2001).

Figure 5. *The Mill and the Cross* (2011). Moving from within the space of the painting to the space of the museum.

Figures 6. Installation sensibility in Peter Greenaway's *Nightwatching* (2007). Note the improbable presence of *spotlights* in a period film (their beams clearly frame the central table).

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Acta Univ. Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies, 11 (2015) 29–37

DOI: 10.1515/ausfm-2015-0014

The Draughtsman's Contract and the Crisis of Structuralism

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Abstract. Peter Greenaway's cinema questions the numerical, verbal and pictorial determinations of sets and systems. Two or one, even or odd? (Twelve drawings or – thirteen?) Is two, as a stabilization of symmetry, undermined by decompositions in time and space that defy any possible reduction to sub-binaries? This latter question is reserved mainly for *A Zed and Two Noughts* (1985), though it is anticipated in *Vertical Features Remake* (1978) and especially *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982), which I will treat as a response to both questions at once. The plot of this film, with its riderless horses and lack of an heir, raises the question Lévi-Strauss raised in the most influential exposition of structuralism we have, *The Structural Study of Myth*. Two or one? Are we born of parents or are we autochthonous? Lévi-Strauss's reading of the Oedipus myth is an allegory of structuralism itself: are intelligible signs born from the differentiation of two other signs (binaries) or do they arise parthenogenetically, as "natural signs," from the autonomous self-identity of what they represent? On the other hand, in the dissolution of identity we see in the body of Mr. Herbert raised from the moat, are there appearances that dissolve identity altogether? The paper will show how the overdetermined frame and its symmetries (the stationary camera, the draughtsman's viewfinder and grid, the "framing" of Mr. Neville, etc.) are confirmed and disconfirmed by invasions of the frame, and the ways in which drawing, painting, and landscaping both "fix on paper" and disrupt the offspring or sterility of twinning.

Keywords: structuralism, structuralist film, Peter Greenaway, systems, symmetry, framing.

Everyone, including Peter Greenaway himself, says that his early work is an encounter with structuralism. Many let it go at that, but Greenaway insists too that this early work is a critical *response* to structuralism, a critique of systems and system-making that revels nonetheless in the encyclopedic shape-shiftings and overlaps of cinematic, verbal, musical, painterly and numerical language systems. In speaking of systems, as Greenaway often also does, I seem to have brought us

forward to the theoretical present, to the work of Niklas Luhmann and others. Henry Sussman has made this move in discussing *The Pillow Book* of 1996. But we have to do here with cinematic work that spans the period 1978–1985.

The Draughtsman's Contract, which is not without an Oedipal storyline, is often understandably called a structuralist film (with Greenaway's approval), typically without pausing to consider the premises and methods of structuralism; but it is also, with all Mrs. Talmann's irony about "significance," a critique of structuralism. Besides *The Draughtsman's Contract* of 1982, I have chiefly in mind two of the experimental pseudo-documentaries, *Vertical Features Remake* (1978) and *The Falls* (1980), together with the feature film that follows *Draughtsman*, *A Zed and Two Noughts* (1985). For this period we must assume that words like structure and system arise both from the anthropological and linguistic structuralism of Lévi-Strauss with Jakobson and from the film theory of Christian Metz and his contemporaries, doubtless including British refugees from literary study like Stephen Heath. To this constellation we should add, in the spirit of critique insisted on by Greenaway, the early work of Derrida, especially the epochal 1967 critique of Lévi-Strauss, *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences*.

But this roll call still does little to overcome our prevailing vagueness when we speak of Greenaway and structuralism. In this paper I want to describe what the evidence of the films themselves suggests to be the structuralism Greenaway has in mind, and in so doing I must begin by insisting that a certain form of structuralism, extremely influential in cinema and cinema theory, is only partially in play, though it is certainly involved. By this I mean the psychoanalytic structuralism mediated by Lacan. The agenda for a structuralist account of "the language of film" in the period immediately preceding the Greenaway films I have mentioned is laid out by Christian Metz, especially in *The Imaginary Signifier*, written between 1973 and 1976 and soon translated. For Metz, the central structuralist concept for understanding cinematic language as a quasi-unconscious system was Lacan's alignment of condensation and displacement in the Freudian dreamwork with the rhetorical terms metaphor and metonymy, terms that Lacan found characterizing the two types of aphasia in the essay on the aphasias by Roman Jakobson. Even though Metz rigorously criticizes the imperfect overlap between these pairings, together with the imperfect overlap between the pairings metaphor/metonymy and paradigmatic/syntagmatic within Jakobson's system itself, Metz builds his own system on these pairings and finds in their very imperfection a measure of freeplay, an elusiveness evocative of unconscious thought, in the language of cinema.

In my opinion, however, while important, this is not the account of structuralism that matters most to Greenaway. He is still more interested in the temptations offered by structures that seduce *waking* consciousness, granting that unconscious structures may superimpose themselves on the attempts at scientific objectivity that obsess the male protagonists in most of his films. I shall soon try to say how this preoccupation directs Greenaway's emphasis in dialogue with structuralism, but I should anticipate here the way in which even for him, despite his undoubted belief that Freud could pose as one of the cranks who populate his films, there remains an underlying problem – call it the anthropological unconscious – which has to do with *inheritance*, a theme obviously central to *The Draughtsman's Contract* and one that inescapably takes an Oedipal form: What determines paternity, who is the father that is killed and by whom, and why does this sacrifice repeat itself across generations? Lurking in these questions you can find the plot of *The Draughtsman's Contract*.

In this form, then, the psychoanalytic perspective remains, but it presents itself in Greenaway's playful structures as an experiment with intermedial languages, perhaps indeed not unlike what Freud and Lacan after him call the *rebus* in the dreamwork, or what the anti-Freudian Deleuze calls multiple plateaus: that is, the way in which an unconscious thought or even a conscious one, as typically in Greenaway's film language, can be comprised of verbal, visual, musical, and numerical signs mixed up together – and also of course, in the case of film, of both static and moving images. Greenaway in his recent defences of an anti-narrative cinema has spoken perhaps too emphatically about the inferiority of image-based narrative to spoken or written verbal narrative. The sentence "The girl looked out of the window" properly leaves a great deal to the imagination, he says, whereas film needs to frame the girl, like the window itself: to describe her appearance, her expression, and what she sees all at once in ways that imprison both her and the spectator – like a zoo, or a system. But in the actual working out of Greenaway's films, as Brigitte Peucker (2014) has shown, this contrast between the visual and the verbal is too neat. Especially in *The Draughtsman's Contract*, as she says, the exuberant freeplay of verbal metaphor borrowed from English Restoration Comedy offsets and liberates the self-conscious and self-critical enframings of the draughtsman's grid, together with the film's symmetries and the fixed camera positions without zooms or tracking. Music in the meantime obtrudes its own code. The manifest structure of a Greenaway film, then, in one way or another, is *like a rebus*.

So what *do* I think Greenaway means by "structuralist" when he accepts that adjective in accounts of his work and willingly repeats it? I think that what he

means arises from the Saussurian premise that the binary is the foundational principle of semiotics, especially as this premise works itself out in the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss, and yet more especially in the famous chapter on "the structural study of myth," which features Lévi-Strauss's confessedly amateur and unguardedly anti-Freudian interpretation of the Oedipus myth. As he spreads out his rows and columns concerning key events and recurrent symbols in all the versions of the myth he has ready to hand, Lévi-Strauss argues that the underlying question answered by this myth, as indeed by all myth, is the question "two or one?" Are we born of one parent, as in parthenogenesis or autochthony, or are we born rather of two parents? "Madam," says Mr. Neville in *Draughtsman* to Mrs. Talmann, "[the child Augustus] is an 'orphan' because his mother became a Catholic?" Is every exogamous birth among these intolerant Protestants a false virgin birth? Mythical thinking posits that we are natural signs, representing by reproducing the unique thing that gives rise to us, in keeping with positivist linguistic theories: the name Adam means "red clay," the name Oedipus means a foot swollen by the clay still sticking to it, both heroes having been born from the earth in Eden and on Mount Cithaeron, respectively. In short, born from *one*.

Needless to say – but it just is not clear, at least to me, how fully Lévi-Strauss is aware of this himself – this reading of birth myths, or *reproduction* myths as we may more pointedly say of medial systems, not only reconfirms the repudiated version of Freud, the father Lévi-Strauss kills off in proclaiming his own science, but is also an allegory of structuralism itself. Scientific meaning understood as the truth of structuralist science is born of the difference between *two* arbitrary signs (what coupling could be more arbitrary than Jocasta and Oedipus, who produce the truth between them?), whereas mythic meaning – positivism's myth of natural signs – entails a sign born directly from its object. Something like what I have just outlined would be Lévi-Strauss's allegory, but by the time of Greenaway the birth myth of structuralism opposes itself not only to positivism – and also to Whorfian pragmatist theories of the sign discussed by the mad linguists of *The Falls* – but also by the uncontrollable dissemination or monstrous birth of the sign that Derrida called an "event" in the essay I have mentioned, and that we have since called deconstruction. Born from one or born *not* from two but from *everything*, everything interconnected yet beyond the remotest conceivable horizon of order, the encyclopedia gone mad: at the meeting extremes of indivisible unity and what the languages of *A Zed and Two Noughts* would call decomposition. The one and the shapeless many are the evil twin enemies of the science of structuralism. I shall be returning to these dangerous extremes in conclusion.

As I now get down to cases, my paper will turn out to be about the number 11, a double "vertical feature" that can produce the number *two*, either by addition or in Roman numerals, or can be the two verticals we visualize as twins, or can begin an infinite series (one, one, etc., in perpetuity), or can graphically express binarism (this alongside that vertical) – or *perhaps* can represent the doubling of the psychoanalytic ur-signifier, misleadingly represented to consciousness as the I of the ego but really doubling the ego as the name of the father, the vertical form that Lacan for obvious reasons calls the phallus.

So it's time for our elevenses. In *The Draughtsman's Contract* there unexpectedly appears a *ladder* – leaning against the house, leading up to the window behind which one of the trysts occurs, and later said to be used mainly for "the collecting of apples." This ladder appears as a mist rises, one of three mists in the film, the riderless white horse emerging from the second and Mr. Neville, the draughtsman returning from Radstock emerging from the third. Mr. Neville, who hates any change in what he sees, decides even so to put the ladder in his drawing, though he derisively calls it a "meretricious vertical," still being at this point in the film an enemy of interpretation. A cigar is only a cigar. More or less in agreement here, the brilliant Sarah Talmann, who is the epicenter of the film's wit and impresario of its conspiracies, describes her husband's "long white britches" as a meretricious vertical when she goes on to say that they contain "nothing of substance," a problem that complicates the possibility of birth and inheritance for the estate. "Woman, it takes two!" says her husband. "It does indeed, sir." It is she, too, here teetering toward Lacan, who ironically parries and parodies Mr. Neville's boastful wordplay about his phallic "significance." She has said that as she moves away from the house she feels that she lessens in significance, self-consciously aware, as she always is, of her decreased commodity value in relation to property as the prospect of a son's inheritance decreases. With comparative naivety passing for libertine wit, Mr. Neville responds, "what signifies does not grow smaller for *me*," a *double entendre* that of course entirely suits Mrs. Talmann's knowing confinement of significance to inheritance only. No male heir, no property, no significance. In any case the ladder in question, which has appeared less prominently against a white wall toward the end of *Vertical Features Remake*, of course does have rungs as well as verticals. They are what *bind the binary*, for example completing the letter H in the titles of Greenaway's experimental films leading up to *Vertical Features*, *H Is for House* and *A Walk Through H*. As Greenaway explained in his account of *Vertical Features*, the horizontal is indispensable in making a grid, the rectangle that constitutes any and all frames and horizons.

But the Greenaway ladder, I would argue, is first and foremost an eleven. This number *qua* number makes a lone anecdotal appearance in *Draughtsman*. It is the number of trees planted by a Mr. Lucas to commemorate the birth of his eleven children – nearly all of whom, but not all, died in childbirth or infancy. The eleven trees, which thus fail to bear fruit, as it were, are given the names, or signifiers, of the children, not of the species identity that destines them, from one seed, to be what they are. Hence they are purely arbitrary signs, barren of identity or intrinsic meaning. There are twelve *drawings* in the contract, not eleven, until the fatal thirteenth is attempted, and we may say not only that despite its symmetry as an even number (there are two sets of six drawings), 12 is itself dangerously in excess of the structuralist equipoise marked by 11; it is also a *false* binary, an illusion of symmetrical completeness like so much else in the film, especially the ubiquitous and commonplace black-and-white binary of the drawings themselves and of the costuming. Mr. Neville has been hired to "fix Mr. Herbert's estate in black and white," to fix it in place devoid of birdsong and the drift of animals. The number 12 after all does not implicitly *contain* the mystery of 2 or 1 but poses the mystery openly as a question – 1 or 2? – which seems progressive rather than symmetrical: from 1 to 2, and so on forward. The introduction of 3 in 13 is not only unlucky but introduces an excess to the mystery itself: to produce an heir at Compton-Anstey, *a third has been scandalously needed*, with Neville, a name containing 11 in its two l's, supplementing Talmann, a name that would mean tall man in English only if it had two l's. Mr. "new evil 11" is punished for his exogamous paternity, "never ill" until now but about to be "null," blinded before he dies like Oedipus before him.

Graphically, the number 11 is a twin towers, like the empty Eiffel Tower from which the horizon organizes itself as described by Roland Barthes in *Le tour Eiffel* (1989) or the twin towers of New York as described long before 2001 by Michel de Certeau (1984) as an empty principle, mimicking the vertical, paradigmatic axis in Jakobson's *Linguistics and Poetics* (1960), that organizes the horizontal, syntagmatic city at its feet. Naturally enough, such structures are everywhere in *Vertical Features Remake*. The water tower to the right of another, narrower tower in a recurrent image is where, in a signature *mise en abîme*, Greenaway's alter ego Tulse Luper – a name with two l's – has stored the footage that the pseudo-scholars described in the voice-over are trying to reconstruct for this film. This shot turns up again repeatedly in *The Falls*, where the water tower is once again identified as a film archive. These towers with their life-giving waters store in their virtual vertical space the signifiers that compose themselves on the

horizontal axis of composition, according to structuralism. As Jakobson famously put it, the poetic function transfers the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection to the axis of combination. You can never actually ascribe substance or content to the vertical axis of selection from which structure emanates any more than you can directly study the unconscious. The event or advent of structure emerges from what is truly an empty, meretricious vertical.

But to come closer to 11: each of the four remakes in *Vertical Features* consists of eleven sets of eleven counted segments of footage representing manmade and natural verticals, although this division becomes more and more obscure with each remake, with tendencies to lose count, with the replacement of counting by the composer Michael Nyman's increasingly complex percussive score (which is still however dominated by twice-repeated chords), and so on. The significance of this number seems to disappear in *The Falls*, which consists of ninety-two brief pseudo-biographical studies of victims of "V-U-E," the "violent unknown event" – "that which is seen" in the French behind the acronym, "*vue*," as opposed to that which is known. As Greenaway has often said, Mr. Neville's problem in *Draughtsman* focuses on the difference between what is known and what is merely seen, and in the film Mrs. Talmann repeats this in mockery of Mr. Neville. The surname of all ninety-two victims of the V-U-E, taken from a directory, begins with the letters "f-a-l-l." But wait, there it is, the number 11 in the letters "l-l," attached rebus-like now by a musical note, fa, to the fall which characterizes many of the violent unknown events caused by the revenge of birds against being caged by vertical bars in human thought and practice: "falls" as a word being a slight evasion of the word "phallus" but also a slight evasion of the word "false" – and, of course, as an *event*, evoking the repeated falls of man, constantly repeating the link with the apples that the ladder in *Draughtsman* is used to pick. In *A Zed and Two Noughts*, the apple is the first object to decompose in time-lapse photography.

The two ones in 11 are twins, rendered identical however only by artifice or obsessiveness – by a structure into which they are inserted. In *A Zed and Two Noughts*, the twins Oliver and Oswald Deuce (two O's or zeros masquerading as ones or identities) look quite different from each other at first, light-haired and dark-haired, dressed differently, reacting to grief at the loss of their wives in seemingly different ways, but in the long run their obsessively shared activities make them identical, and we often see them side by side, like 11, like the bars of animal cages, like the curtains framing the bed of Alba, whose personal symmetry can be restored only by the loss of a second leg after the first. The

twins of *Draughtsman*, the Poulencs, are structurally at least as important as the Deuces, though their marginal presence in the screenplay seems meretricious. They appear first during the credits, later at the top of the stairs in the house, but do nothing on which the plot turns until their final appearance, when it is they who kill Mr. Neville, each using a straight white cudgel resembling a one or an l to deliver alternating blows. Having stood outside the narrative frame, they now slide under it. But beforehand, they have not only been an 11, dressed in matching white and always speaking and gesturing in sympathy, which made them uncannily one – that is part of the lore of twins – but their double vertical is also repeated twice *within* themselves, first in the double-peaked wigs that Greenaway seems more or less to have invented for this film's cast, and second in the twin peaks of the blood-red lipstick each of them wears. They are examples, in short, of the binary subsets, with one always becoming two at a new level, which Roland Barthes describes as the principle of narrative in *The Structural Analysis of Narrative* (1977). Each of their names contains one l, but together they are 11, and also hell. Vamping gay mannerisms like their namesake the composer Poulenc, they are two similar *ones* who do not reproduce.Prominently in Greenaway's experimental films, fleetingly in various feature films, and again in the recent intermedial extravanganza, *Tulse Luper Suitcases*, Greenaway's alter ego Tulse Luper has an evil twin, Van Hoyten. In *Draughtsman*, Van Hoyten is the name of the Dutch landscape architect who by the time of Mr. Neville's return from Radstock has come from The Hague to install himself on the estate not as a draughtsman but as an improver, and he appears to have installed himself as though he were Mr. Neville in Mrs. Talmann's libidinal economy. Mr. Neville is now dressed in white, having been in black during his Compton-Anstey sojourn in contrast with all the other principal characters in white, and Van Hoyten is in black similar to what Mr. Neville formerly wore. When we first see these twins alongside each other with Mrs. Talmann, we realize that they look very much alike. They are the structuralist twin and the anti-structuralist twin. Mr. Neville fixed the estate in black and white, while Van Hoyten introduces fluidity by proposing to flood the lower grounds, prompting Mr. Neville to wonder, ironically but nervously, whether he proposes to join Anstey to the sea – clearly in defiance of all framing. It is always animals and the human being hired to be a garden god who violate frames and destabilize verticals, as when the garden god removes an obelisk from its pedestal, replaces it with himself, and urinates a diagonal line. When in the end this garden god lowers himself from the equestrian statue by the moat where Mr. Herbert's body was found and where the dead Mr. Neville has

now been tossed, we must wonder whether, in the deconstructed frame of things, the centaur-like detachment of mind from body we have witnessed throughout the film retains anything like the stability that belongs to human structures. After all, even when Mr. Herbert's body was pulled out of the moat, his bronze effigy still rode the bronze horse. What happened to it on the evening of Mr. Neville's death? Did the garden god put the sign of the father wherever it was that he had put the obelisk?

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DE GRUYTER OPEN

Acta Univ. Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies, 11 (2015) 39–76

DOI: 10.1515/ausfm-2015-0015

Between Absorption, Abstraction and Exhibition: Inflections of the Cinematic Tableau in the Films of Corneliu Porumboiu, Roy Andersson and Joanna Hogg

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Abstract. The paper proposes to focus on the multiple affordances and intermedial aesthetic of the cinematic tableau seen as a performative space resulting in the impression of watching a painting, a theatre stage, a shop window, a diorama, or a photo-filmic installation in which the play between stillness and motion is accompanied by a reflexive emphasis on media and the senses. Such images, described extensively by David Bordwell in his writings on the evolution of film style, are being re-evaluated through debates on the "tableau form," "absorption and theatricality" in modern art and photography (e.g. Jean-François Chevrier, Michael Fried). In particular, the aim of this paper is to examine inflections of the cinematic tableau in the films of three contemporary European authors, Corneliu Porumboiu (Romania), Roy Andersson (Sweden) and Joanna Hogg (UK), and relate them to the paradigm of the Dutch interior established in seventeenth-century painting.[1]

Keywords: intermedial aesthetic of the tableau shot, Dutch interior in cinema, Corneliu Porumboiu, Roy Andersson, Joanna Hogg.

The Tableau Shot as a Space of In-Betweenness

Harking back to the theatrical tableaux of early cinema and modernist practices of pictorial abstraction, the so called tableau shot[2] has developed into a surprisingly versatile figure in contemporary cinema. It appears indispensable in mainstream bio-pics and heritage films where shots composed as paintings have

1 This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian Ministry of National Education, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-ID-PCE-2012-4-0573.

2 Ben Brewster and Lea Jacobs define the tableau as: "a characteristic type of shot in early films, and a type of constructions which relies on that type of shot. This is the centred axial long shot,

become key figures of a mannerist aesthetic and a kind of shorthand to connect the narrative to a certain period in history (see Vidal 2012). It is however, in the category of arthouse films where we see a puzzling complexity in the use of the tableau. It can be seen as a recurring device of contemplative "slow movies" that have etched out their own niche on the international film festival circuit in the last decades, lyrical documentaries, and experimental works bordering on installation art. We may recall in this respect the almost still tableaux of Pedro Costa or Béla Tarr;[3] Alexander Sokurov's *Spiritual Voices* (*Dukhovnye golosa*, 1995) documenting the life of soldiers in a permanent state of war on the border between Tadjikistan and Afghanistan, which features in its first part a sublime (more than 30 minutes long) scene of a winter landscape, filmed with fixed camera, slowly changing in time; Jean-Claude Rousseau's documentary essay, *The Enclosed Valley* (*La vallée close*, 1995) with its images composed as Romantic landscape paintings; the series of tableaux depicting rural life in Michelangelo Frammartino's *Le Quattro Volte* (2010); or John Akomfrah's *The Nine Muses* (2010) alternating found footage with painterly compositions of majestic stillness. In the category of films conceived like installation pieces, the examples may include: Lav Diaz's beautiful *From What is Before* (*Mula sa Kung Ano ang Noon*, 2014), a more than five and a half hours long motion picture experience unfolding in lengthy tableau shots; Tsai Ming-Liang's Walker-series contrasting in long takes the hustle and bustle of contemporary urban landscapes (Hong Kong, Marseille, Tokyo) with the extreme slow walk of a Buddhist monk (e.g. the short films: *Walker*, 2012; *Journey to the West*, 2014; *No, no Sleep*, 2015), or his feature film consisting of loosely connected, single shot sequences, *Stray Dogs* (2013), etc. These examples, pinpointing some of my latest revelations in the field, are, however, only meant to tentatively ripple the surface of a vast area where discussions about the cinematic tableau may be relevant today. The scope of this article is in fact much narrower. Instead of an inventory of this stylistic device in different areas of world cinema, I merely propose to unravel certain paradigmatic features of the renewed aesthetic of the tableau, hoping in the process to contribute to a more refined understanding of the poetic "mechanism" of this figure. I will do this through an analysis of a more delimited corpus of films, the recent works of three European authors (the Romanian Corneliu Porumboiu, the Swedish Roy Andersson and the British Joanna Hogg). All of

looking at an interior as if at a box set on stage from the centre of the theatre stalls. Many early films consist largely of such shots, linked by intertitles; they lack scene dissection, or even alternation between simultaneous scenes. This has come to be called 'tableau construction'" (1998, 38).

3 See a theoretical discussion of the photo-filmic qualities of these in Pethő (2015).

these authors seem to have designated the tableau as a defining element of their style, resulting in works that are very different, but that somehow still share a set of key features. A comparative analysis of their films may identify and map some of the most important inflections of the tableau form in contemporary film art.

In the broadest sense the premise of my investigation is twofold. On the one hand I situate the tableau within the interpretive framework of intermediality, viewing it in terms of overlapping forms of art and culture, with elements derived from painting, theatre, photography, performance, and new media. On the other hand, closely connected to this, and acknowledging the permutational quality of the tableau (i.e. its possibilities for variation), which has been extensively treated in the writings of Noël Burch (1979) and David Bordwell (1981, 1988),[4] I regard the cinematic tableau not only as a unit defined by certain fixed and flexible parameters, as a set of stylistic markers, but as a highly *transgressive* and *performative* structure.[5] The tableau is always able to bring forth the intermediality of cinema as a productive in-betweenness,[6] assigning the form of one medium (e.g. painting, photography, theatrical *mise-en-scène*) to act as a medium for a specific figure (the tableau shot) in the other medium (cinema).[7] Consequently, we should try to understand the variations of the tableau shot also by mapping out the network of media connections and the dynamics of in-betweenness that they enable. The cinematic image may open up towards painterly vedutas, domestic genre scenes, theatrical arrangements or operatic tableaux performances, in other cases we have a more stylized picture, an ornamental composition, or a minimalistic play upon stillness and motion, rhythm and stasis, depth and surface, or we may behold

4 See also several entries on Bordwell's website: *http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/category/tableau-staging/*. Last accessed 05. 07. 2015.

5 The notion of performativity in this case is used more closely to its use in linguistics (as it appears in the writings of John L. Austin and John Searle on "speech-acts"), where it refers to the capacity of speech not simply to convey meaning but to carry out and action, and is not employed in its wider sense appropriated by the so called "performance theory" or "performance studies," in which it has become "an adjective that can be applied to the dramatic or theatrical aspects of a situation or object of study" (Loxley 2007, 169).

6 See more about the performativity of intermediality in Pethő (2011, 37–48). In addition I have argued elsewhere that intermediality can also be conceived as a process of "becoming" in a Deleuzian sense, something that "always 'folds' from within, emerging from the immanence of cinema's multimedial texture. As the form of one medium resurfaces within another, it always brings to the foreground a heightened sensation of imminent transgression (…) 'as if' one medium had been brought to the verge of collapsing or imploding into another without such a collapse ever taking place" (Pethő 2014, 475).

7 See in this respect the idea of Joachim Paech that "the medium formulates and the form figurates" (i.e. the medium becomes observable as form, and the form serves as a medium for the figure). According to him, intermediality can be described in this way as the process of the re-inscription of a medium as a form in the form of another medium (quoted in Pethő 2011, 40).

images conceived in the manner of pictorial photographs, of single channel video installations, and so on.

In all these manifestations, the cinematic tableau shot draws primarily on the framed, self-contained "picture" (tableau) form in media history, on an inter- and transmedial, often self-reflexive structure (see Chevrier 2003, 2006), which has had a long, "adventurous" journey in-between media, being "dislocated" from painting (where it had its own evolution culminating in modern art displayed in gallery spaces), and adopted as a format in photography, film and installation art. As the tableau form emerges in cinema, it also brings with itself a series of general attributes inherited from painting and shared with photography and new media. The tableau shot does not merely establish or "describe" a setting, or contain a particular choreography of the characters on the screen, it is usually constructed as a standalone image, which confronts the viewer without being fragmented by intra-sequence cuts. Accordingly, it can also be described with the much debated notions of "absorption" and "theatricality" introduced by the art historian Michael Fried, who used them to define the transition from the immersive world of realist painting to modern art, minimalism and the exhibition of mere "objecthood" (see Fried 1988, 1992, 1998a, 1998b.) Although originally they were employed as conflicting terms, with the rise of large-scale photographs and video installations their antagonism was effectively called into question.[8] I suggest that (especially in some of the works of the slow film canon) the recent revival of the tableau form in cinema has produced further challenges to these concepts through foregrounding the inherent duality of theatricality *and* absorption underlying the tableau aesthetic.

As a frontal long take, filmed with a more or less static camera, the tableau offers the impression of viewing a painting, a photograph in motion, or gives the viewer access to what seems like the interior of a box. What is common in the different manifestations of the tableau is that it sustains both a particular type of spectatorship (based on the distance maintained between the viewer and the screen), and a particular relationship between the characters, objects and the natural or architectural space visible on the screen, which all appear to be sealed off and closely interconnected within the frame of the picture. In comparison, we may remember how in classical narrative films the spectator is continually drawn into the illusory world of the screen. The mobile camera eliminates our position

8 See Fried's analysis of Jeff Wall's photo-exhibits, meticulously staging scenes of everyday life (Fried 2008), or his discussion of the anti-theatricality of Douglas Gordon's video installations (Fried 2011, 2015).

of fixed distance, and, in the words of Béla Balázs, it puts us, spectators "in the very heart of the image." He writes: "The camera takes my eye along with it. [...] I have no standpoint of my own. I travel with the crowd, I fly up, I dive down, I join in the ride" (2010, 99). This identification with the camera together with the seamless editing enables a fluid orientation in space, where the spectator sees the cinematic world oblivious of its frame.

The specificity of the tableau, in the most general sense, is that it appears (in the words of Balázs 2010, 99) as an "insulated space, manifesting itself as a microcosm," to which there is no such fluid access as a mobile camera would allow, instead it is something we are not in the middle of, but something we always watch from the outside. So while such a shot preserves the voyeuristic distance of spectator and screen, inasmuch as we view the scene from the same fixed position for a considerable length of time, this is a construction in which we are more in the position of the "pensive spectator" described by Raymond Bellour (2007) and Laura Mulvey (2006). In Bellour's words, the relative stillness of the images "tempers the 'hysteria' of the film […]. Though drawn more deeply into the flow of the film, the spectator is simultaneously able to reflect on it with a maximum of intensity" (2007, 122). At the same time, observing characters absorbed in their action and interacting with each other in a static shot, as if arranged on a canvas, a stage, or in a photographic light box, may paradoxically heighten both the sensation of reality and artificiality, producing the effect of an artification or exhibition of an everyday experience. In this way, the more "vernacular" tableau shot appears to take shape according to a similar, yet somewhat reverse principle as the *tableau vivant* proper (i.e. the explicit reproduction of a painting), in which, according to Brigitte Peucker (2007, 31), the flesh of human presence introduces the "real" into "the image," merging reality with representation. Whereas the *tableau vivant* proper creates the illusion of pictures coming alive, the tableau shot reframes a "slice of life" within the aesthetic constructedness of a picture. Accordingly, both the *tableau vivant* and the tableau shot build on tensions ensuing from the duality of the illusion of the immediate access to the real and the perceivable mediation of the "image." The tableau as a flexible template in film modulating in-between life and art is able to paradoxically reconcile immersion with abstraction, even a minimalist reduction (and parametric variation) of formal elements with multisensory aestheticism.

In what follows, I will discuss three types of inflections of the tableau based on the works of Corneliu Porumboiu (a prominent representative of the so called Romanian New Wave, whose films combine austere minimalist tableaux with

explicit media reflexivity), Roy Andersson (known for his films compiled of grotesque, surrealist vignettes mixing elements of painting, theatre and opera), and Joanna Hogg (experimenting with low-key realism combined with a high degree of stylization in the image, revitalizing the role of architecture in the intermedial texture of cinema). Although concerned with diverse topics, these three authors are all remarkable for the way in which they excavate the affordances of the tableau's intermedial and performative space, relying on the combination between realism and artificiality, and forging not only highly original cinematic styles based on the rigorous aesthetic of the tableau shot, but also conceptualizing the figure of the tableau.

The (Transmedial) Paradigm of the Dutch Interior

Analysing Carl Theodor Dreyer's early films, David Bordwell explains that "as image and structural principle the tableau is firmly tied to a tradition of what we might call *chamber art*. Historically, the stylistic premises of this tradition are the perspective discoveries of quattrocento panting and theatre, whereby space is conceived as a cube to be filled by human figures. With the increasing secularization of subject matter, in northern baroque painting, chambers housing the Virgin or various saints were replaced by everyday interiors, the bedrooms, parlors, and kitchens of bourgeois homes" in which we see people engaged in everyday activities (1981, 41–42).[9]

In fact, Dutch painting of the Golden Age can be seen as a key influence moulding not the tableau shot in general, which can be much more diverse as already suggested, but one of its fundamental types, the box-like, architectural tableau of domestic interiors. This intersection of the tableau shot with the visual paradigm established by the Dutch masters produces a highly performative configuration due to the fact that the Dutch interior is an especially complex model in painting. It does not only consist in a certain geometric organization of space, and is not only relevant from the perspective of a cultural anthropology of space, it also appears as a sophisticated, reflexive structure of in-betwenness which defines its aesthetics. With their recurring motifs of doors and windows, leading the viewer's gaze through a series of thresholds, and staging the scene in depth, these paintings give prominence to architecture (featuring dwellings and churches as their main topic), and to an architectural division of space,

9 We can compare in this respect the paintings of Antonello da Messina: *St. Jerome in his Study* (1460–1475) and those of Pieter de Hooch or Samuel van Hoogstraten in Figs. 1–4.

as well as the idea of liminality in an unprecedented way. Besides reflecting a way of life, a social and gendered stratification of a world of everydayness and domesticity[10] by giving access to the anatomy of the Dutch household with the depiction of kitchens, pantries, living rooms, studios, these paintings introduce a play between the foreground and the background, interior and exterior. They stage a "plunge through," as suggested by the literal meaning of the Dutch word, *doorsien,* applied to this technique: an entrance for the eyes to a deep interior, often with a tiny back room, or an access to a courtyard, a window to the outside, where the scene assimilates the street and the city beyond (Hollander 2002, 5–8), and where the space of the tableau is conceived in-between enclosure and openness, reaching beyond the demarcation of a private and public world. The human figure appears in these paintings caught in theatrical[11] poses "wavering between two worlds," like the "doorway-bound" eavesdropper that we see in the famous series by Nicolaes Maes who is always "equally protagonist and beholder, spectacle and spectator, both within and without the pictorial narrative" (Cole 2006, 20). Maes's *Eavesdroppers* thematize the latent tension between secrecy and disclosure, between the enclosure of a private world within the cluster of rooms and the gaze that repeatedly penetrates it through the apertures in Dutch "chamber art." [Figs. 7–8.] The division of the inner space also enables an intense play upon framing and de-framing, upon the visible and the invisible, as we are allowed to peep through doors and windows,[12] yet the rooms are all fragmented, there are inner walls between doors and windows impenetrable to the gaze, and we also have all kinds of objects occluding the view.[13] Through the opening of doors and windows, what is outside (the "real world" beyond the canvas) becomes an image for the inside, thus the viewer is simultaneously inside and outside the painting (cf. Hammer-Tugendhat 2015, 292). Therefore the art historian Victor I. Stoichita described these as "self-aware images," explaining how, in effect, "the view through the doorway became the metaphor of painting" (1998, 54). Dutch

10 As Charles Rice's book summarizes, these were notions which enhanced the popularity of these paintings two centuries later, in the nineteenth-century, when "concepts such as privacy, intimacy, comfort and home" became relevant in the context of the emerging importance of bourgeois family life as the nucleus for the idea of the Dutch nation (cf. Rice 2007, 22).

11 Both Westermann (1996) and Hollander (2002) emphasize the theatricality of Dutch genre painting, with characters also "exchanging" looks with the viewer, comparable to asides on the stage.

12 Samuel van Hoogstraten's famous *Peepshow with Views of the Interior of a Dutch House* (1655–1660), exhibited in the National Gallery in London, with its actual peep-hole embodies this structure, combining an enclosed box hiding a view that is magically opened up through the aperture inviting the viewer's gaze deeper and deeper inside. [Fig. 5.]

13 See more about the play upon the visible and invisible in seventeenth-century Dutch painting in Hammer-Tugendhat (2015).

interior painting appears in this way also as a secular investigation into the nature of images after the age of iconoclasm, framing a fragment of "life" alongside a subtle staging of "imageness" itself (i.e. the perception of the world as an image, where the doors/windows to the outside are also doors to the "inside:" means for a self-reflexive examination of the art of painting, reinforced also, alongside the multiplication of inner frames, by the presence of pictures hanging on the walls).

In her seminal work on Dutch art, Svetlana Alpers emphasized that "the Dutch present their pictures as describing the world seen rather than as imitations of significant human actions," allegories or narratives (1983, xxvi), and considered that this meticulous "art of description" reflected a way of thinking determined by contemporary scientific approaches like optics or mapmaking (attested by the maps, globes, and telescopes appearing in these depicted homes).

On the other hand, the tight assemblage of elements of these domestic interiors and niche pictures have also been associated with the structure of emblems (cf. Hollander 2002, 77–79). And just like the emblem books, these dense painterly "descriptions," often convey a covert moralizing intent (e.g. Hammer-Tugendhat 2015).[14] Last but not least, as Hollander states, "the use and reuse of particular formal conventions reflects the formulaic, repetitive nature of Dutch art" (2002, 6) which institutes the Dutch interior compositions as one of the most recognizable "parametric scheme" in painting, easily imitated or remodelled in later art, and (trans-medially) adopted by the tableau mode in cinema.[15]

The specific permutations of the tableau that we see in the films of the three authors selected for analysis can all be interpreted starting from the paradigm of Northern baroque painting summarized here. In all of them we find that the tableau form is closely connected to architectural space opening up through inner frames, with protagonists inhabiting these spaces who are portrayed in liminal situations. But instead of any dramatic action they are all caught in mostly static, painterly poses, with dialogues delivered in single takes as if being on a stage. Although there is no clearly moralizing intention, the tableau form does carry an implicit social-philosophical commentary in each case, reflecting on the social stratification and isolation of individuals, or on different ways of life encapsulated in this visual construction. In the vignettes of Roy Andersson's "trilogy of human condition," *Songs from the Second Floor* (*Sånger från andra våningen*, 2000), *You, the Living* (*Du levande*, 2007), *A Pigeon Sat on a Branch*

14 The moralizing purpose is sometimes accomplished through the condensed meanings of proverbs reflected in the satirical genre paintings.

15 For an excellent analysis of the adaptation of some of these parametric elements, i.e. the use of doors, windows in cinema (in the films of Luchino Visconti), see Blom (2010).

Reflecting on Existence (*En duva satt på en gren och funderade på tillvaron*, 2014) we enter a series of grotesque dollhouse structures with an unsettling merger of the notions of public and domestic: public spaces (hospital rooms, corridors, funeral parlours, etc.) are composed as Dutch interiors, domestic settings blend in with impersonal locations (pubs, restaurants, train compartments filmed as if they were people's homes), and homes appear bleak as offices. In Andersson's grotesque vision we can never be sure whether to understand this as the extension of the "format" of domesticity in a highly atomized and compartmentalized life of a welfare society, or as the complete erasure of it. We invariably see the life of his characters contained within cubic spaces, with scenes composed in a complex staging in depth[16] (often achieved with showing the box-like space not frontally but from an angle, see Figs. 9–12). In one particular scene of *A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence*, there is even a minimalist visual pun about conceiving a tableau scene as a box to be filled with human figures as we see a cubicle and people popping up in front of it to wait in another box-like space. The pun has its match in another scene, in which we see with a flamboyant anachronism the eighteenth-century Swedish King Charles XII and an army of mounted horsemen slowly marching into a present-day bar. Realism blends in this way with the surreal and the absurd.

In Joanna Hogg's films people inhabit a series of "borrowed" or transitory spaces filmed as a cluster of rooms opening towards other rooms. Her well-to-do, upper-middle class heroes are on holiday in *Unrelated* (2007), and in *Archipelago* (2010), on the verge of important decisions concerning their lives (in each case we see family groups who are not at home, merely occupying rooms), in *Exhibition* (2013), the married couple is just about to move on and sell their house they live in. All three of Joanna Hogg's films give prominence to the structured interiors of houses with dynamics of family and social relations reflected in architectural spaces. [Figs. 13–20.] In *Archipelago*, the tiny attic room with slanted walls assigned to the son mirrors his subdued position in the family and is in grotesque contrast with his tall stature. (Meanwhile the assertive sister takes possession of the largest room with a king size bed. See Figs. 17–18.) In the same film, the young woman hired to cook for the family is shown in conversation with the hunter who brings the game to the house [Fig. 20] in a composition that is familiar from the courtyard scenes in Peter de Hooch's canvases [e.g. Fig. 6], or the liminal situations of Dutch paintings displaying trades with travelling salesmen coming

16 See a detailed examination of Andersson's parametric technique of staging in depth in Hanich (2014).

to the kitchen doors. The tableau form contributes to a revision of the aesthetic of realism in Hogg's films, in which the traditional emphasis on (working) class issues that defined earlier trends of realism in British cinema gives way to capturing everyday moments of private lives and a feeling of bourgeois ennui.[17]

In Porumboiu's films, again, the demarcation between public and domestic is continually blurred. In *12.08. East of Bucharest* (*A fost sau n-a fost*, 2006) and in *Police, Adjective* (*Poliţist, adjectiv*, 2009) the makeshift TV studio, the police station and the apartments where the protagonists live look not only similar, they are in fact the same specimens of rooms in typical East European blocks of flats built during the time of communism. In *When Evening Falls on Bucharest, or Metabolism* (*Când se lasă seara peste Bucureşti*, 2013) the film director protagonist discusses his film project in his own apartment presented in the same way as Dutch interiors. He also makes love to the leading actress here, but the empty walls and basic furniture make it look more like a film stage waiting to be properly furnished, than a home. Equipped with a brand new Apple computer the apartment speaks of a new way of life mimicking Western models, and appears as a clinical and impersonal "any space whatever" in the middle of the nation's capital. In this way, the tableau becomes in Porumboiu's films a vehicle for an ironic depiction of the post-socialist spaces of life, where the miserable uniformity of communist architecture slowly gives way to the chaotic entanglements of offices and homes brought about by the new petty entrepreneurs who set up their businesses in the old housing projects by repurposing private apartments, or to the dull emptiness of new domiciles, symptomatic of a desperate effort to sever all palpable ties to a specific cultural past.

From "Chamber Art" to Diorama, and the "Sadistic Irony" of De-Framing

Porumboiu's *12.08. East of Bucharest*, a deadpan satire of post-communist Romania, is a film that is built entirely on *re-framing and de-framing*, both visually and conceptually, this traditional tableau construction originating in the Dutch interior. The story of the film is simple: sixteen years after the revolution, in a small town East of Bucharest, on the anniversary of Ceauşescu's infamous last speech just before he was ousted, the owner and talk show host of a shabby local TV studio, for lack of better eye witnesses, invites a cranky old pensioner

17 David Forrest describes this type of realism in Hogg's films as the "shift from the public to the personal" (2014, 68), but does not mention the aesthetic of the tableau prominent in her films.

and an alcoholic schoolteacher to discuss whether there was a revolution in the town or not. The crucial questions to be answered are the following: did people come out to protest against Ceauşescu's regime before the dictator fled in his helicopter at exactly 12.08 on 22 December 1989, or did they react only to the news of the events in the capital city? So was there or wasn't there a revolution on a local scale in this provincial town?

The film begins with the introduction of the main characters and reaches its climax with the talk show itself, with a last scene at the TV studio. In the first part we see a series of tableaux depicting domestic interiors presenting each of the talk show participants in their natural "habitat" in the manner close to what Bordwell described as "chamber art." As we pass from one drab interior to another, the poorly lit spaces stuffed with heavy furniture are further narrowed down by massive doorways acting as interior frames, which, in contrast to Dutch paintings, do not appear as means to extend the space, but to partially block our field of vision. In such shots, as the camera does not move closer to the human figures or follow them around, people become just as important as the objects filling up the space. Bordwell's remarks on Dreyer's technique are valid in this case as well: "our attention swerves to objects and furnishings; details of these chambers become as clearly articulated as figures" (1981, 48). Paradoxically, such compositions constructed around the characters thus manage to de-centre their subjects even though they are physically placed in the centre by pushing them into the background, and by diverting our attention towards other items in the rooms, pictures on the wall or TV sets turned on. [Figs. 21–24.] Porumboiu generates in this way not only a low-key cinematic parody of the tableau mode originating in genre painting but also an implicit ironic social commentary.

In Roy Andersson's films there are also several scenes which use the affordances of the "chamber art" structure for explicit satirical purposes, to emphasize the absurdities of domestic alienation (e.g. in *A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence*, the housewife preparing dinner in the kitchen and not noticing the death throes of her husband, who is having a heart attack in the other room, Figs. 25–26), or to create twisted visions of domestic bliss (in *You, the Living*, there is a young girl fantasizing about being the bride of a rock star, and we see people staring at them through the windows of a house departing with the newlyweds like a train with the crowd standing on the platform). [Figs. 27–28.]

Due to the frontality of the shots, the tableau offers a vantage point from where the spectator's gaze may behold the image as a container, and from where on-screen space becomes not merely staged in a theatrical *mise-en-scène*, but can be

conceived as a display, an "exhibited" space. In some of Joanna Hogg's shots, the low camera angle also contributes to the feeling of seeing characters as if moving on a stage even when they are outdoors [Figs. 29–30].[18] Moreover, characters in these films often appear to be boxed in a glass case, giving the impression of watching an arrangement in a shop window, making the passage in the films from "domestic chamber" to a kind of public diorama [Figs. 31–32].[19] Porumboiu's *12:08. East of Bucharest* makes the most of this with a simple technique in its long scene transporting the talk show participants from their home to the venue of the TV broadcast in which the two men are shown through the windshield, and with the small TV studio filmed like an aquarium [Figs. 33–34]. Here, the disembodied voices of the people who phone in during the live broadcast even indicate the external vantage point of the spectators' gaze. Glass boxes (large windows, glass storefronts) framing the characters are perhaps most frequently used by Andersson in scenes ranging from comical to the morbid [Figs. 35–38] culminating in the absurd conceptualization of the outside perspective of the viewer in his *Pigeon*. Inspired by Pieter Bruegel the Elder's painting (*Hunters in the Snow*, 1565) where birds look down on humans, Andersson shows a taxidermied pigeon in a museum both as observer and observed, suggesting a reversibility of roles (within this doubly folded diorama), with the humans lingering in the exhibition space pale as waxwork figures to be contemplated by the stuffed animals in the glass cases [Figs. 39–40].

In the end of Porumboiu's film, when the panellists take their place in front of the camera, a young cameraman begins to film them in a shaky, amateur video style. The scene can be interpreted also as an ironic, self-reflexive reference to this being the new, fashionable way to do video recordings, and, as such, being in contrast with the "old," static cinematography made with cameras on tripods, implicitly with the tableau aesthetic employed throughout the film. Here, through this clumsy camera work we witness a hilarious disintegration of the tableau (and of the neat arrangement of the three figures, the white haired pensioner and the morose, alcoholic teacher sitting on each side of the pompous talk show host, as an ironic holy trinity). [Figs. 41–44.] The images become de-framed and askew, the panellists move around and fidget uncontrollably while the telephone interventions of the viewers make the scene more and more cringe-worthy. In

18 The same sensation of exhibitedness is achieved in both *Unrelated* and *Archipelago*, for example, through presenting the characters seated in closed group compositions outdoors, surrounded by the picturesque landscape, as if they were posing for a painting.

19 Similarly, in Hogg's *Exhibition* we are even allowed to watch people in a scene from above through a glass window, as if looking down at an exhibition case [Fig. 32].

his seminal article on "décadrage," Bonitzer speaks about "the sadistic irony of off-centre framing" (2000, 201), and Porumboiu uses the visual gag of characters trying to stay in the frame or being pushed out of frame in a sophisticated interplay between framing and de-framing, between the still photograph of the town hall in the background and the chaotic movement in front of it, which ultimately calls attention to the principle of *decentredness*, of *being off-centre*, *out-of-frame* as the main metaphor for the whole film, which presents the failed attempt to re-frame "the everyday" in a provincial town, far from the centre of action in Bucharest, as "revolution."

A similar direction of inflecting the tableau towards ironic de-composition, fragmentation is perceivable in Hogg's films, where we also have a strong conceptualization of the characters' decentredness supported by a rich signification of inventive de-framings ranging from melancholy, isolation, insensitivity to pure visual abstraction [Figs. 45–48]. We observe, for example, Anna, the heroine of *Unrelated* (played by Kathryn Worth) in a series of anxious attempts both literally and symbolically to stay "in the frame," to maintain her social and emotional relations (to her partner, who did not join her on this holiday, to her friends, who most likely invited her out of pity and consider her an odd fit in their circles), pathetic in her efforts to be both part of the "olds" (as the teenagers call their parents), and join the group of youngsters. We see the mother in *Archipelago* talking on the phone in classic niche painting compositions as she repeatedly struggles to bring the absent father "into the picture." [Figs. 49–50.]

In and out of the Box: the Theatricalization of the Tableau and Joanna Hogg's "Liquid Intelligence"

As we can see, the *tableau* shot is usually remarkable not only for what it boxes in but also for what it boxes out. As opposed to the notion of "off-screen," which denotes according to Pascal Bonitzer (2000) an imaginary/fictional dimension, "off-frame" can be conceived as an actual, material space, outside the cutting edge of the frame encompassing both the extension of the diegetic world and the space of the spectator facing the screen. Bonitzer also remarks that the "'out-of-frame' multiplies the power of the representation" (2000, 198), and these films corroborate this assertion by enhancing the play between what is in and out of the frame, between what we see and what we hear. Beside the allusion of the doorways, the duality of off-screen and off-frame is also continually present in these films through the repeated action of characters speaking on the phone,

or communicating with someone beyond the visible space, but stuck in the cinematic frame. The first half of Porumboiu's *12:08. East of Bucharest* presents the protagonists in domestic tableau scenes while all of them have lengthy conversations on the phone, thus opening up each scene and interconnecting the separate "boxes" they appear in.

A recurrent motif for Joanna Hogg is to set up scenes in which emotionally charged dialogues are placed beyond our vision while other characters can unwillingly overhear them, or are actively eavesdropping. During the vacation in Italy in *Unrelated* there is a terrible row between father and son that we cannot see, only hear, as they are inside the house, while the camera remains with the rest of the family and friends, who are lounging outside by the pool and listening to the quarrel in a long, awkward scene. In *Archipelago*, Hogg seems to adapt the situation of Nicolaes Maes's *Eavesdropper* series,[20] with the open doorway, the empty hallway, the figure of the listener standing on the threshold, only this time without the joviality of the scene and without the scenario involving sexual indiscretion. The "mediumship of the listener," as the title of David Toop's book (2010) suggests, involves here a "sinister resonance" indeed. The picture is dark, grey, as if filtered through murky water, and the figure is weighed down not only by the words he is not supposed to hear, but also by what remains out of sight (as Toop explains "the eavesdropper cannot see, only look out into the unknown future," 2010, 77). It is Edward, the irresolute young man (played by Tom Hiddleston), who does not really know what to do in life, and is spending a holiday with his mother and sister before leaving for a volunteer job in Africa. He is overhearing the sobbing and shouting, self-humiliating mother talking with her husband on the phone: a sight that he is surely not eager to behold. Although we can observe him in the middle of a complex theatrical staging, the eavesdropper's position is that of a self-erasing liminality: not only does he not see, he also draws back so as not to be seen. What used to be a depiction of the life of servants or inquisitive housewives in Dutch painting (and is actually paraphrased in some of Hogg's scenes involving the cook), becomes here a powerful portrayal of Edward's invisibility in the family. Despite being seemingly in the centre of the whole situation (it is because of him that they are supposedly there), he has very little say in matters regarding the family, even his repeated attempts to communicate with the cook remain too feeble to amount to a proper relationship. He remains a lingering, liminal figure in the shadow of an open doorway. [Figs. 51–54.]

20 The theme was so popular at the time that Maes himself painted six versions between 1655 and 1657 [e.g. Figs. 5–6].

Such scenes of eavesdropping make us aware of the way these spaces fold into interconnected boxes that can both reveal and conceal, draw us in as complicit witnesses and shut us out, with characters acting at the same time as go-betweens and caught in the vertigo of frames, emphasized through the recurring in-depth compositions of hallways. In Hogg's previous film, as the title of *Unrelated* already suggests, Anna's position within the group is not only an outsider, and she is not only single (and becoming painfully aware of being unmarried and childless), but she is trapped in her role conceived as an extension of the marginal figure of the eavesdropper, listening in at conversations most of the time, and observing how other people live their lives.

Porumboiu's *Police, Adjective* adopts a similar mechanism of looking and listening in at a scene (staged as a compartment of the tableau) within the framework of a narrative derived from detective films. Here, in the figure of the policeman who is surveilling three high-school students suspected of using drugs, we don't just observe the characters from a distance, but observe a character who is himself observing other characters from a distance and moving continuously on a meandering trajectory around the same typically miserable post-communist blocks of flats, garages and sports grounds, in and out of spaces presented as boxes, again in a string of tableaux. [Figs. 55–58.]

In Michael Fried's view, the realist tradition in painting presents figures that are absorbed in their daily activities and are totally "oblivious" of the viewer (resulting in a tableau that is "hermetically" sealed off from the world surrounding it). Modern art, however, relies on the presence of the viewer in front of the artwork; its constructedness is obvious and the awareness of the spectator's gaze (the quality he names, "theatricality," "to be seen-ness") is encoded within the picture. On the one hand, the alternation of the "hermetically sealed," realistic scene with its opening up through diegetic off-screen and off-frame spaces, and the introduction of characters as observers or eavesdroppers already introduces a kind of stage theatricality into these films (similarly to the semantics of Dutch interior paintings). On the other hand, the films also seem to expose the clash between the absorptive features of the scene and the awareness of the image as artificial construction through the reflexive double framings and by way of overwriting classic "transparency" in the moving image with perceivable forms of mediation, so that many scenes display the quality of imageness, a theatricality of representation as the most striking quality. Andersson's one-shot sequences convert everyday situations into highly stylized images under the influence of the painters like Hieronymus Bosch, Francisco Goya or Otto Dicks. The tableau intended as a cinematic paraphrase of Jean-François

Millet's *Noonday Rest* (1866)[21] is a beautiful example of this. [Figs. 59–60.] Keeping just a few gestural and chromatic elements to remind us of Millet's composition, but creating an image which is at the same time remarkable in its serenity (the intimacy of the couple, the faithful family dog, the peacefulness of the scene) and in its bleakness (with the isolation of the couple, the stretch of dusty earth at the dreary periphery of the urban landscape), the tableau is subordinated to no narrative, merely "exhibited" in a long take for us to see and contemplate as a single picture.

The interiors of Joanna Hogg's *Archipelago* appear in an almost monochromatic palette, recalling the pale, melancholic interiors in the paintings of Vilhelm Hammershøi, while some of the frames of *Exhibition* look like the paintings of David Hockney. Moreover, in *Archipelago* the characters themselves view the world in terms of painting as they pass the time by learning to paint and have long conversations about it with a painter, Christopher, who acts both as a friend and a tutor, maybe even standing in for the absent father (played by the real life landscape painter, Christopher W. Baker). [Figs. 61–62.] In *Exhibition* we have a couple of artists living in a very artistic house[22] ("all verticals, reflecting windows and sliding partitions,"[23] Figs. 63–66) and where the female protagonist is busy transforming her own body into art: she is preoccupied with exhibiting herself as a kind of re-embodiment of Gian Lorenzo Bernini's *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* (1647–1652), studying the picture on her computer and in books, trying out poses, costumes and props, putting on a private "performance" (most likely as a rehearsal of an art project to be presented later in a gallery). This, however, does not seem like some kind of identification with the saint, more like a fascination with the rapture expressed by Bernini's famous sculpture, as she herself is fixated on her own body and sexual desires. [Figs. 67–70.] Still her self-exhibitions seem to be more abstract and restrained, something that is more in line with the stark modernism of the architecture of the house and less in tune with her much more ardent sexual fantasies (that we learn of in other scenes). Like the figures appearing in Dutch interior paintings, who are always in close relationship with the architectural space, Joanna Hogg's characters have been devised to "appear as if they might almost be figures in a painting, placed within the frame provided by the house."[24]

21 Andersson speaks about this in the commentary available on the DVD edition of the movie.

22 Designed by James Melvin in 1969 and redesigned by Sauerbruch Hutton Architects sometime after the 1990s.

23 *Exhibition*, press book: *http://www.kinolorber.com/data/presskit/EXHIBITION_pressbook.pdf*. Last accessed 25. 08. 2015.

24 See the film's press book: *http://www.kinolorber.com/data/presskit/EXHIBITION_pressbook.pdf*. Last accessed 25. 08. 2015.

If we dissect this modulation of the tableau space more closely, we will find that in fact Porumboiu and Hogg define two characteristic directions in which such a duality of absorption and theatricality can be polarized within the cinematic tableau, as the following brief subchapters will present.

a) Realism vs. Abstractification

In Porumboiu's *Police, Adjective* we see the young policeman, Cristi completely absorbed in his daily activities, in a naturalistic environment, deeply embedded in his world (as the series of inner frames suggest), and there is no scene in the film which would show us his subjective viewpoint, we always behold everything from the "outside," watching it all perceptibly from somewhere off-frame.[25] [Fig. 71.] The tableau shot appears here not as a vehicle for satire, but as a minimalistic container for reality presented as a fragment torn from a larger whole, a "found object," framed by the viewfinder of the camera. Moreover, a self-consciousness about language runs as a leitmotif in the film, people in this film don't just engage in conversations, they pedantically dissect the meaning of words, the relationship between signifier and signified (e.g. the scene between Cristi and his wife, arguing about the lyrics of a pop song). In addition to this, we see an increased emphasis on different forms of writing: ranging from the graffiti in the street to the handwritten police report and to the printed page brought into close-up. The final face-off about semantics brings all these elements together, and appears as a cynical literalization driving to the extreme the mechanisms of distanciation, abstraction (or theatricalization) already manifest in the visual construction of the film. Here the policeman, who has been reluctant to arrest a teenager for smoking a few hash cigarettes, is ordered by his commander to look up the meaning of the words "conscience," "moral," "law," and "police" in a dictionary, and in the end we see how detailed field tactics to apprehend the kid are chalked up on a blackboard. Thus, the letter of the law imposed with the authority of the police prevails over the qualms tormenting the young detective. Instead of the act of "de-framing" that emerged as the ultimate metaphor in *12.08. East of Bucharest*, here we have a film which is built on the structural principle of "en-framing:" containment, entrapment, the definition of the indefinite (i.e. putting things into a box, underscored by the image of the grid, of various inner frames), and reveals a process of brutally overwriting presentation with

25 Thus, our presence as spectators is inscribed in the film's techniques devised to produce images to be seen, to be comprehended at one glace as a tableau.

representation. [Figs. 73–76.] The scene happens to be also the most rigid and meticulously composed visual tableau, featuring once again an improvised panel of three people arranged symmetrically in a room. The decorative bowl of fruit brought in and placed in the middle of the table even brings back a touch of the deadpan humour based on incongruities that dominated Porumboiu's previous film, not only because it is out of place in a police station, but also because it reminds us of the conventional symbolism of the holy trinity in Orthodox icons (as we see it, for example, in Andrei Rublev's *Troitsa* from 1425–1427[26]). [Figs. 77–78.] This last scene stages a kind of "theatre of the absurd" conceived as a "theatre of the abstract" by playing off the objectification of written language against the "absorptive" realism of the images. Police becomes thus the attribute of the procedure in which subjective conscience is stifled by bureaucracy, and the complexity of reality is traded in for entries in a dictionary.

b) Liquidity vs. Dry Structure

There is a wonderful short essay written by Jeff Wall which defines photography as the co-presence of "the 'liquid intelligence' of nature with the glassed-in and relatively 'dry' character of the institution of photography" (Wall 2007, 109). Defining this "liquidity" as the "natural form, with its unpredictable contours," "an expression of infinitesimal metamorphoses of quality," Wall speaks of Tarkovsky's *Solaris* (1972) in which scientists study an intelligent ocean that is studying them in turn, and concludes with the sentence "in photography, the liquids study us, even from a great distance" (2007, 110). If we consider everything that is optical, geometrical, technical, architectural in the way the cinematic tableau is assembled as a means for each frame being "glassed-in," then we may find that Hogg's films inflect the dichotomy of immersiveness and artificiality in the tableau into a similar opposition between "dry" structure and sensual "liquidity." This is achieved in the first place by alternating clusters of architectural spaces, cubic rooms with picturesque and sensuous outdoor scenes. One of the first images of *Archipelago* shows Edward, who has just landed on the small island of Tresco, perched inside a small van with its back open, being transported to their holiday villa, smiling at his sister and mother who follow on a bicycle. As we see him boxed in, the rectangular form of the van contrasts with the branches and leaves flying around with smudged contours on each side of the van speeding to its destination [Fig. 79]. This juxtaposition of the "liquidity" of nature and of

26 The correspondence was suggested by Pop (2014, 145).

the rigid, mechanical frame around the character condenses like an emblem the antithesis manifest in each of Hogg's films. Interiors composed in accordance with the paradigm established by Dutch paintings are counterpointed with long sequences in which the theatrical or architectural gives way to the pictorial (that Christopher, the painter defines in *Archipelago* as "chaos," something "not solid or anchored"). We have airy shots featuring all the elements of nature (earth, water, vegetation in exotic shapes, rocks, sand, wind, etc., see Figs. 79–82) to convey a sensuous context for the modest ambitions of hedonism of these characters, who take walks, immerse themselves into pools of mud, eat exquisite food prepared for them by a private cook, or make art. In these shots the cinematic tableau taps into the implicit sensuality of the scenes in genre painting, as Hogg's films seem to celebrate in their own, understated way the full sensorium.[27]

Liquidity, on the other hand, is also achieved by building a whole "aural landscape,"[28] a rich universe of sounds.[29] Hogg uses no musical score in her films, just the subtly amplified sounds of the environment. We hear the rustle of the leaves, the wind in the trees, the clinking of the spoons in the teacups, the song of birds, or the hammering noises of the construction workers on the other side of the street. This ambience of sounds does not only announce the presence of a world outside the frame and underscore the sensory, overflowing opulence of the tableau, it also reminds the viewer of the fault line between the discursive and the non-discursive, perceptual elements of the cinematic image. In the meanwhile, the protagonists appear in abeyance, being deprived of a classical dramatic structure, they remain stuck in the rigidity of the tableau. Moreover, Hogg's "glassed-in" figures are not only repeatedly shown gazing beyond the frame, scrutinizing the unknown, caught in poses reminiscent of paintings, but as the large windows in *Exhibition* fold the outside world onto the inside through the multiple overlapping reflections and through the symphony of the city penetrating the walls, a unique reciprocity emerges, the "liquid intelligence"

27 Dutch paintings also manifest a visible ambition to portray the totality of the senses, together with a similar opposition between the order and control of geometric shapes and the randomness or the chaos of sheer sensuality that can disrupt the tranquility of the scene (achieved, for example, through the presence of vegetation exposed to the elements, children that can prove uncontrollable in any moment, cats and dogs walking into the frame, birds just about to burst into song).

28 Joanna Hogg speaks about this in an interview, declaring: "for me the aural landscape of the film is as important, if not more important, than the visual landscape." (See: *http://www.littlewhitelies.co.uk/features/articles/joanna-hogg-2-26487*.)

29 Toop has demonstrated that Dutch paintings are also remarkable for evoking a variety of sounds: "the materiality of sound also flows through these supposedly secure and enclosing interiors" (2010, 105).

of photography also pours over, and (to paraphrase Wall) seems to "study" these people from a not too great distance. [Figs. 83–85.]

From "Black Box" to "White Cube," and Vice Versa: the Metabolism of Contemporary Slow Cinema?

In certain respects, Corneliu Porumboiu's *When Evening Falls on Bucharest, or Metabolism* (2013), Joanna Hogg's *Exhibition* and Roy Andersson's trilogy all seem to employ the tableau as a flexible means to make tentative moves towards *the format of expanded cinema within cinema.* The relative autonomy of the carefully elaborated tableaux, the repetition and permutation of a few basic visual components, the lack of classical narration are all elements which connect them with large screen gallery films. People in these films do not walk into rooms, they walk into "spatial arrangements," or enter visual environments resembling paintings, so much so that these images and spaces become main protagonists in themselves.

Porumboiu's *When Evening Falls on Bucharest* adds an explicit reflexivity to this particular expansion of the tableau form towards long take sequences characteristic of installation art. In the very first shot of the film we see a man and a woman, a film director and his actress, from behind, in the interior of a car, as if sitting in front of a movie screen. The dialogue is about the difference between analogue and digital film, how one cannot shoot more than 11 minutes using traditional film stock, and how digital technology enables the extension of the shot almost indefinitely. Accordingly, the film itself is constructed of a series of long takes of the two protagonists (and occasionally a third person) sitting and talking. The effect is paradoxical, while it makes visible the structural limitations of its own analogue medium,[30] it actually seems to demonstrate the real time effect enabled by digital technology; as we watch, these scenes run much longer than we are used to in a conventional fiction film. And in this fragmentation into autonomous one take sequences, we have an even more pronounced emphasis on the inherent qualities of the tableau shot as each element of composition becomes magnified. We see a space fluctuating between haptical and optical (i.e. between an actual room allowing the protagonists to move around, and a mere frame with the figures appearing as in a stretch of a frieze, pushed against a background). [Figs. 85–88.] We can savour each of the audiovisual ingredients and experience it in "a slow mode," just as we would do in a video installation that runs in a loop

30 The film was shot using traditional film stock.

(and does not have the necessity to include elements of theatrical drama). What we see are a series of permutations: the shot in the car is repeated twice (once at night, once during daytime); there are two scenes in Paul's apartment, followed by three scenes at the restaurant and the bar, concluding with two scenes in the trailer used for the purposes of the film shoot. So we may wonder: is analogue film being framed by a digital medium in these prolonged tableau shots, or vice versa? Is the nostalgia for the limitations of analogue film poured into a form tailored by digital cinema? Furthermore, does the film self-reflexively enact the passage of moving images from the traditional "black box" of the movie theatre to the "white cube" of the modern art gallery,[31] or their "reflux" (the content of a gallery movie poured into a fiction film), as the "metabolism" of slow cinema?

In this inflection of the cinematic tableau, space appears something that is not lived in but consumed, discarded, rotated within the string of autonomous sequences. Roy Andersson, in particular, is famous for his elaborate way of conceiving and constructing each scene as an individual installation piece, involving artificially built sets in a studio. The scenes appear as a series of dioramas, or compartments of a revolving stage, where certain settings return, but the emphasis is on fragmentation and on the episodes that could also be watched as independent shorts.[32]

We also see this in the way in which the protagonists in Joanna Hogg's films use up their spaces and then leave. Both *Unrelated* and *Archipelago* are bookended by the arrival of the protagonists at a house where they spend a few days, and their departure at the end of their vacation. "Bye, house" is the last line spoken in *Archipelago* as the cleaners arrive, and the family vacates the rooms. In *Exhibition* there is no reason why the couple want to sell their home and move on, but we finally understand that – despite a short dreamlike flashback of the couple as newlyweds running up the stairs – there is no substantial personal history seeped into the walls of the house, just art. The edifice acts like a piece of interactive installation shaped by the people who live there and, in turn, shaping the lives of its occupants, embodying and housing desires and anxieties to make art and to "live" the art. The paraphrases of *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* in form of *tableaux vivants* that the woman protagonist repeatedly performs are as much about self-expression through her bond with Bernini's sculpture as about the expression of the symbiosis between her body, her artistic persona, and

31 Following their introduction by O'Doherty (1976) these notions have been widely theorized in art history, see for example, Uroskie (2014).

32 This aesthetics of fragmentation is probably related to Andersson's longstanding work as a prolific director of advertisements and short films.

the house. Bernini's *Saint Teresa*, displayed in an aedicule of the church Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome [Fig. 67], designed as a small theatre, may perhaps be seen not only as an image blending bodily and spiritual joy in the moment of transverberation, but as a prototype for a sculpture conceived as a performance and as the portrayal of a woman passionately blending in with architecture.[33] In the same vein, Hogg's heroine repeatedly folds her body around the corners of the rooms, hugging parts of the house in quiet moments of solitude [Figs. 89–90], while the house itself seems to fold over her body, as the pattern of the Venetian blinds on the windows and the straight lines of the house are echoed in the various striped outfits that she wears.

Thus, the house both encloses around her while she is immersed in her private, interactive "performance," and opens up as a theatrical space, a "white cube" inside the film, that we may observe from all sides and angles [Figs. 91–92].[34] From the outside it displays the reflection of the branches and leaves projected onto the large window pane exhibited as an abstract image facing the viewer, and it reveals the woman's private performance as a partially veiled peep-show through the striped openings of the blinds. In several scenes viewed both from the inside and outside it appears like a glass cage floating above the street, enframing and deframing a fragment of the visible world. As a cubic container, the house sometimes appears not only as an elegant piece of modernist architecture, but as a disconcerting maze consuming the nerves of the heroine with its strange noises, multiple compartments and moveable walls. It emerges even like a futuristic greenhouse of human habitation nesting an amazing collection of plants together with rocks, artefacts and pieces of modern technology. The staircase that looks like a metallic DNA spiral epitomizes the connection between the natural and the artificial [Figs. 66, 89], transforming the construction into a kind of modern day Leviathan that has engulfed its

33 Joanna Hogg also mentions the influence of Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* in thinking about the house as a living organism, a vessel of memory and feeling, and the inspiration drawn from Louise Bourgeois's series called *Femme Maison*, "about woman and building integrated; woman as house." See the online interview in CineVue: *http://www.cine-vue.com/2014/06/interview-joanna-hogg-unravels.html*. Last accessed 25. 08. 2015.

34 The empty room already devoid of furniture shown in the film looks uncannily similar to an actual exhibition space [Fig. 92] reminding us at the same time how a "white cube" is never a neutral container but a modern architectural space which is often exploited for its interaction with the art hosted within its walls. "The walls assimilate, the art discharges," writes O'Doherty (1986, 79). Moreover, in certain cases the exhibition hall itself becomes the exhibition, context becomes content (see Doherty 1986, 65–86). Hogg's film spotlights this interdependence: the house exhibits its content (the life of the married couple, their dreams and their actions), and is exhibited for us to see as an active protagonist alongside the characters inhabiting it.

inhabitants and offers them a cocoon-like space destined for self-reflection and artistic creation, resonating with their emotions, flexible in accommodating their creative work, but also apparently having a life of its own.

As a final act of performance at the farewell party, the protagonists, identified only with their initials D. and H.,[35] reverse this relationship by marking their separation from the house in a symbolic act of dismembering and eating the building in the form of a cake replica that they serve to their guests. Joanna Hogg's house can be seen in this way as the quintessential model for the "architecture" of the post-cinematic tableau, as the perfect vision of the white cube of modern art space being symbolically incorporated, metabolised by contemporary cinema. This also shows how cinema can feed on architecture, sculpture, painting, and performance while slowly moving in the direction of gallery art.

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35 This may remind us, perhaps, of another, majestically haunting film that featured an impressive architectural space related to the protagonists' visions and desires, *Last Year in Marienbad* (*L'année dernière à Marienbad*, 1962) directed by Alain Resnais.

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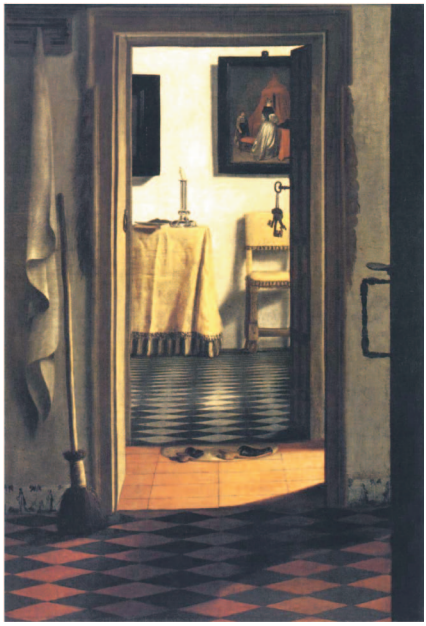

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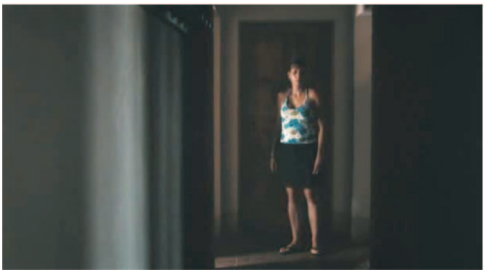

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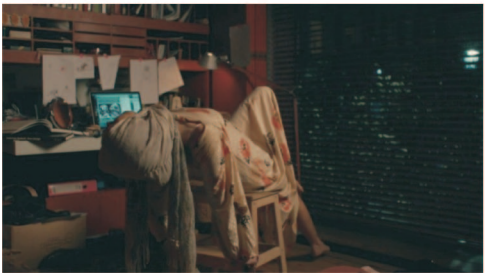


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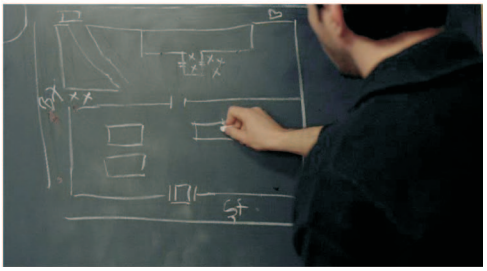

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DE GRUYTER OPEN

Acta Univ. Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies, 11 (2015) 77–92

DOI: 10.1515/ausfm-2015-0016

Spectacular Attractions: Museums, Audio-Visuals and the Ghosts of Memory

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Abstract. In the last decades, moving images have become a common feature not only in art museums, but also in a wide range of institutions devoted to the conservation and transmission of memory. This paper focuses on the role of audio-visuals in the exhibition design of history and memory museums, arguing that they are privileged means to achieve the spectacular effects and the visitors' emotional and "experiential" engagement that constitute the main objective of contemporary museums. I will discuss this topic through the concept of "cinematic attraction," claiming that, films and moving images often produce spectacular *mises en scène* with immersive effects, creating wonder and astonishment, and involving visitors on an emotional, visceral and physical level. Moreover, I will consider Phantasmagoria-like displays that simulate ghostly and uncanny apparitions, creating an ambiguous and often problematic coexistence of truth and illusion, subjectivity and objectivity, facts and imagination.

Keywords: exhibition, history museum, memory, audio-visual display, attraction/narration, Phantasmagoria.

Museums, Audio-Visuals, and the *Experience* of Memory

In the last decades, moving images have become a common feature in exhibition spaces, and a wide variety of museums today are filled with projections, video loops and film installations. In cinema museums, enlarged frames, posters, costumes or film clips are displayed in exhibitions about the relations between art and cinema, or on the work of specific directors (see for instance Païni and Cogeval 2000). In art museums, contemporary art installations involve more and more frequently the use of films and moving images.[1] In science, natural

1 Consider for example the work of Chantal Akerman, Tacita Dean, Stan Douglas and Douglas Gordon, to mention only a few.

history or ethnographic museums, as well as in history museums, projections and screens are used as museological tools, and occupy the space traditionally inhabited by artifacts and artworks. Albeit an impressive amount of scholarly attention has been devoted to the investigation of the penetration of cinema in museums, the role of moving images in museology and exhibition design still remains neglected in academic research. In the following paragraphs, we will focus on this last aspect of the dissemination of moving images in exhibitions, analysing museums in which films and audio-visuals are not exhibited as works of art, but rather function as means of contextualization, explanation or visitor engagement. In these contexts, however, the role of moving images is far from being merely instrumental, and they deeply affect the strategies of museum exhibitions and the meanings they convey.

In this paper, I will concentrate particularly on museums devoted to history and memory,[2] which have known, over the last thirty years, a considerable proliferation (see Williams 2007) in conjunction with the emergence of memory as a dominant issue in Western societies (see Huyssen 2003). Their concern in the conservation and transmission of memory establishes a link with the similar role played by films in the documentation of historical events, but also, on a deeper level, with cinema "as a powerful mnemonic machine, with its capacity to discipline, to enhance, to supplement, or to substitute for memory" (Demaria 2014, 109).

The Museum as "Experience"

Before investigating the use of audio-visual media in museum exhibitions, we should briefly take into account some major trends in contemporary museology that deeply affect memory museums. As noted by many scholars, one of the main aims of contemporary museums is the "delivering of experiences" (Hein 2000; Landsberg 2004). As Patrizia Violi has stated, it is possible to identify "an action performed by the museum in order to affect visitors, evoking a strong emotional involvement on their part, by focusing on their *pathemic* experience. Memory museums thus appear to foresee and construct an *experientialist visitor*, i.e. a visitor that will, first and foremost, 'have an experience' during his visit, rather than being informed, by acquiring more knowledge of past events, which was the principal underlying idea behind traditional museums" (Violi 2014, 53).

2 In the following paragraphs, I will use the term "memory museums" to refer to a wide range of history museums that present past events through the paradigm of memory (Arnold-de Simine 2012, 16).

Experience should be understood as a "strong embodied sensory pathemic involvement on the part of the visitor" (Violi 2014, 53; see also Williams 2011 and Arnold-de Simine 2013). As a consequence of this change of perspective, the very nature of museums is radically transformed, and they have become, instead of repositories of collections, "places of recollection, not so much driven by objects but by narratives and performances" (Arnold-de Simine 2013, 2). Museums could therefore be understood as *performative spaces*, where "the total physical environment becomes the attraction as the visitor is encouraged to re-enact the drama in a kind of empathetic walk-through" (Williams 2011, 223). According to Paul Williams, theatrical tropes in museums include stage-set-like reconstructions of historical scenes, as well as the dramatization of the act of testimony (2011, 223): in theatrical performances or video recordings, real or fictional people that were directly involved in significant events of the past tell their personal stories, accompanying and guiding visitors through the exhibition. Contemporary memory museums seem thus to favour what Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has called "in situ displays" when writing about ethnographic museums (but we can extend the definition to history museums as well). As opposed to "in-context displays," which are based on the "drama of the artifact," such displays are immersive and environmental, privilege experience over demonstration and are based on mimesis and illusionism, through which they recreate virtual works that visitors can enter and explore (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 19–23).

Considering this scenario, I will focus specifically on the role of audio-visual media within the exhibition strategies of museums, arguing that contemporary memory museums extensively draw upon films and audio-visuals to fabricate such performative and "experientially oriented encounters" (Arnold-de Simine 2013, 1) with their visitors.

Audio-Visuals in Museums

Since the very first debates about moving images in museums, curators have emphasized the capacity of cinema to bring motionless museums' objects to life. In a 1930 article titled *Museums and Movies*, an anonymous editor of the *Museums Journal* wrote: "In a museum the objects are as a rule immovable. […] A collection of stuffed animals, of dried plants: how lifeless! […] But now the cinematograph has come to change all that and to give us real living pictures, to bring all the life and movement of the world on to a few square feet in one little room" (1930, 334; see also Griffiths 2008, 243–248). Not only moving images gave curators the

opportunity to "animate" exhibits, but at the same time films were considered to carry an extraordinary educative potential, being capable to communicate in a short time and in a synthetic way a large amount of information otherwise difficult to provide, such as details about the historical context of objects or artworks. Contemporary curatorial statements are in a way very similar: audio-visuals are understood as didactic means but also as instruments to create spectacular displays, hanging in the balance between education and entertainment. Although moving images challenge the traditional "primacy of the object" and pose a number of questions about authenticity, they are by now widely accepted as museographical tools, together with sounds, slide shows, interactive stations, augmented reality or virtual environments. Such devices are no longer an exception, and visitors almost expect the use of multimedia in exhibitions.

However, if today screens and projections are common in museums, designers often employ a series of display strategies that aim to restore what we might call the "attractional" component of audio-visual media. The well-known notion of attraction, firstly developed by film scholars Tom Gunning and André Gaudreault (Gunning 2006 [1986]; Gaudreault and Gunning [1986]), has been used not only to describe a specific kind of film practice and spectatorship, historically situated in the period of early cinema, but also as a trans-historical concept applicable to other moments in the history of the seventh art, as well as to other expressive forms (see Strauven 2006). I would argue that this concept could help us to describe and understand a series of practices related to the use of audio-visuals in contemporary museum exhibitions.[3] In fact, when embedded in displays, films and moving images often produce spectacular *mises en scène* with immersive effects, creating wonder and astonishment: by providing a pleasure based on shock and "strong sensations," they engage visitors on an emotional, visceral and physical level. As it is well known in film studies, *attraction* is distinct from (if not opposed to) *narration*, but the two concepts are not mutually exclusive: attractions can be present when narrative is also involved (see Strauven 2006). Although exhibitions could be characterized by a strong narrative component, I would claim that they have an attractional dimension as well, which suspends for a while the development of the "story" to directly address spectators.

3 In this essay, this claim is discussed in relation to history museums, but I would maintain that these arguments could be extended to a broader range of museums.

Between Narrative and Attraction: Studio Azzurro's *Ocean Liners* Exhibition

I will discuss this topic through the analysis of an example of exhibition design by the Italian multi-disciplinary group Studio Azzurro. Since the beginning of the 2000s, Studio Azzurro has carried out various permanent or temporary installations devoted to local memory and identity. Through the use of multimedia and digital technologies, the group gathers audio-visuals, photographs and other documentary materials in immersive, multisensory and emotional displays, where visitors can interact with the environment in seemingly natural ways, without the interference of intrusive devices. The whole structure of the exhibitions is sustained by a strong narrative, which, for its complexity, could be compared to a film script. As stated by the group, "the narration which unfolds, filling the whole museum space, requires a dramatic approach in the management of the physical space, virtual components and narration, as it were a film script and not just an exhibition. The narration is therefore inextricably linked with that environment, with the stories it tells and the overall subject matter" (Cirifino, Giardini Papa and Rosa 2011, 28). On the one hand, "attention is shifted away from the object itself to the story surrounding the object, reconstructing a setting which gives a context to the exhibit" (Cirifino, Giardini Papa and Rosa 2011, 28); on the other hand, the visitors' intervention completes the exhibition. As they move through the space and interact with the devices, they contribute to building up the story, which means that this is not inherent in the single objects, but is embedded in the whole installation: "visitors do not move just from room to room, but also within a 'cinematographic' sequence which develops as they proceed" (Cirifino, Giardini Papa and Rosa 2011, 29).

The reference to cinema is not casual: cinema is not mentioned only because of the abundant use of moving images, but it has a deeper significance and it is used as a model for the very conception of the exhibition space. Drawing on the classification suggested by Irina O. Rajewsky, I propose to understand it as a systemic intermedial reference where "the media product uses its own media-specific means […] to refer to […] another medium qua system" (Rajewsky 2005, 53). In other words, in many works by Studio Azzurro, museum narrative could be compared to film narrative, not only because they both unfold in time and follow a script, but also because the first employs, thorough its own media-specific means, filmic techniques such as montage (not only in time, but also in space), zooms, close-ups, as well as a complex articulation of diegesis and characters.

The exhibition *Ocean Liners* (*Transatlantici*), held in 2004 at the Museo del Mare in Galata (Liguria, Italy), is emblematic in this respect. The installation was explicitly conceived "as a film that takes place around the space" (Cirifino, Giardini Papa and Rosa 2011, 65), a film split into fragments disposed throughout the museum. The narrative was articulated in sixteen rooms: eight narrative scenarios, and just as many rooms for in-depth investigation of the history of transatlantic shipping in nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Each multi-screen installation presented one of the ships' spaces, and at the same time a different historical period, providing thus a travel in both space and time: the narrative followed the liners from the boarding to the dock, but also through their history in different decades. The exhibition could be described as cinematic not only because it was mostly composed of audio-visuals, but also because of the particular positioning of the exhibits: the screens were arranged across the museum space in order to create a spatial montage in a three-dimensional succession of details and overall views, which amplified the audio-visual montage of the images. For instance, in the first room, devoted to boarding, four screens presented different points of view of the scene, combining in space moving images of passengers from different social classes [Fig. 1]. The juxtaposition of images accentuated their heterogeneity: while a projection showed a close-up or a detail of a first-class passenger, the next one displayed a full-shot of a third-class traveller. This arrangement showed in a powerful and immediate way the multiplicity of people who crossed the Atlantic, while the fractures between the screens revealed the insurmountable gap between them. The multiplication of perspectives on the portrayed event brought to light the impossibility to gather the different stories in a unique narrative, and stimulated visitors to adopt their own individual point of view on the story that was just beginning: the narrative was thus open, discontinuous and multi-layered. And it is precisely into its interstices that, I would argue, the attraction insinuated itself.

Through the various rooms, different strategies aimed to directly involve visitors. The audio-visual narrative abounded with spectacles, which implied the presence of a diegetic observer who is shown from behind, in the foreground, in a *mise en abyme* of the spectator's position. In the scenario titled *And the ship goes... the film of films*, settled in a space similar to a small cinema theater, visitors could sit and watch a montage of original film sequences dedicated to transatlantic ships. Here, the distinction between the space of reception and the diegetic space was ambiguous and uncertain. Moreover, in scenarios such as *The Ballroom*, devoted to parties on board, characters continuously entered

and left the frame moving to or from the fore of the shot, creating an imaginary continuity between diegetic space and viewers' space [Fig. 2]. Often, characters looked directly into the camera, explicitly demanding the spectators' attention, or even made invitation gestures, apparently asking visitors to follow them, to enter the fictional world: this created a momentary uncertainty between the real and the fictional, accentuated by the almost life-size dimension of the figures on the screen. A few seconds later the trick was unveiled as the diegetic character who was the effective receiver of the interpellation entered the frame.[4] However, this restoring of the distinction between fiction and reality did not attenuate the estrangement effect caused by the previous blurring of the boundaries. Addressing viewers directly and emphasizing their being an essential part of the show, these display solutions undermined with their attractional force the homogeneity of the narrative.

In the interactive area *The Routes Carpet*, a dark ambient with ceiling-to-floor projections, the movements of the visitors produced virtual maritime routes which appeared on the floor, superimposed on moving images of the sea. Occasionally, shipwrecked or imaginary beings such as sirens and sea monsters appeared on the surface. Further ahead, in the *Wreck* room, a video projection on the ceiling mirrored on the reflecting floor showed an overturned sea surface where different objects floated to the top. Noises and voices came from a boat, softened by the water that completely surrounded the spectators, who were thus immersed in a multisensory and emotionally charged environment. Their impossible point of view, from the depths of the sea, emphasized the act of viewing itself and the exceptional nature of this point of view. These moments were only marginally functional to the unfolding narrative; rather, they created a pause in the rhythm of the visit, generating wonder, and captivating spectators through spectacle and visual effects. Moreover, in *The Routes Carpet*, the interactive device itself, which responded to spectators' movements, produced an effect of astonishment on them.

Studio Azzurro's exhibitions are characterized by a strong narrative component: the group define its museums as "narration" or as "narrative habitats" (Cirifino, Giardini Papa and Rosa 2011). Moreover, the group firmly tries to avoid using technology as a means in itself, merely aimed at creating spectacular moments. However, as I showed, their use of audio-visual and interactive technologies occasionally creates instants of suspension, which undermine the development

4 Francesco Casetti describes the interpellation as "the recognition by the film of someone outside the text to whom the film makes a direct appeal, 'hailing' this 'you' in the form of an aside; the enunciator, in the form of a narrator, a voice-over, titles, or the like, that directly addresses the spectator" (1998, 138).

of the narration and make spectators' position uncertain. These are not to be understood as parentheses of mere visual pleasure and physical involvement. Rather such moments of attraction underline the direct involvement of visitors, and require a deeper engagement with the issues brought forward in the exhibition.

Another feature makes the *Ocean Liners* installation particularly interesting. As mentioned above, eight rooms were devoted to deepen issues related to the history of liners, such as migration, architectonic styles, ship competitions, as well as war and propaganda. Here, some projections showed archival footage and interviews with witnesses, as well as actors in costume who interpreted key figures in the ships' history, such as captains or architects. The narrative was always in the first person: events were filtered through the experience of individuals, through their (real or imagined) personal accounts and memories. For Studio Azzurro, not only could peoples' stories enrich official history with new shades of meaning, but this "revival of the oral culture" also allowed to "reproduce the emotional impact of direct communication" (Cirifino, Giardini Papa and Rosa 2011, 29), creating a deeper involvement: "the memory contained within the museum is seen as a mobile and fluid substance whose significance must be continually reassessed in the present context, in relation to the social system and the situation we now live" (Cirifino, Giardini Papa and Rosa 2011, 30). This choice is not isolated in contemporary curatorial practice, but responds to a broader trend, as I will show in the followings.

The Witness and the Ghost: Audio-Visual Testimonies in Exhibitions

Witnesses represent key figures in museums devoted to history and memory, which nowadays tend to privilege the stories of common people over authoritative and (presumed) objective historical narratives (see Hooper-Greenhill 2000). This museological tendency is linked to the growing importance of the act of testimony in contemporary culture and media (see Bhaskar and Walker 2009); in fact, as Felman and Laub have argued, the figure of the witness has become crucial to our relation to events (1992, 5). Hence, video testimonies have become an almost ubiquitous presence not only in media such as cinema and television, but also in museum exhibitions, where video interviews regarding the memories of witnesses are projected on screens of all shapes and dimensions. In the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, for instance, the *Tree of Testimony* installation, a seventy-screens video sculpture inspired by video artist Nam June Paik's works, shows

hundreds of filmed testimonies by Holocaust survivors. Moreover, numerous museums such as Studio Azzurro's Museo Audiovisivo della Resistenza (Audio-visual Museum of Resistance) in Fosdinovo (Italy), or N03!'s Museo Diffuso della Resistenza (Diffused Museum of Resistance) in Turin are almost entirely based on audio-visual testimonies, which narrate the history of opposition to fascists during the Second World War, or, more precisely, the many individual stories connected to that period. The significance of video testimonies in the communicative strategies of museums is also proved by the fact that often, when filmed interviews with eyewitnesses do not exist, fictional witnesses interpreted by actors perform the narration of historical events, creating "a tension between the authenticity signaled by the 'genre' of the video testimony and the fact that these are only simulations of testimony" (Arnold-de Simine 2013, 101).

An extensive use of fictional testimonial videos is made at the In Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres (Belgium), where actors play the role of people who actually lived during the First World War and were involved in the armed conflicts: soldiers of different armies, a priest, a doctor and a nurse. Their testimonies, although written by curators, are based on verified historical sources such as letters and written documents. The life-size images of characters are shown on glass display cabinets, one of the most classic means of museum exhibitions. Each video testimony is associated with some real objects, such as weapons or diaries that truly belonged to the historical figure. The colours of their clothes are desaturated, their faces are pale and their bodies seem to emerge from the shadows. Reflections of the Gothic windows of the building on the glass of the vitrines create a number of tricks of light, which emphasize the transparency and immateriality of the figures, and accentuate the ambiguity between the attraction of the visitors' eyes and their inability to touch the exhibits. Characters seem spectres caught between life and death, which speak as they look straight into the eyes of the spectators, asking for their empathy, seducing but at the same time frightening them (Arnold-de Simine 2013, 192–193).

As Silke Arnold-de Simine has stated, such exhibition strategies could be described as "nostalgic revivals of simulations of eighteenth and twentieth-century spectacles such as the magic lantern shows renowned as 'Phantasmagoria' or 'Pepper's Ghost'" (2013, 187–200). As it is well known, the Phantasmagoria was a nineteenth-century exhibition of optical illusions produced by means of a magic lantern. The show was held in the darkness, and the magic lantern, hidden from view, projected frightening images such as ghosts, skeletons and demons on a transparent screen. In this way, rather than appearing on a material surface,

images seemed to fluctuate in the air, and audiences were aware of neither the projection device nor the screen. Pepper's Ghost, which took its name from the lanternist who made it popular, was an improvement of the Phantasmagoria: it allowed, through a game of mirrors, to project on a transparent screen, positioned on the scene, the image of a real person placed in an adjacent room, out of sight of the public (see Mannoni 2000, see also Gunning 2004). Today, these strategies are very popular in museum exhibitions: already in a 2008 article of the professional journal museology *Museums Practice*, Scott Billing argued that museums were rediscovering the impact of displays with ghostly apparitions, obtained by projecting still or moving images (Billing 2008, 36). Effects similar to those of Phantasmagoria and Pepper's Ghost are thus recreated in museums with hi-tech means such as holographic projections, a mid-twentieth century invention whose potential has been fully exploited with the advent of digital technologies. [Fig. 3.]

In memory museums and historical sites, "spectres" seem to know an unprecedented diffusion. Not only testimonies, but also the very protagonists of historical events, or even fictional period characters, re-appear in museums' rooms. To mention only a few, at Palazzo Ducale in Gubbio (Italy) the three-dimensional moving image of an actor playing Duke Federico da Montefeltro appears in one of the rooms and seems to float in the air. Not casually, he converses with an angel, an unreal figure that accentuates the impression to be in presence of an uncanny vision. At the entrance of the Museo Martinitt e Stelline, created in Milan by the group Studio N03! and devoted to the stories of children in the two city orphanages during the nineteenth century, the shadows of the little orphans run on a staircase, accompanied by sounds of steps, whispers and laughs. The immateriality of their figures is accentuated by the fact that they overlap with the bodies of the visitors, just like eerie apparitions. The Fryderyk Chopin Museum in Warsaw proposes the reconstruction of a nineteenth-century Parisian living room, where spectral silhouettes of actors are projected behind a window, mimicking the life that took place there. At the Roman Baths in Bath, full-size wall video projections of historical characters re-populate the site. In Studio Azzurro's exhibition *Fare gli italiani* (The Making of Italians), held in 2011 in Turin, an impressive procession of ghostly figures marched along three large screens hung on the ceiling, which dominated the whole space, creating a sense of wonder in visitors but at the same time a sense of discomfort as well by the threatening figures incumbent upon their heads.

I should also mention Peter Greenaway's 2007 exhibition at Venaria Reale, an Italian Royal palace near Turin. As the title *Peopling the Palaces* indicates,

Greenaway's intervention was intended to bring life in a now deserted historical palace, presenting the daily life of the court during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through hundreds of archetypal figures. The installation, a film divided into fragments and disseminated in space (as in the case of Studio Azzurro's *Ocean Liners*), was situated in eleven rooms (today reduced to five), in which audio-visual projections showed images of people engaged in their daily activities: cooking, hunting, court dances and a procession (for a more detailed description, see Chittenden 2011). In *The Kitchens*, for instance, a large central screen is placed at the centre of the room, flanked by twenty smaller holographic screens placed symmetrically on either side. [Fig. 4.] During the unfolding of the audio-visual narrative, images of the chef and his under-cooks are refracted on the different screens, surrounding and immersing visitors. Again, the transparency of the images suggests the spectral nature of the characters who return to inhabit the palace and share its space with visitors, blurring the distinction between presence and absence, past and present. In other rooms, Greenaway uses the white walls as projection surfaces. On the one hand, filmic images blend with the architectural surface and with its materiality, but on the other, the very architecture seems to lose its consistence and to unfold into a new and evanescent space. Through the use of audio-visuals and digital technologies, *Peopling the Palace* recoveres and renewes traditional means of museum display such as illusionistic diorama or life groups, as well as historical drama reconstructions.

Finally, another Phantasmagoria-like display is the so-called *Secret Annex*, a part of the permanent *Anne Frank* installation at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. It is a small, circular room that recreates the shelter of Anne's family during the Nazi occupation. Here, the moving shadow of the young girl is projected onto a two-hundred-and-sixty degrees curved wall. An actress gives her a voice, and a number of visual and sound effects create an engaging narrative about Anne's life in the refuge. Space is similar to a little projection room: spectators are seated, they watch images on the screen, and they are immersed in dramatic sounds. Museum space mimics the classic conditions of film viewing, and visitors, accustomed to walk through the space, are almost forced to immobility: a constraint that strengthens the feeling of claustrophobia and aims to create a deeper empathy for the girl and her family.

Even if they are in many cases inscribed in the progressing of museum narrative, these strategies at first create attraction, in the sense that has already been explained above. They are thus very effective means for museums to create evocative and emotive experiences (Hein 2000). Audio-visual display

strategies, similar to those just mentioned, contribute to the intensification of the emotional impact of the exhibition, increasing the spectators' sense of empathy and attachment to historical or fictional characters. Projected moving images create a sense of presence and contact (albeit illusory and ambiguous) between reality and the represented world: visitors are aware thatthey are not actually seeing or hearing "real" historical individuals, but nonetheless they are deeply and emotionally touched by their stories. According to Silke Arnold-de Simine, accounts of personal memories, and in a broader sense the transmission of historical knowledge through the filter of individual narratives, "take centre stage, not only because they are seen to be more engaging but because they also seem to provide a democratic and ethically responsible way of approaching the past" (Arnold-de Simine 2012, 15). Moreover, she continues, the focus on emotions "is based on the assumption that knowledge about atrocities alone does not prevent violent histories from happening again, but that instead a degree of imaginative empathy is being called for in order to ensure moral responsibility" (Arnold-de Simine 2012, 15). However, we agree with Patrizia Violi when she argues that we should not underestimate the influence of the broader "spectatorship culture" in which museums are immersed, which renders them "spectacular media showplaces" (Violi 2014, 55). For this reason, "the main emotion they aim to provoke […] is often one of *wonder*: visitors are to be surprised and captured by spectacular innovations and new presentation forms" (Violi 2014, 55).

For their spectacular potential, audio-visual technologies are privileged means to obtain such effects. In the installations described above, the uncanny appearance and disappearance of the shadows of historical characters, as well as the fact that they move as in real life, engender and modulate the spectators' involvement, inducing surprise and astonishment. The presentation of "real" objects, which is the traditional mission of the museum, leaves place to an ambiguous and often problematic coexistence of truth and illusion, subjectivity and objectivity, facts and imagination.

In this paper I have shown that audio-visual media are not merely accessory tools in museums. On the contrary, when film and moving images are incorporated in exhibitions, their arrangement affects the whole museum discourse, which in turn contributes to determine their significance. Moreover, on a deeper level, the components of the exhibition space (such as objects, architecture, lighting, sounds, and visitors' paths) can be shaped in a way that refers to filmic language. Following Rajewsky (2005, 53), I defined this relation as a systemic intermedial relation, arguing that the cinematic component should

be understood as a structural element of contemporary exhibitions. Therefore, the analysis of how audio-visuals are displayed in museums not only enriches our understanding of an underestimated arena of the circulation of films and moving images outside the movie theater, but also helps to better understand how museums transmit their contents and engage their public.

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Figure 2. Studio Azzurro's *Ocean Liners* exhibition: *The Ballroom.* **Figure 3.** In Flanders Fields Museum: the "ghost" of Willi Siebert.

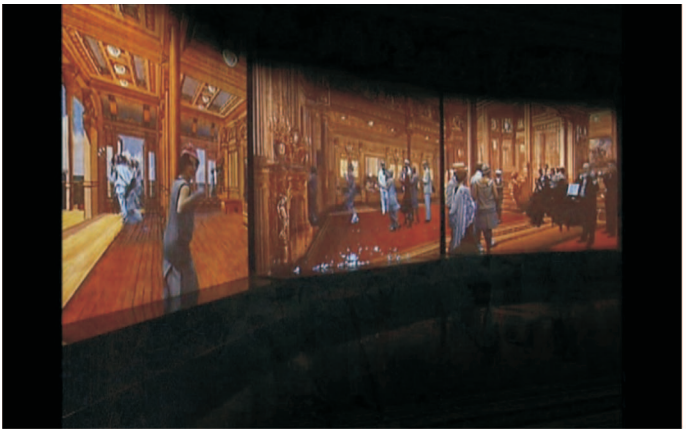

Figure 4. Peter Greenaway's exhibition, *Peopling the Palace* (2007). *The Kitchens.*

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Acta Univ. Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies, 11 (2015) 93–110

DOI: 10.1515/ausfm-2015-0017

Memento and the Embodied Fabula: Narrative Comprehension Revisited

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Abstract. Although Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (2000) has been the subject of numerous critical examinations, the unique manner in which the film's reverse-chronological dramaturgy interweaves the spectators' cognitive-analytical attempts to ensure causal-linear coherency together with a corporal-affective sensation of temporal loss remains underexplored. This I believe is due to the inability of prevalent narratological terms of cutting across the current divide and uniting on the same conceptual plane the cinematic spheres of the cognitive-analytical, evaluative, and interpretative, on the one hand, with the visceral, haptic, and sensory-affective, on the other hand. As an attempt to carve out a conceptual ground where these key facets of the cinematic experience can be unified in a nonhierarchical and nonreductive manner, I propose an embodied reconceptualization of the cognitive-formalist concept of the *fabula*. In order to do so, however, it is necessary to dispute a series of dominant assumptions about cinematic spectatorship and narrative comprehension that automatically come with this narratological concept.[1]

Keywords: narratology, cognitive film science, embodied cognition, film-philosophy, the embodied *fabula*.

Memento and the Embodied *Fabula*: Narrative Comprehension Revisited

The brilliance of Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (2000) lies not simply in its complex narrative dramaturgy. It equally pertains to how this evokes in the viewers an

1 This article draws upon research conducted as part of my PhD-dissertation *Embodying the Fabula: Cinema between the Lines* at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Germany. I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors Lorenz Engell and Christian Kassung for their comments, guidance, and critical remarks, and to the *Graduiertenförderung des Freistaates Thüringen* for financial support. I would also like to express my appreciation to two anonymous reviewers of an earlier draft of this paper for their thoughtful comments and for suggesting ways to further strengthen the concept of the embodied *fabula*.

embodied sensation of time that mirrors that of the film's main character Leonard Shelby (Guy Pearce), who suffers from anterograde amnesia. Although generally hailed as a landmark in nonlinear storytelling, *Memento* compels its viewers to be more engaged with linear reasoning than most classical Hollywood narratives. Consequently, the film renders visible the inferential nature of cognition and perception and thus envisages the cinematic spectator as an active participant constructing – rather than passively receiving – narrative sense. Noticing this aspect of the film, Robert Sinnerbrink observes that *Memento* "chimes with cognitivist theories of narrative that emphasise the roles of rational inference-making, the testing and adjusting of beliefs, and the cognitive matching of affective tone with perceptual awareness" (2011, 48). Yet, due to its ability to distort our sense of temporality, *Memento* also poses a challenge to theories of cinematic spectatorship based on cognitive appraisals, evaluations, and interpretations,[2] because it explicates the emotional and affective underpinnings of narration (cf. Hogan 2012).

Memento's film-philosophical exploration of how spectators construct a narrative world or environment thus forces us to reconsider the cognitive and representational dominance within narratology.[3] Of special interest to this article is how the film provokes a reconsideration of the cognitive-formalist revitalization of the Russian formalists' narratological distinction between the *fabula* (the story's state of affairs and events as inferred by the viewer and organized into a chronological and casual order) and the *syuzhet* (the actual arrangement of the visible and audible events in the narrative) (Bordwell 2007, 14). However, it shall be argued that the *fabula* does not arise from a cognitive picking up of relevant cues inherent in the film's *syuzhet*, but from a resonance created between film and spectator that activates feedback loops in the perceptual, emotional, affective, cognitive, and sensory-motor circuits.[4]

2 In brief, the cognitive appraisal theory of emotion argues that people's personal interpretations of a given event is determining for their emotional reaction (cf. Lazarus 1984). In film theory, such a perspective is typically assumed by cognitive-formalist theories on narrative comprehension and emotion (cf. Plantinga 2009; Plantinga and Smith 1999b; Tan 1996).

3 Although this article emphasizes their interdependence, it is useful to draw a conceptual distinction between cognition, emotion, and affect. While the term cognition "collectively refers to a variety of higher mental processes such as thinking, perceiving, imagining, speaking, acting and planning" (Ward 2010, 4), it is primarily used to designate mental activities associated with information-processing, judgements, evaluations, attention, and problem-solving. The differentiation between emotion and affect is more problematic, as cognitivists generally do not draw such a distinction. However, I believe it to be useful to reserve the term emotion for subjective and object-oriented feelings. Affect, on the other hand, cannot be simply attached to a particular feature or object and thus lacks a specific cause or basis in the world or film (cf. Yacavone 2015, 171).

4 A model of such resonances has been suggested by Torben Grodal's PECMA-flow (**p**erception, **e**motion, **c**ognition, **m**otor **a**ction) (cf. Grodal 2009). In addition, Vittorio Gallese's embodied

In performing a reconceptualization of the cognitive-formalist concept of the *fabula*, this article is informed by a steadily growing body of works that carve out the embodied nature of the cinematic experience.[5] It is, however, crucial that the increased focus on the cinematic body does not amount to a reversal of the mind-body dichotomy of classical cognition such that the affective is conceptualized as an autonomous sphere to be studied in isolation from higher cognitive processes and hermeneutic analysis.[6] On this ground, the embodied *fabula* is a conceptual tool answering the plead of William Brown to synthesize "with the haptic, or affective, elements of the cinematic experience the 'higher' 'brain' elements that in fact form a continuum with them" (2013, 141).

Linearity and Nonlinearity: *Memento*'s Exploration of Cinema's Temporal Modalities

Memento perfectly illustrates the affect-emotion-cognition continuum which becomes activated as the spectators embody the cinematic world unfolding before them. The film motivates viewers to perform the cognitive processes described by David Bordwell and others, while simultaneously demonstrating how cognition, and consequently narrative comprehension, is co-constituted in corporal affects and emotional responses to the cinematic event. In introducing the concept of the embodied *fabula*, this article attempts to incorporate into a common conceptual framework the film's activation of a (narrative) desire for causal-linearity, our corporal-mental efforts to achieve such, and our sensory-affective temporal

simulation theory – based on research in the mirror neuron system – provides a model for the intimate connection between the audiovisual stream of images and the brain-body (cf. Gallese and Guerra 2012; for a similar theory based on literature cf. Gallese and Wojciehowski 2011).

5 Works that re-emphasize the role of embodiment in cinema include: Barker 2009; Elsaesser and Hagener 2009; Marks 2000; Marks 2002; Shaviro 1993; Sobchack 2004; Grodal 2009; Gallese and Guerra 2012.

6 In recent years, the concept of affect has been principal for the formulation of a more direct encounter between the spectator and the moving images (cf. Deleuze 2005a; Deleuze 2005b; Pisters 2012; Shaviro 1993; Sobchack 1992). Affect, particularly as it is has been elaborated in the work of Brian Massumi, can be differentiated from cognition and emotion, which we *have* or *possess*, since it is nonconscious, asignifying, presubjective, unqualified, and intensive; and thus not to be attributed to a self-identical Cartesian individual (2002, 23–45). Affect is thus "irreducibly bodily and autonomic" (2002, 27). Although I find Massumi's distinction between emotion and affect useful, I am sceptical towards a radical disconnection of affect from the emotional and cognitive sphere. The problem with such a disjunction is that it utilizes the concept of affect to inverse the Cartesian dualism separating affect (body) from cognition (mind) (cf. Leys 2011). See Brinkema (2014) for a recent intervention in the study of affect that does not oppose this concept to critical inquiry, interpretation, and formal and aesthetic concerns.

disorientations that arise from such attempts to master the narrative.[7] As it shall become evident, this procedure is not straightforward, given that an embodied reconceptualization of the *fabula* gestures towards a broader redefinition of the concept of narration.[8] In order to understand this claim better, it is useful to consider how *Memento* both invokes and challenges the way the cognitive-formalist *fabula* copes with narrative temporality.

Once confronted with the idea of *Memento* being a nonlinear film, Christopher Nolan promptly answered as follows: "You referred to the film as non-linear but in fact it's very linear just in reversed chronology" (Nolan 2012). In fact, the linear nature of the film is made explicit on the special edition of the DVD-version, since it includes a chronologically re-edited version of the film. The re-edited version reveals how meticulously the film has been constructed to accentuate the causal-linear relation of the individual scenes. Following the suggestion of film critic Andy Klein (2001), the narrative structure can be illustrated according to an intricate yet systematic scheme where the coloured, reverse chronological scenes (A, B, C, etc.) are separated from the black-and-white, chronological scenes (1, 2, 3, etc.). Klein's suggestion provides us with the following visualization of the narrative structure:

Credits, 1, V, 2, U, 3, T, 4, S, 5, R, 6, Q, 7, P, 8, O, 9, N, 10, M, 11, L, 12, K, 13 J, 14, I, 15, H, 16, G, 17, F, 18, E, 19, D, 20, C, 21, B, *22/A*.

Each reverse chronological sequence is interrupted by a black-and-white scene from which a new reverse chronological sequence follows, etc. Scene *22/A* is pivotal in relation to this, since this is where the two narrative threads merge. The black-and-white scene 22, as Klein observes, "almost imperceptibly slips into color and, in an almost vertiginous intellectual loop, becomes (in real-world order) scene A, the first of the color scenes" (Klein 2001).

7 For an alternative attempt to synthesize the affective and cognitive aspects of narrative comprehension see Daniel Yacavone's *Film Worlds: A Philosophical Aesthetics of Cinema* (2015).

8 While this article centres on how the notion of embodiment allows us to expand the concept of the *fabula*, such an approach inevitably gestures at a broader embodied rethinking of narratology beyond the scope of this article. If the *fabula*, as this article suggests, grows out of our embodied experience with the film, this concept is misconceived as a causal-linear and representational string of events that can be isolated from the spectator's corporal-affective and emotional experience and construction of these events. The pertinent task becomes to describe the continuum between corporal experiences and higher-order representations. One possible place to start is to expand upon the argument made by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in relation to reason into the field of narratology. In this fashion, not only reason but also cinematic narration must depart with disembodiment but be seen as arising from the nature of embodied experience (and our engagement with the environment). As the authors declare, "[t]his is not just the innocuous and obvious claim that we need a body to reason [and, I add, to construct narratives]; rather, it is the striking claim that the very structure of reason [and, I add, cinematic narratives] itself comes from the details of our embodiment" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 4).

With the merging of the two narrative threads, the film allows for the cognitive construction of a unified causal-chronological continuum (the cognitive-formalist *fabula*), which can be translated into the following structure:

1, 2, 3 ,4 ,5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22/A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, Credits (in reverse).

In applying this narrative logic, Klein continues by providing an extensive and meticulous account of the film's events once these have been organized causal-linearly.

However useful Klein's visualization of *Memento*'s narrative structure may be, it also exemplifies the gap existing between "our actual experience of the cinema and the theory that we academic film scholars construct to explain it" (Sobchack 2004, 53). If we consider the aforementioned re-edited version of *Memento*, it becomes clear that it does not merely allow spectators to experience the film without the obstructions pertaining to the original version; *in absentia,* it also testifies to the surplus value of the original. From the perspective of Klein's visualization of *Memento*'s narrative (corresponding to Bordwell's cognitive-analytical *fabula*), the narrative events of the film remain the same in both versions, yet anyone who has watched both versions of *Memento* is likely to have had two qualitatively different *experiences* of those events. Logically, both versions focus their narrative attention on Leonard's memory system – consisting of mementos in the form of annotated photographs, notes, and tattoos for the most important facts –, yet, only the original version of the film is capable of provoking a matching feeling of temporal disorientation in the spectators.

The surplus value of the original version pertains to a nonlinear dimension of *Memento*, which is not captured by the cognitive-formalist *fabula*.[9] In an interview published shortly after the film's initial release, Christopher Nolan himself points to the nonlinear quality of the film: "The whole idea was to make a film that bled into the mind a little bit, spun in your head, that you constructed very much yourself. And when I listen to [Radiohead's album *Kid A*], no matter how many times I listen to it, I don't know what comes next" (Nolan in Timberg 2001, 14). Once our narrative comprehension is attuned to "the construction of a

9 For clarification, I do not use the term nonlinear to refer to the film's reverse-chronological telling, but to those aspects of the film which can neither be said to have a specific cause in the film nor to remain qualitatively unaffected once the narrative events have been temporally rearranged. In brief, complexity theory holds that the overall behaviour of a nonlinear or complex system cannot be explained by reference to the sum of its individual components. As Robert Pepperell explains, this "means that even though we may be able to break up a system into its constituent parts, we will not be able to learn about the global behaviour of the system by studying them individually" (2003, 26; see also Prigogine and Stengers 1984; Morin 2007).

more or less intelligible story" (Bordwell 1985, 33) – the default mode assumed in most cognitivist scholarship –, this narrative dimension is easily lost, ignored, or simply deemed a disturbing side effect.[10] We thus need to supplement the analytical *fabula* of *Memento* (understood as the "offline," diagrammatic, cognitive-analytical, intersubjective, and chronological reorganization of story events) with an "online," embodied counterpart capable of incorporating the qualities filtered out in brute cognitive-analytical representations of the "story."[11]

The *Fabula* and the "Classical Sandwich" of Narrative Comprehension

The cognitive-formalist *fabula* is constructed as spectators pick up the cues of the film by means of mental schemata, which are "abstract mental structures that organize the perceptual cues in the plot into a coherent and comprehensible mental whole" (Coëgnarts and Kravanja 2012, 87).[12] In this conception, the *fabula* is an abstract mental entity that nonetheless dominates our perception of the cinematic material, which is being constantly (re-)interpreted to accommodate the construction of a coherent and causal-linear appropriation of the film material. Thus, not only is the *fabula* in this conception predisposed to causal-linearity (being a "spatio-temporal realm in which the action unfolds in chronological order" [Bordwell 2007, 110]), it participates in an ongoing linearization of how the cinematic material is experienced. Bordwell has been criticized for endorsing a too abstract conception of schemata, isolating it from both language and the body (Buckland 2003, 31). Such criticism appears particularly justified in reference to a key assumption made in Bordwell's hugely influential *Narration in the Fiction Film* (1985). Here the author holds that the "spectator's comprehension of the films' narrative is theoretically separable from his or her emotional responses" (1985, 30).[13]

10 Consequently, Bordwell believes "Nolan's real achievement […] is to make his reverse-order plot conform to classical plot structure and film-noir twists" (2006, 79).

11 In using the terms online and offline, I refer to a distinction made between two basic forms of cognition. Whereas online cognition refers to our immediate engagement with the environment (corresponding to our ongoing construction of the *fabula* during the screening of *Memento*), offline engagement is the more abstract, hypothetical imagining of events decoupled from the actual environment of concern (corresponding to the analytical *fabula*). It is crucial to note that within embodied cognition both these forms of cognition are perceived to be body-based (cf. Wilson 2002).

12 Within the cognitive sciences, schemata "are cognitive structures representing generic knowledge, i.e. structures which do not contain information about particular entities, instances or events, but rather about their general form" (Emmott and Alexander 2009, 411).

13 Yet, it shall be noted that Bordwell in later works appears more willing to accept the corporal aspect of mental schemata. This is, for instance, the case when he observes how "[m]ore and more activities seem traceable to humans' super-sensitive natural endowment […] As research

I will argue that this *modus operandi*, which mirrors what the philosopher Susan Hurley (2002) has labelled the "classical sandwich" model of cognition, also dominates cognitive approaches dealing explicitly with emotion and affect in cinema. In brief, Hurley's metaphor of the sandwich encapsulates a position within the study of cognition which "regards perception as input from world to mind, action as output from mind to world, and cognition as sandwiched between" (2008, 2). The core assumption that Hurley wants to criticize with the metaphor of the classical sandwich is that action, perception, and thought can be ontologically dissociated. However, as Vittorio Gallese and Hannah Wojciehowski have pointed out, in conceiving action and perception as separate modular domains, classical cognitivism neglects "both the intertwine character of perception and action and their crucial contribution to cognitive processes" (2011, 11).

My thesis is that the concept of *fabula* – when understood as an inferential and exclusively cognitive construct – occupies the role of the sandwich filling within film narratology. This is not just the underlying assumption made by Bordwell in *Narration in the Fiction Film*. Carl Plantinga, a prominent proponent of the cognitive-evaluative stance to emotions in cinema explains that "a cognitive approach holds that an emotional state is one in which some physical state of felt agitation is caused by an individual's construal and evaluation of his situation" (1997, 378). The advantage of this approach is that it moves beyond the Western dichotomization of emotion and reason since it allows cognitive researchers "to discuss emotion states in terms of goals, objects, characteristics, behaviors, judgements, and motivations" (Plantinga and Smith 1999a, 3). However, in focusing only on the cognitive dimension of emotions, this position risks reducing the corporal-affectivity of cinema to the cognitive-evaluation of narrative events.

As a counter-reaction to the cognitive-evaluative position, recent decades have seen an increased interest in embodiment and affect. While work conducted here has shed valuable light on the many ways affect cannot simply be subsumed under the category of cognition, it has also left a remarkable gap between cognition and affect. With the concept of the embodied *fabula*, the aim is to integrate both the affective and cognitive domains into a larger conceptual framework capable of capturing more fully their complex interactions, which are defining of the cinematic medium. An intriguing, yet all too often ignored aspect of *Memento* is how the film establishes a nonhierachical relationship between cognitive-symbolic operations (e.g. the reorganization of the narrative continuum), affective

goes on, many 'higher-order' activities will probably be revealed as grounded in a rich perceptual system present at birth but awaiting activation and tuning from the environment" (2007, 45).

incitements (e.g. a sensation of temporal loss providing another perspective on Leonard's amnesia), and emotional involvement (e.g. the intuitive rather than rational sympathy towards Leonard's self-righteous project).

From Embodied Cognition to the Embodied *Fabula*

An example of the intricate manner in which cinema brings cognitive, emotional, and affective undertakings to engage can be found in how *Memento* on several levels instigates an alignment between Leonard and the spectator. This alignment is cognitive-epistemological, because the narrative structure restrains our knowledge in a manner comparable to how Leonard is restrained by his short-term memory. However, this alignment also operates at a corporal-affective level, because not only is our access to information limited, we also *feel* limited and restrained in regards to our own memory capabilities as we are trying to work out the narrative. In addition, the alignment is sustained by classical cinematic emotional and affective markers such as facial close-ups, the musical score, camera angles, and colour schemes (cf. Renner 2006).

To exemplify the different modes of experience invoked by *Memento*, consider the following three viewer-reactions highlighted by Stefano Ghislotti (2003):

Viewer 1: "I've seen the movie three times now and may have to watch it ten more times until I get it all straightened out."

Viewer 2: "This movie was brilliant because it totally got me dizzy... never before can I recall concentrating so hard on what was going on... eventually, I hit a mind warp and got totally lost forgetting how things ended thus making the facts in the beginning a dizzying of feelings and a distortion of my OWN memory."

Viewer 3: "I loved this movie because it made me feel as if I had a short-term memory deficit."

These comments illustrate the interrelation between aspects of the cinematic experience that are cognitive-analytical (the straightening out of the narrative), affective-embodied (a "dizzying of feelings and a distortion of my OWN memory"), or induce cognitive-affective, i.e. embodied, reflections about the cinematic experience (as if "I had a short-term memory deficit"). Although the comments stem from three different viewers, I believe each alludes to the same interrelated experience. Whereas the cognitive-formalist *fabula* only accounts for the first, the embodied *fabula* comprises all three.

Memento is unique since it renders evident the need to unite our corporal-affective and cognitive-analytical engagements with cinema into a nonhierarchical and recursive framework. Thus, an analysis of the cognitive activities of the spectators in reorganizing the narrative elements into a coherent *fabula* is incomplete without an account of how such activities interact and co-constitute the temporal sensations and disorientations that play an equal part in shaping our sense of the narrative. In turn, a description of the affective experience of the film is forced to consider the meticulous arrangement of the film's narrative design.[14]

In reconceptualizing the *fabula* as a tool situated in the direct encounter between film and spectator, we must also necessarily reinterpret the intellectual, mental, and cognitive activities of cinematic spectatorship as being embodied. The term embodied not only refers to a film theoretical interest in the body of the cinematic spectator, but also to studies that more broadly have argued for the centrality of corporal processes in relation to questions of consciousness, thinking, cognition, and the mind (e.g. Gallagher 2005; Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Varela, Thompson, and Rosch 1992). *Memento* provides a perfect illustration of embodied cognition because it relies heavily on how spectators perform ordinary cognitive tasks (e.g. problem-solving, temporal re-integration, logical inferences) to organize the narrative continuum in terms of causal-linearity (Ghislotti 2009), but demonstrates that these activities do not ensure an analytically-detached mode of spectatorship driven solely by cognitive evaluations, interpretations, and computations. Instead, such enterprises must be considered as mutually constitutive with more direct, embodied – sensory-motor, corporal, affective, and emotional – modes of appreciating the cinematic universe.

The term embodied thus points towards a renewed conception of narrative comprehension not constituted in the idea that we relate to the cinematic world and the characters inhabiting it primarily through "mind-reading" or mental simulation.[15] Although such may play an important part in how cinematic

14 It is beyond the scope of this article to present a more comprehensive analysis of the specific nature of the cognitions, emotions, and affects that emanate from engaging with *Memento*'s narrative. For a more detailed account of the cognitive work of the spectator and the difficulties it causes to episodic memory cf. Ghislotti (2009); for an analysis of the emotion markers instigated by the film cf. Renner (2006); and for an approach that deals with the film's affective powers, cf. Bianco (2004).

15 Here "mind-reading" refers to theories within psychology and philosophy attempting to explain how we can understand and predict the mental and emotional states, the goals, motifs, and mood of others. According to what has become known as theory theory, we are capable of this due to "our theories of folk psychology, which are made up of a set of law-like generalizations that connect various mental states with other mental states, with external circumstances, and with overt behaviour" (Coplan 2009, 104). A competing view is the simulation theory according

worlds are experienced, they must be seen as merely components of a more encompassing process in which the spectators embody the cinematic space-time. Although *Memento* engages us with quite an amount of analytical backwards reasoning, it ultimately evidences how the cinematic experience "is meaningful *not to the side of our bodies but because of our bodies*" (emphasis in original, Sobchack 2004, 60).

To capture this process, I use the *fabula*-term because it more than the other competing terms (such as the story, fiction, or diegetic) emphasizes the constructivist nature of narrative comprehension. At the same time, however, I maintain that the *fabula* in its Bordwellian conception is used primarily to refer to a cognitive-analytical and detached conception of the "story" as something that can be theoretically isolated from the viewers' emotional and affective responses. Consequently, the *fabula* term is often reserved to what I have referred to as the analytical *fabula*. While not denying the usefulness of this term, the embodied *fabula* serves as a reminder that narration is a dynamic process growing out of our bodily experiences as we engage with the cinematic material. Even when we are engaged in an analytical linearization of the story to achieve a sense of spatio-temporal and causal-linear orientation within the narrative universe, our mode remains embodied insofar as the body shapes higher-level cognitions (cf. Gallagher 2005). The analytical mode of narrative comprehension that dominates cognitive-formalism is thus not eradicated, but rather subsumed into a more encompassing embodied approach to narrative comprehension.[16]

to which "we attempt to determine what others think, feel, and desire by simulating their mental states, that is, attempting to adopt their perspective, using our own mind to model theirs under certain conditions" (Coplan 2009, 104). Yet, I believe 'simulation' occurs not only on the higher-level of cognitive processing, but also more directly on the immediate, intuitive, preconscious, and corporal-affective level. This is the core argument of embodied simulation theory developed by Vittorio Gallese (2005; 2011). In applying this theory to the study of cinema, Gallese and Guerra argue: "we map the actions of others onto our own motor representations, as well as others' emotions and sensations onto our own viscero-motor and sensory-motor representations" (2012, 206). In her latest article, Patricia Pisters (2014) argues convincingly for the possibility of uniting mind-reading models with embodied simulation theory for a richer understanding of how cinema generates empathy.

16 Although the embodied reconceptualization of the *fabula* is a move away from – to use Bordwell's own words – the "too-sapient viewer" (2011) of *Narration in the Fiction Film* (1985), his now classical narratological study nevertheless offers an advanced description of the core operations of a particular analytical attitude to cinematic narration. Defending himself against an overall disinterest in the emotional aspects of cinema, Bordwell claims that this is not problematic as long as we acknowledge that his theory is concerned with "only one aspect of our experience of narrative" (2007, 9).

Resituating the *Fabula* in the Cinematic Experience

In simultaneously activating and disrupting the automatic and unconscious flow according to which we habitually construct our experience of a given film in causal-linear terms, *Memento* makes us sensitive towards temporal layers that otherwise remain imperceptible. In relation to this, it has been argued that the film can be seen as a meta-time travel story insofar as it is "not one told by cinema, but one enacted by the film-viewing experience" (Baguer 2004, 250). In turning its story about memory loss back on its viewers, *Memento* allows us to become cognitively, emotionally, and affectively immersed in its narrative world.

The embodied *fabula* reunites the cognitive-reflexive with the corporal-affective dimensions of the film-experience and, as such, exists in a realm belonging neither to the cinematic spectator nor to the film *per se*. In fact, the embodied *fabula* designates a cinematic realm in which it no longer makes sense to obtain a strict separation between these. This idea resonates with Gilles Deleuze's film-philosophical coupling of the brain and the screen. In a famous passage, Deleuze explicates: "The brain is unity. The brain is the screen. […] The circuits and linkages of the brain don't preexist the stimuli, corpuscles, and particles [grains] that trace them. Cinema isn't theater; rather, it makes bodies out of grains. The linkages are often paradoxical and on all sides overflow simple associations of images. Cinema, precisely because it puts the image in motion, or rather endows the image with self-motion [auto-mouvement], never stops tracing the circuits of the brain. Cinema not only puts movement in the image, it also puts movement in the mind. Spiritual life is the movement of the mind. One naturally goes from philosophy to cinema, but also from cinema to philosophy" (2000, 366).

In evoking this notoriously ambiguous and highly debated coupling of the brain and the screen, my claim is that the embodied *fabula* arises from a realm in which these two remain to be differentiated. This means that the affects, emotions, and cognitions pertaining to the cinematic experience can be discerned but not meaningfully isolated from one another and from the audiovisual cinematic input ("the brain is unity," "the brain is the screen"). Rather than departing from a mode of operation based on isolation and disjunction, the embodied *fabula* turns to cinematic assemblages based on a recognition of the mutual interdependency and co-constitution of entities traditionally separated in the cognitive-formalist *fabula*, such as the spectator and the film, linearity and nonlinearity, and the cognitive and the affective.[17]

17 This could possibly also relate to theories redefining cinematic agency. According to such

In relation to this, two concepts – the cinesthetic subject as developed by Vivian Sobchack (2004) and the surrogate body or *Leihkörper* of Christiane Voss (2011; 2014b)[18] – might be useful in resituating the notion of embodied *fabula* in the actual cinematic experience. For Sobchack and Voss, it is not enough to conceptualize the spectator as an embodied being; the film experience must be seen as capable of producing its own corporality. Following Sobchack, the cinesthetic subject is "constituted at the movies as ambiguously located both 'here' off-screen and 'there' onscreen" (2004, 72). In this fashion, cinematic spectatorship arises synesthetically and coenaesthetically, i.e. *in* and *through* the whole sensory-mechanisms of the body.[19] Sobchack's Merleau-Ponty-inspired phenomenological approach to the cinematic experience is, however, not interested in questions about narration but rather investigates the "primary structures, founded in existence and constitutive of conscious experience" (Sobchack 1992, 8).

Where Sobchack thus opposes the phenomenal experience with the semantic-cognitive operations involved in narrative comprehension, German film-philosopher Christiane Voss maintains that illusions (and hence narrative universes) in cinema should be understood in terms of how they emerge from a sensory-affective resonance with the audiovisual stream of images. Drawing upon John Dewey's philosophy of aesthetics, Voss regards the aesthetics of cinema as "an irreducible and simultaneously reciprocally dynamic relation of aesthetic presentation and reception" (2011, 138). Voss maintains that cinematic narratives cannot be reduced to a brute cognitive apprehension of a cinematic "text" but arise instead from a "loan body" given to us in the direct cinematic encounter: "My thesis is that it is only the spectator's body, in its mental and sensorial-affective resonance with the events onscreen, which […] 'loans' a three-dimensional body to the screen and thus flips the second dimension of the film event over into the third dimension of the sensing body. The spectator thus becomes a temporary 'surrogate body' for the screen, and this body is, for its part, a constituent feature of the filmic architecture" (Voss 2011, 145; see also: 2014b, 117).

theories, agency is distributed not only to the spectator, who organizes the narrative, but also to the image in its capability of *affecting* and *moving* (cf. Sierek 2007; Engell 2014; Voss 2014a).

18 The term surrogate body is the suggestion made by Inga Pollmann to translate the German noun *Leihkörper*, which literally brings together the words "loan" and "body" (cf. Voss 2011).

19 As Sobchack explains, besides the word cinema, the term cinesthetic draws on synaesthesia and coenaesthesia. In common usage, synaesthesia refers "not only to an involuntary transfer of feeling among the senses but also to the volitional use of metaphors in which terms relating to one kind of sense impression are used to describe a sense impression of other kinds" (2004, 68). Coenaesthesia designates "the potential and perception of one's whole sensorial being" (2004, 68).

The main advantage of Voss's concept of the *Leihkörper* is that it carves out the connection between levels of description based in the primary structures of Sobchack and those that are based in cognitive-semantics and thus associated with plot, composition, characters, focalization, etc. Removing the *fabula* from its origin in the cinematic "text" and situating it instead in the cinematic *Leihkörper* makes it possible to emphasize both its cognitive-symbolic and corporal-affective dimensions without reducing the *fabula* to *either* the formal and stylistic features of the film *or* to the cognitive and affective processes of the brain-body.[20]

Memento allows us to experience cinematic narration as a process which does involve attempts to construct spatio-temporal and causal-linear coherency, yet not in the cognitively-analytically detached fashion automatically assumed by the analytical *fabula* of cognitive-formalism. *Memento*'s narrative design calls for a conceptual tool capable of bringing forth the resonances that the film provokes in the affect-emotion-cognition circuitry of the cinematic *Leihkörper*. The embodied *fabula* allows us to conceptualize the formation of cinematic narration as an amalgamation of the recursive interplay of several modes that are all integral to narrative comprehension. As I have argued in relation to *Memento*, these include corporal-affectivity (the dizzying temporal sensation, the sense of memory loss, and the loss of narrative unity), the film's emotional landscape, atmosphere, or mood, and the invocation of a particular mode of temporal reorganization connected with narration more broadly. In incorporating the cognitive-symbolic and analytical *fabula* into an embodied framework that shifts the focus to assemblages of cognitions, emotions, and affects rather than perceiving such according to an analytical principle of disjunction, I hope to have hinted at how the embodied *fabula* could be a useful conceptual tool for understanding the multimodality behind the narrative powers of *Memento*, which continues to intrigue cineastes and academics alike.

20 Although this article has focused on the concept of *fabula*, it is necessary not to forget its counterpart: the *syuzhet* (understood as the actual arrangement of the visible and audible "events" of the narrative). It can be argued that the *syuzhet* is equally misconstrued as the cognitive-analytical "facts" that "cue" us into constructing the *fabula*, since our ability to detect and designate such narrative "events" equally relies on our emotional-affective appreciation of the incoming stimuli. As Patrick Colm Hogan has argued: "Our isolation of something as an event and our attribution of a cause to that event are both crucially a function of emotional response, even if other systems are involved as well" (2012, 16).

Conclusion

In reference to the complex dramaturgical architecture of *Memento*, I have proposed a reconceptualization of the cognitive-formalist concept of the *fabula*. Rather than being merely a perplexing cognitive puzzle, this article suggests that *Memento*'s success should be found in how it embeds us into its themes of amnesia and identity loss. The main task in this relation has been to integrate the corporal and affective aspects of spectatorship as constitutive elements of the *fabula* rather than mere effects of our cognitive-inferential appropriation of the narrative. To circumvent the problematic disassociation of perception, action, cognition, emotion, and affect associated with the classical sandwich model of narrative comprehension, I have relocated the *fabula* in a realm irreducible to the spectator and to the film, yet inevitably bound up on both. This I have done in reference to the concepts of the cinesthetic subject (Sobchack) and the *Leihkörper* (Voss) with the particular aim of reconnecting the initial, phenomenological, and embodied experience with the higher-level cognitive-symbolic operations that I maintain are both vital ingredients for the emergence of narration. Although the scope of this article merely touches upon the outlines of this narratological tool, I hope to have made clear how the embodied *fabula* may contribute to draw our theoretical understanding of cinematic narration closer to the actual experiences we have in the cinema. Only from such a standpoint can we fully appreciate how films like *Memento* realize the cinematic potential to enfold viewers into an audiovisual stream of complex temporalities, narrative rhythms, sensational flows, and multiple cognitive-reflexive pathways that demand to be understood in genuinely embodied terms.

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Acta Univ. Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies, 11 (2015) 111–125

DOI: 10.1515/ausfm-2015-0018

Visual Composition of Bodily Presence. A Phenomenological Approach to Paul Thomas Anderson's *The Master*

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Abstract. The description and interpretation of the visual composition of a film is crucial in understanding the effects of moving images and their specific role in the contemporary context of intermediality. The phenomenological approach, based on the precise depiction of the lived perceptual experience and its integration in the process of interpretation, offers a powerful tool for critical analysis. Although this theoretical framework opens up many different approaches, in this paper I will focus on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological account of perception and on the viewer experience described by Vivian Sobchack with the self-contradictory term "a film's body." After studying this concept and its role in film analysis, as used by Sobchack, based on the term *double-sided and fissured experience* the paper offers an alternative approach which, compared to the earlier ones, seems to be more fruitful in understanding the act of vision and the embodied viewer experience constructed by a moving picture. The last part of the paper demonstrates, through the example of Paul Thomas Anderson's *The Master* (2012), how crucial the embodied viewer experience can be in the understanding of moving images. The analysis of the visual system of this film will show how the main problem of the whole story is re-created, re-presented in the visually triggered bodily experience of the viewer.

Keywords: phenomenology, perception, film's body, Paul Thomas Anderson, *The Master*.

"The first capital event in the history of filmic representation was unquestionably the recognition of the narrative potential of the image, by way of its assimilation to a gaze" – argues Jacques Aumont, making it clear that it would be impossible to disregard the problem of the gaze in any description and analysis of the cinematic experience (1989, 2). One cannot emphasize enough how crucial it is that, opposed to still images, in cinema, all that appears on screen is considered as being seen from somewhere or by someone, and it is always linked to a "source"

by the viewer. This is the reason many film theorists have analysed the visual, narrative, and symbolic function of the cinematic gaze. What phenomenology can add to the analysis is a focus on a specific aspect of this problem, namely that it is an embodied gaze. If we are to consider the cinematic image as being linked to a certain bodily presence, we have to understand its consequences for the process of meaning generation, where we will have to deal with the description and understanding of non-visual experiences. Before moving on to the analysis of Paul Thomas Anderson's film, I will give a brief overview of the most important approaches in film phenomenology and point out the aspects which can help create a useful framework for the analysis of moving pictures.

All phenomenological approaches and analyses are linked to perception, they are often dealt together within film theory with cognitive sciences or ecological analyses.[1] However, there is an important difference between these theories. It is true that phenomenology is linked to perception, but its main goal is not to understand perception in itself, but to understand the world through perception; while cognitive sciences are mostly trying to understand how we perceive and understand the world that surrounds us. As Jennifer M. Barker puts it: "Phenomenological description seeks to identify the underlying structures of the phenomenon at hand by studying its intimate entailment with the intentional act of perception to which the phenomenon is present" (2009, 11).

Although he has written almost nothing on cinema itself[2], nearly all phenomenological film theories are based on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's groundbreaking work, his most often cited lecture, *The Film and the New Psychology* (1966). An impressive part of his phenomenology is grounded on the critique of the Cartesian view of the world. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological theory of perception is based on the belief that the division between mind and body is a false one, and thus perception and understanding, bodily apprehension and comprehension are part of one and the same process, they happen simultaneously. As he expresses in *L'Oeuil et l'esprit* (Merleau-Ponty 1964b), body is nothing else but the entailment of vision and movement, because the moving human body is part of the visible world. This means that my perception,

1 Phenomenology is often considered as one of the so-called reception or interpretation theories, and thus it is often dealt together with cognitive theories. For example, when trying to find similarities between different types of (film) theoretical discourses within the Humanities, Henry Bacon argues that the combination of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and the hermeneutics of Ricoeur "can furnish us with conceptual tools for appropriating the discoveries and insights of cognitivism, ecological film theory, neoformalism, historical poetics" (Bacon, 2005).

2 Focusing openly on cinema we only find his brief lecture entitled *The Film and the New Psychology* (1966).

my visual recording system is not outside the world it sees but constitutes an organic part of it. And thus, according to Merleau-Ponty, seeing is not an act of thinking, because "immersed in the visible by his body, itself visible, the see-er does not appropriate what he sees; he merely approaches it by looking, he opens onto the world" (Merleau-Ponty 1993, 124).

At the heart of Merleau-Ponty's theory on perception is the idea that "my body simultaneously sees and is seen," so my body is in every sense part of the world, of the things it observes. And thus, the act of seeing originates from the world, the medium of things. This is what phenomenology calls chiasm, or chiastic structure: the one who perceives is in the very same moment perceivable, exposed to the perception of the world he observes. Merleau-Ponty's concept of chiasm describes a perception which implies a strong connection between seeing and that which is seen. In this respect, seeing is similar to touching, where there is a relation between the act of touching, the movement of one's hand, and the touched surface. The description of the left hand touching the right hand, the experience of touching and being touched, of being simultaneously the subject and the object of experience is central to his theory of perception. Chiasm is about the interconnected nature of the seeing subject and the seen object. And this results in a primordial subjectivity: we simply cannot transcend our embodied, material, and irreducible relation with the world (cf. Merleau-Ponty 2002 and Merleau-Ponty 1964a).

Transposing Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology into the realm of moving pictures, Vivian Sobchack argues that the main novelty in cinema is that it is able to reproduce this everyday experience: we are seeing and being seen at the same time. As she explains it, "the moving picture not only visibly represents moving objects but also – and simultaneously – presents *the very movement of vision itself"* (Sobchack 2004a, 146). Hence, for the first time in the history of visual representation, cinema has provided "objective insight into the subjective structure of vision and thus into oneself and others as always *both viewing subjects and visible objects*" (my emphasis, Sobchack 2004a, 149). So, in Sobchack's view, film expresses perception. "To exist in a lived-body is always to do both, and so the film is, essentially, perception and expression in motion" (Barker 2009, 8). This also means that both film and viewer might engage in the act of looking. We should therefore acknowledge that filmmakers not only construct images and visual compositions, but at the same time they also construct a specific act of seeing, an act of vision, an act of perception through the moving image. It will be demonstrated further on, through the analysis of *The Master*, that the main

ingredient of Paul Thomas Anderson's directing is the creation of a very specific way of perception, of an embodied act of seeing.

The term embodied act of seeing makes it necessary to take into consideration other senses than vision – which is, in fact, one of the main concerns of film phenomenology (cf. Barker 2009, Marks 2000, Sobchack 2004). If film is considered an audiovisual medium, how is it possible that it is capable to trigger, or evoke (the difference between the two is a matter of discussion in itself) other sensations, such as touch, smell or taste? One side of the problem is connected to the acceptance or denial of the primacy of vision. Are haptic sensations really taking place (as Sobchack suggests, 2004c), or do we just imagine them due to our visual experience? This is an important question because if we want to analyse films through perception, we must be able to say that perceptual experience is really taking place. Not being entitled to make final judgements on the issue, I would go with Merleau-Ponty, who stated that even what is behind our back, even "the gramophone playing in the next room [...] still counts in my visual field" (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 323). Another side of the issue is related to the actual place of this embodiment: does it take place "here," or rather "there" (in the diegetic world of the movie)? Before elaborating further on these questions, several terms and discussions of film phenomenology have to be considered.

When moving to a phenomenological approach of the cinematic experience, as Jennifer M. Barker puts it, the analyst "focuses neither solely on the formal or narrative features of the film itself, nor solely on the spectator's psychic identification with the characters or cognitive interpretation of the film. Instead, phenomenological film analysis approaches the film and the viewer as acting together, correlationally, along an axis that would itself constitute the object of study" (Barker 2009, 18).

It is at this point that the relationship between viewer and film, between our and the film's body comes in. In her now famous book entitled *The Address of the Eye* (Sobchack 1992), Vivian Sobchack created the notion of the film's body, which is used to describe the embodied nature of the cinematic experience. We can talk about the film's body because – as argued before – we can see the film "seeing:" "we see its own process of perception and expression unfolding in space and time" (Barker 2009, 9). The main issue here is related to the problem of the gaze: film is always the re-presentation of the act of seeing an Other. So, the viewer not only sees a world shown by the film, but he/she observes a world seen by someone – this is why film is conceived of as a seeing subject. Sobchack considers that the source of the cinematic gaze is not a transcendental eye, but rather an enworlded act of seeing

that is capable of understanding materiality. "A phenomenological description of the act of viewing inevitably leads to an *embodied viewer* – not visible *in* the act or its productions but generative *of* the act and its existentially directed and diacritical structure" (Sobchack 1992, 135, my emphasis). If there is an invisible, embodied observer who generates the act of seeing itself, then – according to Sobchack – we have to speak of the film's body. Therefore, Sobchack argues that film is more than pure vision; its existence implies a certain kind of body. "Realized by the physical presence of the camera at the scene of the cinematography yet not the same as the camera, the film's 'body' needs not be visible in its vision – just as we are not visible in our vision as it accomplishes its visual grasp of things other than itself" (Sobchack 1992, 133). The perceptual engagement with the film experience is enabled by an eye that does not belong solely to the filmmaker, to the camera, or to the spectator, so "the film exists as the *visible visual relation* between an embodied eye and a sensible world" (Sobchack 1992, 203). It is neither the camera nor the projector, neither the filmmaker nor the spectator who mediates between the perceiving act and the intentional object – this relation, this mediating entity is described by Sobchack with the term the film's body. Although it seems to be clear that while watching a film we experience from inside an act of seeing, it is important to note that this still does not appear to us as our own vision. "Even as I perceive it as lived from within vision, it does not emerge as my own lived vision because I am seeing it as visible from without" (Sobchack 1992, 138–139).

There are many debates within film theory about the true origin of vision in cinema. Is it the film's vision? Or does it belong to the viewer? Yet again, is it the author's? While he cannot be considered a phenomenologist, in his essay *Moving Pictures,* Arthus Danto grasps this problem from the perspective of camera movement: "I think, in a way, the kinetification of the camera goes some way toward explaining the internal impact films make upon us, for it seems to overcome, at least in principle, the distance between spectator and scene, trusting us like movable ghosts into scenes which a-kinetic photography locates us outside of, like disembodied cartesian spectators" (Danto 1979, 19). In his view it is us, the viewers, who are thrown in the world of the film, but our presence is only a ghostly one. This is a very important idea because it very precisely shows this uncertain, double-sided and fissured presence of us, viewers in the film experience. Film is neither the viewer's gaze (because we do not have the visual and motoric freedom that we would enjoy if we really were in the space shown by the camera); nor is it the author's gaze, because he/she has chosen this image from a much larger "reality."

Analysing Kiarostami's cinema, Jean-Luc Nancy argues that it is the director's gaze that appears on screen,[3] and it is important to observe the way he describes the viewer's relation to the moving image: "It is not about passivity, even less about captivity; it is about adapting, according [s'accorder] ourself to a gaze, in order to watch when it comes to us. Our gaze is not captive, and if captivated, it is because it is requested, mobilized" (Nancy 2001, 17, translation mine).

All these descriptions refer to a fissured and double-sided experience in which both identification and otherness have their place. Contrary to Sobchack, I don't think that a concept such as the film's body is needed to render the experience understandable, and it especially does not help the understanding, analysis and interpretation of actual films – which is the goal of my phenomenological approach. If we talk of the film's body, we will soon face the problem of the lack of visibility of this body. As we are not able to see the film's body from one shot to another, the visibility of the seeing subject, which – even according to Sobchack – is the most important element of the cinematic experience, is missing from this approach. Within the film, one is capable of experiencing the visibility of the seeing bodies, yet this is true not for the immaterial body of the film, but rather for the characters visible on screen (since identification takes place mostly with them), and for us, viewers. So, when I experience the visibility of the seeing subject as being mine, it is often the visibility of the vision of a character within the film, not the visibility of the film itself. The main problem is that weird experience of being in the film and outside it at the same time: "Watching a film, we are certainly not *in* the film, but we are not entirely *outside* it, either. We exist and move and feel in that space of contact where our surfaces mingle and our musculatures entangle. […] This sense of fleshy, muscular, visceral contact seriously undermines the rigidity of the opposition between viewer and film" (Barker 2009, 12–13). Although it is clear that, for Merleau-Ponty, all perception is embodied perception, it seems to me that the concept of the film's body is an unnecessary theoretical construction that serves best those who try to undermine the credibility of phenomenology by pointing out its (supposedly) fuzzy, unclear, poetic notions. In my view, what we are dealing with here is an experience of *fissured double-sidedness*. In other words, although a process of perception clearly goes on, an act of seeing and hearing takes place in the film and is perceived by the viewer, we do not necessarily need to posit a body to film. If – as true phenomenologists – we try to understand the thing, the film itself,

3 In my view, in Kiarostami's cinema it is essential that we are not dealing with a modernist self-reflexive attitude which emphasizes its own constructed nature. Rather, I would argue that he anchors every gaze in the represented reality, thus making us aware of the constructed nature of reality itself.

and not the process of perception, if we are aiming for a phenomenological theory of film analysis, then there is no need for the complicated concept of the film's body.

Let me examine this problem from another angle. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology not only posits that the division of mind and body is a false one – as I presented earlier –, but also questions the boundary between body and world, between the subject and object of perception. The reversibility or chiastic nature of perception is central to his theory, as he argues that the common materiality shared by us and the world, the common materiality of our own body and the flesh of the world is which makes perception possible in the first place. If we relate this idea to cinema, we can say that the whole issue of the film's body, of this invisible yet bodily presence of the viewer in the world of the film, is related to the problem of subject and object, to the relationship of the viewer's own body and the external world. Vivian Sobchack uses the emotions of passion and suffering to elaborate on this idea (Sobchack 2004b). She writes that, on the one hand, suffering "enhances the awareness of oneself as a *subjective object*: a material being that is nonetheless capable of *feeling* what it is to be treated *only* as an object" (Sobchack 2004b, 288). When tortured or being forced to suffer a non-intentional wordly phenomenon, in fact, we suffer a diminution of our subjectivity, thus we experience what it is like to be a material object. We can find an extraordinary example of this in *The Master*, in the scene where Freddie is "forced" to walk up and down in a room, hitting the wall with his almost objectified body – in order to be capable of reaching a higher understanding of Lancaster's ideas. On the other hand, the passion of devotion, and especially sexual passion, is a devotion to the carnal possession of another, a self-displacement in the flesh of the world. Based on this, Sobchack argues that "it is this sense of passion that provides the material foundations of our aesthetic behaviour toward the world and others" (Sobchack 2004b, 290). And finally she concludes: "I would suggest that it is only through the intimate […] subjective recognition of ourselves as material objects that we can share in the full being of the world, and […] feel not merely a superficial passion *for* the material (that is always other than ourselves) but feel also the existential passion *of* the material (that is always also ourselves)" (Sobchack 2004b, 296).

The notion of the film's body in fact theorizes this double-sided and fissured experience that we have while watching a film, when we are both outside and inside it at the same time. Really remarkable filmmakers are able to make the construction of the "presence-absence," of this invisible bodily experience a central problem of their art, and are also capable of grounding the main topic of their film in that specific viewer experience which they themselves have created.

This is the way in which a phenomenological approach can be channelled in a critically productive manner into the analysis of moving pictures.

At this point, I would like to return to the problem of the place of embodiment. If we accept Merleau-Ponty's assumption on the dissolution of the boundary between the subject and object of perception, then we have to say that the whole problem is irrelevant, as the subject and the object of perception are both part of the same world (be that partially the diegetic world of a film). Identification with a character – another issue often brought up in these discussions – is only psychological, not perceptual: the perceptual experience always belongs to the viewer. This justifies the idea of a fissured experience, and this is why, in the example of *The Master*, a non-visual bodily sensation can occur independently of any of the characters of the movie (as it will be presented later).

When I use phenomenology in my approach to film studies, contrary to most scholars, I do not intend to create a comprehensive phenomenological theory of the filmic representation. Due to my teaching practice and my activity as a film critic I am much more interested in finding approaches that actually help to understand films based on the cinematic experience they create. A phenomenological theory of film analysis could help us understand films not only through their symbolic value, narrative strategy, genre references, or visual style, but through the embodied viewer experience that they enable by the fact that they are viewed as an expression of perception. When scholars speak of a phenomenological approach to cinema, the main idea is that they do not consider the film as text, image, or discourse, but rather they deal with the cinematic experience. This is why, I try to develop a methodology that can be successfully used in the critical approach of moving pictures.

One way to do this would be to follow the scholars whose phenomenological analysis is concerned with the immense possibilities offered by the sensual approach to perception, a phenomenological understanding of the filmic reception that is not limited anymore within the boundaries of visuality. In her book *The Tactile Eye*, Jennifer M. Barker stresses that "exploring cinema's tactility thus opens up the possibility of cinema as an *intimate* experience and of our relationship with cinema as a close connection, rather than as a distant experience of observation, which the notion of cinema as a purely visual medium presumes" (Barker 2009, 2). She also points out that by tactility she does not only understand physical contact, but "a profound manner of being." So, Barker extends the notion of tactility beyond touch, to the experience of a bodily being-in-the-world. If we are to accept Merleau-Ponty's description of the chiastic structure of human

experience, which is actually based on tactility, we can say that touch has a special significance in perception and in our bodily presence. But what is maybe even more important here is that Barker moves the notion of body from the side of the cinematic apparatus, where it has been placed by Sobchack, and deals with it within the context of viewer experience. Beside Barker's book, we should also refer here to several essays written by Sobchack (especially the paper entitled *What My Fingers Knew: The Cinesthetic Subject, or Vision in the Flesh*, 2004c) and Laura U. Marks's book, *The Skin of the Film* (2000). Both works emphasize the significance of the non-visual and non-narrative side of the cinematic experience and try to interpret the artworks through the description of non-visual perception.

Although this approach might lead to very sensitive and almost poetic interpretations, this is not the path I would follow. I consider that it is much more productive to focus on the embodied viewer experience that actually takes place during the screening of a moving picture. The reason I have chosen Paul Thomas Anderson's *The Master* (2012) is that it seems to me that through the composition of the shots and camera movements this film consciously creates an act of vision closely related to the subject of the film.

Kent Jones notes in *Film Comment*: "Anderson is too interested in Hubbard and Scientology to be content with merely condemning them" (Jones 2012) – this is one of the reasons why we should pay further attention to what this film is about. The phenomenological insight into the film will be based on four scenes or shots that are most enlightening regarding the viewer experience constructed by the filmmaker. I start my analysis of the film with a recurring shot of symbolic significance, which appears in important moments, and not accidentally it is also the very first shot [Fig. 1]. Here we can observe, for about 15–20 seconds, the blue sea that covers the whole screen, from the deck of a ship, whose unseen presence is acknowledged by the fact that the propeller whirls the waves beneath us. It is important that we are not facing forward, in the direction of the movement of the ship, but rearwards, in the direction where it came from. This shot is significant not (only) for its symbolic value, but due to the uncanny bodily experience it creates in its viewer, an experience that is continuously reinforced by the visual composition of the entire film. The uncanny bodily sensation we get here is that of a person going backwards, without being able to watch his/her steps, without being able to see where he/she is heading. It is extremely important to note that this view belongs to none of the characters, so it cannot be considered a POV shot. Although it can be anchored to a certain moment of the plot, as it could have been taken during Freddie's boat trip on Lancaster's yacht, there is no specific

scene from where this shot could actually originate. This is why I consider this shot as a key sequence destined to reinforce and, to a certain point, unveil the representational strategy of the film.

The second moment I have chosen is a magnificent steadicam shot that could have been included in Kevin B. Lee's remarkable video essay made for *Sight&Sound* (Lee 2012a) as probably the most mature example of Anderson's use of this device [Fig. 2]. In my view, it could also be a fine example of how Anderson has moved away from the spectacular use of these kinds of shots, seen in his earlier films, to a more condensed application – a tendency spotted by Lee already in *There Will Be Blood* (2007). The shot I am referring to starts around 10 minutes into the film and shows the moment when Freddie, working as photographer in a department store, observes his woman colleague wandering around and selling a coat – or, to be more precise, she observes him. The most striking feature of this beautifully choreographed and paced shot is the subtle and changing relationship between the movement of the camera and the movement of the protagonist, the amazing woman. In the beginning, one might think that the shot is taken from Freddie's point of view, but after a few seconds it becomes clear that the camera moves around with great mobility, while he (most probably) remains still in his small photo studio. The focal point of the shot is, in fact, the woman's gaze, who, while moving around the customers, glances back time and again at Freddie. What makes all this uncanny is that we never get to see what she is looking at, and as the minutes pass by, we feel more and more uncomfortable by this. The moment when, towards the end of the shot, she walks toward the receding camera – besides being symbolic – is full of visual and emotional tension, as we just do not get the possibility to see what she is looking at, and what the reaction of Freddie is. It is important to note that the tension does not originate from the identification with the main character (Freddie) but from the fact that the film does not offer us the possibility to turn around – what our natural reaction would be in such situations. It is exactly this almost physical constraint that creates a visually triggered bodily presence for the viewer, who is obliged to consciously acknowledge his or her embodied position within the viewing experience.

The next moment I would like to refer to is a short, 15-second shot, a receding steadicam progress that shows the two main characters, Lancaster and Freddie, leaving the rocks in the desert from where they have dug out the famous box [Fig. 3]. The shot is important for my argument mainly because it proves once again that the visual strategy of not showing the direction where the characters are looking or heading is central in the entire film. This is also probably the moment

when we start to realize that there are no eyeline match cuts in *The Master* – no matter how intensely a character is focusing in a certain direction, we will never get a shot showing us what he or she was looking at.

This visual decision becomes evident in the 4-minute-long scene towards the end of the film (it occurs around 1 hour and 50 minutes into the film), when Lancaster tries to make his followers live a certain kind of experience when riding very fast with the motorbike towards a chosen orientation point in the desert [Fig. 4]. This scene is crucial from the point of view of the visual composition of the film because here we can see how step by step this above described strategy changes. It is exactly in the moment when Lancaster realizes that Freddie might not come back that we get to see the first eyeline match cut of the film: finally we are able to look in the direction where the Master is looking. And, not accidentally, this is the moment when Freddie is finally capable of freeing himself from Lancaster's influence.

This embodied viewer experience created by Anderson is important for two reasons. First, we are dealing here with a perceptual experience that is clearly not linked to any kind of identification with a character; this is about our spectatorial presence in the diegetic world of the film. This is also the reason why I have called it a fissured double-sided experience. The second reason is that in *The Master* we face a synaesthetic perceptual phenomenon, as characterized by Merleau-Ponty, who says that "synaesthetic perception is the rule," and thus it is perfectly possible that we have haptic sensations through sight. "The senses intercommunicate by opening on to the structure of the thing. […] The form of objects is not their geometrical shape: it stands in a certain relation to their specific nature, and appeals to all our other senses as well as sight" (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 266–267). This is why we actually perceive, and not only "imagine," this uncanny bodily feeling of the blind spot behind our back.

Finally, in my view, Anderson's coherent visual strategy followed throughout the film is of extremely great importance not simply because it creates a very specific, embodied viewer experience, but also because it is strongly related to the whole topic of the film. Lancaster Dodd's manipulation is, in fact, based on the pattern of nostalgia, on the strategy that he turns his audience's attention towards their past: he talks of their childhood, of their past lives, or of things that happened billions and trillions of years ago. So, while they are looking backwards, he is able to take them where he wants. Now, this manipulation suffered by the characters of the film is translated and then conveyed to us through the construction of a specific act of vision. Due to the composition of the

shots and the omission of eyeline match cuts, we are able to experience through our bodily presence, in an embodied way, a similar experience to that endured by Freddie and other followers of Lancaster. The immense value of this solution is that it makes us bodily, physically "understand" the intellectual and emotional experience of the main character.

This brief analysis was important to me not only as a possible interpretation of the film, but also because I hope that it proves that a heightened attention to the visually triggered, embodied act of vision, which is, in fact, created in a different way by every moving picture, can actually aid the interpretation and analysis of films. A phenomenologically grounded focus on our viewer experience can become a useful critical tool.

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Figure 4. *The Master* – the first eyeline match cut of the movie.

DE GRUYTER OPEN

Acta Univ. Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies, 11 (2015) 127–142

DOI: 10.1515/ausfm-2015-0019

Performing the Unspeakable. Intermedial Events in András Jeles's *Parallel Lives*

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Abstract. Among the various connotations of intermediality one is related to the performative aspect of the term. As Ágnes Pethő (2011, 42) formulates: "Intermediality is seen, more often than not, as something that actively 'does,' 'performs' something, and not merely 'is.'" This notion of intermediality implies a dynamic category within which media constellations are in continuous motion, being reconfigured by one another, the cinematic medium becoming a playground of media interactions. András Jeles, Hungarian experimental filmmaker formulates the paradox that a particular medium can best express its own mediality through the "foreign" material of other arts and media. The medial consonances and dissonances transform the cinematic medium into a liminal space where meaning as *event* can take shape. Jeles's film entitled *Parallel Lives* (*Senkiföldje*, 1993) is aimed at such event-like liminality in several respects: culturally, it turns towards a burdened site of the still unprocessed past of the Hungarian society; thematically, it addresses the topic of the Holocaust; and medially, it proposes to artistically render the unrepresentable. The film appeals to the other arts, incorporating a set of literary, painterly and musical allusions that contrast a culturally aestheticized view of the child in pain with the ultimate, inescapable and incommensurable reality.[1]

Keywords: the real vs. the intermedial, intermediality as event, tropes of the unrepresentable, archival footage, András Jeles.

Figuring the Infigurable

The present article addresses possible ways in which the real is configured in the interplay of different media within the cinematic medium. It investigates how various media constellations can be caught, in Brigitte Peucker's terms, in the act of "gesturing toward the real," of "figuring the real," which is by nature inherently

1 This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian Ministry of National Education, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-ID-PCE-2012-4-0573.

unrepresentable. My research deals with ways in which the crisis of representation is addressed by particular moments of intermedial figurations that fold back onto the real and assist "the movement between the representation and the real" (Peucker 2007, 9). In the introduction to her book entitled *The Material Image. Art and the Real in Film,* Brigitte Peucker states: "It is only seemingly a paradox that the real and its relation to representation are centrally at issue in the *trompe l'oeil* and *tableau vivant* moments that occur in film – in the visual games, that is, that film plays with reality. Aesthetic practices such as these serve as occasions for staging the real in its relation to representation" (Peucker 2007, 1–2).

In mapping the rhetoric of intermedial cinema in her book *Cinema and Intermediality. A Passion for the In-Between*, among the various connotations implied by the term intermediality, Ágnes Pethő draws attention to the performative aspect inherent in it: "Intermediality is seen, more often than not, as something that actively 'does,' 'performs' something, and not merely 'is'" (2011, 42). Thus, the notion of intermediality implies a dynamic category within which media constellations are in continuous motion, being reconfigured by one another, the cinematic medium becoming a playground of media interactions and meaning emerging out of the tensions, collisions, on the boundaries, in-between.

In relating intermediality to the domain of the figural, Joachim Paech's statement can serve as a premise: "the trace of the medium would become describable as a figured process or a configuration in the film" (Paech 2000). In researching the figurations of intermediality, the "figured permeability" (Peucker) between the real and the image, I am particularly interested in the figural brought in relation to the real experienced as trauma, and related to this, in the relation between the discourses of trauma and the discourses of intermediality. As trauma is a liminal experience of the real that particularly resists representation, and any attempt at authentic representation is strewn with pitfalls, I examine the role of media confluences and differences in rendering the unspeakable, or in Lyotard's terms, in figuring the infigurable. In examining the role of visual media in literary representations of traumatic experiences, Christof Decker develops the argument that "Mixed media often signal a lack of the visible and the knowable, yet by creating hybrid forms of signification, they can also be understood as highly reflexive and creative responses to this feeling of lack. The act of 'mixing,' therefore, as a semiotic as well as technological process, may have two major implications: firstly, it evokes something that is not visible and cannot be represented; secondly, it creates multi-layered, hybrid objects that are aesthetically complex and rich in connotations" (Decker 2012). In a similar way, intermedial figurations may act as

tropes of the unrepresentable within the texture of film, allowing for the presentness of the threshold experience and providing the sensory-affective engagement of the spectator.

András Jeles's "Critical Cinema"

The main reason why András Jeles has remained mostly unknown in an international context may be that his films are thematically closely related to the Hungarian socio-cultural context. He is situated at the periphery also within Hungarian cinema, because he creates extremely bizarre and disquieting parables of human existence in the not easily digestible language of cinematic experimentation. He started his career within the confines of state socialism, when experimental filmmaking was a form of cultural resistance embedded in the alternative/underground cultural movements and also a form of representational resistance, strongly defying the conventions of mainstream cinema. Hungarian experimental filmmaking does not refer to a particular mode of cinematic expression, but it embraces a plethora of artistic endeavours that have manifested mostly within the confines of the Béla Balázs Studio. As many artists coming from the field of the other arts, especially fine arts, also pursued their activity within the thriving workshop of the BBS, a strongly intermedial spirit evolved in the Studio, in line with the medial expansion of the 1970s and 1980s. Most of the artists creating in the studio were transgressing the media boundaries and exploring the conflations and tensions of media differences, such as among painting, photography and film (Dóra Maurer); film, literature and happening (Miklós Erdély, Tamás Szentjóby); painting, music, theatre and film (László feLugossy); film and video (Gábor Bódy); fine arts and theatre (Ilona Keserü, Gyula Pauer); film and theatre (András Jeles). Theatre is a determining part of Jeles's artistic career; he creates a unique theatrical discourse that deviates from the institutional system of theatre, representing alterity even in the context of alternative theatre. Two of Jeles's theatrical performances were recorded onto film within the Béla Balázs Studio: *Dramatic Events* (*Drámai események*, 1985) and *The Empire of Smiles* (*A mosoly birodalma*, 1987).

András Jeles, disciple, together with Gábor Bódy, of the great "father-figure" of Hungarian neo-avant-garde, Miklós Erdély, wished to relieve Hungarian cinema of the ideological sediments that restricted the possibilities of expression. The cinematic discourse elaborated by him radically deviates from the classical mode of narration in the Bordwellian sense, as well as from the representational templates

of both documentary and fiction. Jeles considers stylization as a way out of both documentary realism and feature film narrative. At Jeles stylization implies, in the first place, consistently playing off the forms of fiction and documentary against each other, reaching into further deconstructive gestures. His first feature film, entitled *Little Valentino* (*A kis Valentinó*, 1979) was already made in this spirit, in which the documentary-like tonality is mingled with stylized role-plays; the text written over the image signals the influence of Godard and the French New Wave cinema. The adolescent protagonist is in search of his identity against the backdrop of 1970s Hungary; the film examines the relationship between the individual and society by aligning to neither alternative of representational modes. [Fig. 1.] Jeles's next film, the highly subversive *Dream Brigade* (*Álombrigád*, 1983), which was banned, and presented to the public only after 1989, shifts the perspective from the individual to a social group, that of the working class. [Fig. 2.] It is a parody of the propaganda film of the 1950s, in which the destructive apparatus of the film penetrates into all levels, from the *mise-en-scène* through composition and structure, to the relationship of sound and image.

In the next year, Jeles made *The Annunciation* (*Angyali üdvözlet*, 1984), a screen adaptation of a Romanticist philosophical poem of Hungarian literature, Imre Madách's *The Tragedy of Man*, which constitutes yet another shift of perspective, this time to the scale of universal human existence. In both, the *Dream Brigade* and *The Annunciation,* Jeles employs non-professional actors. The four adapted scenes of the *Tragedy* are acted by children, in this way *The Annunciation* contrasts the tragic depths of existence with children's innocent naivety, resulting in a grotesque and revelatory quality of the moving image. [Figs. 3–4.] For Jeles, the child actor is a kind of mask, carrying energies other than adult actors, endowed with the capacity of expressing through concealing, in a state of oblivion. Acting requires a mode of expression that is beyond the capacity of professional adult actors, whether male or female; a Third is needed, namely the child actor, who, through "its" genderless and unprofessional acting, is capable of rendering the foreignness of existence (cf. Jeles 2006, 30).

The child's perspective and the unprocessable trauma of the Holocaust are contrasted in Jeles's next film, *Parallel Lives*, a. k. a. *Why Wasn't He There?* (*Senkiföldje*, 1993), in which Jeles eschews the iconic images of the Holocaust in favour of narrating the events prior to deportation through the diary of an adolescent girl, along with the intermedial representation conjoining literature, painting and music, as well as archival footage of the child in pain, the child facing death. Ten years passed until his next film, *Joseph and his Brothers – Scenes from*

a Peasant Bible (*József és testvérei – Jelenetek egy parasztbibliából*, 2003), which counterpoints two stories of human exposedness told in different registers: the biblical story of Joseph and his brothers narrated in form of a shadow play, as well as a prostitute's story recorded with an infrared camera, both techniques leading out of the realm of cinematic familiarity. [Figs. 5–6.]

Jeles's cinematic art deviates from generic standards and commercial uses. Whether in the recurrent theme of (individual, ethnic, social or universal) alienation or through the techniques aimed at creating non-filmlike films, Jeles is particularly motivated by the urge to depict foreignness in a revelatory way, by creating disconcerting interfaces through which film medium faces its Other. He is attracted by themes and forms that resist representation, dips the cinematic discourse into crisis and gropes its limits only to return from beyond the boundaries of cinema, allowing meaning to take shape as *event*, mostly achieved through the presence of the "otherness" of the other arts.

According to him, a particular medium can best express its own medial character and display its own materiality by getting close to the foreign matter of some other medium: "There seems to exist a peculiar tendency in art: to create forms which bring to the surface the most profound and mysterious features of the matter […]. It is a shocking paradox: if the form makes visible its own material, if the *medium* reveals its most specific qualities, then it almost leaves the sphere of its own possibilities and approaches a foreign territory, the language of another medium" (Jeles 2006, 8, translation mine).

Painting gains special significance in Jeles's films. In his view, the answer to the question what film can learn from painting lies by no means in the painterly quality or painterly composition. What links the two media, according to Jeles, is handling the material in such a way that it reveals what lies beyond the matter. Jeles regards the moving image as a means to evoke the invisible: "It is not the lighting or the handling of central perspective (etc.) that film should take over from painting – as sharply different conditions prevail in the two media in this respect – but rather the painterly mentality, the incessant vigilance, the dread and despair arising in front of the white surface, the tension between total naivety and total professional readiness, the childish guidance of the work of the hand, as well as the humble acceptance of the task that the visible image serves to evoke the invisible – in other words, that painting is a sacred activity" (Jeles 2006, 24, translation mine). The painterly allusion in the title of *The Annunciation* serves as the indication of this sacred dimension, as an urge to seek in film the invisible looming through the surface of the visible, evoking "the aesthetic regime of the

image" (Rancière, 2006) and the metaphysical view of Romanticism – with the express aim of deconstructing the metaphysical horizon of human thinking.

Literature, Painting, Music and Archival Footage: Tropes of the Unrepresentable in András Jeles's *Parallel Lives*

András Jeles's *Parallel Lives*, a. k. a. *Why Wasn't He There?* (*Senkiföldje*, 1993) is a full-length feature film, also containing archival footage. It addresses the individual and collective trauma of the Holocaust, which resists representation and transforms the attempt of mediation, whether at the level of private memory or that of artistic representation, into the crisis, the trauma of representation. In her study *Jewish Identities and Generational Perspectives*, Catherine Portuges (2012) surveys the site of Hungarian films made after 1989 addressing the Holocaust, and discusses the variety of representational modes in fictional, documentary and experimental formats (historical frescoes, transgenerational or intimate personal narratives, flashback, real-time documentary investigation, physically (re-)entering the places of memory, etc.). Jeles eschews the pitfalls of grand narratives or direct *mise en scène* by creating a "beautiful, balanced and simple" narrative (Balassa 1993) focusing on episodes of the life of a Hungarian Jewish family prior to deportation, as documented in the fictional diary of a thirteen-year-old girl. [Figs. 7–8.]

Whereas Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985) focuses on the *Endlösung*, Jeles turns the attention towards the antecedents. The film represents the process of disintegration of family and personality, of family members becoming foreigners in their home. It follows how hysteria and compulsive neurosis creep up on the family, in genre episodes presented through the focalization of the fallible perspective of the child, through the perception of the diary which documents two years' events, from 1942 to 1944. The film faces the crisis of representation by an awareness of unrepresentability: the voice-over is that of the adolescent girl, Éva Münzer, who is also the protagonist of the story, a possible Hungarian Anne Frank, but who conveys a deep sense of disintegration as what is going on around her is beyond comprehension. From this perspective, it is the personal episodes and objects, the birthday party, the deportation of the family of Éva's cousin, the red bicycle and its absent owner, the fate of Uncle Münzer's last coat, that get to the fore. [Figs. 9–10.] The last episode of the film shows Éva being raped by a gendarme; then the diary stops, the story does not continue.

Needless to mention the profound interconnectedness of child and cinema or the role of children as the most vulnerable protagonists in various representations of the Holocaust: *Somewhere in Europe* (*Valahol Európában*, Géza von Radványi, 1947), *Fateless* (*Sorstalanság*, Lajos Koltai, 2005), *Schindler's List* (Steven Spielberg, 1993) attest to the immediacy, intimacy and "aural richness" (Lebeau 2008, 16) that the figure of the child confers on the moving image. The child is the figure that stands for "the claims of the moving pictures to document the spontaneity and immediacy of 'life' itself" (Lebeau 2008, 13). In Jeles's cinema, the child before the camera is situated in-between the anthropological and the artistic sense of playing, simultaneously inside and outside, standing for the artistic truth that "emerges into the unconcealedness of its being" in the Heideggerian sense (Heidegger 2001, 35).

"I don't understand," the restrained voice-over of the child repeats again and again. In contrast, the camera does: the intruding, lurking, ubiquitous camera performs the gaze of the power. Voice and image act as dissonant agents, playing off one against the other. While Éva's diary documents the endangered intimacy of existence, the voyeur camera, lurking from beyond doors and curtains, infecting private sphere and interpersonal relations, records the gradual degradation and implosion of the family, reinforcing the feeling that there is nowhere to escape. The tension between the limited knowledge conveyed by the voice-over and the omniscience of the camera dramatizes the unresolvable dissonance between childhood intimacy and the irreversibility of destruction.

In rendering ultimate reality which is, on its own, inherently unrepresentable, infigurable, the film calls upon the other arts, systematically incorporating a set of literary, painterly and musical allusions that act as *intermedial figurations* in the texture of the film, making it dense and porous at the same time, being involved in the dynamics of simultaneously concealing and revealing the dimensions of the real. The film carries out the "gesturing toward the real" by inviting the representational modes of other arts. It has to be mentioned from the outset that the literary, painterly and musical references to Goethe, Dickens, Caspar David Friedrich, and Mozart, Schubert and Wagner respectively, all belong to the classical tradition of the Enlightenment and Romanticism, several of which revolve around the exposedness, suffering and death of children. Thus, one of the interpreters of the film, Gábor Schein (2004) is right when he claims that there is an implied intertextual reference to the lines in Rilke's *Duino Elegies* that point at the profoundly unsettling issue of who is responsible for the death of children: "Who will depict a child just as it stands? – place it / within its constellation, give it the measure of distance / into

its hand? Who make the death of children / out of grey bread, which hardens like a stone, / or place it in the cherry mouth as it were the core / of a shiny apple? Murderers are / easy to fathom. Only this: to take on death / completely, before even life begins, / contain it lightly and without complaining, / bereaves description." The evoked artistic references seem to emerge from the aesthetic experience of the child protagonist herself, who insulates bare reality and, as a defence mechanism, compensates for the loss experienced in life with the gain of imagination. Beyond this, the employment of classical cultural heritage reveals an awareness of the cultural determinedness of experience, of the fact that the communicability of experience is culturally coded, depending upon and carried by prior cultural images. In this way, Jeles's film contrasts a culturally aestheticized view of the child in pain, the child in death with the ultimate, inescapable and incommensurable reality. Folding upon one another, the immediacy of the real and the hypermediated experience of artistic rendition also address the working of cultural memory, the consubstantiality of (inter)mediality and the mediatedness of memories, as well as the inertia of art in the face of the unpardonable sins of humanity.

In parallel with writing her diary, Éva is reading *David Copperfield*. The protagonist of Dickens's novel steps out of the book, gets animated by the girl's imagination and enters Éva's life as an alter ego or an imaginary friend with whom Éva shares her destiny. Dickens's book starts with the following sentence, which Éva quotes in her diary: "Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show." The literary Bildungsroman brings proof of David Copperfield's becoming, indeed, the hero of his own life; this chance, however, is not given to Éva, whose fate recontextualizes literature and at the same time reconsiders its relation with reality. The literary figure of David Copperfield enters the diegesis of the film and becomes embodied as a cinematic figure, standing for a similar destiny of exposedness to the atrocities of the adult world. The parallel (also indicated by the title of the film, *Parallel Lives*) is made evident in the scene of killing a pig, when the two children are watching helplessly how the adults take pleasure in the brutal – otherwise routine – activity. The memorable literary scene of David Copperfield's being beaten by Mr Murdstone is also embedded in the film, together with a number of other scenes in which Éva is also present, thus she becomes a *witness* of David Copperfield's fate. Conversely, the literary figure also turns into a witness of Éva's fate. [Figs. 11–12.]

The incorporated literary scenes, simultaneously implying medial difference and contextual analogy, illuminate a non-place, a heterotopia in the diegesis of

the film, and serve as an intermedial *mise en abyme* "in which we see not just an 'inscription' of one medium into another, but a more complex 'trans-figuration' taking place, in the process of which one medium is transposed as a 'figure' into the other, also acting as a figure of 'in-betweenness' that reflects on both the media involved in this process" (Pethő 2011, 4). The juxtaposition of fiction and reality in the figures of David Copperfield and Éva Münzer reverberates with the profoundly unsettling affirmation that Jean-Paul Sartre formulated after World War II: "The most beautiful book in the world will not save a child from pain" (Sartre 1970, 233). Vicky Lebeau, in her volume *Childhood and Cinema*, comments on this passage as follows: "What does it mean to measure the value of literature against the life and death of a child? Part of the significance of Sartre's intervention is that, while it casts the child's body – in pain, in death – as a type of limit to an aesthetic committed to acts of social transformation, it is also speaking out of a long tradition in thinking about the power of representation as, precisely, transformative of pain (a tradition usually derived from Aristotle's well-known commentary on our delight in the realistic depiction of objects that it would be painful to see)" (Lebeau 2008, 136).

In the light of the close connection between Jeles's filmmaking practice and the art of painting briefly outlined above, *Parallel Lives* also evokes the presence of painting in rendering the unspeakable. The close-ups of house interiors suggesting confinedness are contrasted with the total of the openness of the sea in a manner that evokes Caspar David Friedrich's painterly universe and metaphysical-existential horizon. I am now referring to one single *tableau vivant*, namely a symbolic setting paraphrasing Caspar David Friedrich's *Two Men by the Sea at Moonrise* (1817), in which Éva, the narrator-protagonist, and Dickens's hero can be seen together at the seaside. [Figs. 13–14.] Brigitte Peucker regards *tableau vivant* moments in film as moments of "intensified intermediality" (2007, 26). According to Ágnes Pethő, "the *tableau* form confers the filmic discourse a degree of constructedness and aestheticism that often emerges in a tense interplay with unsettling subject matters" (2014, 54); the *tableau vivant* performs the "reconnection to a universal cultural heritage of 'grand images'" (2014, 67). The spectacle turning into vision, the mystical encounter of sky and water, the perspective running into the infinite, the figures standing with their back being immersed in the spectacle of nature, the finite face to face with the infinite – all these idiosyncratic elements of Friedrich's painting are evoked in the cinematic *tableau*, which, however, deconstructs the painterly universe by erasing the mystical light and leaving only the huge sea and the cloudy horizon, while the

children are throwing pebbles into the water and Éva's voice-over says: "I am afraid of the sea. It is so cruel. I saw how it dealt roughly with some of those from among us." The substitution of the painterly figures with children further enlarges the incommensurability and deepens the exposedness of human existence in the face of universal foreignness. Jeles proves to be profoundly disillusioned with the metaphysical construction of Western culture and civilization.

Jeles's film eschews the pitfalls of the visual iconography of the Holocaust and creates a more penetrating intermedial playground, folding the layers of literature, music and painting upon one another within the cinematic medium, allowing for the mediation of liminal experience through the intermedial figurations discussed above. Besides, the film also contains archival footage interweaving the narrative thread with documentary images. The archival footage, albeit representing a return to the real, functions rather as *figuration* within the texture of the film narrative. In this sense, the archival footage can be viewed not as a set of images evoking the real, constituting some kind of transparent representation within the body of film, but rather as an alternative modality of mediation, creating productive tension and interaction between two distinct sets of moving images. Indexical archival footage embedded into feature film, as an ontological rupture, creates a dynamic structure and inscribes a sense of difference into spectatorial experience. Its presence as *figuration* may serve as meditation upon time and history, activating in the spectator the documentary consciousness in the sense Vivian Sobchack understands the term, that is, "a particular mode of embodied and ethical spectatorship that informs and transforms the space of the irreal into the space of the real" (Sobchack 2004, 261). Jeles lifts into the narrative particular segments of the Nazi propaganda film on the emptying of the Warsaw ghetto in 1943, in which many children can be seen among those embarked onto trucks to be deported.

Jeles manipulates the archival material, letting the images flow under the scrutiny of a magnifying lens (connecting back to Éva's examining a painting with a magnifying lens and to the images of killing a pig also presented through its filter) [Figs. 15–16], turning the faceless mass into individual faces, thus turning history into a dossier that needs to be reconsidered and the effacing mechanism of historical memory into personal involvement. The most emblematic moment of this documentary material is the dancing of a small crippled boy in front of the soldiers. The haunting indexical presence of children reconnects to the narrative thread of the film and also establishes an intertextual connection with those films that also draw upon the very same Nazi propaganda film. Such are Alain Resnais's *Night and Fog* (1956), which presents for the first time the image of the small

boy raising his hands at gunpoint, as well as Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* (1966), which takes over this photographic image and inserts it into its highly unsettling intermedial texture. [Figs. 17–18.] As Vicky Lebeau (2008, 139) comments: "Captured again by *Persona*, the photograph becomes a means to represent the precedence, or imposition of memory over lived time: the (still) life that rushes back in to interrupt our moments of being, registering the irruption of personal as well as historical memory."

As a memento, the archival footage condenses the future of the narrated time, which is the past evoked on the film reel. This uncanny "future-in-the-past" turned into presence, the slow, iterative motion of people on the documentary recordings evoked in the closure of the film bitterly counterpointed by the grandeur of the accompanying music, Pamina and Papageno's duet from the first act of Mozart's *Zauberflöte*, whose story portrays the education of mankind, progressing from chaos through religion and reason, ultimately to make "the Earth a heavenly kingdom, and mortals like gods," provide a cathartic closure that reveals a total disillusionment with the metaphysical and enlightened values and "anthropology of hope" (Balassa 1993) of Western civilization. The closure of *Parallel Lives* universalizes deportation into a parable of human existence. Beyond condensing the narrative and reinforcing the affective quality of cinematic experience, the intermedial occurrences act in the Heideggerian sense of *Ereignis*, *Er-eignis*, that is, in the sense of appropriation, of making one's own, providing medial irruptions that interrupt one's moments of being, and also revelative moments that make one feel the grip of human existence, creating the premises of an embodied spectatorship.

Conclusions

Jeles's *Parallel Lives* is a cinematic attempt at medially performing the unspeakable. The film figures the infigurable, on the one hand, through the employment of the child's perspective, turning the figure of the child into an emblem of the exposedness of human existence, and through the employment of a set of classical artistic references, on the other hand. Jeles touches upon the sphere of the unrepresentable through a deconstruction of the metaphysical and rational construction of human civilization evoked in the classical cultural references, which perform the working of cultural memory, but perhaps more significantly, point at the impotence of art and aesthetics in the face of inhumanity. Ultimately, Jeles's film stages the incomprehensibility of the dual nature of

Western civilization built on the heritage of Enlightenment and Romanticism, the incommensurability of the cohabitation – of the "parallel lives" – of the two faces of human culture, the scale of inhumanity and the aesthetic regime of culture.

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DE GRUYTER OPEN

Acta Univ. Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies, 11 (2015) 143–158

DOI: 10.1515/ausfm-2015-0020

Derek Jarman's Allegories of Spectacle: Inter-Artistic Embodiment

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Abstract. Derek Jarman was a multifaceted artist whose intermedial versatility reinforces a strong authorial discourse. He constructs an immersive allegorical world of hybrid art where different layers of cinematic, theatrical and painterly materials come together to convey a lyrical form and express a powerful ideological message. In *Caravaggio* (1986) and *Edward II* (1991), Jarman approaches two European historical figures from two different but concomitant perspectives. In *Caravaggio*, through the use of *tableaux* of abstract meaning and by focusing on the detailing of the models' poses, Jarman re-enacts the allegorical spirit of Caravaggio's paintings through entirely cinematic resources. Edward II was a king, and as a statesman he possessed a certain dose of showmanship. In this film Jarman reconstructs the theatrical basis of Christopher Marlowe's Elizabethan play bringing it up to date in a successfully abstract approach to the musical stage. In this article, I intend to conjoin the practice of allegory in film with certain notions of existential phenomenology as advocated by Vivian Sobchack and Laura U. Marks, in order to address the relationship between the corporeality of the film and the lived bodies of the spectators. In this context, the allegory is a means to convey intradiegetically the *sense-ability* at play in the cinematic experience, reinforcing the textural and sensual nature of both film and viewer, which, in turn, is also materially enhanced in the film proper, touching the spectator in a supplementary fashion. The two corporealities favour an inter-artistic immersion achieved through coenaesthesia.

Keywords: cinematic allegories, inter-artistic spectacle, embodiment, immersive, intermediality, Derek Jarman.

The Language of Allegory

According to Craig Owens (1980), contemporary art is naturally hybrid, therefore prone to an allegorical dimension, as allegory itself causes the miscegenation of media and stylistic categories: "The allegorical work is synthetic; it crosses aesthetic boundaries" (Owens 1980, 75). In this light, allegory has a meta-textual

nature and in it different types of artworks, or texts, are intrinsically connected: "In allegorical structure, then, one text is read through another, however fragmentary, intermittent, or chaotic their relationship may be; the paradigm for the allegorical work is thus the palimpsest" (Owens, 69). In post-modernity, allegory has been reinvented as intermediality.

Derek Jarman was a specifically multifaceted artist, whose versatility comes across in his cinematic *oeuvre* in favour of a very marked authorial discourse, in spite of his defence of collective creation. He was a painter, a theatre and film designer, a writer, a performance artist (committed to the production of happenings), and, of course, a film director. All of this artistic background tightly imbues his films, resulting in an allegorical world where the arts are fused together in a lyrical form that conveys an ideological message.

Never prone to figurative painting, Jarman adopted the allegorical format from very early in his career. As a filmmaker, he chose to ignore the storytelling tradition of the commercial cinema. Indeed, theorists agree that linear narrative was not his forte: "Where there is narrative it is often temporally disjointed and sophisticated, combining several phases, viewpoints and character sets" (Wollen 1996, 15). In other words, Jarman makes a lyrical use of narrative contents, ignoring the story in favour of the story*telling*, thus indirectly exposing the technique of creative production. In his works, narrative always takes second place to the visual art and the theatrical design with the consequence of a notorious degree of abstraction (Watson 1996, 34). Jarman had a problem with creating narrative dialogue, which is why he either resorted to previously written material (such as Christopher Marlowe's play on Edward II) or substituted it for interior monologues whenever possible. In the latter case, the "loosely associative and poetic patterns of thought" (Watson 1996, 37) reinforce the allegorical dimension of his films.[1]

In spite of their allegorical nature, Jarman's films are populated with human characters. According to Angus Fletcher (2012), the two possibilities of narrative agency in allegories are personifications of abstract ideas and real historical figures. In the two films I propose to analyze here (*Caravaggio*, 1986, and *Edward II,* 1991), the protagonists belong to the latter category. As in all allegories, their psychological depth is sacrificed in favour of gesture and iconography. They serve a higher purpose than that of being either heroes or villains. Plus, they inhabit a theatrical world.

As a matter of fact, the films are structured in *tableaux,* instead of scenes. Therefore, the narrative segments are not in direct temporal or spatial connection

1 In some cases, his use of celebratory camp style further denaturalizes his films.

to one another and the action is largely metaphorical. In general, an allegory is an opus with two simultaneous meanings: a metaphorical sense is inscribed underneath a more literal one which is directly connected with the actions of the characters and the events of the plot (Xavier 1999). In Jarman's case, the opposite is also true: the abstraction of the whole narrative design is reinforced when we realize that the *tableaux* may depict past, present or future events in relation to the *fabula*, and that, furthermore, they may also convey fantasies (usually of a sexual nature), nightmares, lurid dreams, memories and other truly Jungian psychological material of which Jarman was so fond. According to Joel Fineman (1981), the structural success of an allegory is dependent upon the articulation of time and space within its own confines as [physical] *text*.[2] Moreover, an allegory appeals to the desire of the spectator in two different but concurrent ways. On the one hand, an allegorical text needs to be unclear so as to trigger a cognitive activity of spectatorial decoding that keeps the interest awake and assures the understanding of the underlying encrypted message (Fletcher 2012).[3] On the other hand, the desire of interpretation is guaranteed by the running metaphor, since an allegory is really a string of metaphors contributing to the same objective: the transmission of an idea (Fineman 1981, 45).

Besides the overall fragmentary style and scattered narrative, Jarman also used textured images in what Michael O'Pray (1996, 65) considers to be an obvious link to his painterly activity. In *Caravaggio* (1986), which is a straightforward allegory of creation and where the *tableaux* contain actual *tableaux vivants,* this is most obvious. "For Jarman, the artist was always identified with this kind of visionary whose magic was equivalent to the procedures of art itself. Art was alchemy" (O'Pray 1996, 69). However, the same can be noted in *Edward II*, where the art world gives way to an eminently political universe. Edward II is portrayed, by Jarman, as an art enthusiast and the backstage of politics is conveyed as a web of machinations for the benefit of a public: the lords and the nation at large. The king is no less involved in a dialectical relationship with spectators than the painter Caravaggio; he is no less on display and his deeds are no less under scrutiny than his more artistic counterpart's. This is why I prefer to

2 "The text presents us with a self-contained structure of relations. In which elements are manipulated as in a game and that therefore there is neither need nor reason to adduce any extra-literary explanation or justification at all for the particular arrangements that the structurality of the texts allow us to observe" (Fineman 1981, 40).

3 "Enigma, and not always decipherable enigma, appears to be allegory's most cherished function […]. Since the basic symbolism is highly articulated, he can increase the enigma with even private obscurities, while the allegory as a whole will not thereby disintegrate into nonsense" (Fletcher 2012, 72).

designate both films as "allegories of spectacle." I contend that by approaching such subjects in a multilayered and multifaceted artistic form, Jarman is stressing both the inner and the outer spectacle in his films (intra and extradiegetic); he is formulating a theory of cinema as a film body through the body of the film which represents its characters in a very corporeal way.

The Body as a Textured Substance

Both *Caravaggio* and *Edward II* are strongly embodied allegories in that they cause the spectator to think upon and make meaning of the diegetic world perceived on screen, but do so along doubly corporeal lines that involve the spectator himself/herself. All films trigger our spectatorial "carnal thoughts," as Vivian Sobchack calls them (2004). We think and feel with our body, and all of its five senses and proprioceptive abilities, adhering to the films' figurative dimension (their narrative and characters) through a mimetic sympathy that involves as much conscious attention as it does bodily tension (Sobchack 2004, 76). This way the spectator feels his/her body more, reacting in kind to what he/she is shown on screen. However, in the case of *Caravaggio* and *Edward II,* a third condition is applicable: the corporeality of the people and things perceived on screen is even more sentient, sensual and sensible than usual. According to Sobchak, films which appeal to our sensorium constitute the true essence of cinema. In the two aforementioned films this is partially achieved through the use of the diegetic bodies, thus reinforcing our spectatorial "sense-ability" during the cinematic experience.

Intradiegetically, Jarman's films are all about the body, mostly the male physique, but not only. Magdalena's corpse in *Caravaggio* (Tilda Swinton) is made relevant by the way it is transformed into a work of art. Indeed, Lena's drowned body is tended over, her feet washed (in a recurrent gesture of cleansing and purification), her hair brushed by the diegetic painter himself. She looks radiant and not the ugly blown corpse a filthy river might have regurgitated. [Fig. 1.] She is an idea: death, as the ultimate state of perfection. The same can be said of the body of the painter Caravaggio himself (Nigel Terry) when he is associated with the image of Christ, sacrificed in the altar of the philistines' ignorance. His body is poised in abandonment, as he is removed from the cross, in one of the numerous *tableaux vivants* that permeate this film. [Fig. 2.] He too, is not a sexual figure but a thing of beauty and the transmitter of a message. In fact, on several occasions the characters look directly at the camera, therefore attaining, by default, the cinematic spectator on the other side. The eyes of the characters

are, simultaneously, imparting the message of the overriding importance of the body and cancelling out their own import in the diegesis, thus ratifying their status as abstractions. [Fig. 6.]

In *Caravaggio,* the models' bodies and those of the main characters reproduce intradiegetically the texture of art itself. In this perspective, the aforementioned Lena's drowned corpse discloses the director's technique in this film: the body as God's gift to the artist, a material that he/she can shape according to his/her own designs in order to create beauty. In other words, the human body is art in a raw state, totally dependent on the creator's skills to become all that it can be.

Caravaggio's paintings are nowadays renowned for the perfection with which they depict human figures. The diegetic paintings, however, that the character Caravaggio is shown painting in the film are, although still works in progress, far less perfect than the models he is seen using as visual references. [Fig. 3.] The latter not only are for the most part half naked, but they are also framed in a manner that sensually captivates the spectator. The camera does not limit itself to capturing them frontally, as you would expect in a painting (and as the perception of the scene as a *tableau vivant* actually requires); it also moves laterally behind them, surreptitiously further stressing the corporeality implied. [Fig. 4.] As a matter of fact, this prevents the spectator from seeing the whole diegetic group of people, causing him/her to observe only details of their bodies, which is what the haptic visuality proposed by Laura U. Marks (2002, 3) actually does. Metaphorically, the film is depicting our erotic relationship with some cinematic objects, considering that we interchange a dominant voyeuristic look upon the scene with a more tactile and intimate perception of it. [Figs. 3–4.] In the situations where the bodies seen in *Caravaggio* do not belong to paid models in rigid poses, the male torso is often bare and frequently sweaty as a result of physical activities (sex, fighting). Beside the clearly intended erotic quality, these scenes also emphasize the textural nature of the flesh and human skin in a film about painting. The beads of perspiration which abundantly trickle down the characters' bodies are a sort of dye, the equivalent to the pigment used on the artist's canvas, and they also *represent* the sort of material surface detail of the film body which Marks calls the skin of the film (2002).

In *Caravaggio,* the establishing shots are banished altogether: the *tableaux* either start with a corporeal detail (such as the feet of the young Caravaggio being washed clean by the cardinal Del Monte) or with several close shots unrelated to the surroundings. Indeed, the film itself opens with such a shot: a close up of the old Caravaggio's ailing and worn face. The scars on his cheeks look like tears

that drip down some Christ image on an altar. The parallelism between religion and art is a motif of the entire film as befits an allegory of creation. Because *Caravaggio* is explicitly a film about art, it cannot be formally minimalist from beginning to end. The richness of painting calls for a variety of wardrobes and props, as well as sets that are not entirely devoid of dressing. Jarman opts for some semblance of the real, even when the set is, occasionally, stripped of many of its elements. However, one or two exceptions can be observed. For instance, the tavern in which Caravaggio meets Ranuccio (Sean Bean) is a bare greyish cubicle with some men sitting on a few tables. No other decoration is needed here - unlike the scenes that take place in Caravaggio's painting studio – because this is not a metaphor for life and art, and does not contain a representation of a body (an artwork) being inscribed within another (the canvas/the film). [Figs. 7–8.]

However, in order to acquire the status of art, all creations need spectators. In *Caravaggio*, permanent onlookers accomplish this task. Whenever Caravaggio paints, someone watches: Lena sees him painting Ranuccio; Del Monte observes the painting of a composite canvas; the painter himself contemplates his own painting; and there is, of course, the ever present Jerusaleme. On a basic level, this symbolizes the adoration that all sacred figures and things are prone to, which is ironical since the historical Caravaggio was, in fact, a wild man and led a wanton life. Nevertheless, Michel Foucault, in an article about Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1966), pointed to a more complex level of spectatorship whereby the gaze of the characters (the figures) depicted not only calls our attention to the off-screen space of the diegetic situation, but also makes us, onlookers of the artwork feel watched ourselves.

In *Edward II*, an openly gay opus about a homosexual monarch, the male body is not so undressed and not so textural with sweat or other fluids (such as blood), even though the first scene presents, unabashedly, a male couple of sailors having sex on a bed. In *Edward II*, the body that matters the most is the political body, i.e. the realm, not the physical body as raw material for the artist. Still, both things cannot be entirely separated and the body remains the key. For instance, the king's lover and favourite, Piers Gaveston (Andrew Tiernan), prances provocatively on the throne in the nude. [Fig. 9.] His bareness, framed in a manner as not to expose his sexual organs, reveals him as a carnal object, but more importantly, as a base creature (here he crouches and clicks his tongue like an animal; later on, after having been forcibly exiled, he howls under heavy rain like a beast). His pose is symbolic of his status in the realm: a predator unbecoming the high society he has entered as favourite of the king.

In *Edward II,* the textural pattern has mostly been applied to the sets, stripped to their minimum significant objects: a bow and an arrow to portray a shooting gallery; a table to indicate a dining room or an office; a bed to signify a bedroom; the throne to represent the state room; and so on. It is up to the human figures that inhabit these spaces to make them credible as this or that and to elevate the sets out of their minimalism. Given this improbable and abstract geography, in many scenes it is not even possible to know for certain whether the action is diegetically taking place indoors or outdoors, as all the film was shot in studio. [Fig. 10.] The ceilings are never seen, the doors are simply large openings, the windows are virtually inexistent and the walls and floors are rugged as badly applied plaster (painted in a very dark shade). The space is as empty and abstract as it can be, the major signifiers being the bodies that inhabit it. These acquire an added spatial importance as set dressing, helping to flesh out the *tableaux*. Concomitantly, their own corporeality is reinforced as on par with the ruggedness of the walls.

Cinematic Body as Spectacle

The intradiegetic textures – the bodies on screen – always draw our attention to the texture of the cinematic materials as such, the film as body. In general, Vivian Sobchack claims that each film is an expressive entity that can be perceived by the spectator in its literal (or material) dimension, regardless of the nature of the images seen and the sounds heard. The bodies of the characters are inscribed in the body of the film, but the film's body itself is what triggers "our primary engagement [...] with the senses and sensibility of materiality itself" (2004, 65). Therefore, in our perception, the film's cinematic texture can be said to precede the film's diegetic textures. According to Laura U. Marks (2002, 8), if our look merely scrutinizes the surface of the film, instead of plunging into its depths (where the diegetic universe is situated), we discern texture rather than form. This corresponds to a haptic caress which, in turn, brings about an added sensuality to our film viewing activity. Sobchack (2004) argues for a reciprocal corporeality: the film diegesis (the metaphorical) and the film as matter (the literal) are intertwined in our appreciation of them.[4] Marks contends that the spectatorial involvement with the film is never psychological, always sensible; however Sobchack claims that the brain is also part of the body, therefore there is no unembodied perceptive

4 For all purposes, according to this author, there are three levels of reversibility in the cinematic experience: the bodies on-screen, the bodies off-screen (i.e. the spectator) and the screen as a body (i.e. the film) (Sobchack 2004, 67).

activity in cinema viewing (2004, 73). Without this important predication the allegories would not be compatible with the inter-artistic embodiment I strongly advocate in this article.

As it is, the discourse on cinema (as art and medium) transmitted by *Caravaggio* and *Edward II* is reinforced. These films depict, both in their story and their tissue, the question of the intrinsically corporeal nature of cinema. As a result, the human bodies of the characters, through the films' respective bodies, point yet to another body: Jarman's filmic *oeuvre* as an intermedial approach to the Seventh Art.

Caravaggio's main credits reveal a brush painting a canvas black, over and over again. We hear the sound of the large brush touching the canvas (as we do later on, in several *tableaux* where the character Caravaggio is seen painting). The production of the pigments by the mute servant Jerusaleme follows the same auditory pattern. We hear the powders being ground in the mortar and spread out with a knife on a stone. The film presents us with the tools of the intradiegetic art in question (painting) as itself is being laid out for us as Jarman's piece (cinema). The brush, the canvas and the pigments metonymically represent painting as an activity. [Fig. 5.] However, the physical bodies of the people represented and the intensification of the spectator's senses through the pictorial and aural textures connoted with Caravaggio's profession (which allow us to be *touched* by the film and *involved* in a visual atmosphere) are what actually transform painting into art. *Caravaggio* is an allegory of art as requiring a commitment and sacrifices beyond imagination. This is also why the film is punctuated by a lyrical inner voice formed by all Caravaggio's thoughts and remembrances. He transcends his low life beginnings, base human sexual inclinations and violent temperament through the life of the spirit. His body of work (indeed his *oeuvre*) is the materialization of his inner poet self; all the above mentioned visual and auditory textures only reinforce what the young Caravaggio mentioned himself: that he was an object of art ("*oggeto d'arte*"), as a male prostitute in his younger years, as well as a major artist, in his later ones.

Admittedly, the narrative condensation, so common in allegories, is here taken to artistic extremes. In *Caravaggio*, the *tableaux* are presented out of chronological order (of events). The film starts with the inner thoughts (voice-over) of a dying Caravaggio. As he lies in bed, half-conscious, his remembrances and fantasies are given free rein; it is only through his mind that he continues to exist as a creator. His body is motionless, but he acts as a narrator of the events that he represents, in a psychic patina more lyrical than the actual truth. His dialogue in the flashback scenes he musters is not as poetic, neither is it so full of free associations as the

text he intones in his dying oratory. The nature of his invocation is uncertain, contributing to make time itself unreliable and baffling. As he recites his thoughts, the sounds of his surrounding reality impose themselves on us.

Very near the beginning of the film, the inner voice of the dying character Caravaggio links three different life periods in only one memory time: we watch a scene that illustrates how Jerusaleme came to be part of the painter's life, as a mute and inept peasant boy sold by his own family; a *tableau* where Jersusaleme is already grown up, lying next to a goat, a symbolic representation of the shepherd he was meant to be and never was; finally, a film segment where Caravaggio is tended upon by Jerusaleme, who acts like a pet who loves his master. All the while, Caravaggio is talking about his lost love, a boy by the name of Pasqualone, who has nothing to do with what we are watching. The uncertain nature of time, already an intrinsic part of all allegories, is thus made more uncertain by the use of the voice-over. Further down the film, these ruminations of a feverish mind tend to mix past and present, reality and imagination, therefore stressing the illusory nature of art in general and Jarman's film, in particular. Ironically, Caravaggio's self-questioning remark – "All art is against lived experience. How can you compare flesh and blood with oil and ground pigment?" – is contradicted by the film itself through the sensual use of its corporeality. Indeed, the pigments are framed, more than once, in extreme close up, and human blood, including the artist's (when he is wounded during a brawl with knives), is seen on several occasions. Art is no less corporeal than the lived body of humanity.

In *Caravaggio,* time is even made more obscure by the recurrent darkness of the image. The *chiaroscuro* lighting is a direct manifestation of the painter's own technique of tenebrism (a mixture of naturalism with a theatrical propensity) and, therefore, engulfs the spectator in the world of the paintings, making the viewer part of the picture viewed, in more senses than one. In fact, the spectator feels himself/herself both part of Caravaggio's canvases and Jarman's film. When, occasionally, some character looks directly at the camera, as do Lena and Jerusaleme, we feel looked upon, not only as film spectators but also as part of a painting, which reinforces the spectacular nature of art. Indeed, the young painter Caravaggio (Dexter Fletcher) is fully aware of the necessary existence of an audience: "I raise this fragile glass and drink to you, my audience". This is the ultimate manifestation of the apparatus in this film. However, the demystification of reality also takes place intradiegetically. [Fig. 7–8.] In one particular instance, the adult Caravaggio watches a street fight between Ranuccio and one of his own friends, beaten to a pulp. The painter is framed in close-up, looking on,

mesmerized by the bloody spectacle, which the film viewer has the opportunity to watch as a metaphorical projection of silhouettes on a white wall. Similarly, the spectator observes all along the film the painter's fight with his own art through the *de-formation* of matter on a canvas.

In *Edward II*, the signs of power are the most important corporeal elements: the throne, the sword, the crown, several types of arms, different uniforms. These are the allegorical emblems that relate to a common destiny and the idea of nation/realm. The film is a discourse on the corrupting nature of power and the prejudices of the majority borne upon different individuals on the grounds of the so-called greater good, but the notion of spectacle is very much present. All political activities imply a measure of putting on a show, as queen Isabella (Tilda Swinton) clearly demonstrates when, taking up arms against her husband, king Edward, she resorts to the media for popularity and validation of an unlawful act (the deposition of a monarch). Edward II himself (Steven Waddington), seeking support for his cause outside the nobility, turns to the people (portrayed as queer activists). Thus, a cry for help is turned into a public demonstration complete with slogans, posters and cameras taking snapshots.

Art is not unrelated to this showmanship. Indeed, very early in the film Gaveston says of Edward: "Music and poetry are his delight. / Sweet speeches, comedies, pleasing shows." The prince is here described as someone who has an artistic propensity and, indeed, several spectacles are seen taking place at court: a man with a python and a golden laurel crown shows off his muscles (which can also be interpreted as an imaginary action); a poet recites an Italian piece in a session attended only by the king and Gaveston (and which takes place in a room with several seats facing the orator). More importantly, it is the intermedial nature of some other spectacles in which Edward himself takes part that calls attention to the analogy intended by Jarman: (a) two men dancing a modern ballet that emulates Edward and Gaveston's relationship (the crosscutting between the dance, which ends in a kiss, parallels Edward kissing Gaveston on the throne); (b) a blonde woman (Annie Lennox) sings a Cole Porter song ("Every time we say goodbye I die a little") involved in a slightly artificial mist while Edward and Gaveston dance alone in a large room lighted by a strong theatrical follow spot (the pair and the singer are all in the same imaginary space and the men actually look at her in the end) [Figs. 11–12]; (c) a female string quartet brought together by Edward to celebrate Gaveston's return from exile (the classical music turns into something lighter as the two men dance once more, this time in a clownish tango mockery, again illuminated by follow spots).

Music is to the political allegory of *Edward II* what painting is to the authorial allegory of *Caravaggio*. Both art media are used to reinforce a significance that is intrinsically cinematic and that takes place at the surface of the film. As I continue to develop the spectacular nature of *Edward II*, I will refer to many intentional examples of "pro-haptic properties" (Marks 2002), which are also a manifestation of the cinematic apparatus *per se* and a disclosure of the whole narrative as artifice.

In *Edward II,* colour is important, but it is almost entirely dependent on the lighting, which is pointed directly at the characters through the use of key lights placed higher or lower than the human eyes, giving the *tableaux* a strong theatrical impression. The characters seem to be always on a stage, as public figures usually are. Therefore, the bareness of the sets not only stresses the allegory, but also reinforces the spectacular nature of the film as an ode to spectacle, far beyond the political world it depicts. While part of the image is deliberately kept in darkness, making the background often unnoticeable, the rest is lighted by strong projectors, resulting in a very marked contrast. Indeed, *Edward II* is fraught with flares, most of them induced by diegetic flashlights. The use of strong key lights strategically placed also creates huge shadows, reminiscent of German Expressionism, and the appearance of silhouettes points to the Oriental shadow theatres that constitute the archaeological origins of cinema. [Fig. 14.] Blue and red filtered shots transform characters and spaces in one-dimensional images endowed with strong symbolic modulations. Thus is the lighting made evident as an artistic *praxis* and a tool with which to work the texture of the film, calling to attention its artificial cinematic nature.

In *Edward II*, the disclosure of the apparatus points to a spatial duality: the "there" of the screen, where the film evolves; and the "here" of the audience, where the film is watched (and, therefore, validated as such). In phenomenological terms, this is evidence of corporeal reversibility. The off-screen space is the *locus* of the viewer and that is why, in this film, the spectator is also of the utmost importance. In fact, early cinema rose out of vaudeville and its sensorial display, as did the musical comedy. Significantly, a twofold act of communication is required for such entertainment convention to work: the film and the audience must interact with each other.[5] At a sensorial level that is exactly what Jarman means to accomplish.

Edward II is filled with shot/reverse shot framings, constantly opposing (and, simultaneously, joining) the two sides of space. For instance, when Gaveston is

5 In her canonical book about musical, Jane Feuer (1982) states that in no other type of musical was the communication with the audience so emulated as in the backstage musical, which had intradiegetical spectators intercut with the performers acting on stage.

exiled, by order of Edward, he is symbolically escorted out of the country by the clergy. First we see him with his back to the camera, walking past the priests who spit on him from either side of the road; next we see him being spat upon as he walks towards the camera, face to us, until he reaches the end of the road. By the use of the reverse shot the spectator is partly transformed into spectacle and vice-versa. This has obvious implications in how the viewers of Jarman's film engage in what they are watching. They are attracted as the audience of a musical film, of which *Edward II* obviously carries the marks, by the use of their sensations and emotions. However, by osmosis, they also feel spat upon, which is not a physically comfortable feeling.

Immersive Allegorical Intermediality

The allegory employed by Jarman is capable of incorporating emblems, endowed with a very strict pre-existing meaning, as well as symbols, where all the free association of ideas is concentrated. In corporeal terms, the hybridization of arts, typical of intermediality, is responsible for what can be seen as a paradox: a sparse and abstract diegetic universe coexists with a rich and all-encompassing viewer immersion.

Caravaggio and *Edward II* are able to combine the bareness of the sets with the opulence of the texture, in part because the films are enriched by other media and other arts. The deliberate mixture of times and realities turns each and every single gesture and creative action depicted in the films into a sign to be decoded by the spectator. Thus begins the plunge in the film, whose narrative labyrinth the viewer finds himself/herself inescapably immersed in. All allegories are enigmas that entail a necessary work of spectatorial reconstruction. In Jarman's two films analysed here, the use of other art forms is made part of that enigma. For instance, in *Edward II* a boys' angelical choir constitutes the background music to a violent sodomy act, which is only recognized as Edward's fearful imagination after the deed is supposedly done (the slow motion is already a hint, though).

This first level of immersion is part of the symbolic network of both films. The agonizing painter, in *Caravaggio*, alludes in voice-over to a close escape from death by drowning, presumably after a shipwreck (whose occurrence we never see confirmed). His younger incarnation mentions painting himself as Bacchus and, surely enough, the film presents us with a short editing flash which reproduces the celebrated canvas, in the form of a *tableau vivant*, starring the actor Dexter Fletcher, who plays the title role in Caravaggio's youthful years.

Later, the two motifs come together in an ironic twist, typical of Jarman, when the nobleman who behaves as an art critic, harsh on Caravaggio's work, dies in the bathtub with the looks and the pose of Jacques-Louis David's *The Death of Marat* (1793). In *Edward II*, the protagonist is often seen in an undefined space that seems to exist underground and which is depicted as a dark place made of metal and rivets, where a furnace shines and fire glitters. It could symbolize hell in western cultural imagery, were it not for the water it contains. This water can be construed, on several occasions during the film, as: (a) an underground spring; (b) a sewer; (c) a pond. Beautiful reflections emanate from it as Edward rests close to the water and speaks of his dual nature, made up of himself and Gaveston. At this point, the image almost reproduces the pictorial Narcissus as painted by the historical Caravaggio (1594–1596).

Inasmuch as allegory is very conceptual and characterized by a high degree of abstraction, there seems to be no room for sensorial immersion. However, both films harbour a second level of meaning and matter through which Jarman proves this to be a preconceived idea. Both films *transpire* with eroticism and are *illuminated* by an attractive power that keeps the spectators enwrapped in the diegetic world of the characters and the ritualistic atmosphere of the whole picture. The above puns are intended, for as Sobchack mentions, the spectator is a "cinesthetic subject" endowed with an embodied vision "in-formed" by the knowledge imparted through the other senses (2004, 70–71). Jarman makes excellent use of our intrinsic "synaesthetic perception" (2004, 70). In fact, a text full of music sculptured with light, enhanced with colour and human figures, either tri- or bi-dimensional, is never an empty text: it has volume, shape, depth, colour, etc. and can be apprehended as such. In other words, these films create a coenasthesia capable of making the spectator inhabit the world on the screen and experience more fully the contact with the screen as a world. The space is transformed into a *place*, as abstract as it is alluring.

Caravaggio and *Edward II* exhibit a corporeality that magnifies art, calling to attention the artistry as enriched matter, in turn causing the enhancement of our sensual being. In these cases, the spectator, Sobchack argues, goes through an "as if" situation where he/she experiences general and diffuse sensations (i.e. not specifically directed at anything) in which his/her body is touched both in a literal and figural sense, that is, directly (in itself) and indirectly (through the bodies of the characters on screen). In conclusion, our film viewing "skin" opens us to "fabrics and their textures" (Sobchack 2004, 78–79). Like an unsuspicious fly, the spectator falls into the creator's web of art through art itself.

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DE GRUYTER OPEN

Acta Univ. Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies, 11 (2015) 159–179

DOI: 10.1515/ausfm-2015-0021

Pictorial Imagery, Camerawork and Soundtrack in Dario Argento's *Deep Red*

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Abstract. This article re-engages with existing scholarship identifying *Deep Red* (*Profondo rosso*, 1975) as a typical example within Dario Argento's body of work, in which the Italian horror-meister fully explores a distinguishing pairing of the acoustic and the iconic through an effective combination of elaborate camerawork and disjunctive music and sound. Specifically, this article seeks to complement these studies by arguing that such a stylistic and technical achievement in the film is also rendered by Argento's use of a specific art-historical repertoire, which not only reiterates the Gesamtkunstwerk-like complexity of the director's audiovisual spectacle, but also serves to transpose the film's narrative over a metanarrative plane through pictorial techniques and their possible interpretations. The purpose of this article is, thus, twofold. Firstly, I shall discuss how Argento's references to American hyperrealism in painting are integrated into *Deep Red*'s spectacles of death through colour, framing, and lighting, as well as the extent to which such references allow us to undertake a more in-depth analysis of the director's style in terms of referentiality and cinematic intermediality. Secondly, I will demonstrate how and to what extent in the film Argento manages to break down the epistemological system of knowledge and to disrupt the reasonable order of traditional storytelling through the technique of the *trompe-l'oeil* in painting.

Keywords: Dario Argento, *Deep Red*, excessiveness of imagery and sound, American hyperrealism, *trompe-l'oeil*.

"I had never seen anything like *Deep Red*. It wasn't the story that stuck with me months, and then years […], it was the overwhelming experience of it, equal parts visual-vivid colours and bizarre camera angles, dizzying pans and flamboyant tracking shots, disorientating framing and composition, fetishistic close-ups of quivering eyes and weird objects (knives, dolls, marbles, braided scraps of wool) and aural. *Deep Red*'s throbbing progressive-rock score was almost hypnotic, and alternated with a singsong lullaby whose 'la la la la' lyrics grew more gratingly

ominous with each repetition" (McDonagh 2010, vii). Maitland McDonagh's consideration is a useful starting-point for broadly contextualizing *Deep Red* within Dario Argento's body of work. The film was co-written with screenwriter Bernardino Zapponi, whose contribution to the horror genre was made working on Federico Fellini's segment *Toby Dammit* in *Histoires extraordinaires* (1967), a three-episode film inspired by the tales of Edgar Allan Poe (Jones 2004, 63). In *Deep Red*, Argento still relies on the consolidated narrative formula of his directorial debut *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (*L'uccello dalle piume di cristallo*, 1970), which was firstly pioneered by Italian horror director Mario Bava in his 1962 proto-*giallo*, *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* (*La ragazza che sapeva troppo*). As Peter Bondanella (2009, 375) has argued, the typical Bava-Argento g*iallo* formula centres on an amateur detective who is usually an eyewitness to a murder and whose unreliable sight and subsequent inability to take the distance from the crime manage to lead him or her to an initial misleading conclusion. Hence, the narrative in both *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* and *Deep Red* is based on the fragmented memory of the male protagonist relative to what really happened, and the plots are impressively convoluted until the final denouement and the revelation of the serial-killer's identity. While Sam Dalmas in *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* is not initially aware that the black-gloved man in the art gallery is not the attacker but is actually defending himself from his psychotic wife, Marc Daly in *Deep Red* sees the face of the female killer reflected in a mirror without realizing it.

Despite the aforementioned narrative similarities with *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, *Deep Red* constitutes a turning point within Argento's career in terms of style and technique. Starting from *Deep Red*, in fact, the Italian horror-meister experienced a growing interest in the exploration of new professional devices. This allowed Argento to develop his mature cinematic language and technical ability, which became the trademark of the director's work up to the mid-1980s. In *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, for example, Argento still alternates between the serial-killer's POV while striking, represented with long focal length lenses, that of the eyewitness while investigating, represented with standard lenses, and that of the victims being chased, represented with wide angles (Crispino 2008, 195). In addition, the director's omniscient gaze emerges in the final sequence of the film. After the alleged killer has committed suicide, Sam Dalmas goes in search of his fiancée Julia, who has disappeared from the scene of the crime and has been kidnapped by the real murderess. The camera follows Sam in high angle shot and slowly zooms out from the long shot to

the extreme long shot of the man standing near a building. Then, the camera progresses with a tilt movement from bottom to top that is followed by a pan movement from right to left on the rooftops along the *Lungotevere Flaminio* in Rome, until it eventually zooms in to reveal the not-yet-discovered place where Julia is held prisoner. By contrast, in *Deep Red*, Argento constantly disrupts the perception of the audience by moving the camera back and forth and alternating any omniscient shot with a specific POV without discernible pattern. Such a strategy embodies a violation of the classical narrative form typical of the filmmaker's directorial debut with a subsequent failure to motivate cinematic space and time by cause-effect logic (McDonagh 1994, 113). A typical example of this cinematic technique is evident in the opening sequence of the film, in which psychic Helga Ullmann provides a demonstration of her telepathic gift before sensing the presence of a killer among the public of the conference on parapsychology. In the sequence, "accustomed to playing the part of the passive spectator, we suddenly find ourselves occupying the position of the object of our scopophilic desire […] disrupting our comfortable one-way relationship with the screen" (Gallant 2001a, 15). As soon as the sequence begins, the camera is immediately aligned with the non-diegetic audience's gazes, "walking into the building, through an anteroom and past a hat check guy and a ticket attendant" (Grainger 2001, 116). The peculiarity of this sequence is that the two men at the conference's entrance door do not seem aware that anyone is walking past them. As the big red theatre drapes leading into the conference hall violently open, the camera-audience passes through. As the sequence progresses, there is a constant slippage between the non-diegetic and the diegetic spectator and these apparent POV shots are disrupted by a variety of angles taken from all over the theatre and ranging from a series of extreme long shots from the various balconies to the high angle shot of Helga and her two colleagues on the stage, although no single individual is in all these places. Then, the camera moves from one spectator to another in close-up, focuses on the back of Helga's head, comes back to the stage and makes an extreme close-up of Helga's mouth as she is drinking a glass of water. It resumes diegetic POV status when Helga addresses the killer, who eventually rises from a seat and eases out of the row. [Figs. 1–10.]

This unconventional use of the camera in *Deep Red* is, moreover, matched with an innovative use of the soundtrack, especially in the sequences preceding and accompanying the several spectacles of death. While in *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, Ennio Morricone's score consists of a mixture of orchestral tunes in the wake of Bernard Herrmann's work for Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) and

Psycho (1960) and with the addition of jazz tunes in the wake of Miles Davis's work for Louis Malle's *Elevator to the Gallows* (*Ascenseur pour l'échafaud*, 1958) and Martial Solal's work for Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* (*A bout de souffle*, 1960), in *Deep Red* the soundtrack is entrusted to jazz musician Giorgio Gaslini, but it is added to by some instrumental pieces from the progressive rock band Goblin (Lucantonio 2008, 215–216). In certain extended scenes, such as Marc's visit to the "house of the screaming child," this throbbing downtown jazz crossed with a funk-jam component completely replaces the dialogue as the aural component of the imagery. In the ten-minute-long sequence in which Marc goes to the abandoned villa to investigate, he does not utter a single word while he observes and tries to capture all essential details of the solution to the case. Accompanied by the Goblin's progressive rock soundtrack, the whole sequence is conceived as a film within a film. Each one of Marc's steps is followed in detail, and it seems that Argento is presenting the effective time it would take to explore such a place in reality. As a result, *Deep Red* becomes the first example within Argento's body of work in which a remarkable excessiveness of images and sound takes place. Although this excessiveness may partly derive from the director's adherence to the tradition of the Italian g*iallo*, which tended to impart a certain aesthetic pleasure by an effective use of editing, music and sound during their various murder sequences, it is undeniable that in *Deep Red* such a technique achieves one of the most effective and sophisticated aural-visual impacts of Argento's career and makes "the film exceptional in its musical violence, its violation of the logic of the suspense genre, and in the visceral character of the violence depicted" (Smuts 2002).

Hyperrealist Images and Soundtrack: Endoscopy and the *Snorkel* Camera

Although fully pertinent, this consideration of a remarkable excessiveness of images and sound in *Deep Red*, as identified by previous scholarship, is somehow reductive in terms of medium-specific strategies as it does not take into account another fundamental aesthetic aspect within the film. I refer to Argento's use of a specific art-historical repertoire, namely the appropriation of pictorial references and techniques, which – by the director's own admission – have been a constant source of inspiration for him and regularly play a large role in defining the film's stylistic structure and effectiveness. On the one hand, such pictorial repertoire in *Deep Red* fully combines with the excessiveness of images

and sound as identified by existing literature, and contributes to the focus on the aesthetic composition of the related sequences through diegesis and *tableau vivant*, while on the other hand, these pictorial references and techniques allow us to undertake a more in-depth analysis of Argento's style in terms of influence, referentiality, and cinematic intermediality.

In light of this statement, we may argue that such a sophisticated interplay of artistic imagery, complex camerawork and disjunctive soundtrack in *Deep Red* is applicable to a number of sequences, including the one anticipating Helga's gruesome murder by the serial-killer and introducing the audience to the murderer's childish and macabre gadgets. The sequence begins with the close-up of a marble, which causes a dollhouse cradle to tip over. Goblin's pressing progressive rock soundtrack of the credit sequence resumes and Argento displays a number of child's toys belonging to the serial-killer in extreme close-up. Suddenly, the audience witness a swirling and uninterrupted pan over the murderer's childish and macabre collection, all given sinister significance by the camera's relentless gaze. The camera then passes over a red yarn voodoo doll with her stomach stuck with needles, a drawing of a woman being stabbed by an outsized knife, a metal warrior, a wool plait, a naked baby doll that is taken by the black-gloved hand of the killer, a red clay demon, a series of marbles, and two slender switchblade knives.[1] [Figs. 11–19.] There is eventually a cut to the extreme close-up of the murderer's eye gazing blankly into the camera, ringed with black eye make-up. [Fig. 20.]

As Aaron Smuts (2002) has discussed, the sequence is "intended to give the audience some insight into the lunatic's mind, but given the unexpected prominence of the music and the practically characterless images, it more effectively associates the sounds of Goblin with an abstract insanity." More importantly, Argento's concern in the sequence has nothing to do with narrative progression. Rather, what becomes fundamental is the process through which the effect of tension and terror is created. As Argento has admitted, "the sequence was mainly inspired by hyperrealism in painting and its icy atmospheres […]. I was particularly interested in representing my characters in hyper realistic situations, as if they were frozen in a picture" (Giusti 2010, 493–494, translation mine).[2] The

1 A similar ritual of death is repeated before the murder of novelist Amanda Righetti, this time showing a ball slamming other marbles, a creepy doll with a braid of wool twisting around her neck, and the black leather gloves of the serial-killer.

2 Original quotation: "nella sequenza mi sono principalmente ispirato alla pittura iperrealista americana e alle sue atmosfere gelide […], in particolare, mi piaceva l'idea di rappresentare i miei personaggi […] in situazioni […] iperrealiste, fredde, gelide, congelate come in un quadro."

word hyperrealism or photorealism in art was coined by American author and art dealer Louis K. Meisel in 1968 and appeared in print for the first time in 1970, in a Whitney Museum catalogue. It refers to the art movement that developed from pop art and as a counter to abstract expressionism between the late 1960s and the early 1970s in the United States and that developed throughout Europe from the early 1980s (Meisel 1980, 12). In his exploration of the movement's evolution through the 1990s, *Photorealism at the Millennium* (2002), Meisel reminds us that since the late 1960s hyperrealism has consisted of the accurate and detailed exploration of the physical and verifiable properties of the objects depicted through the medium of photographic sources. At the same time, this depiction of contemporary subject matter is not only based on photographic sources, but is also blatantly and unapologetically photographic in style. As since the late 1960s the dominant techniques of the art movement have consisted of taking a series of pictures with a camera. Once the photo was developed, usually onto a photographic slide, the artist systematically transferred the image from the photographic slide onto canvas. The resulting images were often direct copies of the original photo, although they were usually larger and sharper than the original reference (Meisel 1980, 12–24). Likewise, in the sequence Argento relies on early hyperrealist (re)sources to provide the most accurate perception of reality through the ubiquity of the camera and maximize such reality in size to create a highly sensorial effect and reveal beneath the surface of every single object a new aesthetically intrinsic dimension.

This is not the first time Argento overtly draws on hyperrealist techniques. In the final sequence of *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* (*Quattro mosche di velluto grigio*, 1971), the Italian horror-meister adopted a hyperrealist effect through the use of a technologically advanced high-speed camera to show the murderer's death in a car accident. This is the *Pentazet,* a German camera that consumes 30,000 frames per second, but when run at normal theatrical speed shows the image in a wholly different temporal register (Lucantonio 2003, 13; Grimaldi 2008, 262; Pugliese 2011, 17). Yet, it is not *slow motion* as the image does not drag or shudder. Thus, an accident that normally would last a few seconds is turned into a hyperbolic sequence of death in which every single detail, from the killer's face to the glass shimmering, is explored to the extremes (Needham, 2002). However, while in *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* this hyperrealist sequence of death is a specific case of elaborate camerawork within the film's more conventional visual tropes, in *Deep Red*, Argento develops his use of technology on a regular basis. In the sequence displaying the serial-killer's gadgets in particular, Argento was inspired by

endoscopy, which is a minimally invasive diagnostic medical procedure used to assess the interior surfaces of an organ by inserting a tube into the body (Pugliese 2011, 17). He used the *Snorkel*, a thirty centimetres flexible tube that was directly applied to the camera, at the top of which he placed a mirror reflecting the framed object that was instantaneously reflected inside the tube by a series of prisms that were placed in an oblique position in order to be easily exposed in the film (Maiello 2007, 95; Grimaldi 2008, 262). Moreover, because of their subject matter and the technical level of sophistication with which they are represented on the screen, these killer's gadgets show close resemblance to Charles Bell's hyperrealist canvasses of marbles and vintage toys of the early 1970s [Figs. 21–22], in whose work the manipulation of size through the use of the camera lens was a defining feature from the 1970s onwards. With the camera, Bell could light and set up a still life on a small platform in any way he desired, photograph it in many different focuses and exposures, and eventually project it to any size and scale before deciding how the final painting would look. He decided that the effective scale would be between six and twelve times life size. Thus, by regularly increasing the size of any object, Bell was able to involve himself in the intrinsic reality of the object itself, including colour and the potentialities of light, such as light distorted by diffusion, light as reflection, and light as transparency (Geldzahler 1991, 34; Meisel 1993, 35–36). Likewise, Argento's sequence is more focused on showing a camera-mediated gaze rather than what the human eye can perceive in the same circumstances. As Edward Lucie-Smith (1979, 12) has pointed out, the camera has monocular vision while our own vision is binocular. The monocular way of seeing produces many of the aberrations we notice when we look at a photograph, although these vary in turn with the actual choice of lens. The human eye operates more flexibly than the camera, but Argento does nothing to compensate such distortions. Indeed, he chooses to emphasize them to make the audience aware of the exact nature of his source material.

Hyperrealist Images and Soundtrack: the Murder "Set-Pieces"

Other valuable examples relying on the distinguishing pairing of hyperrealist images and soundtrack in the film are visible in the sequences regarding the elaborate murder "set-pieces" which Donato Totaro (2003, 162) has defined in the following terms: "a situation or set of actions where narrative function […] gives way to 'spectacle' [and] the scene plays on far longer than is strictly necessary for

the narrative purposes". In this regard, the first effective characteristic of *Deep Red*'s *fête sanguinaire* is represented by the diegetic and non-diegetic musical accompaniment, which serves as a powerful transition device that both anticipates and accompanies every gruesome act of bodily violence. According to Smuts (2002), the ominous children's lullaby that is played on a hand-held tape recorder before every act of murder in the film is first and foremost aimed at alerting the audience to the fact that another homicide is going to occur. In the attempted murder of Marc and the murder of novelist Amanda Righetti, this hand-held tape recorder is displayed in a hyperrealist extreme close-up, so that the audience can see the tape running slowly and be hypnotised by the creepy and repetitive sound. [Figs. 23–26.] During the film, Professor Giordani explains the murderer's motivation for playing the song in question prior to each attack. According to Giordani, the serial-killer must have suffered from some traumatic episode in the past and must recreate a certain aspect of the original event in the present. At the same time, as Smuts (2002) has suggested, Argento tries to place the audience in a similar position to the killer by playing this song before any act of murder.

While the use of the diegetic lullaby can be said to be motivated by narrative purposes, the use of the macabre toys that precede both Amanda's and Giordani's death may be interpreted from a different perspective. [Figs. 27–28.] The serial-killer in *Deep Red* is first of all a sadist who terrifies her victim-to-be in a tense game of cat and mouse. Before Giordani is killed, for example, a cackling mechanical doll is set loose in his study, walking towards him. This interference clashes with the logic of the story. The doll comes from the door on the right, while the murderer is already in the room waiting for her victim from behind. The consequence of this procedure is a type of writing that completely lacks in a real connection between cause and effect and is merely intended to disrupt the audience's expectations by breaking the link between the two. Although there is no particular logic to the action, the image of the broken doll, arms flailing, skull fractured, and mechanical laugh still echoing, is profoundly unnerving and imparts tension to the sequence as a preamble to the murder. More specifically, this strategy is integral to the manner in which the *giallo* depicts murder set-pieces as heightened spectacles with the aim of interrupting the flow of the narrative in order to produce aural and visual moments of beauty and evocative power (Guins 1999, 141). However, *Deep Red*'s technically accomplished murder set-pieces may also be interpreted according to a more literary-based horror tradition. In particular, the ways Argento's murder scenes are choreographed and organized in the film are very close to the ones staged in the *Grand-Guignol*, the French red-

light district theatre of the erotic, the horrific, and the morally dubious. As Louis Paul (2005, 10) has discussed, the *Grand-Guignol* did not work on the tradition of supernatural horror, but rather explored the horror of contemporary cities in graphic detail and unbelievable cruelty. Of particular interest and relevance to Argento's use of set-pieces in *Deep Red* was the modality of representing and staging the act of murder as a highly sensational moment, in which violence was played longer than was strictly necessary "in order to squeeze every ounce of tension out of the scene" (Hand and Wilson 2002, 38). In 1931, a French journalist argued that the *Grand-Guignol* author had to calibrate every single murder scene in order to create a well-crafted timing device, where second by second the mechanism was going to turn until the bomb finally exploded (Hand and Wilson 2002, 47–48). A consequence of the exaggeration of the act of violence was the way every *Grand-Guignol* actor tended to perform any scene with a series of extremely heightened gestures. In the *Grand Guignol*, the melodramatic technique of addressing the audience directly was a typical way of slowing down the action. Specifically, every single actor, either murderer or victim, tended to fix his or her gaze on the audience in any violent moment as a strategy in performance practice to manipulate time and increase the viewers' tension. Another method included the interruption of the act of violence in order to move away from the focus and then return to it later, as the pauses and silences were indispensable elements to make the viewers' imagination flow. In *Deep Red*, the same techniques are achieved through camerawork. As Chris Gallant (2001a, 13) has argued, as far back as *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, the psychopath's POV had become a staple element in Argento's work, initially using both a hand-held tracking shot and a steady cam. In *The Cat o' Nine Tails* (*Il gatto a nove code*, 1971), the Italian director improved this technique by delivering an unsettling variation of the same formula. In the film, the killer's POV is sometimes interrupted by a close-up of his eyes looking directly at the audience. Indeed, this diegetic interference provokes a note of ambiguity in the relationship between the film and the audience. While the audience is forced into identification with the point of view of the murderer, they are simultaneously stitched into the fabric of the filmic world by becoming the focus of the directorial gaze. In *Deep Red*, Argento eventually refines this technique of threatened spectatorship. During Amanda Righetti's murder, while the victim is walking through the corridor of her house, an eye stares out from the darkness of an open closet first scrutinising the surrounding area and then staring directly at the camera with a penetrating gaze (Gallant 2001b, 80; Pugliese 2011, 40).

What really distinguishes *Deep Red*'s spectacle of death from the aforementioned *gialli*, however, can be found in Argento's ability to show murder as a mere act of artistic creation. This equation – responsibility for which effectively shifts from the director, as behind-the-scenes narrator, to the murderer, as diegetic set designer – is aesthetically and symbolically conveyed with the victims being placed in a position mimicking pictorial iconography and their eventual transformation into *objets d'art* through the composition of the shot. Specifically, in *Deep Red* Argento immortalizes his victims in a hyperrealist picture of death by employing a variety of reflecting surfaces, such as glass, metals, and mirrors, and by exploring all potentialities of their lighting effects. Reality and reflection of reality become indistinguishable from one another, and the focus on the latter generates a kind of nightmarish fantasy in spite of rigidly explicit factual details. All murder set-pieces, in fact, end up with the frozen image of the corpses reflected in harsh reflective surfaces, such as the glass of a window in the case of Helga, a reflecting wall in the case of Amanda, and a reflecting desk in the case of Giordani; and in all these cases Argento focuses on the close-up of the martyred corpses and their reflections, creating an optical alignment of both images. [Figs. 27–32.] This optical illusion generated by the alignment of reflecting surfaces also lies at the heart of Richard Estes's hyperrealist reflection series of the 1960s. [Fig. 33.] In this series of canvasses depicting some downtown areas of New York, Estes did not work on the direct depiction of the objects. Rather, he shifted the focus from the objects onto the effects of light and shadow that were generated by their reflections on shining surfaces, such as a car's bonnet, a large-windowed building, a shop window, a telephone booth, or a pool of water in the street. These clean surfaces are the only subjects of the canvasses, and Estes's realities appear distorted, fragmented, and inverted according to their alignment to the shining surfaces. In some examples, a wall divides two scenes, such as the inside and the outside of a bus or of a shop window, causing a juxtaposition of real and reflected images and of images reflected in the reflections of other images. To compose such canvasses, Estes used to stand between two and ten feet from a storefront, which was usually made of glass. Then, he aimed his camera straight up the street to create a single centred vanishing point. Approximately half of the resultant photograph and the subsequent painting was a reflection of the other half (Meisel 1986, 57). Similarly, Argento employed the same effect in *Deep Red*'s final shot of the murderer's death. As soon as the serial-killer tries to kill Marc, her heavy necklace wedges into the elevator shaft decapitating her. The act of decapitation is shot in gruesome detail with the extreme close-up of the

woman's chain slowly splitting her throat and her mouth secreting a yellowish substance as a result of the process of beheading. Following this, Argento makes a cut to a close-up of Marc's distorted and inverted image reflected in the pool of blood, creating an illusionist effect (Toffetti 2008, 158). [Figs. 34–35.] The shot's richness of visual information is comparable to Estes's canvasses, as the dynamic interplay between the figure, the reflected visual elements, and the dispassionate perfection of the execution enhance each other to create a synergistic balance and tension that give this sequence a highly hyperrealist effect.

The *Trompe-l'Oeil*: the Invisibility of the Visible Through the Artwork

The optical alignment of images and their reflections also assumes a crucial role in terms of narrative as it contributes to the final denouement of the story in which the serial-killer's identity is eventually revealed. As Sébastien Bazou has pointed out, "to enter one of Argento's films is to enter a disquieting universe full of signs to decipher […]. The viewers are at once masters of the game and totally manipulated by it, free to interpret all the signs and symbols presented to them or, on the contrary, free to let themselves be driven along in a ghost train" (2009, translation mine).[3] Bazou's consideration suggests a cinema centred on the importance of sight, in which both the story and the visual composition of the film are conceived as a unique blend that is able to challenge and stimulate the viewers' ingenuity. This is the case of *Deep Red*, in which every single detail becomes an indispensable piece that contributes to the whole structure of the film's narrative and visual impact. A typical example of this statement is provided in the sequence in which Marc witnesses Helga's murder from the adjacent piazza and rushes to the woman's apartment to try to help. While walking down a corridor lined with Edvard Munch-style paintings, Marc fails to realize that one of the paintings – in which four ghostly women are painted – is actually a mirror in which the murderer's face can be clearly seen – thereby confusing representation with reality and not realizing the importance of what he saw until it is almost too late. [Figs. 36–39.] As a result, the audience also are drawn to the same mistaken conclusion, particularly as in the sequence the whole of the mirror is visible for only a single frame and the fast dolly shot makes it nearly

3 Original quotation: "entrer dans un film d'Argento c'est entrer avec inquiétude dans un univers de signes à déchiffrer […]. Le spectateur est à la fois maître du jeu et totalement manipulé, libre de surinterpréter tous les signes et les symboles qui se présentent à lui ou, au contraire, libre de se laisser guider dans un train fantôme."

impossible to focus on the relevant part of the screen in time to take in the vital detail. At the film's climax, however, Argento gives a clue to the mystery. When Marc returns to Helga's apartment in order to remember what happened, the director zooms in to a close-up on the serial-killer's face, which becomes visible in the mirror together with the painting. [Figs. 38–39.]

Since *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, in which Sam Dalmas tries to solve a series of crimes by codifying the meaning hidden behind an old naïf painting, pictorial repertoire in Argento's cinema has sometimes served to recreate the backbone of the story through artistic images and their possible interpretations. In *Deep Red*, Argento takes a step forward in this sense by breaking down the epistemological system of knowledge through art and, as a consequence, disrupting the reasonable and discursive order of traditional storytelling through the medium of pictorial iconography. More specifically, the director explicates a paradox, the invisibility of the visible, through the artwork. In the sequence, art confuses Marc and, at the same time, denies full understanding to the audience following the scene by employing the medium of *trompe-l'oeil*. The *trompe-l'oeil* is a pictorial technique that aims to trick the eye by making the audience think they are seeing an actual object and not a painted one. In *Deep Red*, Argento produces the opposite effect in that a tree-dimensional object is perceived as two-dimensional. More significantly, in the sequence, Argento manages to convey the narrative trope typical of the *giallo* formula, which is the fragmented and misleading sight of the eyewitness in relation to the true situation, through the medium of a pictorial technique.

The theme of the short-circuiting of sight that is typical of the *giallo* formula in the sequence is also achieved through a technically sophisticated combination of complex camerawork and unsettling soundtrack, which seems designed to mobilize the audience's attention and eventually manages to mask the essential detail from sight. As Jean Baptiste Thoret (2003, 83–84) has suggested, the tracking shot in the corridor has the function of directing the viewers' gaze towards the bottom of the frame and does not allow them to make the difference necessary to discover the right sign. If the viewers go back to Helga's murder, they will discover that the serial-killer is reflected in the mirror, but it is almost impossible to see her without using the still frame facility. Moreover, the mirror is positioned at the edge of the frame, so the audience watching the film in a pan-and-scanned version would have even less chance of spotting this pivotal moment. Quite simply, the audience could not possibly be expected to see the murderer and solve the puzzle, as they have not been introduced to the character at this point

of the story. On the contrary, the murderer's reflection in the mirror acquires the function of isolating the detail from a general context by freezing it in a *tableau* of watching. As Argento has stated, "the mirror fascinates me because of its power to isolate the detail from its general context. A vision of the whole is sometimes deceiving and misleading for both the character in the film and the audience. The detail shown in the mirror can be distinguished more easily" (Giusti 2010, 494, translation mine).[4] Thus, the reflection in the mirror focuses all the audience's attention on what Gary Needham (2002) has identified as the *punctum*, which is a consequential detail that punctures the eye, adding something that the *mise-en-scène* and narrative cannot contain and foretell. A vision of the whole can deceive and mislead both the protagonist and the viewers, but any single detail that is projected into a mirror can be spotted more easily. In *Deep Red,* the simple act of seeing is not sufficient to full understanding. Reality as it is revealed to the audience is a riddle that must be analyzed constantly and broken down to the smallest detail to ensure a solution.

Conclusion

Deep Red is a typical example within Argento's body of work to show a sophisticated interplay of artistic imagery, complex camerawork, and unsettling soundtrack. In this respect, as this article has demonstrated, artistic imagery becomes an indispensable piece that contributes to the whole structure of the film's narrative and visual impact. On the one hand, artistic imagery reinforces *Deep Red*'s stylistic and technical innovation through the medium of a consolidated pictorial repertoire. Specifically, Argento combines the techniques of the close-up and extreme close-up, and the progressive rock soundtrack with an artistic subject matter that is typical of hyperrealist painting of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The relationship to the hyperrealist painting of the late 1960s and early 1970s in the film is clear through the director's use of the *Snorkel* camera in the depiction of the killer's toys which is reminiscent of Charles Bell's paintings of vintage toys and marbles. In a similar manner, Argento's use of lighting in the multiple murder set-pieces is comparable to the light effects of Estes's paintings of the 1960s. The photographic-type accuracy with which Argento focuses on surfaces encourages the audience to pay full attention to

4 Original quotation: "ciò che mi affascina dello specchio è il suo potere di isolare il dettaglio dal suo contesto generale. Una visione dell'insieme a volte inganna e svia sia il personaggio del film sia lo spettatore. Il dettaglio proiettato nello specchio si distingue con più facilità."

the aesthetic and intrinsic qualities of the objects represented rather than to the narrative progression of the sequences involved. Apart from the aesthetic and symbolic values of artistic imagery in defining Argento's stylistic and technical effectiveness, art-historical repertoire also assumes an essential role in terms of (meta)narrative. Argento utilizes the pictorial device of the *trompe-l'oeil* in order to mislead both the film's protagonist and the audience about the crucial detail that would lead to the resolution of the case. Thus, the *giallo* theme of the amateur detective's misleading sight while witnessing a crime is symbolically reiterated by the effect of a pictorial technique. For all these qualities, *Deep Red* is the first of Argento's *fêtes sanguinaires* in which artistic imagery, narrative, and style come together in a highly powerful blend.

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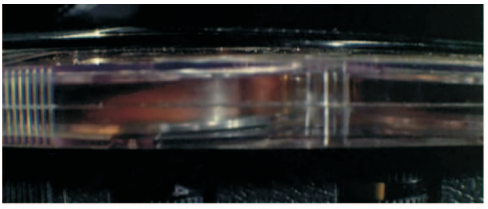
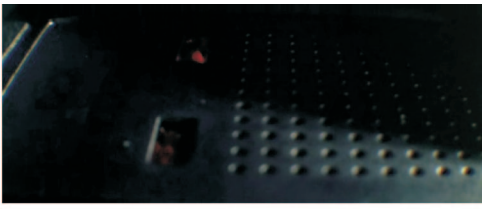

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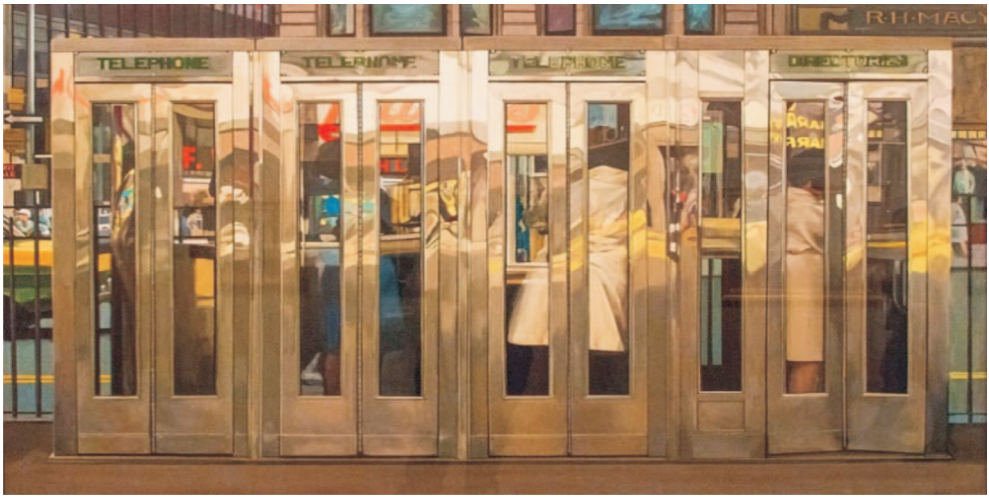

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Acta Univ. Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies, 11 (2015) 181–193

DOI: 10.1515/ausfm-2015-0022

Intermediality and Reflexivity in Andrzej Żuławski's *Fidelity*

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Abstract. The paper focuses on a characteristic of Andrzej Żuławski's aesthetics which has been ignored by most of the critics who emphasized the impact of surrealism and the taste for provocation in his cinema. Meanwhile, the œuvre's French period is obviously characterized by self-reflexivity and media-reflexivity, autobiographical and literary background references. In these film dramas, the topic of love, beauty and artistic values are interconnected with a sophisticated narrative strategy using intermediality and intertextuality in a complex way. In *Fidelity* (*La Fidelité*, 2000), Żuławski put photography and literature in focus again in order to express thoughts and emotions in their complexity, surpassing the limitations of the linear narrative. A certain semiotic double-codedness is provided by either intertextual references or the hidden meanings based on the symbolic language of flowers, used as diegetic metaphors. Moreover, Żuławski thematizes photography that makes us conscious of our experiences from an aesthetic distance, even in an ironic manner.

Keywords: self-reflexivity, intermediality, adaptation, intertextuality, photography, poetry, language of flowers, irony.

Reflexivity in Żuławski

Andrzej Żuławski's cinema is usually interpreted by highlighting such thematic leitmotifs as cruelty, hysteria, anarchism, mad love, and absolute liberty. Robert Hammond compares Żuławski to Walerian Borowczyk "in his taste for provocation and spectacular effects" (Ford and Hammond 2005, 148) claiming that they "squandered their gifts on unworthy and sensational productions" (Ford and Hammond 2005, 144). Michael Goddard refers to the shortcomings of contextualization in the third generation of Polish cinema, in the Polish New Wave, as well as to the focusing on surrealist characteristics (Goddard and Mazierska 2014, 237–238). Investigating the subversive aspect of Żuławskian

cinema, Goddard underlines that the French period is "aesthetically and stylistically distinct from his Polish work" (Goddard and Mazierka 2014, 248), the latter being influenced by some of the work of Jean-Luc Godard, at least by *Contempt* (*Le Mépris*, 1963) and *Pierrot le fou* (1965), and "was certainly inspired by Godard's disregard for conventional narrative structures" (Goddard and Mazierska 2014, 238). Goddard stresses the importance of performativity and intertextuality in Żuławski's French cinema from *The Most Important Thing: Love* (*L'Important c'est d'aimer*, 1975) to *Fidelity* (*La Fidelité*, 2000). Based on the above-mentioned narrative aspect of subversivity, I shall study *Fidelity* in terms of reflexivity, taking Żuławski's earlier French cinema into consideration. In these adaptations, intertextuality and aesthetic self-reflection are constantly pivotal, and so is intermediality.

Żuławski has an original cinematic voice, as Michael Atkinson puts it: "Few other filmmakers have maintained, come hell or high water, as defiantly consistent a voice, and no one's cinematic voice is as divisive, as ludicrously anarchic, as viciously overwrought" (Atkinson 2008, 80). Here I shall try to map out the narrative structure of this phenomenon, characterized by biographical and intertextual references, self-reflexivity, intermediality and the topic of voyeurism. It is well known that Żuławski is also a prolific author and, as a young student he was working as a photographer, so "his films and his life are woven with literature, paintings, music."[1] Cinematic allusions and visual quotations are also quite usual in these films, with a purpose of aesthetic reflection. There are several allusions to the typical scenes and motives of Buñuel, Godard, Truffaut, Antonioni, Makavejev, among others. A special case is the opera film, such as his *Boris Godunov* (1989), and the biographical film on Chopin and Georges Sand (*The Blue Note – La note bleue*, 1991), both being the intermedial terrain of aesthetic self-reflection. Hereby must we mention the role of music in Żuławski's cinema, usually composed by Andrzej Korzynski. Filmmaking and photography as *mise en abymes*[2] are present in *The Most Important Thing: Love*, in *The Public Woman*, (*La femme publique*, 1984), and theatrical spectacle has the same function in *Mad Love* (*L'Amour braque*, 1985). As we will see, in *Fidelity* intermediality and intertextuality are also connected very closely.

Photography is not just a part of his world and his films, but "film *is* photography," as Żuławski puts it. It obviously implies the fact of self-reflexivity, since at least from

1 See the Filmcomment's interview with Żuławski in 2012 (Barton-Fumo 2012).

2 On the transcendental *mise en abyme* through which an interpretation of the frame-story or the reality itself is provided, see Dällenbach 1989, 107–116.

the 1960s photography as an art form has been the main field of self-referentiality, which metaphorically drives to a general aesthetic self-reflection. Similarly, filmmaking plays an essential role in the plot of his films, as well as theatre or poetry. In the opening scene of *The Most Important Thing: Love*, there is a film shoot going on, and one can be seen also in *The Public Woman*. Moreover, the world of cinema is permanently put in focus in a reflexive Godardian manner, showing Hollywood movie posters (as potential *mise en abymes* of the plot at the same time). Furthermore, the main characters are a photographer and an actress; both are compelled to prostitute themselves as artists, which has a symbolic meaning. The husband of Nadine, the actress has the hobby of collecting movie-photos. It is closely related to the aesthetic problem of the visual and narrative representation of reality, evoking among others Antonioni's film classic *Blow-Up* (1966). The central role of photography helps the viewer understand the self-reflexive character which emphasizes the fact that life often hides the truth that only the artwork can help us discover. To quote Peter Goldman: "Antonioni suggests that meaning is discovered in the creative process rather than being determined by a performed authorial intentionality. The mimesis of empirical reality is subordinated to a collaborative process involving the audience and actors" (Goldman 2008). The credit for this insight also goes to Żuławski, whose oeuvre has a taste of concept art, evoking altogether the performance and the orgiastic Vienna Actionism (Wiener Aktionismus) of Hermann Nitsch and others. The strong theatricality, through the body and the facticity of bodily existence points to the simultaneously subjective and conventional character of every representation, necessarily distorting and interpreting the reality. Besides, it is obvious that Antonin Artaud's theater of cruelty and Jerzy Grotowski's "poor theatre" had a major influence on Żuławski (Atkinson 2008, 81). Ecstatic and cathartic states of mind are often represented in Żuławski's cinema, generally in an absurd, grotesque or surrealistic way. Atkinson points out that "his sensibility is in-grown surrealist – not in terms of imagery (which is most often grounded in absurd) but in terms of emotional eruption, disorienting texture, mad-love worship" (Atkinson 2008, 81). This irrationality is always connected to transgression and subversion, setting freedom against social order.

In *Mad Love* the scene is set in 1968 Paris, and starts with a grotesque bank robbery committed in Disney costumes just as if it was a masquerade. The subversive carnival-like performances suggest that the only way of social revolution is being an outsider – as madman, poet, or criminal. As an adaptation of Dostoievsky's *Idiot*, the film focuses on the possibility of revolution. Leon, akin to Mishkin, is an idiot, which means a kind of purity and innocence here, while

the others need drugs or madness to be outside the order. The aesthetic reflection appears in the form of a theatrical *mise en abyme* presenting Chekhov's *Seagull* as the adequate representation of reality.

The problem of realism is linked to extremity and hysterical eccentricity in the erotic photo shoot scenes of *The Public Woman*, a real metafilm, a film about making film that starts with an audition for an adaptation of Dostoievsky's *The Possessed*. The date 1968 allows on the one hand a social and philosophical interpretation focusing on violence and social change (there are several allusions to Sartre and existentialism), and on the other hand, a reflection on the history of the European cinema of the 1960s, including Godard, Truffaut, Antonioni and Forman. Meanwhile, the character of Lucas Kessling, the director, can be seen as a fictional analogue of Żuławski himself. Thus, reflexivity, literary allusions and biographical references are common in Żuławski's French cinema; the film language used in *Fidelity* is an acquired and well-mastered one.

Photography and Realism in *Fidelity*

Fidelity is an autobiographical fiction and, at the same time, a cinematic adaptation, more precisely, a palimpsest-like re-writing of the famous love story of *La Princesse de Clèves* wrote by Madame de La Fayette in the seventeenth century. (It was presented one year after the adaptation of Mme Lafayette's novel by Manoel de Oliveira – *The Letter* [*La Lettre*, 1999]). The interconnection of autobiography and artistic fiction lies in the fact that the young and beautiful, adulterous photographer, Clélia is impersonated by Sophie Marceau, Żuławski's wife, who finally left him in 2001. In the film she draws to a paparazzi colleague called Némo. They work for the tabloid *La Vérité*, therefore the visual representation of reality is in the focus of the picture, in an ironic way. This irony gains a tragic self-ironic accent by the W. H. Auden poems often cited in the film drama, the poet being the favourite one of Clèves, Clélia's abandoned husband. Thus, we have to consider the intermedial surplus meaning constituted by linking novel, poetry, film, music, and photography together, which represents the interconnection of reality, fiction, desires and media simulacra. *Fidelity* is obviously linked to Żuławski's autobiographical novel, *Infidelité* (Infidelity), in which he wrote the story of their break-up. Thus, the film has a manifold meaning, implying a biographical "reading," in which the viewer has to solve a puzzle to grasp Żuławski's thoughts and feelings about the love between himself and his wife. Intertextuality and intermediality both serve as a mask to hide the factual

and too personal character of the story. Therefore, he elaborates a complex, at once cryptological and double-coded communication.

This double-codedness is represented by the intermedial and multimodal flower-pieces, being a form of still life. The language of flowers is often used in literature, but Żuławski combines this symbolic surplus meaning with the intermedial aesthetic self-reflection represented by photography. It results in a polysemic structure, since nearly every flower has multiple associations, and points out the viewer's hermeneutical task. Flower-pieces appear several times during the film, providing a structure of hidden meanings behind the surface of the – basically literary, that is, linguistic – narrative. It makes his words on images more plausible: "This expression is not *telling* you things with words but making you see it" (Barton-Fumo 2012). First, Clélia meets Clèves in a flower shop, and soon, during having sex with him, in a symbolic manner she treads on the bunch made for Clèves's engagement. [Fig. 1.] In the shop, Clélia askes Clèves to allow her to take a photo of the bunch of lilies, and these flowers are the symbol of purity and innocence.[3] [Fig. 2.] It is obliquely ironic when she asks if it is for a funeral. For the second time, Clélia takes photos of a bunch of gerberas, which may symbolize love, in general, but here they do it in an ambiguous way because red ones, like red roses, may refer to admiration and desire, while white ones may imply pure love and innocence. In this scene, there is a special, simultaneously intermedial and intertextual effect pointing out the limits of narrativization: when Auden's famous poem, *August 1968* is being recited (in French) while shooting flower arrangements:

> The Ogre does what ogres can,
> Deeds quite impossible for Man,
> But one prize is beyond his reach,
> The Ogre cannot master Speech:
> About a subjugated plain,
> Among its desperate and slain,
> The Ogre stalks with hands on hips,
> While drivel gushes from his lips. (Auden 1969, 88.)

For the third time, flowers get into focus in the midst of the story, after the marriage of Clélia and Clèves. Clélia feels perplexed because of the strong desire she feels for Nemo, a young paparazzo. She takes photos of flowers that express

3 An alphabetic catalogue of meanings and sentiments with a bibliography of flower symbolism is available online: *http://www.languageofflowers.com/*

her emotions in a symbolic way. She shoots five bunches one after another. The first one mostly contains pink Stargazer lilies with white gardenias: the first means wealth and prosperity while the latter stand for secret love. [Fig. 3.] This combination carries an obvious tension, intensified by the next shots. The second bunch is made of red roses and huge red celosia cockscombs (brain flowers), both referring to burning love (the latter's Greek etymology – *kelos* – is flame), while celosia also means silliness. [Fig. 4.] In the middle of the bunch, there are also some asters, which symbolize patience, but this flower is also indicative of the love of variety. These pink asters could also mean that "I will never forget you." In the third bunch, there are sunflowers, which may have several meanings, such as devotion, hospitality, pure thoughts, or adoration, dedicated love, or even haughtiness. [Fig. 5.] The next bunch is full of pink roses, which indicate an affection that may turn into deeper love. There is only one white rose, on the periphery, while two yellow roses appear, which represent infidelity, and a red one, which – as mentioned above – refers to passionate love. [Fig. 6.] Finally, Clélia is becoming more and more perturbed while shooting a red anthurium, which symbolizes hospitality or happiness. [Fig. 7.] She is obviously thinking about Nemo and she is looking for him, hoping that he is on the lurk again on the neighbour's rooftop. In the end, after his husband's death, Clélia takes photos of an aloe in a strange convent where joy is the main task for the nuns, even if it is enforced and unspontaneous. Aloe, the lily of the desert, symbolizes grief and pain as well as healing and life, but can also refer to eternal life, implying religious devotion, and to the opposite, to the primacy of earthly life. [Fig. 8.]

Flowers "can be totally shameless" says Clélia in an interview, just as if responding to her mother's words concerning the principle of honour. On this level, there is another double-coded communication, the one of Żuławski as an implied author. *The Princess of Cleves* as a hypotext gives an ironic accent to the voice of the left lover known from the biography. The novel focuses on the virtue of fidelity, while love in the real life leads to infidelity. Thus, the idealism of a lover like Clèves – or, by analogy, like Żuławski – can be interpreted as an either tragic or comic fail. As we see, the intertextual irony constitutes a voice in which the "implied author" of the film cannot be independent from the biographical person of the director. What makes possible to apply this narratological framework to cinema – one can ask oneself. This is made possible by the intermedial and intertextual features which express a metaverbal reflection, in a double-coded way. Besides the iconic surplus dimension, flowers, just like poetry, have an autoreferential aesthetic function and a synesthetic potential to make us feel what

cannot be narrativized. This metalanguage unites the metaverbal and metavisual features analysed by Marina Grishakova: "Whereas the metavisual text refers to an inadequate or virtual verbal counterpart of the visual representation, the excess of verbalization in the metaverbal text is meant to compensate for a lack of visual representation – what the narrator and the characters are trying but unable to see, or what they are only imagining to be real" (Grishakova 2010, 323). This narratological approach seems to be fit for the Żuławskian cinema, as well as for a Dickens novel (López-Varela and Khaski Gaglia 2013). Since the adapted work was the first psychological novel, the director had to represent the characters' inner thoughts and emotions in every possible way, let alone the supposed confessional intention. Poetry, still images, flower language and literary background references express the complex psychology of love.

Photography as a recurring reflexive theme of Żuławski permanently appears in *Fidelity*. At the end of the opening scene, Clélia suddenly takes a photo of his mother, to make her an aesthetic object, in order to be able to keep a distance from her. As an artistic photographer, she points to the hollowness and impersonality of life in her photographs by making them out of focus, thus changing figures into ghost images. [Fig. 9.] (For reasons of space, we do not discuss the transcendent elements of the film, though it is important to mention that ghosts often appear to Clélia.) She tries to be objective when representing reality, while starts to work in mass media, for a tabloid newspaper. Obviously, both imply related aesthetic problems, that of realism and that of mass mediatedness. The blurred shots of the hockey match and Clélia's words that every good photo is "méchante" (that is, malicious, cruel) are in accordance with Żuławski's earlier aesthetics. This cruelty consists in an estrangement, an artificial distance from the faceless, unidentifiable bodies. Once again, the problem of realism has a reference to the *Blow-Up* scene on deciphering a modern painting. Goldman associates it with Antonioni's statement on reality in his 1964 essay: "We know that under the revealed image there is another one which is more faithful to reality and under this one there is yet another and again another under this last one, down to the true image of that absolute, mysterious reality that no one will ever see. Or perhaps, not until the decomposition of every image, of every reality" (Antonioni 2007, 63).

Contrary to these blurred photos, the ones taken by Némo show "the truth" of flesh-and-bone reality, a sort of "cruel science of man." [Fig. 10.] As MacRoi's lover puts it: "The real is photographed as it is." For her naturalism, Clélia's style is "arty-farty" ("artisme"). For Clélia, to photograph the world means defending herself against it. [Fig. 11.]

It is worth adding that realism in the age of computer images is quite a problematic term. Analysing the difference between traditional and digital photography, Göran Sönesson argues that the "synthetic image" consisting of pixels involves a disruption separating the content and its expression (Sönesson 2003, 3). Akin to language, computer image is made up by arbitrary, endlessly repeatable elements, thus it loses either the iconic or the indexical link to reality (Sönesson 2003, 5). Besides, it is the image which constitutes reality, opening up a virtual dimension.

Sönesson distinguishes three types by which pictures can be described (Sönesson 1996). He emphasizes the fact that "construction types, such as oil paintings, linear drawings, and photographs; function types, determined by socially anticipated purposes, such as caricatures, publicity pictures, and pornographic pictures; and circulation types, defined by the channels through which pictures are conveyed from a creator to a receiver, such as posters, frescoes, television pictures, and web-page pictures" (Sönesson 1997, 1).

In *Fidelity*, there is also a thematized tension between artistic image and press photo, act photo and pornography, still images and tabloid reports. "Normally we expect certain construction types, function types, and circulation types to go together" – adds Sönesson (1997, 1). The relation between reality and the virtual world of images is permanently reflected in Żuławski's *Fidelity*. This issue is put into focus by the inconsistency between the construction, the function and the circulation of those photographs taken by Clélia and Nemo, respectively. The contingent moments of everyday life or the illegal activities need a sort of voyeurism to be registered. These photographs then became extraordinary frontispieces and photo reports in a trash tabloid, after being digitally remastered. The processing is carried out spectacularly on Mac computers, as an ironic and self-reflexive allusion to the more and more aggressive product placement in the movie. All this shows ironically that there is no direct relation to reality, every image is manipulated. Consequently, truth became a sort of fiction. It goes to the autobiographical layer as well, producing a radical uncertainty for the audience, in a reflexive and ironic manner.

Irony and Self-Irony

Żuławski's film as an adaptation is rather ironic. We meet the figures of the seventeenth century like Clèves, Nemo (Duke de Nemours), or Mme Clèves's mother. The king (MacRoi instead of Henry II), the queen and their lovers are members

of the management of a media empire which constantly generates sensations as simulacra, supplements. Chevalier de Guise, the young knight who is madly in love with Mme Clèves appears here as the little editor. He is reading and quoting Mme Lafayette's novel, and makes a film on Clélia, using different mirror structures, *mise en abymes*, just as Żuławski, the director of this adaptation. This comic and pathetic alter ego bears a good portion of responsibility for the ironic effect.

Fidelity's intertextuality is also intertwined with irony, which interconnects the biographical and the aesthetic layers of the reflection, sketching out an implied author-like narrative instance beyond propositions and images. The ironic and satiric character of Auden's old age poetry is well known. Clèves is a fan of Auden's poetry because of its truth, while – in an ironic manner – the title of the tabloid Clélia works for is *La Vérité*, that is "The Truth." It is hard to tell whether it is a fake or rather a parallel reality when one reads the headline about Fidel Castro's death, appearing as the media context of a bad quality picture which advertises Clélia's photo-reportage. The ironic association points out again the distorting function of mass media. This scene in the movie is followed by a shot in which we see a television advertisement of a photo camera with autofocus, being right the opposite of Clélia's realism. The scene in which Clélia and Clèves go to bed surrounded by her projection-prints can also be interpreted in a metaphoric way, and in that case it would suggest that their love is as unspontaneous and fuzzy as the real life. As a counterpart of the above scene, the real squash match of Clélia and Nemo gives an ironic twist to the virtual tennis scene in Antonioni's *Blow-Up*. [Fig. 12.] Here, they really do it, together.

Besides the aesthetic reflections through background references, another source of irony is the fact that the film is a free adaptation. It provides an excellent possibility to put the contemporary world of the adaptation in contrast with the morals of the French aristocracy of the seventeenth century. In Mme Lafayette's novel, noblesse requires that passion should not rule obligation in any circumstances. The autobiographical background of Żuławski's film – namely, Sophie Marceau left him for a producer – is suited to interconnect melancholy and social criticism. Traditions, values, and virtues represented by the high culture of Clèves, Auden and Żuławski have become outdated in the accelerated, shallow, virtual world of a consumption society formed by mass media. Nevertheless, Żuławski offers a dialogical and self-ironic structure of meanings in *Fidelity* since his alter ego is rather a tragicomic figure, formed in an excellent way by Pascal Greggory. Furthermore, the name of the heroine, Clélia, refers to another seventeenth-century French novel, the *Clélia* of Mlle de Scudéry, often

considered as a proto-feminist manifesto concerning love. Her allegoric Map of Tender and the debates on the virtuous and constant love may serve as another *mise en abyme*. The love triangle of Clèves, Clélia and Nemo evokes the story of Valeria, Emilius and Herminius in *Clélia*. Similarly, the ghost of Clélia's father is conjured up in the film from a point of view which merges Clélia's twinge of conscience and her mother's remorse. Thus, besides the alleged opinion of the implied author, another perspective gets into focus, that one of the woman who wants to "be mistress of her own destiny" (Scudéry 2005, 276), and for this reason she rejects her suitors – constituting a polyphonic narrative structure to dramatize moral ambiguity in romantic love.

Besides the obvious analogies with *The Princess of Clèves* and *Clélia*, another work has to be taken into account, *Lélia*, an autobiographical fiction written by Georges Sand. Obviously, there are important differences between Mme de Lafayette's love story and that of Żuławski. In the latter, Clèves has far more importance, while Clélia had not had an abstinent attitude towards sexuality before the relationship with him. The motive of misunderstanding is central in the novel – it is caused by a lost letter, while the film emphasizes other aspects. As mentioned, the tabloid's editor – as another *mise en abyme* of the director, since he is also making a movie about Clélia and himself, – often quotes from *The Princess of Clèves*, but Clélia tells him not to quote. Therefore, she refuses the analogy with Mme de Clèves, telling "I am myself." The figure of Clélia rather evokes Lélia, the burned-out woman whose real-life model was Georges Sand herself. *Lélia* is a sentimental novel consisting of letters and subjective monologues put together in an autobiographical and allegorical manner. Lélia is a disillusioned thirty-year-old woman – just as Clélia –, who is not able to be in love, to be happy. Sténio is desperately in love with her, but she cannot requite it. Here Sténio is rather analogous to Nemo, emancipating the point of view of the younger teaser in a way.

To sum up, in *Fidelity*, biographical references and aesthetic reflexivity are interconnected in an intermedial way. This intermediality consists mainly in the different functions of photography. Quotations from Auden's poetry and the *Princess of Cleves* as hypotext serve as another intermedial link, just like the allusions to *Clélia* and *Lélia*, between literature and film. Using this intermedial approach, Żuławski expresses irony and self-irony, and puts such problems into the focus as aesthetic realism, the possibility of narrativization, and more specifically the epistemological problem of subjective perspectives. Finally, another *mise en abyme* provides us an ironic and at once self-ironic

stance towards realism when Clélia in a monastery is watching an American TV adaptation of *The Princess of Clève*, directed by Nemo. It has the same opening scene as *Fidelity* but the ending represents Nemo's perspective and emotions in a parodistic way. Thus, Żuławski successfully disposes of the semantic limitation attached to the conventional ("realist") linear and referential narrative structure. Self-referentiality, intertextuality, uncertainty and perspectivism result in a multi-referential, open-ended narrative, which requires an active hermeneutical approach from the audience.

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DE GRUYTER OPEN
Scientia Publishing House

ISSN 2065-5924
http://www.acta.sapientia.ro

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Printed by Idea Printing House
Director: Péter NAGY