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Frames, Sensations and Transgressions

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SPECIAL DOSSIER:
REFRAMING GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM

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Introduction

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German Expressionism was linked to the intellectual, cultural, and political upheaval preceding the First World War and plaguing its aftermath. Intrinsically related to 19th-century Symbolism, Expressionism however looked beyond its fatalism and mysticism, and above all, beyond its representational panache. And while its exact beginnings are placed somewhere between 1905 and 1911 (the foundation of *Die Brücke* and *Das Blaue Reiter*), the end of the Weimar Republic in 1933 spelled its end as a historical artistic movement. In its less than three decades of existence, however, Expressionism asserted itself as an influential artistic style, steering all art forms towards imperative interrogation of the materialistic view of the visible world. Under the influence of Nietzschean pessimism and Existentialist doubts, and especially that of rapid developments in analytic psychology and psychoanalysis, Expressionist artists turned inwards, privileging the subjective over the objective, and feelings over reason. For them, to create was not merely to reproduce nature, but to react to the visible in a uniquely personalized fashion.

This aesthetic shift was prompted culturally by a deep mistrust in the rationalization and externalization of psychic life, and the neglect of the inner self, which had gradually become the norm in the Western world since the Enlightenment. In the wake of destroyed traditional ways of life and cultures, urban living was bound to become the new norm, which inevitably brought to bear profound feelings of alienation, foreboding, loneliness, and skepticism about the true relationship between oneself and the world. Moreover, the psychologically devastating experience in the trenches scarred deeply a great number of Expressionist artists, forcing them to question the very foundations of Western civilization.

The collection of articles in this special dossier was inspired by the city-wide celebration of Expressionism, held in 2016 in Regina, the capital of the Canadian

prairie province of Saskatchewan. The very well-attended public talks, on which the current collection is founded, were among the highlights of this unique event, bringing audiences from all walks of life in Regina with artists and academics, and giving them a chance to appreciate the art of Expressionism, including its own local brand of prairie Expressionist films, paintings, poetry and music. We are therefore extremely grateful to the editorial team of *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies* journal for making it possible for us to disseminate our thoughts and ideas internationally.

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German Expressionism in Context: the First World War and the European Avant-Garde

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Abstract. German Expressionism, although often viewed as a uniquely German phenomenon, was part of a broader crisis affecting the European avant-garde at the time of the First World War. The experience of modernity, so proudly displayed at events like the Universal Exposition of 1900, inspired both hopes and fears which were reflected in the works of artists, writers and musicians throughout Europe. The outbreak of the war was welcomed by many exponents of the avant-garde as the cathartic crisis they had anticipated. The letters and diaries of artists who hastened to enlist, however, reflected their rapid disillusionment. The war had the effect of severing cultural ties that had been forged prior to 1914. This did not prevent a parallel process of cultural evolution on both sides of the conflict. Those who survived the war, of diverse nationalities and artistic affiliations, produced works reflecting a common perception that modern civilization had resulted in humanity becoming a slave to its own machines.

Keywords: avant-garde, Expressionism, First World War, art, modernism.

Belle Epoque and Fin de Siècle

Although the subject of this special issue is German Expressionism, this article begins by considering a painting produced not by a German, but by a Frenchman, and which can be viewed at the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris, itself located in the Palais de Tokyo, a building constructed for the Universal Exposition of 1937. The building's esplanade offers a splendid view of the Champ de Mars and the Eiffel Tower. The painting is Robert Delaunay's *L'équipe de Cardiff*, which was exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants in 1913. [Fig. 1.] There could hardly be a more appropriate setting for this painting, which represents not only the Eiffel Tower, inaugurated at the Universal Exposition of 1889, but also the Ferris wheel

that was a legacy of the Universal Exposition of 1900. Visually, it is the Ferris wheel that provides the link between the upwards leap of the rugby player in the foreground of the painting to the biplane – actually a Wright flyer, the aircraft developed by the Wright brothers – in the sky above. Advertising hoardings promote Astra – the company that manufactured the Wright Flyer in France – as well as Delaunay himself, reminding us that the artist's reputation reached at least as far as New York. Robert Wohl, describing an earlier version of the painting, exhibited in Berlin in 1912, writes: "assaulted by this wealth of imagery, which we are supposed to assimilate *simultaneously* as a whole, we understand intuitively that Paris is the capital of technology [...] and that the twentieth century is one of ascension and movement upwards toward the stars – *ad astra*" (1994, 188).

Not everybody liked *L'équipe de Cardiff*. Delaunay sent a photograph of it to Franz Marc, one of the leading German Expressionist painters, who dismissed it as "the sheerest Impressionism, instantaneous, photographic motion [...]. The only thing that struck me about the picture is that it is very Parisian, very French, but very far removed from my ideas" (Wohl 1994, 190). Delaunay wrote back to say, "with this picture, which is the most perfect and beautiful subject, I have outdone myself [...]. It is the most important, the very newest picture theme in my art and at the same time the most representative in its execution" (Wohl 1994, 192). Indeed, with its bright colours, harmonious symmetries and literally uplifting themes, the painting encapsulates the confidence of an era which would come to be defined as a *Belle Epoque*. *L'équipe de Cardiff* is a feel-good painting that expresses the confidence of an age of progress.

Very different was another painting which was also completed in 1913, this time by a German artist. Max Beckmann's vast canvas representing the disaster of the sinking of the Titanic, on the night of 14–15 April, 1912, was a commentary on the hubris of those who put their faith in modern technology. [Fig. 2.] The painting depicted the famous ship and the iceberg that sank it in the background, while in the foreground it represented the desperation of men and women fighting for a place in the boats. "Beckmann," writes Emilio Gentile, "wished to evoke the tragic condition of human existence during the epoch of triumphant modernity." (2011, 214, my translation). The painting was "a prophetic reminder" of human vulnerability. It is anything but a feel-good painting, but in its way it was as emblematic of the mood of Europe in 1913 as was that of Delaunay. At that time there were many writers and artists who warned that modern civilization, corrupted by the very forces that had ensured its triumph, was on the brink of a catastrophe. Indeed, not a few were openly contemptuous of the decadence which

they believed modernity and material progress had brought in their wake and looked forward to a regenerative apocalypse. Whether through war, revolution, or a general cultural upheaval, the impending catastrophe would sweep away the old world and liberate the creative forces of a new man. The cultural pessimism exemplified by Beckmann and given literary expression by Friedrich Nietzsche embodied the spirit not so much of a confident *Belle Epoque*, but of an anxious *Fin de Siècle*. The connection between Nietzsche and the Expressionists is unquestionable. The group of Expressionists who identified themselves as *Die Brücke* (*The Bridge*) took its name from a passage in the prologue to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in which Nietzsche defined man as a rope or a bridge over an abyss, "between beast and overman" (Eliel 1989, 17).

The paintings by Delaunay and Beckmann embody two contrasting representations of and attitudes toward modernity – attitudes that jostled for precedence with one another throughout the two decades preceding the First World War. We might be tempted to contrast them in terms of national styles, to agree with Marc about the Delaunay that it is "very French, very Parisian," and to say likewise of the Beckmann that it is very German. European avant-garde movements are often defined by nationality. We speak of German Expressionism, Italian Futurism, French Cubism, British Vorticism, Russian Suprematism and, for the postwar period, of German New Objectivity and French Surrealism. At times, there appeared to be a gulf of incomprehension between these movements. Delaunay confessed himself to be as baffled by the mysticism that animated the young German painters as Marc was by Delaunay's *L'équipe de Cardiff* (Vriesen and Imdahl 1967, 57–58). Yet it is revealing that Delaunay first exhibited his painting in Berlin and that he persisted in his frank correspondence with Marc, with Auguste Macke and Ludwig Meidner, as well as with other German artists who visited him in his Paris studio. His painting of the *Équipe de Cardiff* itself pointed to the way the forces of modernity were bringing the world's great cities, like New York and Paris, closer together. "In Berlin, I did not feel like a foreigner, except for the language," wrote Delaunay after his 1913 visit. "Berlin is luminous" (Vriesen and Imdahl 1967, 57–58). Before 1914, the metropolises of London, Rome, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna drew artists to them like moths to a flame. It was to these cities, which concentrated the essence of modernity, for good or ill, that artists came in search of ideas and inspiration. In Emilio Gentile's words, "they discovered and recognized their spiritual brothers in the heart of a young European community of creators of new art" (my translation, 2011, 243). Thus, the young Max Beckmann, as soon as he had finished his training as an artist in Weimar,

headed off to Paris, very much the capital of the international art world. In a point form autobiography written in 1924, he would write "Beckmann undertook his education as a European citizen in Weimar, Florence, Paris and Berlin" (2002, 201). In 1909, he added his voice to those of seventy-four other German artists who rejected the argument of Carl Vinnen that "a people can only be lifted to the heights by artists of its own flesh and blood" and that German art galleries should therefore adopt protectionist acquisition policies. (Beckmann 2002, 118.) In his own writing, Beckmann's admiration for Cézanne, Signorelli, Tintoretto, El Greco, Goya, Géricault and Delacroix was unconstrained by nationalism. As Count Harry Kessler said of him, Beckmann was "German, but fully recognizing the debt to the French, especially Cézanne and Gauguin and Maillol. He has spent half a year in Paris and clearly observed and learned much there" (2011, 370).

Europe's avant-garde artists therefore shared a great deal in common prior to the First World War, not least their ambivalent relationship to modernity. The war threatened to divide them against one another, just as it severed the international ties that had proved so fruitful prior to 1914. In 1912, Harry Kessler had gone with the Russian impresario, Sergei Diaghilev, to the home of Auguste Rodin, to offer their support to the French sculptor and his American mistress after Rodin had been attacked in the conservative press because of his enthusiasm for Diaghilev's controversial modernist troupe, the *Ballets Russes*. "We sat around him in his bedroom," wrote Kessler, "a Russian, a German, and an American, to console the old Frenchman" (2011, 601). Eight days before the war began, however, Kessler had escorted Rodin from London to Paris as he himself returned to Germany, waving goodbye to his friend at the Gare du Nord. "I already knew that I would never see him again," Kessler wrote in his diary when he learned of Rodin's death in November 1917 (2011, 792). The severing of such friendships within the avant-garde community was not without consequences. French Cubism, in particular, was a victim of war-time xenophobia. Nevertheless, even if a result of the war was the emergence of the very different New Objectivity movement in Germany and Surrealism in France, the similarity of their experiences during the war meant that the relationship of the two countries' avant-gardes with modernity underwent a parallel evolution. The war made real a catastrophe that many had predicted but one that dashed their hopes of regeneration. Instead, it confirmed a much darker vision of modernity's starkly dehumanizing consequences, as humans became the slaves of machines. After the war, artists and intellectuals throughout Europe once again drew inspiration from one another, expressing their indignation at the war and at the modernity the war embodied.

Modernity on Display: Paris and Berlin

The high point in Europe's celebration of modernity was without doubt the Universal Exposition held in Paris in 1900, an occasion which drew fifty million people from all over the world to witness 83,000 exhibits of the latest accomplishments of science and technology. The Exposition highlighted the transformative power of electricity. The giant dynamos in the Palace of Electricity, which were used to illuminate the Eiffel Tower, inspired a religious reverence in the American visitor, Henry Adams, who wrote that he experienced the forty foot dynamos as "a symbol of infinity [...], a moral force, much as the early Christians felt the Cross [...]. Before the end, one began to pray to it; inherited instinct taught the natural expression of man before silent and infinite force" (1918, 205). The force of electricity was intrinsic to the experience of visitors to the Exposition. It illuminated the Exposition at night and powered the moving sidewalk that linked its venues, as well as the electric train which circulated along the same route as the sidewalk but in the opposite direction (*Le Petit Journal* 29 April 1900). The new divinity was not omnipotent, since the Exposition experienced numerous short-circuits and power failures. The *Petit Journal* noted that the illumination of an artificial waterfall was only a partial success; as the waterfall brightened so the lights in local restaurants dimmed (*Le Petit Journal* 14 May 1900). Nonetheless, the Exposition reaffirmed the primacy of France as the heartland of modernity. In his speech at the opening ceremony, President Loubet proudly evoked the achievement of Louis Pasteur in discovering the bacteriological causes of disease. "Death itself recoils before the victorious achievement of the human mind," he declared (*The Times* 16 April 1900). The French claimed to be at the forefront of progress on many fronts. It was the Lumière brothers and Pathé films who led the way in the new film industry, which was rapidly making its presence felt throughout the world as a popular entertainment. It was French inventors, such as André and Edouard Michelin and Armand Peugeot who had pioneered the development of the bicycle as a vehicle of mass leisure and transportation – there were three and a half million bicycles in France by 1914 – before doing the same for the motor car (Weber 1986, 197–207). As the number of automobiles grew, accidents became more frequent and the first speed limits were imposed. The *Petit Journal* warned in 1900 that over-regulation of automobiles might lead to the emigration of a "national industry" ("industrie nationale" – *Le Petit Journal* 3 May 1900) and the loss of thousands of jobs. A 1907 French guidebook provides ample evidence that such concerns were not well founded, taking perverse pride

that more pedestrians were run over by cars on Paris streets than on those of any other city of the world (Levenstein 1998, 134). The French had also surpassed themselves in the pioneering of aviation. It was French pilots who were the first to fly across the English Channel (1909) and from Paris to Rome (1911). The Eiffel Tower, lit up for the exposition of 1900, was subsequently given a new lease on life as a symbol of modernity – and of Paris as the heartland of that modernity – as it was repurposed as a radio tower. In July 1913, it became "the watch of the universe," emitting a powerful signal twice a day for the world to set its clocks by (Emmerson 2013, 45).

Despite such evidence that France was on the cutting edge of the new technologies that were transforming industry, communication and transportation, the French press commented grudgingly on the success of Germany's exhibits at the Exposition of 1900. The *Petit Journal*, noting that Germany had hardly figured in the Exposition of 1889, reported the interest aroused by the display of scale models of German battleships: "the public stands for a long time before these toys that represent enormous factors of destruction" (my translation, *Le Petit Journal* 16 May 1900). Another French writer pointed to the four great dynamos in the Palace of Electricity and a mobile crane capable of lifting a weight of thirty tons as evidence of the "ever ascending march of Germany toward the summit of industry" (my translation, *L'Exposition en Famille: Revue illustrée de l'exposition universelle de 1900* 5 June 1900, 151). Germany, a late starter in terms of its modernization, had leap-frogged its rivals. Berlin, capital of the new German Empire created in 1871, had swelled from 200,000 inhabitants in 1813 to nearly four million a hundred years later. While it may not have been in a position to challenge the status of Paris as the capital of culture – indeed its critics disparaged it as "Chicago on the Spree" – Berlin's credentials as the capital of science and technology were unrivalled. Not only did Berlin possess leading technical institutes and universities, such as the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for the Advancement of Science, which became the home of Albert Einstein at the end of 1913, but it could also boast industrial giants like Siemens and AEG. Berlin dominated Europe's chemical and electrical engineering industries. The city's trams and railway system were unequalled. The tramways were fully electrified by 1902. The above ground city railway, the Stadtbahn, was launched in 1882, and work began on an underground railway in 1896, four years before the first Paris metro line opened. Berlin never hosted a Universal Exposition, but in 1896 it did provide a venue, at Treptower Park, for an Industrial Exposition which covered a larger area than any previous exposition and which included a Hall of Appetite where could be seen such marvels of

modernity as a giant sausage making machine (Large 2000, 82). Walther Rathenau, the head of AEG, self-deprecatingly referred to Berlin as the "parvenu of Great cities and a Great City of parvenus" (Large 2000, 48) but, as Charles Emmerson sums up: "while Paris might retain the crown of the *cité lumière*, Berlin gloried in the title of 'Elektropolis,' city of electricity" (2013, 62).

The effects of modernization, so proudly displayed in cities like Paris and Berlin, were mixed. On the one hand, confidence in European superiority and in the future was enhanced. Delaunay's painting conveyed the message of those who put their faith in modernity that, quite literally, the sky was the limit. On the other hand, modernity brought in its train unanticipated changes that were a source of anxiety. Berlin's expansion was accompanied by the creation of a vast, impoverished working class, many of them living in frightful conditions in infamous rental barracks, others in cardboard shelters that proliferated around the city gates and which the authorities periodically razed. Socialism made rapid progress among this constituency and in 1912 the Social Democratic Party won 75.3% of votes in the elections to the Reichstag (Large 2000, 104). Strikes and demonstrations were common. In France, too, socialists and trade unionists were increasingly militant, clashing regularly with police in May Day demonstrations. In both France and Germany, military insecurity produced contradictory results. In Germany, the military camarilla that surrounded the Kaiser aggressively asserted Germany's status as a world power. The sabre was famously rattled on a number of occasions, most notably during the Morocco Crises of 1905 and 1911. German workers responded by demonstrating for peace. 200,000 protested in Berlin's Treptower Park against their government's actions during the crisis of 1911. Similarly, in France, where fears about the decline of the French population relative to Germany's encouraged the government in 1913 to extend the period of military service from two years to three, massive demonstrations were organized by socialist and trade union leaders on the outskirts of Paris. The *Bataille Syndicaliste* estimated 200,000 participants – "200,000 hearts that beat in unison" against "the patriotic madness" (my translation, *La Bataille Syndicaliste* 17 March 2013) – for the 16 March demonstration held on the Pré-Saint-Gervais against the three-year law. But the "patriotic madness" had its advocates, too. In 1913, two young Frenchmen, Henri Massis and Alfred de Tarde, published a work entitled *The Young of Today*, in which they condemned the decadence of the older generation, insisting that the new generation to which they belonged was imbued with a new spirit, one that rejected the conformism and materialism of the modern world, embracing instead the values of action, patriotism and self-sacrifice: values that could only be fulfilled through war. The authors cited approvingly the words of

Ernest Psichari, whose rediscovery of Catholic and patriotic ideals, as well as of more primitive, warlike values, derived from his experiences fighting Arab tribesmen in the deserts of North Africa: "from an extreme barbarity we have moved on to an extreme of civilization […]. But who knows if, by a reversal that is not uncommon in human history, we may not come back to the place from which we departed? A time is coming where even goodness ceases to be fruitful and becomes weakening and cowardly" (my translation, Agathon 1919, 34).

There is little wonder, then, that the artists and intellectuals who inhabited Europe's capitals had a love-hate relationship with the modern city. Ludwig Meidner, in encouraging his fellow artists to make the city the subject of their art, wrote, "we must finally begin to paint our homeland, the metropolis, for which we have an infinite love [...]. Let's paint what is close to us, our city world! The wild streets, the elegance of iron suspension bridges, gas tanks which hang in white-cloud mountains, the roaring colors of buses and express locomotives, the rushing telephone wires [...], the harlequinade of advertising pillars, and the night [...] big city night" (Large 2000, 73). And yet this professed love for the city expressed itself in Meidner's art in images of urban catastrophe, such as his *Apocalyptic Landscape* and *Burning City*, both produced in 1913. "I cried out inwardly for the far-off rattle and the trumpet blasts of future catastrophes," Meidner wrote later, looking back at his state of mind as he plunged into his most intense phase of apocalyptic creativity. "Did I not crave comet-trails and blazing volcanoes in every background?" (Roters 1989, 70.) The exuberant chaos of the modern city inspired foreboding and visions of the apocalypse.

In his apocalyptic city-scapes Meidner was in tune with the spirit of the age. Whether in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche or the poetry of Georg Heym and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, in the theosophical writing of Rudolf Steiner, in the fiction of Andrej Belyj and H.G. Wells, in the music of Scriabin and Rimsky-Korsakov, in the painting of Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, apocalyptic ideas were in every medium and every place. Encapsulating this apocalyptic mood as well as several different media was Sergei Diaghilev's production of the ballet, *Rite of Spring*, notoriously performed for the first time – and prompting a near riot – at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in Paris on 29 May, 1913. Stravinsky originally proposed the title of *The Great Sacrifice* for this composition, which, through the violent choreography of Nijinsky and the dissonant, primal rhythms of Stravinsky's music, told the story of a pagan ritual in which a young virgin dances herself to death. The ballet captured what Emilio Gentile has described as the "yearning for sacrifice" on the part of the new generation, "which scorned the belle époque of

triumphant modernity and called for a war or a revolution that would destroy a world which appeared old and corrupt, in order to give birth to a new world and a new man" (my translation, 2000, 258–259). In painting, Kandinsky and Marc echoed the same apocalyptic spirit in adopting the title *The Blue Rider* for their almanac, the prospectus of which began: "today art is moving in a direction of which our fathers would never have dreamed. We stand before the new pictures as in a dream and we hear apocalyptic horsemen in the air" (Kandinsky and Marc 1979, 252). Marc's sense of an historical turning point involving an apocalyptic struggle between an old world that was dying and a new one struggling to be born was conveyed in his painting *Fighting Forms*. [Fig. 3.] Richard Cork says of this painting, "despite his belief in the affirmative consequences of destruction, this strangely feverish picture indicates that Marc felt overwhelmed by a sense of havoc ahead" (1994, 28). In February 1914, Marc's foreword to the planned second volume of *The Blue Rider* confirmed his mood of anticipatory dread: "the world is giving birth to a new time; there is only one question: has the time now come to separate ourselves from the old world? Are we ready for the *vita nuova*? This is the terrifying question of our age" (Kandinsky and Marc 1979, 260).

The Great War

When war came in 1914, many artists and intellectuals embraced it as the apocalypse they had anticipated and the opportunity for liberation and renewal for which they hoped. Otto Dix was one of them. Dix himself confessed that "the war was a hideous thing, but there was something tremendous about it too. I couldn't afford to miss it" (Biro 2014, 110). He served for four years in a machine gun detachment on the western front. Franz Marc volunteered for service in an artillery regiment. In his letters from the front, he insisted that the war inspired his creativity. "Without the war, none of these ideas would be 'thinkable,'" he wrote, "and for one thing, they would not even exist" (my translation, 1996, 56). While confessing that "never has such a desire to die or such a thirst for sacrifice taken hold of humanity as it has today," Marc held to the belief that the sacrifice would result in cultural redemption: "but the dead are indescribably happy. If no poet or no music emerges from this war, then none will exist ever again" (my translation, 1996, 81). Max Beckmann, too, although he did not serve in the front lines, got as close to them as he could, serving as a medical orderly at Ypres and on the eastern front. The war, he wrote in his diary on 23 May, 1915, "is in and of itself a manifestation of life, like sickness, love, or lust. And just as I consciously and unconsciously

pursue the terror of sickness and lust, love, and hate to their fullest extent – so I'm trying to do now with this war. Everything is life, wonderfully changing and overly abundant in invention. Everywhere I discover deep lines of beauty in the suffering and endurance of this terrible fate" (Buenger 1997, 173). In Britain, the artist Paul Nash (and his brother John), the cartoonist Bruce Bairnsfather and the poet Edward Thomas joined the London Regiment of the Territorial Army, better known as the Artists' Rifles. In France, too, the poets Guillaume Apollinaire and Charles Péguy, as well as the painters André Mare, Georges Braque and Fernand Léger, were among those who volunteered for active service. Nor were musicians deaf to the call to arms. Arnold Schoenberg, denouncing the decadence of his French and Russian rivals, declared that the war would teach those "mediocre kitschmongers" a lesson (Ross 2007, 72). One of those rivals, Maurice Ravel, saw service as a truck driver. Although eventually invalided out of the army with dysentery, Ravel did at least see front-line service. Schoenberg's service, on the other hand, was limited to playing in a military orchestra (Ross 2007, 73; McAuliffe 2014, 306, 316).

Whether or not they signed up for military service, avant-garde artists, writers and musicians were eager to put their talents to work in the service of their respective countries' war efforts. The total nature of the war made it a bitter contest between cultures: a crusade on behalf of civilization against barbarism, as the Allies imagined it, and on behalf of the deep spiritual values of Germanic "Kultur" against the shallow materialism of Anglo-French "civilization," as the Germans imagined it. A sign of the times was the "Appeal to the World of Culture!" of 4 October 1914 made by 93 German intellectuals and artists, in which they denied the charges that the German army had committed atrocities in Belgium (Jelavich 1999, 44–45). This mobilization of culture implied a repudiation of the international connections that had made the European avant-garde such a rich and diverse community during the years before 1914. Max Beckmann provided an elegiac acknowledgement of this internationalism, writing, "I don't shoot at the French, I have learned so much from them. Nor at the Russians, Dostoyevsky is my friend" (Weissbrich 2014, 42). Harry Kessler, despite his official position orchestrating the production of German war propaganda, also found himself overcome by nostalgia for his cosmopolitan past as he mournfully reflected upon the damage likely to be done to his beloved cultural monuments of Paris by German long-range guns in the spring of 1918: "Notre-Dame, Ste-Chapelle, the Bibliothèque Nationale, so much that is refined, beautiful, irreplaceable, can be struck by chance" (2011, 825). That such sentiments were no longer in vogue after 1914 is illustrated by the fate of the Swiss artist, Ferdinand Hodler, who was swiftly ejected from the Berlin Secession, the Munich Secession

and from the League of German Artists for joining other Swiss artists in protesting the destruction of cultural monuments, notably Rheims Cathedral (Kramer 2007, 28). The repudiation of internationalism after 1914 had lasting consequences. One of the chief casualties of the war's heightened cultural nationalism was French Cubism. Falsely condemned as "the German style" by critics, Cubism fell into disrepute. In 1915, Tony Tollet gave a lecture in Lyons entitled *On the Influence of the Judeo-German Cartel of Parisian Painting Dealers on French Art*. Tollet elucidated a conspiracy theory to the effect that German art dealers "had imposed works stamped with German culture – Pointillist, Cubist, and Futurist, etc., – on the taste of our snobs […]. Everything – music, literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, decorative arts, fashion, everything – suffered the noxious effects of the asphyxiating gases of our enemies" (Silver 1989, 8). Cubism's most famous exponent, the Francophile Spanish artist Picasso, sought an acceptably "latin" form of expression, choosing Ingres as the model for his war-time portraits. Cultural chauvinism also extended to the world of music. The National League for the Defence of French Music sought to ban the performance of works by German and Austrian composers, an initiative that was courageously resisted by Maurice Ravel and Claude Debussy (Richard Strauss was another musician who resisted the pressure of his peers, declining to sign the *Manifesto of the Ninety-Three* (McAuliffe 2014, 307; Ross 2007, 72–73).

The war did at least bring London, Paris, Rome and St. Petersburg (renamed Petrograd because it sounded less Germanic) closer together. Berlin, on the other hand, was thrown back on its own resources. The war had the effect of making Berlin culture more Germanic at the same time as it heightened its cultural significance as capital of the German Reich. As Stefan Goebel writes, "in wartime, the Prussian capital matured into *the* hub of cultural work in Germany; the war marked a turning point in the cultural history of the city overlooked in most accounts of Berlin's meteoric rise in the legendary 1920s" (2007, 187). Berlin's distance from the front intensified the need for patriotic exhibitions to represent the war to its population. In the spring of 1916, the Royal Academy of Arts in Berlin put 665 paintings by war artists on display (Weissbrich 2014, 46). Nail monuments, such as the giant figure of Hindenburg erected in Königsplatz, symbolically linked the blood sacrifice of soldiers at the front with the financial sacrifice of civilians whose donations gave them the right to hammer a nail into the monument. Such exhibitions had their counterparts in allied cities. In London in 1917, "tank banks" roamed the city, providing entertainment and soliciting donations, and in December 1919, 925 works by British war artists commissioned by the government were put on display at the Royal Academy (Wood 2014, 58).

Nevertheless, only in Berlin was there a full scale "War Exposition" opened to the public. In the first four months of 1916, 500,000 people visited this display in the Zoological Gardens. Highlighting the technology of war, including heavy guns, mortars and vehicles, the exposition also featured a display on military medicine. In many ways, as Stefan Goebel points out, Berlin's War Exposition of 1916 was the antithesis of the Paris Universal Exposition of 1900, replacing the "trophies of civilization" with "the trophies of war and violence" (2007, 147).

The enthusiasm of artists for the war did not long survive the encounter with reality. Save perhaps for a few Italian Futurists, nearly all artists who experienced the war were sooner or later repelled by that experience. Some, of course, died with their illusions intact. That was the fate of August Macke, killed in September 1914. Franz Marc was also killed, in March 1916, by which time the war had for him long since lost its allure. "The world, many millennia old, has just enriched itself by its bloodiest year," he wrote to his wife on the first day of 1916, "it is frightful to think of it; and all that for NOTHING" (my translation, 1996, 150). Those who survived also experienced a change of heart. When Max Beckmann arrived in Flanders in the spring of 1915, he was brimming with enthusiasm. "For me the war is a miracle," he wrote, "even if a rather uncomfortable one. My art can gorge itself here" (Buenger 1997, 159). On May 4, having bolstered their courage with a bottle of champagne and another of red wine, Beckmann and a friend "went for a walk in the grenade fire" as if it were a walk in the rain. For a moment this satisfied his longing for ultimate experiences: "standing there in the middle between life and death gave me a delirious, almost evil sense of joy" (Buenger 1997, 165). Later the same day, however, having witnessed the suffering of the wounded and the dying in a front-line first aid station, as well as attending a funeral while under enemy fire, Beckmann confessed, "now for the first time, I've had enough" (Buenger 1997, 165). His written descriptions of the front evoke a mirror image of the modern city-scape. "Unforgettable and strange," he wrote of his first visit to the front lines. "In all those holes and sharp trenches. Those ghostly passageways and artificial forests and houses. That fatal hissing of the rifle bullets and the roar of the big guns. Strangely unreal cities, like lunar mountains, have emerged there." (Buenger 1997, 163.) In June, he penned a description of Ypres: "I saw Ypres appearing like a mirage in the hot mists of the distance. Monstrous sulfurous yellow craters from explosions, over them the pale violet, hot sky, and the cold, rose-colored skeleton of a village church. Saw the entire strangely flat chain of Ypres's heights; it has in it something of the majestic barrenness and desertion of death and destruction. No more isolated house skeletons and destroyed churches – instead, entire plateaus

of house skeletons, and wide, desolate plains thick with crosses, helmets, and churned up graves" (Buenger 1997, 175). It was descriptions like this that informed Beckmann's most important war-time painting. His unfinished *Resurrection*, as Jay Winter writes, is "anything but triumphal." Depicting his war-time companions "emerging from the long night of war into an uncertain day, lit by a dying sun," Beckmann's painting is devoid of hope in the future: "brooding on the disaster rather than on the better days to come" (1995, 166–167).

Otto Dix was another artist whose war experience destroyed his faith in the war as a salutary, life-renewing crisis. Dix's corpus of post-war paintings and etchings is the most devastating critique of the war and its consequences produced by any artist. One of those images, *Skat Players* (1920), [Fig. 4] helps to provide an insight into the nature of the artists' disillusionment and the way in which the war had affected their perceptions of modernity. Dix's painting is an unsympathetic portrayal of disabled veterans who, while still wearing the trappings of the military institution that was responsible for their mutilation, continue to function only through the aid of mechanical contrivances: ear trumpets, wooden legs, metallic jaw-bones, and so on. Where flesh ends and mechanical contrivance begins is anything but clear. Stephen Forcer writes, "Dix's image speaks for itself: the card-playing figures in the painting have passed through what Winston Churchill called 'gigantic agencies for the slaughter of men by machinery' and the same age of technological 'development' that allowed armies to increase the killing power of munitions has also afforded grotesquely innovative ways of patching up the soldiers' injuries" (2014, 87).

Dix's work encapsulated a view of the war and its consequences that he shared with other artists and intellectuals: that modern technology, far from accomplishing the triumph of humanity and civilization, had been the very agent of their demise. Fernand Léger wrote that the war had made human beings into unconscious slaves of machines: "individual action is reduced to a minimum. You pull the trigger on a gun and you fire without seeing. You hardly act. You no longer have the intoxication of action and you still have, even more than before, the danger of death […]. In sum, we have come to this, *human beings acting unconsciously* and making machines act; we are very close to abstraction" (emphasis in the original, my translation, 1990, 22). Léger was one French artist, at least, who remained true to Cubism. His 1917 painting of *The Card Game* resembles Dix's *Skat Players* both in terms of its subject – soldiers or ex-soldiers playing cards – and in terms of its indictment of a mechanized war and its dehumanizing effects. Léger's soldiers are reduced to a chaotic jumble of tubular metal fragments. Like Beckmann's,

Léger's attitude toward the war was one of appalled fascination. "It is something like an immense cemetery where innumerable grave-diggers all dressed the same mechanically kill and bury a little bit more every day," he wrote in one of his letters (my translation, 1990, 53). In another, his Cubist imagination shades into Surrealism. "I adore Verdun," he wrote. "There are at Verdun completely unexpected subjects designed to make my Cubist spirit rejoice. For example, you find a tree with a chair perched upon it. Supposedly sensible people would treat you as an idiot if you presented them with a painting composed in this way. However all you have to do is copy. Verdun authorizes all pictorial fantasies" (my translation, 1990, 72). The writer Drieu la Rochelle shared Léger's insight into the ways in which the war had transformed the relationship between humans and machines. "Modern war," wrote Drieu in his 1934 novel, *The Comedy of Charleroi*, "is a maleficent revolt of the matter enslaved by man" (my translation, 1934, 88). Men, he said, had been dehumanized and vanquished by "this modern war, this war of iron and not of muscles. The war of science and not of art." He warned that "it is necessary for man to master the machine which surpassed him in this war – and which now surpasses him in peace" (my translation, 1934, 75–76).

That medical science was implicated in this twin process of mechanization and dehumanization was recognized both by practitioners and by observers. Georges Duhamel referred to himself ironically as "a good worker in human flesh" (my translation, Duhamel and Duhamel 2008, 414) in describing the exhausting, production-line surgery in which he was employed by the French army. In a short story entitled *The Fleshmongers*, he described a medical review board indifferently approving men in varying states of health fit for front-line duty (1919, 121–134). George Grosz's *Fit for active service*, [Fig. 5] in which a doctor in thrall to the military authorities is shown approving a skeleton for service in the army, would have been a perfect illustration for Duhamel's story (Duhamel 2005, 279). A similar complicity in the abuse of military and medical power was described in the musical vein by Alban Berg, whose unhappy wartime service gave rise to the modernist opera, *Wozzeck*, which described the descent into homicidal madness of a soldier persecuted by the combined efforts of a captain and a doctor (Ross 2007, 72–79). Another story by Duhamel, entitled simply *Civilization*, described the autoclave – a machine for sterilizing instruments – as the beating heart of a mobile surgical unit. The machine, he wrote, was "raised like a monarch on a sort of throne." It "filled the universe with its strident cry," he continued, while medical personnel "seemed to execute, harmoniously, a religious dance, a sort of severe and mysterious ballet" around it (my translation, 2005, 385–388). In this

passage Duhamel evoked, like Henry Adams, the religious awe inspired by modern technology. But for Duhamel the machine he described was not so much awe-inspiring as it was awful. Although recognizing that the ambulance was a force for good, Duhamel marvelled that a machine of such complexity was necessary "to nullify a bit of the immense harm done by the age of machines" (my translation, 2005, 389). The conclusion to his reflection on the autoclave was scarcely a comforting one: "I say to you, civilization is truly not in this object any more than in the shiny instruments of the surgeon. Civilization is not in any of that terrible junk; and if it is not in the heart of man, well! It is nowhere" (my translation, 2005, 392). Duhamel's wartime reflection was not so very far from that of Hermann Bahr as the latter sought to provide a definition of Expressionism: "so, brought very near the edge of destruction by 'civilization,' we discover in ourselves powers which cannot be destroyed. With the fear of death upon us, we muster these and use them as spells against 'civilization.' Expressionism is the symbol of the unknown in us in which we confide, hoping that it will save us" (Bahr 1925, 88). Both the Frenchman and the German had arrived at the same insight at about the same time, that man "has become the tool of his own work [...], since he serves the machine" (Bahr 1925, 83) and that any hope of salvation must come from within.

Conclusion

What Duhamel and Bahr gave voice to was nothing less than a loss of faith. The naïve faith in modernity expressed by Henry Adams in 1900 and by Robert Delaunay in 1913 was dealt a severe blow by the Great War. As Philipp Blom writes, the forces of modernity that had been apparent before 1914 and which had determined the shape of the Great War would continue to transform the world after 1918, "but now the optimism about technology had been crushed, the idea of a glorious and uninterrupted march of progress lay in ruins, and faith in the values underpinning society had been profoundly shaken" (2015, 8–9). It is this loss of faith that provides the context for the dystopian films representing the enslavement or defeat of humans by machines such as Fernand Léger's Surrealist *Ballet Mécanique* (1924) and Fritz Lang's Expressionist masterpiece, *Metropolis* (1926).

Despite the severing of international cultural connections during the war years, the common experience of the war ensured that Europe's artists and intellectuals evolved along parallel lines during the conflict. There was, of course, a refuge for those whose internationalism was so deeply rooted that they refused to abandon it in 1914. Figures as diverse as Romain Rolland and Lenin sought asylum in

Switzerland. It was also in Switzerland that the Dada movement was born. The participants in this movement, which defined itself by its rejection of the war, were self-consciously cosmopolitan in their outlook. This was exemplified by the name change of one of its leading exponents, Helmuth Herzfeld, who took the name John Heartfield in 1916. Otto Dix, the most famous of Germany's anti-war painters of the 1920s and 1930s, exhibited his work alongside that of the Dadaists. His most famous works also betray international influences, most notably his painting *Flanders*, inspired by the writing of Henri Barbusse. Indeed, despite their obvious differences, during the postwar years both French Surrealists and German Expressionists were inspired by the Dada movement and, in their unique and inimitable ways, expressed their rejection of the war, as well as of the values that had made it possible. Luc Albert Moreau was not a Surrealist and probably would have objected to being categorized as belonging to any particular movement. Severely wounded during the war, he spent the postwar period obsessively painting images of his dead comrades. Like other artists, relatively few, who had the courage to tackle this theme, Moreau abandoned Modernism for a realism reminiscent of Courbet. Nevertheless, his depictions of French soldiers as dehumanized trench warriors [Fig. 6] bear a striking similarity to an etching by Dix of German stormtroopers [Fig. 7]. In short, German Expressionism was a movement that was, like all the other cultural "isms" of the day, deeply implicated in the debates over the meaning of modernity that reached a critical moment in the Great War of 1914–1918. As Stephan Wiese writes, "once the history of the avant-garde within Modernism is perceived in this way as a simultaneous process, Expressionism loses its national prefix" (1988, 122). Like other contemporaneous movements elsewhere, German Expressionism sought to come to terms with the human implications of the machine age. Ultimately, the experience of the war confirmed and accentuated its pessimism. The apocalyptic hopes of a new world and a new man of the pre-war generation gave way to the morbidity of the postwar generation. Faith in the transformative power of modern machines or of the human will did not entirely vanish, but for the time being at least, it had moved to the margins of cultural and political life.

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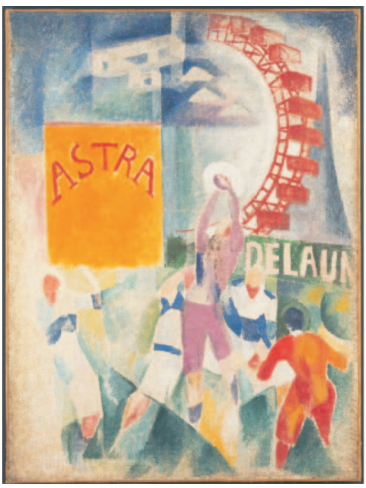

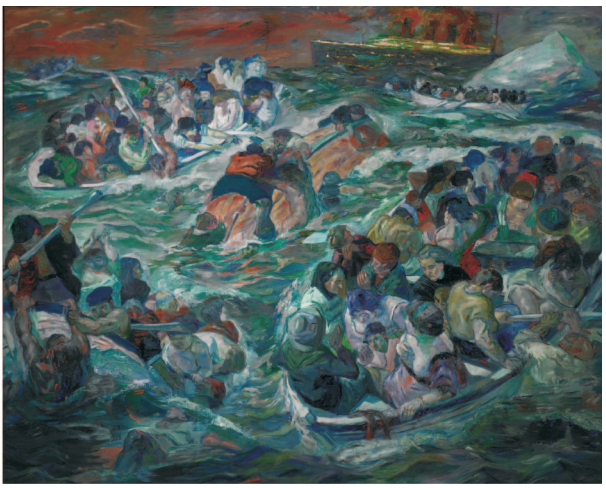

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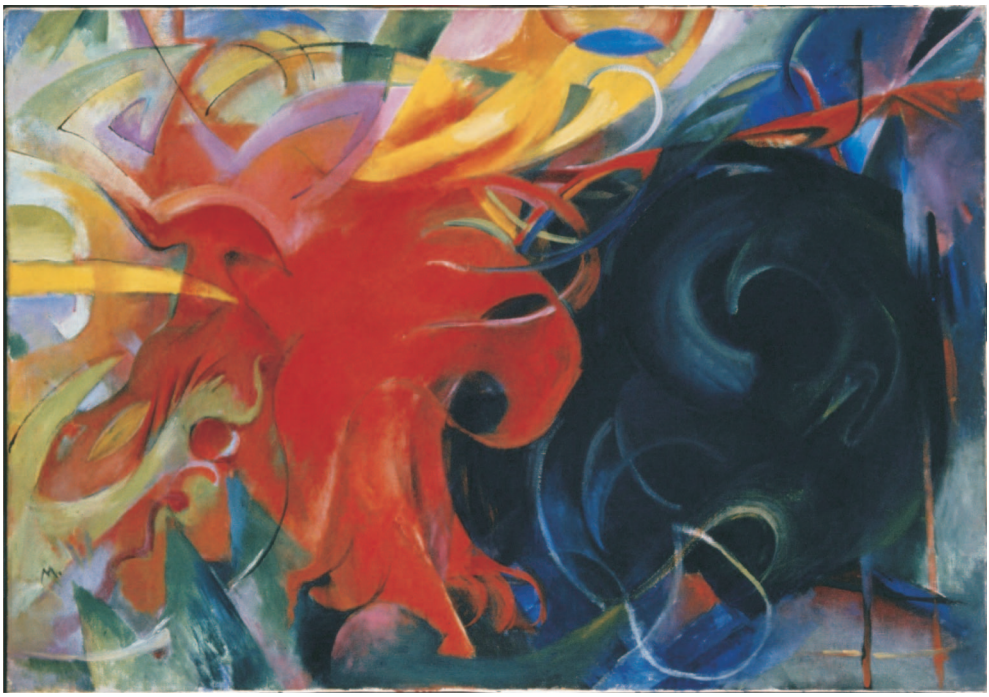

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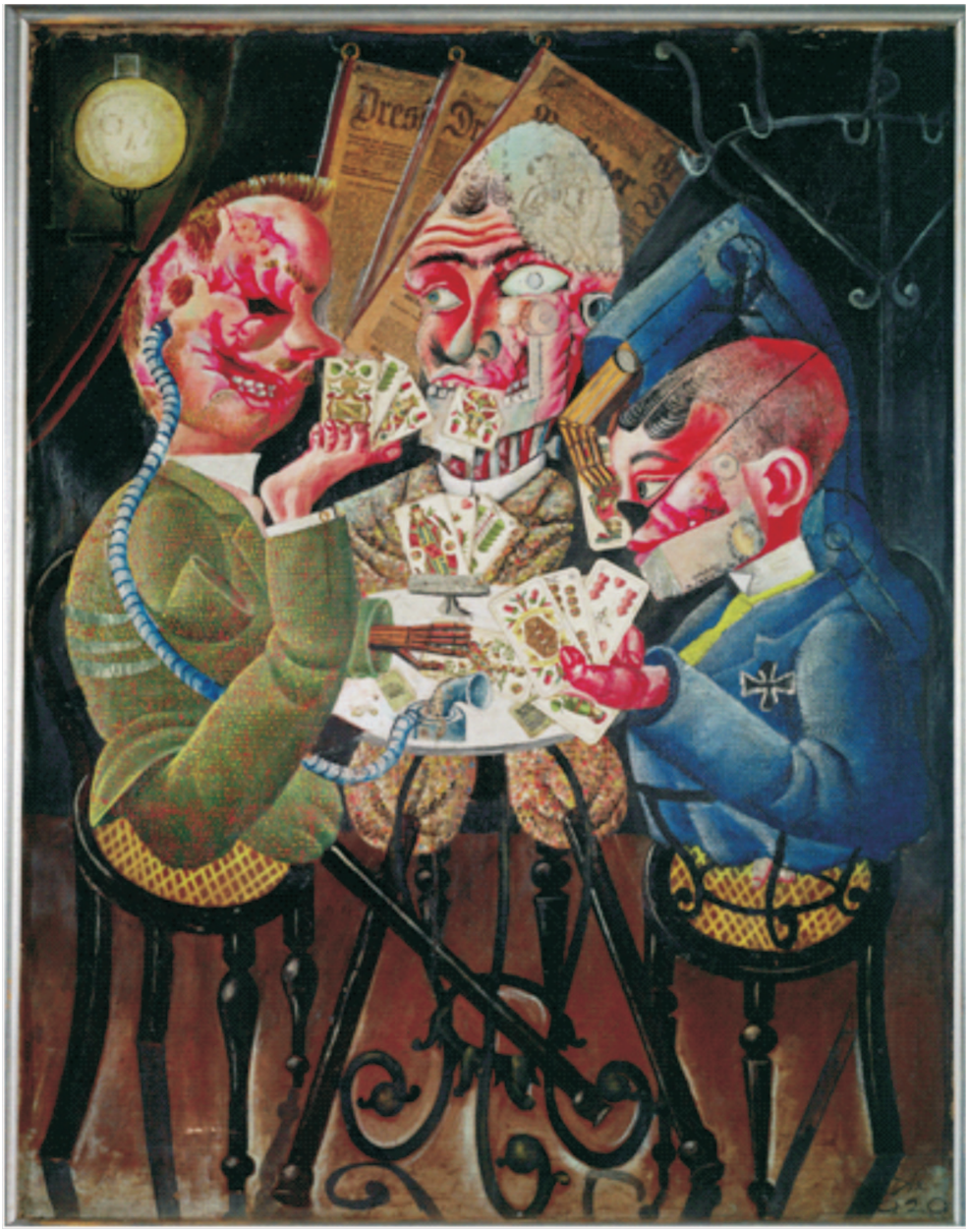

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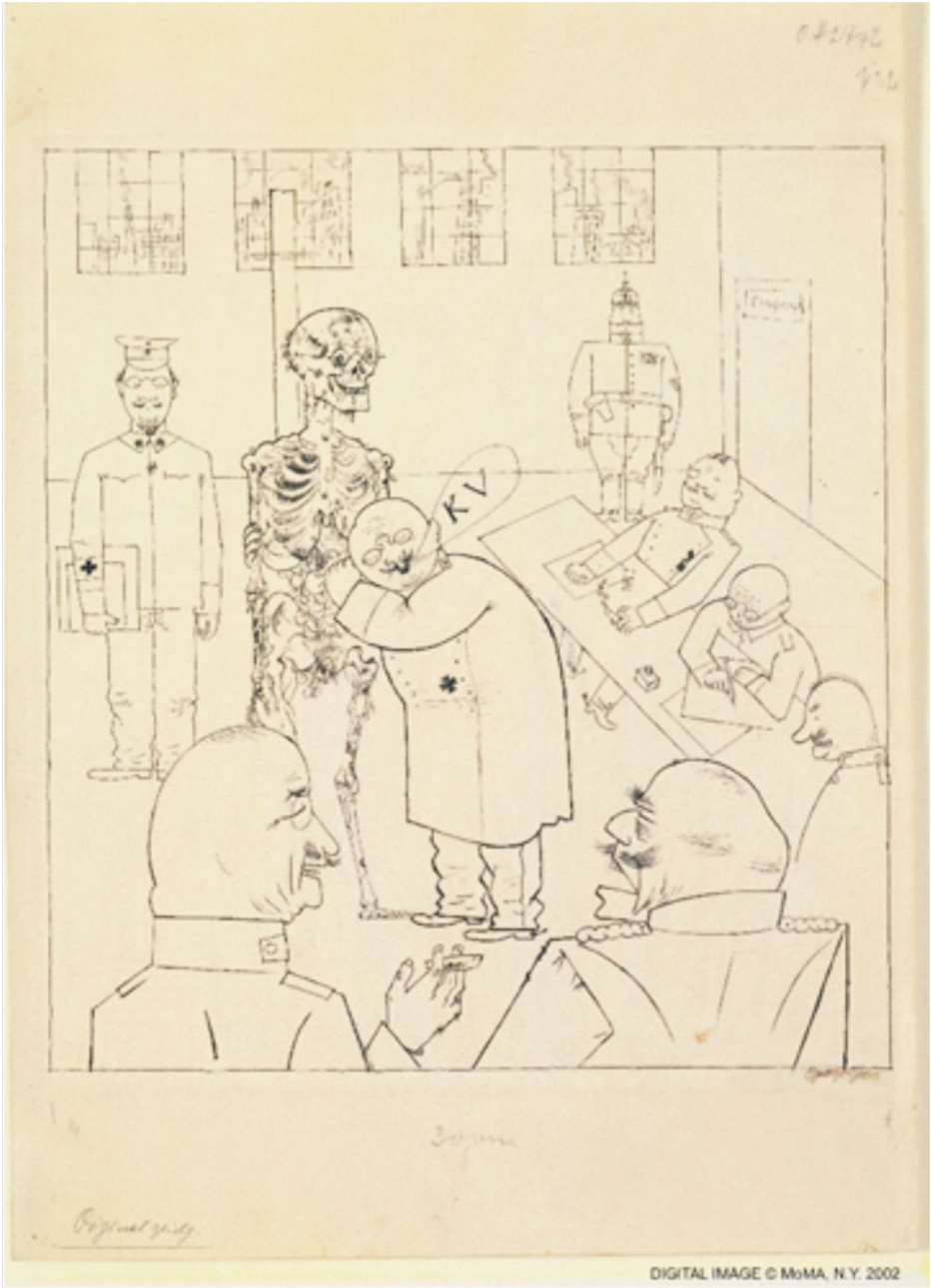

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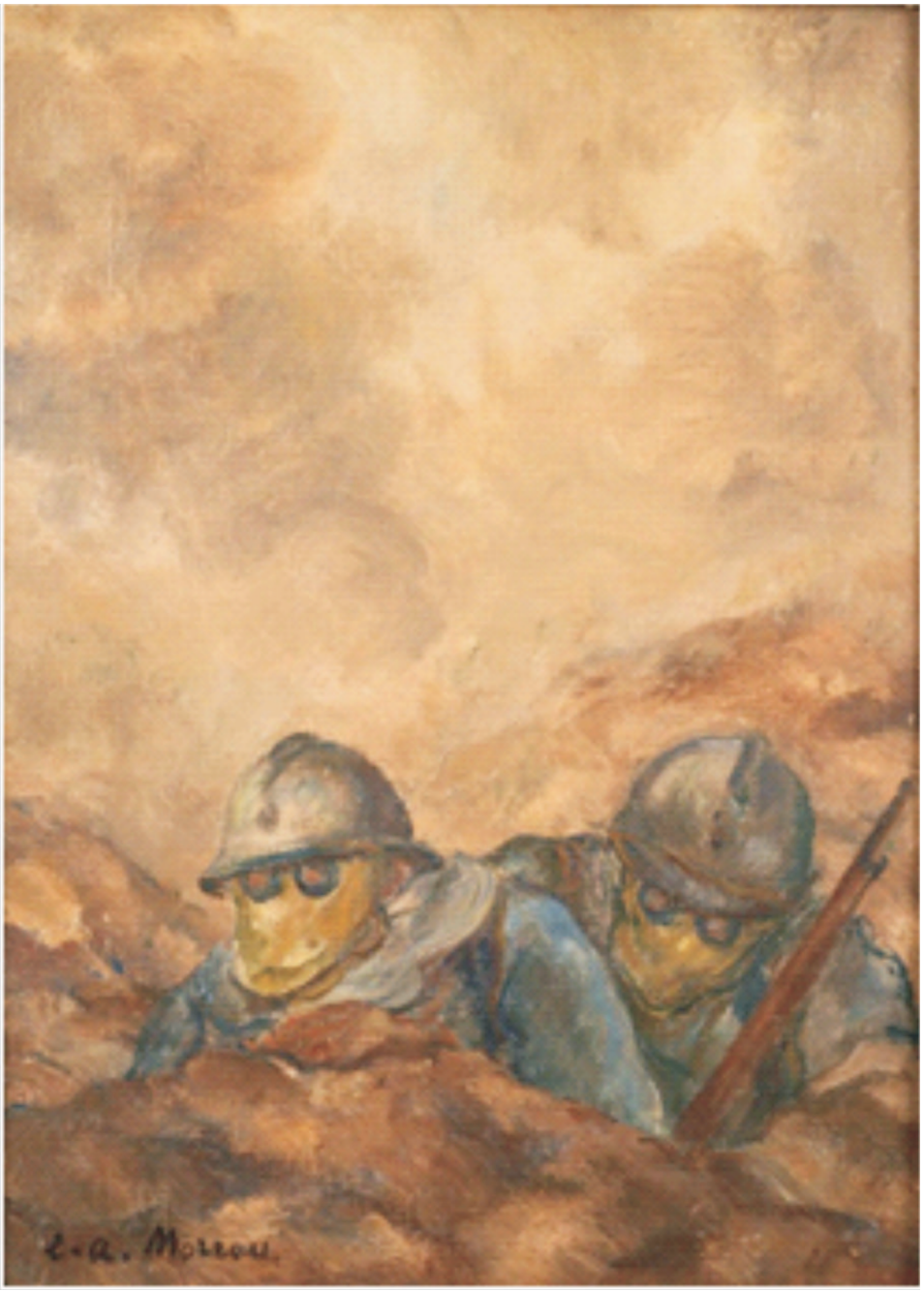

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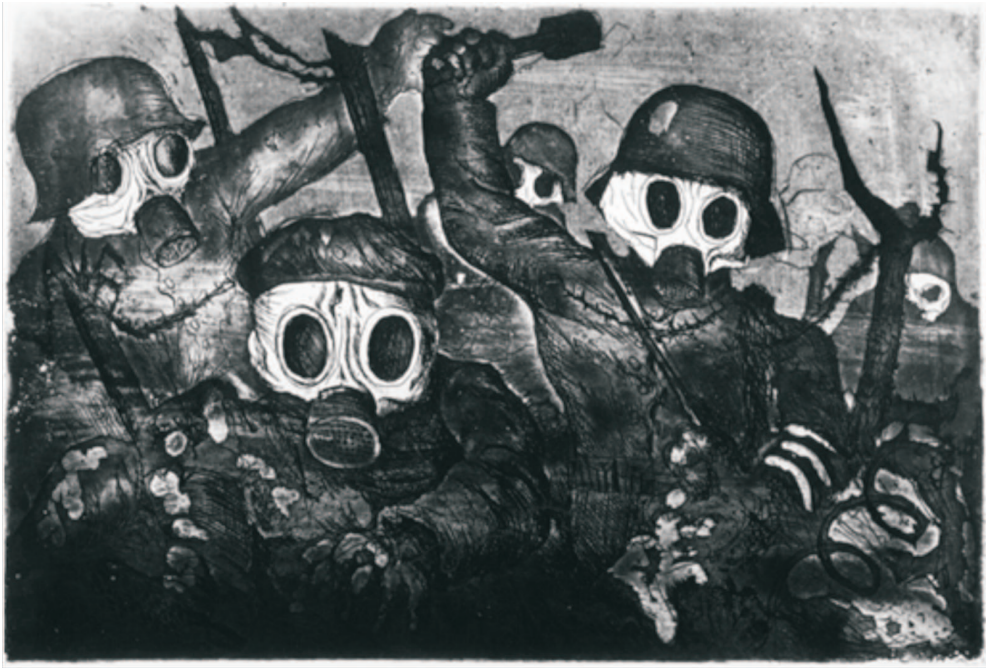

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German Cinematic Expressionism in Light of Jungian and Post-Jungian Approaches

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"True symbolism occurs where the particular represents the more general […] as living, momentary revelation of the unfathomable."
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1949, no. 314.

Abstract. Prerogative of what Jung calls visionary art, the aesthetics of German Expressionist cinema is "primarily expressive of the collective unconscious," and – unlike the psychological art, whose goal is "to express the collective consciousness of a society" – they have succeeded not only to "*compensate* their culture for its biases" by bringing "to the consciousness what is *ignored* or repressed," but also to "*predic*t something of the future direction of a culture" (Rowland 2008, italics in the original, 189–90). After a theoretical introduction, the article develops this idea through the example of three visionary works: Arthur Robison's *Warning Shadows (Schatten,* 1923), Fritz Lang's *The Weary Death* aka *Destiny (Der müde Tod*, 1921), and Paul Leni's *Waxworks (Wachsfigurenkabinett*, 1924).

Keywords: Symbolism, Expressionism, semiotic vs. symbolic approach, psychological vs. visionary art, shadow, animus/anima, Faust-Mephistopheles dyad.

This essay argues that the longevity of German Expressionist cinema as a unique expression of the complex historical, cultural, and psychological environment of the Weimar republic (1918–1933), is above all predicated on its sophisticated cinematic language, defined as "symbolic expression" of "illogical and irrational factors, transcending our omprehension," which "cannot be dealt with rationally" (Jung qtd. in Smythe 2012, 151). Indeed, as has been noted (Guffey 2016), the most popular medium of the day invariably displays affinity to irrational and often times tabooed factors, related to sex and madness, but above all – to death and the occult. German filmmakers were among the firsts to see "the possibilities of film […] as a method of transmitting" spiritual knowledge, marginalized by

modernity, and simply moved in to occupy the niche (Guffey 2016, 171). And while *The Student of Prague* (*Der Student von Prag*, Paul Wegener and Stellan Rye, 1913) and *The Golem* (*Der Golem*, Henrik Galeen and Paul Wegener, 1915) appeared well before the officially endorsed beginnings of German cinematic Expressionism, their remakes – by the same crew and under the same titles – went to become staples of its canon.

According to Siegfried Kracauer's book *From Caligari To Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film,* published in 1947, these early works "introduced to the screen the theme that was to become an obsession of the German Cinema: a deep and fearful concern with the foundations of the self," and the place of that self within the increasingly destabilized world of Wilhelmine Germany (1974, 30). Lotte Eisner, in her 1952 book, *The Haunted Screen*: *Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt*, alludes also strongly to the metaphysical tendencies of what came to be known as German Cinematic Expressionism, despite the protests of scholars who insist that Weimar cinema (1918–1933) is much more than the two dozen or so Expressionist films. But even Thomas Elsaesser, whose thorough study *Weimar Cinema and After: Germany's Historical Imaginary* (2000) wraps up decades of research into the subject, admits that, despite their diversity, "in retrospect, a unity imposes itself on these films, their subject and stories" (2000, 3). "It seems," he goes on to say, "the films usually indexed as Weimar Cinema, have one thing in common – they are invariably constructed as picture puzzles, which consistently, if not systematically refuse to be tied down to a single meaning" (2000, 3). And, one feels tempted to add, open themselves most readily – and consistently, if not systematically – to interpretation in light of concepts borrowed from clinical psychology. Which is not surprising since, as Elsaesser writes, the most "significant utterances" of that time came from "the same three nineteenth-century thinkers: Nietzsche's genealogy of morals, Marx's notion of ideology, and Freud's concept of the unconscious" (2000, 152).

Indeed, the "deep and fearful concern with the foundations of the self" and the ensuing anxieties, could – and have – been attributed by Marxist scholars to the consequences of the humiliating post-war Weimar arrangements, which intensified the extant class struggle.[1] These deep-seated psychological concerns and social anxieties could also be seen as having triggered what Friedrich

1 See Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell for a balanced review of German Expressionism and its social and political background (2003, 101–117). On the other hand, Marxist-based approaches to Weimar culture focus predominantly on the enormous influence of the Soviet avant-garde cinema of Eisenstein, Vertov, and Pudovkin (Braskén, 2014).

Nietzsche describes as the "beginnings of the slave revolt in morality" and "the ressentiment of those beings who, denied the proper response of action, compensate for it only with imaginary revenge" (2006, 20, see also Sipiora 2016). And, as Kracauer's study and its followers demonstrate, the reflection of these concerns and anxieties on the Weimar screen inevitably made psychoanalysis a preferred approach for analysing German Expressionist cinema. All the more that the psychoanalytical utterances of Sigmund Freud, based on the symbolism of dreams, were already entering the mainstream intellectual discourse, thus undoubtedly influencing the filmmakers.

Symbolism and Expressionism

German Expressionist cinema – along with the visual arts, music, theatre, and literature – obviously plays a significant role in the imaginary revenge of the Expressionist *Weltanschauung* against capitalist modernity and Enlightenment rationalism, considered to be the major causes behind the slaughter at the fronts of WWI, and of the exacerbated exploitation of the masses that followed. However, the metaphysical shift in German cinema, mentioned above, is prompted not so much by the creative ressentiment and the socially critical impetus of the Expressionist movement, but by the indignation – shared by German Romanticism and the decadent French Symbolism – with the profanation and destruction, brought on by the Industrial Revolution, of the "'noble', 'aristocratic', 'spiritually high-minded'" values (Nietzsche 2006, 13). German cinematic Expressionism came to be associated with the mysticism and melancholy of late German Romanticism – usually projected on Medieval or Classical past, and with the Symbolist trend in paintings which – with its ancient ruins, majestic twilight landscapes, vertically elongated Gothic shapes, and almost pathological fascination with death and afterlife – represented a passionate escapist reaction to realism and naturalism of the 19th-century literature, art, and philosophy.

Moreover, the triumph of Eros over Logos,[2] associated initially with Symbolism, acquired an increasingly ideological meaning after WWI with inward-looking movements like Expressionism, and certainly with Surrealism, both positioning themselves firmly against the rational and optimistic extroversion of Futurism and Constructivism which served, albeit briefly, as inspiration to ideologically opposite

2 According to Rowland, "Eros stands for psychic capacity of relatedness and feeling, while Logos – for spiritual meaning and reason." While she accepts these concepts, she critiques Jung's "alignment" of Eros with the feminine, and Logos with the masculine, as "contemporary Jungian analytic practice treats Eros and Logos as equally available to both genders" (2008, 185–6).

but equally murderous regimes – Fascism and Communism – whose official figurative artistry was to eradicate all symbolism and abstraction in the 1930s.

The Semiotic and the Symbolic

It is worth mentioning that post-WWI philosophical thought also privileged the fluidity of symbols over the concreteness of words because of their inability, as Ludwig Wittgenstein writes,[3] to express imponderable values like "religion, the meaning of life, logic and philosophy" (Monk 2005, 17–21). Yet it is the major developments in analytical psychology – more specifically the publication in 1912 of the first version of *Symbols of Transformation* (revised in 1952 as *Psychology of the Unconscious*) by the Swiss clinical psychologist Carl Gustav Jung – which brought to the fore the importance of symbols for the human psyche. In addition to making public his break with Freud by openly declaring a radically different stand on the contentious issues of the collective unconscious[4] and the nature of the libido,[5] it established a different way of handling symbols. Rather than explaining them away, as Freud proposed in his *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), Jung suggested amplifying them. Thus amplification was gradually accepted as "a general comparative strategy for exploring symbolic meaning" of 'primordial images' – later called archetypes[6] – from the collective unconscious (Smythe 2012, 155).

Fittingly, Jungian scholar William Smythe relates amplification to "'discovery procedure' rather than to method of verification," since its goal is "to exemplify, elaborate and embellish meaning without ever exhausting or explaining it" (2012, 154). Such a "distinction between the conceptual" – or the semiotic – and "the

3 In *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* Ludwig Wittgenstein affirms that "a picture is a model of reality" (Proposition 2.12) since "what a picture represents is its sense" (Proposition 2.221), yet is quick to warn us that "it cannot be discovered from the picture alone whether it [that is, the sense of reality] is true or false" (Proposition 2.224) (2015, 16–18). Therefore his last Proposition, no. 7, proclaiming that "whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent," could be read, among other things, as a critique of the complexity of philosophical conceptualization but also as a nod to the domain of the non-conceptual, that is, the symbolic (2015, 109).

4 In later writings Jung uses the term objective psyche.

5 While Freud defines the libido as predominantly sexual in nature, Jung insists that the libido is the psychic energy in general, and therefore of quantitative, not qualitative nature.

6 According to Smythe, "Jung used the term archetype to refer to basic patterns or forms of meaning that are widely distributed across cultures and reflect perennial, existential concerns of human life everywhere […]. In his final, definitive reformulation of the theory of archetypes, Jung distinguished archetypal expressions, in the form of personal images and cultural symbols, from the archetype as such, which he conceived as 'irrepresentable' and generally non-amenable to conceptual articulation or explicit representation" (2012, 152–53).

non-conceptual" – or the symbolic – could be compared to "the contrast between the denotative function of conceptual language and the expressive function of symbols" (Smythe 2012, 154). In addition to "the individual productions of patients in psychotherapy," amplification is thus successfully applied "across a wide range of diverse contexts," including "cultural products of religious and mythological traditions" (Smythe 2012, 154), and certainly – in literary and art criticism (see Susan Rowland 2010, 2013, and 2018). As Post-Jungian film scholar Don Fredericksen remarks, amplification is the only possible way of grasping "the extraordinary fascination," experienced when symbols from the objective psyche (or the collective unconscious) captured on screen, "transcend the personal association" of the conscious mind (2001, 29).

In his seminal article "Jung/sign/symbol/film" Fredericksen – basing his argument on Jung's understanding of sign and symbol – emphasizes amplification as an indispensable tool for the symbolic approach to film. In his view, the extant semiotic approaches, which he defines as brought on by the "rationalistic hubris" – Christian Metz's theory of the Imaginary Signifier, Freud- and Lacan-inspired theory, and Marxism – are aimed at explaining rationally every symbol, and turning it into sign once and for all (2001, 28). He then contrasts Freudian semiotics and Jungian symbolism on the basis of their approach to "the incest imagery" in the Oedipus complex. While Freud found this imagery "annoyingly persistent" even after the "concretistic, allegedly semiotic meaning was made time and again conscious to the patient" (Fredericksen 2001, 19), Jung saw "what appeared to Freud as mere regression into the infantile […] as a necessary step into the 'maternal depths' for spiritual unfoldment and psychic wholeness" (Fredericksen 2001, 19). In other words, Freud aimed at explaining away psychic material in rational terms and Jung encouraged amplification of its symbolism. Fredericksen concludes that "while the majority of films are predominantly semiotic in character […] and [represent] manifestations of social codes" (Fredericksen 2001, 27), a number of avant-garde, experimental works are construed like "symbolic products of the psyche," which would "lack in meaning were not a symbolic one conceded to them" (Jung qtd. in Fredericksen 2001, 27). Fredericksen's approach to the semiotic and the symbolic follows closely Jung's understanding of "psychological" or "introvert" and "visionary" or "extrovert" art.[7] Thus in Jung's view, Part I of *Faust* is an example of psychological or introverted art, which yields

7 What is meant by introvert and extrovert here is that psychological art is self-sufficient, enclosed within itself, while the visionary is open, and entirely dependent on the recipient for interpretation.

to Fredericksen's semiotic approach, since it remains within the boundaries of the human experiences and human consciousness. Unless, of course "we expect [to be explained] why Faust fell in love with Gretchen, or why she was driven to murder her child" (Jung 1989b, vol. 15, 88–89). In Part II, however, "the material for artistic expression is no longer familiar," it is "something strange that derives its expression from the hinterland of man's mind, as if it had emerged from the abyss of pre-human ages, or from a superhuman world of contrasting light and darkness, […] a primordial experience which surpasses man's understanding and to which in his weakness he may easily succumb" (Jung 1989b, vol. 15, 90).

The Psychological Cinema of Robert Wiene

In her succinct way, post-Jungian scholar Susan Rowland clarifies further the above division by suggesting that "psychological art expresses mainly the collective consciousness of a society," and that "the artist has already done most of the psychic work for the audience" (2008, 187–8). With this in mind, it is easy to see why Robert Wiene stands out among the few Expressionist directors of psychological cinema, who seek to "express what the collective is consciously debating or concerned about," and ensure that a rational explanation of the numerous mysterious occurrences in their films is obtained (Rowland 2008, 88). Thus the viewer – as Tzvetan Todorov has it in his discussion of the fantastic – after some "hesitation between the natural and the unnatural explanation of the events described," is steered towards the conclusion that "the laws of reality remain intact," and "the work belongs to the uncanny" (Todorov 1975, 41). In *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, 1920) for example, the protagonist, Frank tells a strange story about the head doctor of a local mental hospital, who in some mysterious ways has adopted the personality of the medieval necromancer Caligari, and is committing a series of murders by the hand of Cesare, a malleable somnambulist in his care. Until the very end of the film Wiene masterfully coaxes viewers' hesitation as to whether Frank's story belongs to the realm of the unexplained and the "marvelous," where "new laws of nature must be entertained to account for the phenomena," or is a case of psychotic transference where patients project – or unconsciously transmit phantasmagoric desires and aggressive impulses – on their doctor (Todorov 1975, 41). The hesitation reaches its climax in the penultimate scene, where Frank confronts the head doctor publicly: "you think I am insane? It is the director who is insane! He is Caligari, Caligari, Caligari." Weine – in tune with Freud's musings about transference being

sometimes "the best tool" in psychiatric treatment, but also "its greatest threat" (Demir) – resolves the hesitation in favour of the "natural laws of reality." And lets the doctor utter the final words: "at last I understand his delusion. He thinks I am that mystic Caligari, now I know exactly how to cure him." [Fig. 1.]

For *The Hands of Orlac (Orlacs Hande*, 1924), Wiene adapts the eponymous novel by Maurice Renard, the forerunner of the dystopian bio-punk subgenre. And makes the story about the transplantation of a murderer's hands onto the talented pianist Orlac, who has just lost his in a horrific railway accident, as self-explanatory and as rationally explicit as possible. He excelled in this endeavour to such an extent that, as an excellent blog on silent cinema affirms, "the Interior Ministry of Saxony tried, without success, to have the film prohibited" for giving "too detailed information on the working methods of the police [which they believed] could give criminals ideas to commit a crime without being caught" (A Cinema History). Yet again, the nocturnal scene of the train crash, and especially the scenes where Orlac is seized by terror, imagining the acts his new hands might be capable of, are designed with stunning Expressionist elegance, both uncannily macabre and out-worldly marvellous.

Wiene's *Raskolnikov* (*Raskolnikow,* 1923), along with Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's *Tartutfe (Tartüff,* 1925) and Fritz Lang's *Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler* (*Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler*, 1922), also belong to this category as their psychological conspicuousness stems from their famous critical-realist literary prototypes. And while the unusual camera angles, chiaroscuro lighting, and the generally gloomy nocturnal atmosphere – or their *Stimmung* as Lotte Eisner would have it – are unquestionably Expressionist, they are hardly original. Or, as Dr. Mabuse's somewhat self-derogatory comment sums it up: "Expressionism is mere pastime ... but why not? Everything today is pastime!" (A Cinema History).

Shadows, The Weary Death, and *Waxworks* as Visionary Art

According to Rowland, "visionary art is primarily expressive of the collective unconscious. As such it *compensates* the culture for its biases, brings to the consciousness what is *ignored* or repressed, and may *predict* something of the future direction of a culture" (italics in the original, 2008, 189–90). In any case, neither ego, nor consciousness cannot be "excluded from a work of art, so nothing is hundred percent of the unconscious," therefore "visionary and psychological [art] are linked categories pushed apart to polar extremes, not wholly different realms"

(Rowland 2008, 190). Unlike the psychological works, discussed above, the three visionary works under scrutiny here have remained on the margins of most seminal writings on German Expressionism, since semiotic approaches fail to capture their symbolic energy – always already open to any number of meanings conceded to them – generated by the manifestation of the archetypes at their core. Thus Arthur Robison's *Warning Shadows* (*Schatten*, 1923), Fritz Lang's *The Weary Death* aka *Destiny (Der müde Tod*, 1921), and Paul Leni's *Waxworks (Wachsfigurenkabinett*, 1924) are amplified in terms of the shadow, the *anima*, and the *animus*, which also happen to be the archetypes "most clearly characterized from empirical point of view," because of their "most frequent and most disturbing influence on the ego" (Jung 1968, vol. 9ii, 8). To quote Jung again, their amplification elucidates the fascination with "something strange that derives […] from the hinterland of the mind"– that is, from the collective unconscious, and therefore yields "new laws of nature," coming from the "realm of the fantastic marvelous" as Torodov suggests.

Warning Shadows (subtitled *A Nocturnal Hallucination*) is a lesser known, but very original film which, as its title implies, creates a riddle of shadow symbolism, which works on semantic, religious, mythological, and archetypal level. And to reduce its meaning to any of those aspects would result in "impoverishment of the emotive experience, of its imaginal and affective mass" (Mario Trevi qtd. in Connolly 2008, 129). The film is above all an exquisite aesthetic rendition of the art of shadows, deployed by Robison as visions, emergent "from a superhuman world of contrasting light and darkness," but also as extravagant commentaries of the unfolding events in a film without a single intertitle.

Shadows features a group of small town aristocrats, gathered for a lavish dinner party at the house of a rich and jealous husband who, unbeknownst to them, has set up an experiment to test his beautiful wife's fidelity. While prying on her, the host is increasingly tormented by the deceptive shadows on curtains and walls, which transform the guests' courting gestures into actual intimacies.

At this point, the shadows – along with the forceful chiaroscuro effect of the ubiquitous low-key lighting – are playful, even meta-cinematic comments on the shadows as a staple aesthetic trope of German Expressionism. [Fig. 2.] They represent "a pregnant metaphor that translates […] the everyday experience" into "knowledge that we have a 'twilight zone', an obscure part of ourselves in which many presences reveal themselves" (Connolly 2008, 129).

As fate would have it, however, the host's sadomasochistic designs are frustrated by a travelling Illusionist who is eventually allowed to present a Chinese shadow-play to the party. The man swiftly grasps the situation, and aggravates

deliberately the host's obsession by placing a lamp behind his dancing wife thus revealing her body under the dress. Prompted by the menacing silhouettes on walls and surfaces, the mood becomes foreboding, preparing the viewer for the most intense part of the film, where the symbolic – archetypal – meaning of the *shadow* is homologised to that of evil.

Once everyone is seated at the table, facing a screen, the Illusionist begins his hypnotising screening of a shadow-play about a Chinese Emperor, his unfaithful wife and her lover, whose allegorical implications are as essential to the personages as they are to the viewers. [Fig. 3.] Half way through the show, however, when the Emperor is about to behead the lover and punish the wife, the Illusionist makes the shadows of everyone at the table disappear, and a dissolve transition shows them sitting at the other side of the table.

Indeed, the shadow flaunts a typical archetypal duality – of life, as "the bond that ties us to the earth" – but also of "the black ghost that emanates from us, revealing the death within us" (G. Meyrink qtd. in Huckvale 2018, 52). In addition to being "the most accessible" archetype, and "the easiest to experience" (1968, vol. 9ii, 8), Jung understands the shadow as potentially both positive and negative due to its capacity to challenge "the whole ego-personality" (qtd. in Sharp 1991). The enormous psychological and moral difficulty in coming to conscious terms with one's *shadow* explains its tendency to project itself on others, which paradoxically remains the only empirical way of exploring it. Thus the shadow-selves of Robison's personages – their murderous desires, vulgar urges, and morally inferior drives – are acted out on the screen before their minds' eye. As a result, the wife's intensifying flirtatiousness, the growing boldness of the lascivious guests, and especially that of the most handsome one, called the Lover, play in the hands of the crafty husband, who ultimately is seen as forcing the guests to stab his fettered wife to death and then challenging them to a deadly sword-fight.

At this crucial moment of the illusionary tale, the shadow-player, after having restored their shadows, wakes up the party. In this manner, Robison captures the shadow transition as an instrument of death and evil, to a nurturing force, which gives "corporeality and depth to the human body" (Connolly 2008, 129). Hosts and guests thus find themselves at the table in the position they were before the Illusionist mesmerized them, watching the end of the shadow-play, where the Emperor forgives his wife, they kiss, and even the miraculously resurrected lover leaves unharmed. Forewarned by the vision of the tragedy that was awaiting them, the guests hastily bid their good-byes, husband and wife embrace, and the mysterious shadow-player leaves the courtyard of the castle, riding a pig.

In his comments on *Warning Shadows*, Kracauer writes that Robison's film, along with an episode from the second Wegener's *Golem* (1920) – where Rabbi Loew's mythical Golem, "by means of magic," makes the "panic-stricken Emperor" rescind his orders for evicting the Jews and stems the ensuing destruction – were the only cinematic instances at that time where reason and forgiveness prevailed (1974, 123–4). Yet the engagement of German Expressionist cinema with irrational and dark sides of the human psyche was a worthy, albeit short-lived attempt to capture on screen the propensity of neglected shadow contents to break out in neurosis and violence on individual and mass scale, and even coalesce as autonomous entities. It is enough to evoke the deadly outbreak of dark drives and desires in Georg Wilhelm Pabst's *The Treasure* (*Der Schatz*, 1923), in Fritz Wendhausen's *The Stone Rider* (*Der steinerne Reiter*, 1923) and the advent of Nosferatu in the small German town of Wisborg. The eponymous vampire from Murnau's 1922 classic, hailing from the Balkans – widely perceived obscure and therefore dangerous – is an exquisitely autonomous manifestation of *shadow* contents of xenophobia and bigotry, repressed in the personal and collective unconscious.

Writing with the devastating outcomes of WWII in mind, Jung sums up the dangers of identifying entirely with one's rational mind (or ego personality). Such one-sidedness, he warns, invariably leads to a Dr. Jekyll–Mr. Hyde kind of split on individual level, and to a Cold War standoff – on a political-economic and ideological one (1955, 1–94). He advises that instead of trying to "convince ourselves and the world that it is only they (i.e. our opponents) who are wrong […], it would be much more to the point to make a serious attempt to recognise our own *shadow* and its nefarious doings" (1955, 73). Then again, the personal shadow has long been considered a "symbol of the soul," and it is through its recognition that the ego-personality becomes aware of the *animus*[8] and the *anima*,[9] the unconscious male aspect in a woman, and the female aspect of a man (Connolly 2008, 129). Yet, as Rowland warns, neither the *anima*, nor the *animus* "lock Jungian theory into perpetual gender opposition," since the "archetypes

8 The inner masculine side of a woman, like the *anima* in a man, the *animus* is both a personal complex, an archetypal image, and a compensating masculine element in woman, providing her unconscious, so to speak, with a masculine imprint, therefore "I have called the projection-making factor in women the *animus*, which means mind or spirit. The *animus* corresponds to the paternal Logos just as the *anima* corresponds to the maternal Eros" (Jung qtd. in Sharp 1991).

9 Called by Jung the "archetype of life itself" and the "inner feminine side of a man," the *anima* is both a personal complex and an archetypal image of woman in the male psyche. "It is an unconscious factor […], responsible for the mechanism of projection. Initially identified with the personal mother, the *anima* is later experienced not only in other women but as a pervasive and creative influence in a man's life" (qtd. in Sharp, 1991).

of the unconscious are androgynous, and therefore masculinity as well as femininity," are among the "series of 'otherness' for the psyche" of a man or a woman (2008, 184).

According to Jung, individuation, or psychological maturity – that is, the actualizing of the archetype of the self by freeing it from "the false wrappings of the ego-persona and of the suggestive power of primordial images" and their projections – is impossible without the awareness of the internal other, or of the *animus/anima* forces of the unconscious (Jung qtd. in Sharp 1991). For, as Jung suggests, if the "encounter with the shadow is the 'apprentice-piece'" in a person's development, then "the reconciliation with their *anima* – and, for that matter, with their *animus*, would be their 'master-piece'" (Jung qtd. in Sharp 1991).

It is therefore intriguing to look at Lang's *The Weary Death*, known also as *Destiny*, and Leni's *Waxworks* not only as doppelgangers in structural sense, but also in psychological, as metaphorical expressions of the protagonists' quests for individuation with the help of their *animus* and *anima*, respectively. Both works represent aesthetically accomplished musings on death and love, set in different historical times in far-flung corners of the Earth, and played out in various genre modes, ranging from tragic and melancholy, to suspenseful, ironic, and even comedic.

Considered the first major work of Lang's oeuvre, *Destiny* features a grief-stricken Young Woman who, after losing her beloved, pleads to Death – personified by a sombrely handsome man – to let her have him back, and is given three chances to succeed if an avatar of hers saves the life of her beloved in one of the Stories of Light. Similarly, the protagonist in *Waxworks*, a poor Poet – asked by the proprietor of a fairground wax-museum and his daughter Eva to write tales about famous historical figures – imagines his newly-found love for Eva put to the test in three segments, animated by the famous personages and their times.

The bizarre locations in both films were obviously chosen with their mystical potential in mind, hence the Middle Eastern cityscapes [Figs. 4–5], the snowy vistas of Medieval Russia or the bridges of Venice and the jungles of China, with their oneiric atmosphere, point to the archetypal nature of the protagonists' experiences. Moreover, despite of their ostensible geographical and historical scope, these two films – "in diametrical opposition to nineteenth-century historicism" – bring to bear "a visual poetics of parallelism and homology, emphasizing trans-historical affinities and commonalities rather than distinct inner principles" (Baer 2015, 146). Indeed, the deployment of oddly shaped edifices and visual patterns underscores the metaphorical-mythological nature

of the narratives, making these films representative pieces of visionary cinematic Expressionism, whose ultimate goal is just that – to express, "to show, or metaphorically exemplify" archetypes, "rather than to explicitly describe and conceptualise [their] meaning" (Smythe 2012, 154).

The quest of the Young Woman through time and space could therefore be amplified as a movement towards restoring "the lost mediation between her conscious and unconscious" mind, severed with the untimely passing of her male other, the *animus*. Each film segment hence corresponds roughly to one of "the four stages of *animus* development and the philosophical or religious ideas" associated with it, and to "the attitude resulting" thereof (Jung qtd. in Sharp 1991). Like Perceval, in her naïveté the Young Woman has stumbled upon the Grail of love unconsciously, lost it, and then – after an emotionally and spiritually excruciating quest – finds it again. But not before her unconscious self-sacrificial impulses transcend the ego-desires, and become a consciously selfless expression of her individuation.

In the first segment, the Young Woman's avatar is Princess Zobeide, the sister of the Calif in an imaginary Middle-Eastern City of the Faithful. She is passionately in love with the adventurous, trigger happy Frank,[10] a Christian, who is the first incarnation of the lost beloved. The sexually and religiously transgressive nature of their attraction is underscored by the time and place of their secret meeting – during the holy month of Ramadan, at the central Mosque. The settings and the *mise-en-scène*, especially the ritual dance of the ascetic Dervishes – staged realistically, but lit and shot in expressionist manner – enhance the exotic-erotic charge of the story. As is to be expected, their forbidden love is crushed by Zobeide's mighty brother, and Frank is buried alive by the Calif's gardener El Mot, who is actually Death.

In the second segment – the least visually inventive and, because of its melodramatic narrative and stock characters, the most clichéd – the projection of the Young Woman's *animus* is no longer "embodiment of physical power" and sexual prowess, but inspires "desires for independence" in the noble Monna Fiametta, her new avatar (Jung qtd. in Sharp 1991). Unfortunately, the object of this desire is the characterless Giovan Francesco – the second reincarnation of the lost beloved – whose greatest virtue is his youth and absolute dedication to Monna. And although the *animus* here motivates her "initiative and capacity for planned action," the Young Woman fails again to take into account the power of the other man who wants to possess her (Jung qtd. in Sharp 1991). Taking

10 Frank could be understood as a personal, but was also a generic name for a European Christian.

advantage of the wild Venice Carnival, her cunning older suitor arranges that Giovan Francesco is killed instead of him, and with the poisoned knife, yielded by Monna Fiametta's loyal servant, who is actually Death.

The third, Chinese segment, is the best crafted one, boldly juxtaposing realist shots with Expressionist interiors and lighting. [Fig. 6.] Fittingly, its overall ironic mode and actors' self-reflexivity echoes the growing independence of the Young Woman, now on her way of mastering both her conscious and unconscious mind. In this third stage, the *animus* is "often personified as a professor or clergyman," the archetypal wise old man, a role fulfilled here by the old magician A Hi, whose ingenious disciple her avatar Tiao Tsien is (Jung qtd. in Sharp 1991). As A Hi's trusted assistant, Tiao Tsien is poised to surpass him, which she eventually does by turning the old man into an ugly cactus. The role of her beloved, however, is reduced to that of an erotic playmate, an object of desire whose only dramatic function is to advance the plot. And when the greedy Emperor demands that A Hi gives him Tiao Tsien as a birthday gift – along with the flying carpet, the winged horse, and the miniature army – she flees with her beloved Liang. What follows is a sequence of magic tricks – performed by Tiao Tsien to frustrate the pursuers – whose cinematographic inventiveness has beautifully survived the passage of time. Yet despite of camouflaging Liang as a jungle tiger, he is pierced through the heart by Death – who appears here as the Emperor's best archer – while Tiao Tsien, disguised as a Buddhist statue, sheds stone tears.

The desperate Young Woman then finds herself back with Death who, in this fourth and final stage, epitomizes her *animus* as "the incarnation of spiritual meaning," a "helpful guide," the one who mediates between life and death, reality and unreality, consciousness and the unconscious, and plays an indispensable role in her individuation (Jung qtd. in Sharp 1991). Moved by her valiant selflessness, Death gives the Young Woman yet another chance to save her beloved if she were to convince someone to exchange their life for his. After a frantic search, the woman gets such a chance when she is about to leave a newborn baby perish in a fire, but decides against it. By accepting to take the saved baby to his mother, Death endorses this act of selfless appreciation for the "values of the collective," considered supreme manifestation of an individuated psyche and, as a reward, lets the Young Woman join her beloved in his realm (Sharp, 1991). [Fig. 7.]

Indeed, after Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God at the end of the 19th century, death has arguably remained the last metaphysical entity, whose numinous appeal is still felt in art, philosophy, and certainly in the media. Yet death as an

archetype enjoyed a singular status in German Romanticism and Symbolism, and in its *fin-de-siècle* culture, influenced by morbid Gothic mysticism. And certainly in cinematic Expressionism, whose engagement with death in its various symbolic and narrative hypostases intuited an ominous constellation of a death-wish in the collective unconscious.[11] This serendipitously prophetic insight throws light on the enduring fascination with Death in *Destiny*, resuscitated more than three decades later by the equally mesmerizing figure of the chess-playing Death in *The Seventh Seal* (*Det sjunde inseglet*, Ingmar Bergman, 1957).

In addition to *anima* and *death*, Lang's film engages with other archetypes, three of which are directly related to the discussion at hand – that of the *quaternity*, of the *senex* and the *puer aeternus.* The *senex* or old man, is metaphorically exemplified by Zobeide's Brother, Monna Fiametta's suitor, and the Emperor of China, while the *puer aeternus*, or the eternal boy, is manifested in the avatars of the Young Woman's beloved. Being each other's shadow, the "disciplined, controlled, responsible, rational, and ordered *senex*" is "associated with the god Apollo," while the *puer* is "related to Dionysus-unbounded instinct, disorder, intoxication, whimsy" (Sharp 1991). The *senex* is also counterpoised by the archetype of the wise old man, who in the film is embodied, albeit ironically, by A Hi, and of course, by Death.

The inevitable finitude of the Young Woman's decision is supported by the archetype of *quaternity*, which, according to Jung, "points to the universal idea of wholeness" and is manifested in the four-fold structure of the film (qtd. in Sharp 1991). Thus "the cross, formed by the points of the *quaternity*" could be interpreted as a symbol of moral imperative – that is, to bear her cross by obeying to patriarchy or the Law of the Father (as Lacan has it), symbolized by rigidified, controlling and blocking older males. Or spend her life saving, in a literal and figurative sense, her beloved *puer* – or follow Death, the only wise and compassionate male presence in the film (Jung qtd. in Sharp 1991). This Jungian approach to the fate of an individuated woman yields an unexpectedly prophetic layer of meaning to *Destiny*, further corroborated by the discussion of Paul Leni's *Waxworks*.

Unlike *Destiny,* the overall mood of *Waxworks* is lighter, at times even self-ironic, and the structure of the film, reflecting the erratic individuation process

11 Catalysed after 1933 by the officially endorsed pessimistic *eschaton* (or myth about the end of the world) of Norse mythology, and the constellation of (the god of war) Wotan archetype in the collective unconscious, this collective death-wish brought about the conflagration of WWII (see Jung's Wotan essay at *http://www.cgjungpage.org/learn/articles/analytical-psychology/47-jungs-shadow-two-troubling-essays-by-jung*. Last accessed 30. 03. 2019)

of the protagonist – a quintessential *puer aeternus*, known by the generic name the Poet – consists of three segments instead of four, framed by an introductory and a conclusive episode. Needless to say, the handsome Poet leads poor and provisional, "more or less imaginary" life due to "fear of being caught in a situation from which it might not be possible to escape" (Sharp 1991). Ironically, he imagines himself caught in three such situations, two of which he overcomes thanks to the lovely Eva, who appears as personification of his *anima*.

The first segment is a playful rendition of motifs from the Middle-Eastern *One Thousand and One Nights* tales, featuring the fabulously rich sultan Harun-al Rashid, and the Poet as his neighbour, the poor baker Assad. Instead of beheading him for polluting his palace with smoke from the bakery chimney, the sultan falls for his beautiful wife Zarah, a personification of the Poet's *anima*, who evokes a universally coveted "collective and ideal sexual image," which – as Jung implies – is "modelled after Helen of Troy," and is every bit as shrewd as her historical prototype (Sharp 1991). Obsessed with the near-impossible task to strike it rich, Assad decides to steal the sultan's famous wish-fulfilling ring, which would secure the good life for his beloved Zarah. And, as only a fairy tale would have it, while Assad is sneaking into the palace, the sultan clandestinely finds his way to Zarah's place.

The ring Assad brings back – along with the arm of the sultan's wax doppelganger left in his bed for conspiracy purposes – turns out to be false, pointing to the Poet's bungled individuation. Which is to be expected from a *puer,* who never gets things right and subconsciously sabotages success. What is more, the falsity of the ring – otherwise a symbol of psychological wholeness – complicates even further his quest for maturity. Yet instead of a bloody confrontation with his powerful rival, his *anima,* that is Zarah – in a twist, worthy of Shahrazad – succeeds in mediating the dangerous *puer-senex* standoff by wrapping both the jealous Assad and the lascivious sultan around her finger.

Visually, this segment is as seamlessly expressionist with regard to settings, lighting, and acting, as are *From Morn to Midnight (Von Morgens bis Mitternacht*, Karlheinz Martin, 1920), *Caligari,* and some episodes of *The Hands of Orlac*. The rounded shapes and irregular cavities of its exquisite, Antoni Gaudí-like décor force the sultan to drag his corpulent body in and out of Assad's strange abode, thus externalizing the challenges of the forbidden love. [Fig. 8.] Assad's tortuous movement through the maze of spiral passages, on the other hand, symbolizes the Poet's descent into the nurturing pits of the collective unconscious for it is there – according to the main theme in the visionary Part II of *Faust* – where "the

Realm of the Mothers" is, and wherefrom "the creative process arises"[12] (van den Berk 2012, 103).

The mood of the second segment, albeit sombre, is tinged with irony, stemming from the exotified world of Ivan the Terrible, the infamous late medieval Russian Tzar. The predominantly elongated and pointed architectural shapes – tailored after the tall-slim figure of the Tzar – counterbalance the rounded ones from the previous segment, apparently enthused by Harun al-Rashid's curvy forms. The skylines, though – defined here by the onion shapes of Russian orthodox churches – rhyme with the Middle-Eastern arches and minarets from the first segment.

The autocratic Tzar, a rigidified *senex* totally devoid of Eros, is "secretly […] influenced by primitive impulses," like taking sadistic-voyeuristic pleasure in watching prisoners tortured in the Kremlin dungeons, and in colluding with his poison-maker to annihilate his enemies, yet living in mortal fear of assassins and poisoning (von Franz 1993, 112). Such a "negatively perceived paternal power figure" is bound to have a psychologically paralysing effect on the Poet's *puer,* embodied by the handsome Prince, who is about to marry a beautiful noble girl (von Franz 1993, 110). The bride – Eva's second avatar – personifies his pious *anima* which, according to biblical and other mythological traditions, is "manifested in religious feelings and a capacity for lasting relationships," symbolized by the Virgin Mary (Sharp 1991). When, mistaken for the Tzar, the bride's father gets assassinated, the Prince is stupefied by the latter's brutal "efforts to maintain his status of a privileged […] voyeur" by forcing the grief-stricken wedding guests to make merry in order to entertain him (Telotte 2005, 23). Angered for having instead become a "subject of […] their horrified looks," the Tzar – while preparing to defile the bride – sends the Prince to the dungeons to be tortured (Telotte 2005, 23).

Now, "dreams of imprisonment," along with "chains, bars, cages, entrapment, bondage" are "common symptoms of *puer* psychology," since "life itself is experienced as a prison," in comparison to the childhood the *puer* is so reluctant to part with (Sharp 1991). The Prince is saved at the last moment by the Tzar's sudden fixation with turning over incessantly an oversized hourglass, which has been used for counting down the seconds left before his victims die. A menacing symbol of mortality, the hourglass – along with its miniature version at the beginning of *Destiny* and the prominent town clock striking off the minutes, allotted to the Young Woman – signals the eerie timelessness of this "superhuman world of contrasting light and darkness, which surpasses man's understanding and to which in his weakness he may easily succumb" (Jung 1989b, vol. 15, 90).

12 So, by the way, believed Lacan, when defining his Imaginary Order as the domain of the Mother.

The segment closes with the devastated bride – the Poet's *anima*, the archetype of life itself – cradling in a Pieta-like way the listless Prince in her arms, while watching the Tzar go completely mad.

Obviously alarmed by the stories spawned in the "hinterlands of his mind," the Poet approaches with a greater care Jack the Ripper, the third historical personage he is asked to write a story about. And, in an attempt to transcend his horrific misogynistic legacy, amalgamates him with the semi-mythological Spring-heeled Jack, known for attacking both males and females in 19th-century London and its vicinity. Yet, the Poet ends up with only a very short piece – about seven minutes screen time – which captures the finale of the third story. After having avoided, thanks to luck and his resourceful anima, the deadly face off with two murderous *senēs* – the Poet is fixated on the inevitability of a nightmarish flight from a third, and a much more dangerous one. And although the image of Eva flickers behind the barrage of superimpositions of Jack's wax figure, who blocks all exits, intensifying the Poet's sense of entrapment, it is not clear whether she is part of the story, or just a hallucinatory vision. And just when the Ripper is about to get him – and maybe also her! – the Poet wakes up with Eva by his side.

Despite the fast-paced editing, and the exquisite cinematographic tricks – or special effects – praised so much by Eisner (2008, 122), this segment is hardly "an acceleration near the end, typical of stories that employ suspense," as its brevity would have dragged the whole film down were it not contextualized so well symbolically (Coates 1991, 61). The ensuing conclusive episode therefore shows the Poet back where he was at the opening – at the writing desk in the claustrophobic confines of the wax-museum – before his imaginary quest for individuation began. In light of this, the short third segment could be seen as a flight from the forth – final, and most challenging – stage of individuation, where the "*anima*, symbolized as Sophia (or Wisdom), functions as a guide to the inner life," and a mediator between the conscious and the unconscious mind (Sharp 1991). The frightened Poet has instead chosen to return – or regress – to the stage where his *anima*, symbolized by the biblical Eve, or his love interest Eva, has become once again "indistinguishable from his personal mother" (Sharp 1991). Yet in this womb-like place, called significantly the Panoptikum (that is, Panopticon), the Poet is under the perennial watchful gaze of the three patriarchal tyrants, and therefore could hardly be driven to realizing the repressed "desire of a patriarchal eros […] to reassert itself against the growth in feminine power" (Coates 1991, 62). On the contrary, the deadly designs of these *senēs*, if anything, are bound to catalyse the Poet's new quest for individuation through art which,

for Jung, was "a highly effective form […] because it is a confrontation with the other in the imagination" (Rowland 2008, 186). Such a quest would be the only way to release both himself and Eva from being stuck between the patriarchy of the *senex* and the womb-like domain of the mother, and transcend conformity or death as their only ways out.

In Way of Conclusion: the Faust-Mephistopheles Dyad

As seen so far, the psychological and the visionary art – although "not wholly different realms" of German Expressionist cinema – are, to quote Rowland again, still "pushed apart to polar extremes," but brought together again by the archetypal story of Faust and his unearthly enticer Mephistopheles. Inspired by legends about the medieval German alchemist and astrologer, the existential drama of Dr Faustus has become a central myth of European modernity thanks to Christopher Marlowe's play *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* (1604), and certainly by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's tragedy *Faust* (1832). Paradoxically, F. W. Murnau's *Faust* which, along with *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927) is among the last works Erich Pommer produced before his forced resignation as the head of UFA, and therefore executed on a lavish budget as a "cultural monument," in Kracauer's words "misrepresented, if not ignored" the significant motifs "inherent in its subject matter," thus turning the film adaptation into a "monumental display of artifice" (1974, 148).

When tracing the aesthetic and conceptual sources of German Expressionist cinema, Eisner, following Oswald Spengler, discusses the importance of what she calls the "'Faustian soul' of the northern man," and juxtaposes its predilection for a world, "swathed in gloom," and "frightful solitude" – epitomized by the "Germanic Valhalla" – to the theatre of Max Reinhardt (2008, 51). He, as she reminds us, "was Jewish," and therefore "created his magical world with light," where "darkness served only as a foil to light" (Eisner 2008, 56). Canadian scholar Paul Coates homologizes Eisner's (and Spengler's) notion of the Faustian soul to that of Hans Schwerte's idea of the Faustian man, who "traduced" the Faustian myth to a symbol of "an ideology" of "the titanic German national destiny," dominating Wilhelmine Germany (1991, 29). Small wonder, then, that Faust – in a "symbiosis with Mephistopheles" – is considered as "the pervasive, frequently disguised hero of Weimar cinema" (Coates 1991, 30).

Jung, in turn, was interested mostly in the role of Mephistopheles as a Trickster figure, the shadow brother of Christ, so to speak. In *Faus*t, he wrote, "I first

found confirmation that there were people […] who saw evil and its universal power, […] and the mysterious role it played in delivering man from darkness and suffering" (1989a, 60). Religious historian Mircea Eliade comes to a similar conclusion when speaking about the "unexpected" mutual "'sympathy' between God and the Spirit of Negation," that is Mephistopheles, since "for Goethe evil, and also error, are productive." Or as Goethe himself put it, "it is contradiction that makes us productive" (1962, 79). Thus, for both Eliade[13] and Jung,[14] this coincidence of opposites – or *coincidentia oppositorum* – is an imperative condition for understanding the workings of the human psyche and human life in general, and German Expressionist cinema offers an ample evidence of it.

In its various manifestations, the symbolic richness of the Faust-Mephistophelian dyad is at the core of the German Expressionist corpus. Thus *The Earth Spirit* (*Erdgeist*, Leopold Jessner, 1923), the first adaptation of Frank Wedekind's eponymous play, sees Lulu as a female version of Goethe's Earth Spirit. That is, a warning for trials yet to come and thus part of works – initiated by the succubus Genuine from Wiene's eponymous film from 1920, and closed by the false Maria in *Metropolis* – about vamp *fatales,* who like the Greek goddess Circe, tempt men into self-destruction by forcing their hidden depravities into the open.

Moreover, the Faust-Mephistopheles dyad has a decisive function in defining the genre mode, the character types, and above all, the psychological or visionary nature of Expressionist films. Thus in psychological works, the tandem is strictly divided into characters Elsaesser defines as "young, petit-bourgeois Fausts" – or Everymen Fausts – and those he calls "Mephisto figures" (2000, 66). It is enough to mention Nera (*The Hands of Orlac)*, Scapinelli (*The Student of Prague*), or the title personages from *Nosferatu*, *Tartuffe* and *Dr. Mabuse*, to recognize the "Mephisto figures" as autonomous constellations of pure archetypal evil, meant to bring about the total demise of petit-bourgeois, Everyman Fausts. In visionary works, on the other hand, as has been demonstrated above by the Illusionist, the Death, and the three *senēs*, the Faust-Mephistopheles dyad works as *coincidentia oppositorum*, which throws in high relief the interrelatedness of evil and creativity, of temptation and inspiration, and of egotism and selflessness in the process of individuation. Indeed, as Jung has wittingly put it, it might never be known "what

13 Eliade finds evidence of *concidentia oppositorum* in religious myths about "the consanguinity of God and Satan, or of the Saint and the Devil-woman," which reflect "an obscure desire to pierce the mystery of the existence of evil or the imperfection of the divine Creation" (1962, 92–3).

14 For Jung *coincidentia oppositorum* or the *transcendent function*, fuelled by tensions of rationally irresolvable contradictions between conscious/unconscious, ego/shadow, *anima/animus*, has ultimately a positive transformative or transcendent impact on the totality of the Self.

evil may not be necessary in order to produce good by *enantiodromia*,[15] and what good may very possibly lead to evil" (Jung qtd. in Sharp 1991).

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15 Literally, "running counter to," referring to the emergence of the unconscious opposite in the course of time (Sharp, 1991).

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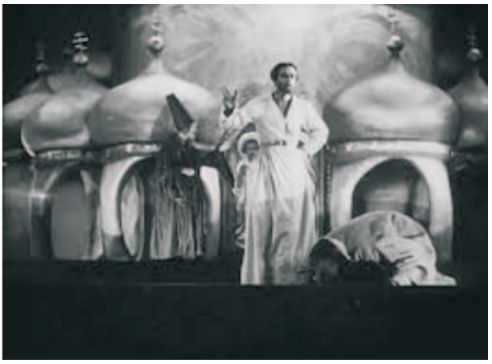

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From Weimar to Winnipeg: German Expressionism and Guy Maddin

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Abstract. The films of Guy Maddin, from his debut feature *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* (1988) to his most recent one, *The Forbidden Room* (2015), draw extensively on the visual vocabulary and narrative conventions of 1920s and 1930s German cinema. These cinematic revisitations, however, are no mere exercise in sentimental cinephilia or empty pastiche. What distinguishes Maddin's compulsive returns to the era of German Expressionism is the desire to both archive and awaken the past. *Careful* (1992), Maddin's mountain film, reanimates an anachronistic genre in order to craft an elegant allegory about the apprehensions and anxieties of everyday social and political life. *My Winnipeg* (2006) rescores the city symphony to reveal how personal history and cultural memory combine to structure the experience of the modern metropolis, whether it is Weimar Berlin or wintry Winnipeg. In this paper, I explore the influence of German Expressionism on Maddin's work as well as argue that Maddin's films preserve and perpetuate the energies and idiosyncrasies of Weimar cinema.

Keywords: Guy Maddin, Canadian film, German Expressionism, Weimar cinema, cinephilia.

Any effort to catalogue completely the references to, and reanimations of, German Expressionist cinema in the films of Guy Maddin would be a difficult, if not impossible, task. From his earliest work to his most recent, Maddin's films are suffused with images and iconography drawn from the German films of the 1920s. In addition to this reproduction of the visual style and language of the 1920s German studio style, they also pick up on the tropes, themes, temptations and terrors that characterize the cinematic productions of the Weimar period. Instead of offering a complete inventory of what Maddin imports from Weimar to his native Winnipeg, I will investigate and illustrate the ways in which Maddin's numerous feature films and many shorts form part of the rich cultural afterlife of German Expressionism: how it, in modified and mutated ways, continues to

haunt our screens and fuel our nightmares. I think I can say without controversy that Maddin has played a key role in keeping the cinematic spirit of German Expressionism alive.[1] And although Maddin is by no means a one-trick pony who has simply hitched his wagon to a Weimar horse, it is nevertheless also fair to say that he has made a number of films where it very much feels that he has found a portal in Winnipeg that somehow takes him through time and space to Alexanderplatz or the Alps.

Unfortunately, and as much as I might want to, I won't be able to touch on all of Maddin's films in this essay. At this point, his catalogue is too deep to attempt any kind of comprehensive, detailed overview of his work within the span of a single article.[2] But, in some ways, to focus on the films in Maddin's filmography that draw sustenance from the rich visual vocabulary of German Expressionism allows me to light on its Bavarian peaks. In what follows I will zero in specifically on his films that are in direct dialogue with the classics of German Expressionism. But I will also pursue a handful of more oblique connections and unexpected affiliations that concretize the imaginative links between Weimar and Winnipeg that Maddin has forged and fostered over the past thirty years or so, during which time he has become a central figure in Canadian film culture, and has garnered an international reputation for his distinct visual style and wild narrative inventiveness. Maddin himself has never been shy about expressing his love of German film, from the Weimar period to the age of the New German Cinema. In 2012, the Goethe-Institut in Montréal invited Maddin to curate a selection of German films. Not surprisingly, his selection included many from the Weimar period, including *Nerves* (Robert Reinert, 1919), *From Morn Till Midnight* (Karlheinz Martin, 1920), *The Street* (Karl Grune, 1923), *Secrets of a Soul* (G.W. Pabst, 1926) and *Walking from Munich to Berlin* (Oskar Fischinger, 1927). Perhaps more important are the introductory notes that Maddin provides, in which he conveys his deep love of German cinema, especially that of the Weimar period. "My parents are Icelandic and Scottish, but somewhere, deep in the darkest red corpuscles of my blood, there must be something German.

1 There is abundant scholarship on the films of the Weimar period and on the innovations of German Expressionist cinema in particular. Sigfried Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler* retains its influential place in any assessment of the period. For more recent overviews of the period and its films, see Thomas Elsaesser's *Weimar Cinema and After* and Noah Isenberg's edited collection, *Weimar Cinema*. And for a work that explores the connections between film, the Frankfurt School, and the social, cultural, and political shape of the period, see Miriam Hansen's *Cinema and Experience*.

2 For a comprehensive and compelling overview of Maddin's career up to 2008's *My Winnipeg*, see Beard 2010.

[…] And when I watch the great German films, I get the absurd feeling I could have made them, if only I had lived in another time and been blessed with the blunt trauma genius of the masters featured in this program. The preposterous conviction I could have made these masterpieces is simply the result of an ethos in the films at once so exhilarating and open. When I watch *Nerves* or *Secrets of a Soul* I am a young man beholding the art form at its most volatile time, when its vocabulary could have developed in any number of directions, and that I could have taken it in another direction for good had I held a camera in those pioneering days." (Maddin 2012, n.p.)

Maddin's films actualize, to some degree, this "preposterous conviction," not through any sort of time travel that would actually place him on the ground in Germany in the 1920s, but through his persistence in this desire to reanimate the sense of openness and possibility that distinguishes the films of that time and place. Maddin's films are not hollow pastiches, merely enamoured with the look and feel of a past era, but are experiments in recreating the historical volatility that existed at an earlier moment in film's history, when other futures were possible. And this fascination with the past and the unrealized possibilities it represents is there in Maddin's work from the very beginning.

Perhaps the most striking thing about even the earliest of Maddin's films is how fully formed they are, both stylistically and conceptually. This is perhaps, to some degree at least, a retrospective illusion. From the vantage point of the present, what viewers now see in *The Dead Father*, Maddin's debut short from 1985 and *Tales from the Gimli Hospital*, his debut feature from 1988, are those elements that would find expansion and development in his later films. Nevertheless, the stylistic and thematic integrity of Maddin's body of work cannot be chalked up to retrospective illusion alone. *The Dead Father* establishes a cinematic terrain haunted by paternal loss and characterized by uncanny events and occurrences. The ostensible setting of that first film, the Dominion of Forgetfulness, not only suggests some vaguely defined *Mitteleuropa*, evocative of the psychic landscape of the Weimar period shaped by the traumas of the early decades of the twentieth century, but also names the territory that later Maddin films would so often occupy. The Dominion of Forgetfulness serves as a kind of shorthand for Maddin's favoured cinematic terrain. It names the amnesiac Winnipeg and myth-deprived Manitoba that his films occupy and enrich.

From the very beginning, Maddin took aim at that most cherished of Canadian cinematic tendencies, the impulse toward documentary and social realism, and turned it on its head. His is a cinema that consists of fabrications and fabulations,

a cinema that invests in deep melodrama and invents surreal mythologies. Even though, as Maddin has long claimed, the outline for *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* was cribbed from a community history written by the Sisters of the Rotarians or some other benevolent local organization, it offers no straightforward history of the township or of New Iceland (Vatnsdal 2000, 45–46). Instead, Maddin takes semi-true tales that date from the late nineteenth century, such as a fishing competition overseen by Lord Dufferin or an account of the traditional Viking sport of Glima wrestling, and cinematically embroiders and enlarges them in a way that makes them seem straight from the Sagas. At the same time, of course, they are shot through with a streak of the absurd and, as Maddin has said in numerous interviews, these surreal set pieces derive at least in part from a desire to antagonize his own ancestral community, to satirize, as he acidly observes, "how humorously obsessed with their own history […] the gallery of sourpusses known as Canadian Icelanders […] are" (Vatnsdal 2000, 45).

However, if this begins to explain some of the content of these early works, it does not quite account for the look and style of these films, which evoke early cinema and are built out of what was, from the vantage point of the mid-1980s, an archaic and eclipsed cinematic vocabulary. Maddin's grainy, inky historical Gimli might be chalked up to some imagined Nordic affiliation with Carl Theodor Dreyer, yet Maddin himself points to Erich von Stroheim and his 1924 film *Greed* as his primary visual influence for the film. He does admit, however, that there is no way he could, working with limited budgets and rudimentary technology, reproduce the intensity and clarity of von Stroheim's images, and that it is hard to replicate the grandeur of *Greed* when working with sets that, as Maddin notes, "were, like, eleven feet wide" (Beard 2010, 406). [Fig. 1.]

Perhaps the best answer to the speed with which Maddin developed his signature style resides in Winnipeg itself. In the years immediately before he made his debut short and feature, Maddin, along with a group of friends, had immersed himself in the cinema of the 10s, 20s, and 30s, drawing on a rich archive at the University of Winnipeg that has long since been liquidated and lost. In a 1991 interview, he says, "since I hadn't seen a colour movie for three years when I made *Tales*, the language and rhythm of silent black and white features came as a second nature" (Jones 2010, 21). Even beyond this milieu of layabout cinephiles obsessed with silent film, it often seems that Winnipeg is populated by those in the grip of the past. Whether it is the widespread civic resentment toward the Panama Canal, which is commonly understood to have compromised Winnipeg's full development into the Chicago of the north in the

1910s, or the fond memories of the 1960s when Centennial dollars sparked a civic building boom and suburban expansion that accelerated the city's growth and development, the past looms large in the civic imaginary.[3]

On the cinematic front, it is perhaps telling that the first production of the Winnipeg Film Group, 1976's *Rabbit Pie*, was a collaboratively-made pastiche of a 1930s slapstick comedy. And perhaps the most influential filmmaker to emerge in the early years of the Film Group was John Paizs, whose *Three Worlds of Nick* trilogy of short films established the cinematic vocabulary that he would fully develop in his debut feature *Crime Wave* in 1985. As Geoff Pevere writes, what made Paizs's film such a revelation was its commitment to a grab-bag of unloved genres and ephemeral forms. "Where the official versions of national cultural history tended to cling to documentary, scruffy realism, experimental cinema, high-minded McLarenesque animation and literary coming-of-age tales set on oceanic prairies, Paizs's movies glommed onto far more fetchingly mundane influences: horror films and comics, hyper-square industrial films, '50s and '60s sitcom tropes, triple-bill spy movies and cleaning product commercials." (Pevere 2009, 108.)

With Paizs occupying this vividly-imagined, colour-saturated 1950s and 60s, with its suburban backyard swimming pools and theatres filled with colour crime pictures of the sort that his protagonist so desperately wants to write, it is in every way fortuitous that Maddin was drawn to the films of an earlier period, the era of tinting and two-strip technicolor.[4] This is not to say that there was some mid-1980s summit of Winnipeg filmmakers to parcel up the past and take responsibility for it decade-by-decade. There were, after all, many Winnipeg Film Group productions grounded firmly in the present, from Elise Swerhone's *Havakeen Lunch* (1979), an extraordinary work of prairie vérité, to Jon Krocker's *38 Jansky Units* (1982), a bold and bizarre new wave experiment.[5] Nevertheless, this larger context of a city and a culture of filmmaking drawn to the old and the outmoded is key to understanding why Maddin would want to revisit the cinematic language of German Expressionism and to make films that, at least in the eyes of one early reviewer, seem comprised of the "rotting images of past cinema" (Jones 2010, 21).

3 For more on the relationship between civic history and Winnipeg's cinematic production, see my forthcoming article entitled *Stand Tall: Winnipeg Cinema and the Civic Imaginary*.

4 Jonathan Ball's study (2014) of *Crime Wave* provides an in-depth analysis of that film's innovations and preoccupations as well as details on Paizs's importance to the development of Winnipeg film in general and on the work of Maddin in particular.

5 For more on the centrality of the Winnipeg Film Group and its importance in the cinematic history of Winnipeg, see my *The WFG at 40* (Burke 2015).

Maddin's debut feature, *Tales from the Gimli Hospital*, was rejected by the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), but went on to become a midnight favourite in New York City. Yet, by the time it had gained this cult and critical traction, Maddin was already immersed in preparations for his second feature, *Archangel*, which would premiere at TIFF in 1990. As extraordinary and expressionistic as *Archangel* is, with its almost impossible to summarize tale of Allied soldiers fighting on in the wake of the Great War in northern Russia against both Bolsheviks and Huns, it is really Maddin's next film, 1992's *Careful*, that is my main focus here.

There are two deeply compelling, yet perhaps completely apocryphal, origin stories for *Careful*. The first, recounted in William Beard's *Into the Past: The Cinema of Guy Maddin* (2010), has prairie boy Maddin visiting the Rockies and suddenly remembering a conversation he once had with University of Manitoba film professor Howard Curle. In that conversation, Curle mentioned that in 1920s Germany the mountain picture was as popular a film genre as the western was in the United States. This sudden remembrance sparked a desire in Maddin to make a mountain picture despite, he claims, having never actually seen one (Beard 2010, 88). The second one, gleaned from an interview with Maddin and the producer for several of his early films, Greg Klymkiw, has Klymkiw in the chair at the shop of Winnipeg's legendary octogenarian barber and ardent cinephile Bill Sciak, whom he and Maddin had conscripted to provide the cast and crew of *Archangel* with historically accurate late 1910s haircuts. When Sciak asked what style he himself wanted, Klymkiw replied "an Emil Jannings cut." Without a pause, Sciak replied, "from the silent mountaineering pictures?" (Rankin 2008). Klymkiw insists that this lightning quick response, overheard by Maddin, planted the seed for *Careful*. Whatever story is true, the power of *Careful* resides in the passion that it brings to its infidelity to the past. It is not by any stretch of the imagination an orthodox remaking of a mountain picture.[6] Yet it manages somehow, through a combination of deep passion and reckless aesthetic speculation, to do justice to the *idea* of a mountain picture irrespective of the actual history of the genre. It cobbles together bits and pieces of German Romanticism and German Expressionism to create a mountain melodrama, a kind of operetta without singing, inspired by, but not imitative of, the genre as it was.

6 The mountain film plays a key role in Siegfried Kracauer's argument in *From Caligari to Hitler* where he criticizes them harshly, suggesting that "the surge of pro-Nazi tendencies during the pre-Hitler period could not be better confirmed than by the increase and specific evolution of the mountain films" (2004, 257). For a more recent examination of the *Bergfilm* that examines the limits and blindspots of Kracauer's assessment, see Rentschler 1990.

Perhaps the best description of *Careful* comes from Maddin himself, in a self-review of the film he wrote for the *Village Voice* on the eve of a retrospective of his films at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2001: "*Careful* is a pro-incest mountain *träumerai* shot in the two-strip Technicolor used in that holy year of 1929" (Maddin 2003b, 93). *Careful* is set in Tolzbad, a fictional Swiss Alpine village cheekily named after the film's screenwriter, University of Manitoba film professor George Toles. The citizens of Tolzbad conduct all their conversations in whispers out of fear that anything louder will trigger a fatal avalanche. The fear of snowy death has come to shape the entire life of the town as well as the identities of its inhabitants, all of whom have internalized the injunction that serves as the title of the film. The film's extraordinary opening sequence offers a whole array of optical tricks and striking shots drawn directly from the image-world of German Expressionism. Just as importantly, the opening speech that accompanies this prologue evokes the form of the fairy tale and establishes the continuity between the Brothers Grimm, German Romanticism, and German Expressionism that forms the very heart of the film. Herr Trotta, a town elder, delivers this speech and lays out the perilous predicament of Tolzbad in terms that are at once fantastic and foreboding: "Careful, Otto. Don't spill it. Hold your horses! Children! Heed the warnings of your parents. Peril awaits the incautious wayfarer and strews grief where laughter once played. Think twice. I'm sure you can live without that. Don't get wet. Nature has built for us a beautiful world. Allow yourself to drink in its wonder safely. Paths must be climbed with the sure-footedness of a mountain goat, but beware your skill at climbing. The skill assures nothing. A heedless heart can be lured to dangerous heights and a sudden ice film or a single wobbly stone can pry you loose from the path and serenade you with the whistling wind of the death plummet. Then there is always the avalanche – when the snow relaxes its grip on the slope and is dragged downwards under its own crushing weight. The slightest sound or any false move by anyone can trigger these deadly landslides and sweep all into oblivion. Guard yourself and your neighbour against making that fatal sound. Be vigilant. Do you have your binoculars? Use them. Silence. Propriety."

This represents only the initial phase of the prologue, but it delivers the necessary exposition about Tolzbad and its collective fears. It also manages to convey everything the viewer needs to know about the village's deep-seated repression in strikingly visual ways, from the excessive, almost parodic, Germanness of the typeface used for the title card and epigraph to the vertiginous angles and evocative dissolves that structure and shape the montage. The sepia-toned

tinting throughout the sequence immediately brings to mind the use of colour in Weimar-era cinema to express tone and atmosphere, and Maddin uses shadow plays to illustrate the narrator's repeated injunction to be careful. The language of expressionist theatre is there in Herr Trotta's direct address to the audience and Maddin echoes the vocabulary of classical painting in elaborate tableau shots that picture the frightened populace. Maddin also draws on the wide array of optical tricks developed in German Expressionist film. He applies Vaseline to the camera lens to produce tilt-shift or vignette effects, employs the Schüfften process to evoke landscape panoramas using small-scale models, and uses multiple exposure to communicate the fractured psychic life of the village and its inhabitants.[7] Maddin has said that in order to do visual justice to the care and caution that informs every aspect of life in Tolzbad, he needed to create a "fragile Repress-O-Vision" that would convey this through the colour, grain, texture, and tone of the image (Vatnsdal 2000, 78). The list above does not even cover Maddin's full repertoire of visual tricks and techniques; missing are his beloved iris effects and superimpositions. *Careful* is a film that raids the visual toolbox of 1920s German cinema, both Expressionist and beyond, to evoke a generalized sense of cinematic pastness and to communicate an ardent cinephilia fuelled by a deeply melancholic attachment to forgotten forms and exhausted genres.

As Will Straw argues, reviews of Maddin's films commonly struggle to assemble "scattershot inventories of [their] stylistic and historical reference points" (2016, 62), and the critical responses to *Careful* were no different. In *Sight and Sound*, Claire Monk suggested the film presents "a kitsch-hell of giant flugelhorns, flaxen-haired maidens and flower-bedecked funiculars" (qtd. by Straw 2016, 62). In *Film Comment*, Robert Horton suggests the film has "the look of an overstuffed UFA film from the twenties, the tone of an *SCTV* version of a Wagner opera, and the overall aesthetics of Dr. Seuss" (qtd. by Straw 2016, 62). As Straw notes, these strained critical efforts to itemize the influences on Maddin's film obscure the extent to which the force of *Careful* resides not in the accuracy with which it recreates its antecedents or the idiosyncrasy of its references, but in the passion and intensity Maddin brings to the process. "Lists such as these are often effective in suggesting the variety of resonances which *Careful* sets in play. They do injustice, however, to the discipline and consistency with which Maddin patiently unearths and

7 Mike D'Angelo provides a detailed shot-by-shot analysis of the first couple of minutes of *Careful*'s prologue in his *Scenic Routes* column for the *A.V. Club* (2014). As D'Angelo argues, the opening section of the prologue does not even get around to the delivering of any kind of critical narrative information: "it's Maddin's way of establishing *Careful*'s idiosyncratic tone and look, giving viewers a bit of time to acclimate themselves before hitting them with genuinely crucial details."

reinhabits the lost languages of minor, transitional moments in film history. These lost languages are, most of the time, historically authentic, but the peculiar paradox of Maddin's film (and of *Careful*, in particular) is that the stylistic predecessors of which they so successfully remind us may, in fact, be ones we have never experienced to any significant degree. Reviewers who applaud Maddin's insight into the Bavarian mountain film are unlikely to have seen a great number of these, but that is the point. Maddin's films are both inventive revisitings of genuine past styles and imagined versions of such styles, seemingly drawn (in *Careful*'s case) from such ephemera as the illustrations of children's fairy-tale books or early sound-era operetta. The coherence of *Careful*'s world is not solely an effect of Maddin's careful reconstruction of already existing generic traditions; it springs, as well, from the convincing completeness with which he has imagined such worlds." (2017, 62.) For me, the power of *Careful* resides in the act of imaginative will that it took to create a mountain film amidst the prairie flatness of Manitoba and the sheer topographical uneventfulness of Winnipeg. There has long been the critical temptation to read the restraint and repression of Tolzbad as a thinly-veiled national allegory that captures Canada's fearfulness and timidity. While this reading is both satisfying and seductive, it by no means exhausts interpretive possibilities.[8] *Careful* can also be understood on a smaller allegorical scale, as a work concerned with the dynamics of a smaller community or village, which Winnipeg, despite its size, sometimes feels like. [Fig. 2.]

To understand *Careful* as civic allegory is, in a way, to understand it in relation to *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*. After all, *Caligari* is a film that similarly starts with civic celebrations and a village fair but soon gives way to a vision of a town torn apart by hidden and illicit desires, complicated and conflicted love triangles, mysterious visitors, and sinister and supernatural machinations. This is not to suggest that in its day-to-day experience Winnipeg is as plagued by Caligari-esque interlopers as this comparison to Caligari's Holstenwall and Tolzbad implies. Yet, as fantastical and fairy-tale-ish the film is, *Careful*'s preoccupation with shame and desire form the basis of Maddin's more directly autobiographical civic investigations in *My Winnipeg* (2008).[9] Of course, the ongoing force of Siegfried Kracauer's work, despite whatever critiques, suggests the nation cannot be jettisoned absolutely, that just as *Caligari* offers an uncanny premonition of the fascist tyranny that

8 Initial Canadian reviews of *Careful* often flirted with the possibility the film is best read as national allegory, but the most comprehensive argument that it can be understood as such is Wolfram R. Keller and Christian Uffmann's *Careful...Canadians: Guy Maddin's Allegory of Canadian Identity.*

9 For a detailed reading of *My Winnipeg*, see Wershler.

would follow, so too, buried somewhere in *Careful* is a diagnosis of national traits and tendencies. Yet, I can't help but think that there's something more provincial, municipal, civic at play in *Careful*, a fascination with the dynamics of the village, town, or city as both an actual and imagined community, rather than necessarily being an allegorical representation of a national body.

Before I move forward in Maddin's filmography, I want to propose another way in which *Careful* draws on the legacy of German Expressionism, not by referencing it directly but by being in dialogue with other contemporary enthusiasts for the period. My favorite section of *Careful* is the whole, meticulous account of Grigorss and Johann's training at Tolzbad's Butler School, as overseen by Frau Teacher, magnificently played by Jackie Burroughs. The clear inspiration for this sequence is Robert Walser's 1909 novel *Jakob von Gunten*. The novel tells the tale of the eponymous Jakob who enrols in a training school for servants and upsets the delicate balance of the school when he comes between the brother and sister who run it. Even though Walser's novel resists any simple categorization, as Expressionist or otherwise, it seems to take place in precisely the kind of claustrophobic dream-world captured in *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*. It is a novel that invites an expressionist vision, which is precisely what happened when it was adapted for the screen by The Brothers Quay as *Instituta Benjamenta, or This Dream Called Human Life*, which I would claim was a huge influence on *Careful* if it were not for the inconvenient historical fact that it was actually made three years after Maddin's film. Nevertheless, and perhaps a little counter-intuitively, I think there is still a way that Maddin's *Careful* is influenced by a film that had not yet been made. It is this: The Brothers Quay had once before beat Maddin to the punch in adapting a cult literary work when they released their animated version of Bruno Schulz's *The Street of Crocodiles* in 1986. When Maddin introduced this film as part of the Pacific Film Archive's *Cinema Mon Amour* series in 2016, he explained how he felt when he first learned of the adaptation and about The Brothers Quay: "I first heard of them in one of those horrifying moments. My favorite author for decades now has been Bruno Schulz, the author of the short stories *The Street of Crocodiles* (1934). Bruno Schulz is practically the *reason* I wanted to make films. I didn't make my first film until I was 29 years old; it was a short movie. I was hoping that at the end of 10-15 years of filmmaking to be good enough to be able to make a Bruno Schulz adaptation […]. So I had this vague plan to get better and better until somehow I could make a film that would be like what Bruno Schulz did on the page. The next thing I know, my screenwriter/collaborator George Toles called me to say, 'Have you

heard that *The Street of Crocodiles* is now a movie?' He was all excited but I was like, 'No! My entire future is *gone*!' It was advertised to play on PBS that night so I watched it quickly, full of hatred, dying to hate the movie and to hate whoever made it. But it ended up being one of those things where the film was just so great that my feelings went beyond jealousy."

So even though *Institute Benjamenta* came after *Careful*, there is, weirdly, a way in which Maddin's admiration for The Brothers Quay and *The Street of Crocodiles* may have played some part in shaping his depiction of the repressed, regulated, and routinized world of the Butler School in *Careful* even before they delivered their official version a few years later. Perhaps just as importantly, this affiliation with the Brothers Quay also counteracts the mythology of Maddin as a cinematic lone wolf wholly disconnected from the rest of the film world.[10]

I want to jump forward now to the series of films that Maddin made in the 2000s, which may not initially seem as explicitly indebted to expressionist cinema as either *Archangel* or *Careful*, but which draw on the German 1920s in different and somewhat more unexpected ways. *Cowards Bend the Knee* (2003) started life as an installation at Toronto's Power Plant gallery. In its initial form, it consisted of ten standalone peepshow devices, which at once recalled cinema's origins in Edison's cinematograph and invited visitors to think about the proximity of the scopophilic and the pornographic. For the film version, these separate short films were strung together sequentially in ten chapters that tell the story of Guy Maddin (played by Darcy Fehr), a hockey player for the Winnipeg Maroons who, after convincing his lover Veronika to have an abortion, unceremoniously dumps her when seduced by the vixenish Meta. Little does he know that Meta wants nothing more from him than to murder her mother, hairdresser-slash-bordello madam, who, whilst having an affair with Guy's teammate Shaky, had conspired to murder Meta's beloved father. Perversely, Meta has saved her father's hands in a formaldehyde-filled jar and coaxes Guy into agreeing to have maniacal back-alley sawbones Dr. Fusi amputate his hands and replace them with those of her dead dad. Dr. Fusi, however, finds some ounce of decency in himself and cannot complete the procedure, so he tints Guy's own hands with blue Barbicide to replicate the stains from the preservation fluid and fakes stitching around the wrists. However, Guy, unaware of Dr. Fusi's

10 As well as being in dialogue with the history of cinema, Maddin's films fit alongside contemporary experimental cinema similarly engaged with the materiality of the moving image and the persistence of past forms, from Bill Morrison, whose *Light is Calling* (2004) Maddin also selected to screen as part of the *Cinema Mon Amour* series, to Peter Tscherkassky, whose *Outer Space* (2000) and *Dream Work* (2002) Maddin celebrates in a *Village Voice* piece on a screening series held at the Anthology Film Archives.

deception, is horrified by what he *thinks* are his new hands. Even though they have given him great goal-scoring powers, they fill him with dread and make his relationship with Meta feel awkwardly incestuous. Admittedly, this synopsis only really brings us up to Chapter 4, but hopefully conveys something of the film's narrative excesses and surreal enthusiasms.

It is strange to think of this story as having its basis in autobiography, but the general shape of Maddin's life is there, even if he sets it back in time a little. The film is set in Winnipeg in the 1930s and the action unfolds in a hairdressing salon and at the fabled Winnipeg arena. As is confirmed in Maddin's *My Winnipeg*, released four years later in 2007, his mother and aunt owned and operated a salon on Winnipeg's Ellice Avenue when Guy was a child and his father was the manager for the Winnipeg Maroons, who played at the Winnipeg Arena. What is especially compelling about *Cowards* is how it exemplifies the relationship between personal memory and cinema memory in Maddin's cycle of autobiographical films. In *Cowards Bend the Knee*, *Brand Upon the Brain* (2006), and *My Winnipeg*, the so-called Me Trilogy, the border between family history and cinema's past is unstable and they frequently shape and form one another. Maddin uses his own personal history as yet another vehicle for his ongoing exploration of the lost languages of cinema and its forgotten genres. I also have the sense that it is only through cinema, through these older genres defined by excess and artificiality, that Maddin can find a way to understand the truth of his childhood and to recreate the intensely felt experience of it.

So, while Robert Wiene's *The Hands of Orlac* (1924) may seem an odd choice of film through which to understand a cluster of childhood traumas and desires that have shaped him as a person, it works remarkably well in the case of *Cowards Bend the Knee*. Wiene's film, made in Austria less than five years after the completion of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari,* retains much of the earlier film's Expressionist tone and tendencies. This is at least in part due to the presence of Conrad Veidt, who brings as great an intensity to Orlac as he did to Cesare in the earlier film. Orlac is a concert pianist who loses his hands in a railway accident. Knowing that her husband's hands are his livelihood, his wife begs the surgeon to save them. Moved by her desperation, the doctor transplants the hands of the recently-executed murderer Vasseur onto Orlac.

Even though he does not tell Orlac of this deception, the pianist is horrified by his new hands from the very moment he awakes. He looks at them in horror and is haunted by what he thinks is the ghost of their true owner. When he eventually learns that he now has the hands of a murderer, he fears that he has also inherited

the capacity, even the desire, to kill. When Orlac's father is discovered murdered, the fingerprints on the knife lead directly back to his son, who fears that he committed patricide in some kind of hand-driven frenzy. He then becomes the victim of blackmail when a man claiming to be Vasseur emerges, claiming that he was saved from execution by an unscrupulous assistant of the surgeon who, after the execution, sewed his head onto a living body and gave him prosthetic hands. This man, however, turns out to be a fraud. The police reveal that he tried to frame Orlac for the murder of his own father by using a pair of rubber gloves imprinted with Vasseur's fingerprints. With this revelation, Orlac is exonerated and his acceptance of his new hands is confirmed when he finally brings himself to embrace his wife.

The first thing to notice is that the complexity of the plot of *Cowards* matches that of *Orlac* twist for turn. And, yes, even though there are a whole slew of contemporary puzzle films that very much fetishize narrative complexity, almost as an end in itself, it serves an altogether different purpose in Expressionist cinema and Maddin's revisions of it.[11] The convolutedness of the plot does not seem solely at the service of the spectator's narrative pleasure in either *Caligari* or *Cowards*, but is a sign of these films' frantic desire to express some deeper truth about human life, despite the full recognition that there are psychic dangers in doing so. In interviews, Maddin frequently makes the point that melodrama should not be thought of simply as "life exaggerated" but as "life uninhibited" and this can serve as a model for understanding the revisioning of *Orlac* into *Cowards Bend the Knee*: it is not that you, as a spectator, have to wipe away all the excess – the narrative excess, the visual excess, the emotional excess, the musical excess, the actorly excess – in order to find the truth that lies underneath. What lies beneath is merely the events and occurrences of life, the real truth of which can only be approached via the excess that initially seems to obscure or obliterate it. This is possibly the main element that Maddin takes from German Expressionism, this idea that the articulation of some kind of lived, emotional or psychological truth is expressible only through a grandness or excess, which always runs the risk of being written off as kitsch, camp, or pastiche. [Fig. 3.]

Hands play an important part in the obstacle that contemporary audiences sometimes feel stands between them and taking seriously older forms, especially the classics of the silent period. At the beginning of the printed screenplay of *Cowards Bend the Knee*, Maddin includes "A Note on Hands" that presumably forms part of the instructions he gave his actors before they embarked on the

11 For an overview of the contemporary Hollywood puzzle film, see Buckland 2014.

project. He writes: "in this melodrama each actor will be required to use his or her hands expressionistically. Frequently, the actors' hands, rather than their faces, will be used to convey required emotions and plot turns" (2003a, 18). It is hardly surprising that *Cowards*, as a silent film that draws heavily on *The Hands of Orlac*, would require a fair bit of robust hand acting. What is important here is the way that Maddin's film frames an older form of acting and allows the spectator to see what has been lost in the transition to newer styles of acting. Drawing on the work of Keir Keightley, Will Straw suggests that we might see Maddin's film as a kind of "historical essay on style" (2016, 66). This would mean understanding it as an archaeological work that encourages an audience to confront what has been lost in the transition from an expressionist or excessively melodramatic mode to the dominant and far more restrained realisms of the present.

Cowards is also a good example of how the reach of Expressionism is redoubled as a consequence of its overwhelming influence on film noir. Maddin describes *Cowards* as a "hockey and hairdressing noir" and has suggested that only noir cinematography could reproduce the high contrast lighting and the inkiest of inky blacks that defines mid-century hockey photography. Likewise, the smoky and sexualized interior of the salon-bordello evokes the illicit spaces of film noir. It scarcely needs to be said that the basic visual vocabulary of film noir was shaped by German exiles who came to Hollywood over the course of the 1930s and in the early 1940s. Directors such as Billy Wilder (*Double Indemnity*, 1944) and Fritz Lang (*Scarlet Street*, 1944) were key to the development of noir, as were cinematographers such as Rudolph Maté (*Gilda*, 1946). Hollywood is, of course, important enough to the story of the export and influence of German Expressionism that Westwood inevitably intervenes between Weimar and Winnipeg. Recognition of this not only acknowledges the centrality of Hollywood in consolidating and promoting the Expressionist style in the years that followed the collapse of the German film industry when the Nazis came to power, but also signals Maddin's own love for all kinds of offbeat Hollywood studio productions of the 1930s, 40s and 50s.[12]

Maddin's engagement with expressionist-inflected film noir continues in *My Winnipeg*. For the film, Maddin cast legendary noir actress Ann Savage to play

12 Gerd Gemünden provides a comprehensive overview of German directors, screenwriters, cinematographers, and technicians in exile in Hollywood and elsewhere during the Nazi period and after in his *Continental Strangers: German Exile Cinema, 1933–1951* (2014). For a sense of Maddin's infectious enthusiasm for all manner of minor and major Hollywood productions of the 1930s and 40s especially, see his occasional column, *Guy Maddin's Jolly Corner*, which appeared sporadically in *Film Comment* during the 2000s.

his mother. She appears in those scenes where Maddin attempts to forensically reconstruct moments from his childhood in the effort to understand why the city has such a tenacious hold on him. Savage is best known for her work in Edgar G. Ulmer's *Detour* from 1945, a low budget or "Poverty Row" noir produced outside the studio system. *Detour* is a cult classic that has acquired a legendary reputation because it is one of the most grimly fatalistic films in the whole noir cycle. That reputation is down in large part to Savage. Her femme fatale Vera is equal parts venom and spite. Throughout the film, she heaps abuse on Tom Neal's sad-sack protagonist. She reminds him time and again that he is nothing more than a "sucker" and a "sap." It's perhaps typical of Maddin to think, "I must get this woman to play my mother!" but I'm more interested in the way that Savage connects the film, via Westwood, back to Weimar.

The conduit for this history, the man who connects it all, is Ulmer, whose career spans both decades and continents, binding together a series of different cinematic movements and film styles.[13] Ulmer started out as an assistant director working with F.W. Murnau on *The Last Laugh* in 1924 and followed Murnau to Hollywood, where he worked as the art director on the Academy Award winning *Sunrise* in 1927. He returned to Germany and co-wrote and co-directed *People on Sunday* in 1930 alongside Curt Siodmak, Robert Siodmak, Billy Wilder and Fred Zinnemann, all of whom, of course, went on to write and direct classic Hollywood films. They were part of a cinematic community in exile, alongside Ulmer, who translated the images and ideas of Expressionism into the American idiom. Ulmer stayed in Germany long enough to be a set designer on Fritz Lang's *M* in 1931, but he returned to Hollywood when the Nazis came to power, and directed the Universal horror classic *The Black Cat* in 1934. After that, throughout the 1930s and 40s, he directed dozens of low-budget pictures, from Bronx-set Yiddish comedies to military documentaries about tuberculosis. Finally, Ulmer even directed two Ukrainian-language films for former Winnipegger and legendary Ukrainian-Canadian showman and producer Vasile Avramenko, who firmly believed these films would be the start of a Ukrainian Hollywood. Even though both *Natalka Poltavka* (1936) and *Cossacks in Exile* (1938) were shot in New Jersey, they found their largest audience in the Ukrainian diasporic communities of Western Canada.[14] *Cossacks in Exile* was restored and digitized by the Provincial Archives of Alberta in 2016, based on a print that circulated

13 Noah Isenberg's *Edgar G. Ulmer: A Filmmaker at the Margins* (2014) provides a comprehensive overview of Ulmer's life and films.

14 For more on the extraordinary life and career of Vasile Avramenko, with fine detail on how Ulmer came to direct the two films, see Martynowych 2014.

as part of an itinerant picture show that travelled to Ukrainian communities in Saskatchewan from the 1930s to the 1950s. *Cossacks in Exile* is not a particularly Expressionist film. Nevertheless, via Savage and her connection to Ulmer, Maddin incorporates into *My Winnipeg* something of the Expressionist twenties that a figure like Ulmer embodies and exemplifies, and which he took into exile and transformed into a series of incredibly esoteric films that are tied to Maddin's Winnipeg in unexpected yet extraordinary ways.

I want to conclude by taking a brief look at Maddin's latest film, 2015's *The Forbidden Room*, which he co-directed with Evan Johnson. *The Forbidden Room* is a film comprised of lost films. Maddin and Johnson made up a list of hundreds of lost films, mostly from the early days of cinema, and set about recreating them on a frantic schedule of one a day, working in public at Centre Phi in Montreal and the Centre Pompidou in Paris. This initial phase of the project was titled *Hauntings*, and sought to restore to existence those lost objects of cinephile fantasy. In certain cases, as with Mikio Naruse's lost film from 1931, *The Strength of a Moustache*, Maddin and his collaborators had little more to work with than the title itself. But, as should already be clear, this kind of speculative reimagining is exactly Maddin's forte. *Hauntings* and *The Forbidden Room* also have an online component, titled *Séances,* which can be accessed via a dedicated NFB site. For each visitor to the site *Séances* generates a unique film algorithmically made up of the hours and hours of surplus footage Maddin shot during *Hauntings*. The film, complete with title and usually fitting in some broad mix of genres and styles, disappears immediately after the film ends. It is perhaps a bit odd to think that Maddin, a filmmaker whose aesthetic is so grounded in his love for cinema's pasts, has become a filmmaker whose practice looks so boldly forward to its digital future. Yet, it is the flexibility that the digital offers that has allowed him to dive even deeper into cinema's past and to explore its lost, deteriorating, forgotten, or orphaned works.[15]

For enthusiasts of German Expressionism, Maddin's take on F.W. Murnau's lost *Der Janus-kopf* from 1920 might very well be the highlight of *The Forbidden Room*. *Der Janus-kopf* was Murnau's adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. The script was written by Hans Janowitz, who was one of the writers of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and it featured Conrad Veidt as both Jekyll and Hyde. Given this cast and crew, the film surely would be, had it survived, a key part of the German Expressionist canon; its disappearance

15 The full story of how *Hauntings*, *The Forbidden Room*, and *Séances* came together is even more complicated than my brief synopsis suggests. For more on the origin, the development, and realization of these projects, see Straw 2016.

is one of those incalculable losses that cinephiles and film scholars mournfully lament. As such, there is some consolation in seeing Maddin's remake. It is one of the few sections of *The Forbidden Room* in black and white and it masterfully works within the Expressionist idiom, both visually and thematically. It features all the shadows you would expect and concludes with the protagonist being whacked on the head with the eponymous Janus head by his doppelgänger.

Since it is perhaps a bit too straightforward an homage, I want to conclude by briefly looking at another one of *The Forbidden Room*'s sequences: the one featuring the great Udo Kier as a man so debilitatingly obsessed with buttocks that he seeks out a surgeon to remove sections of his ass-addled brain bit by bit to try to cure him of his affliction. What I like about this admittedly bonkers sequence is the way that it recalls and revisits the debilitating obsessions, the uncontrollable impulses that thread through Weimar cinema and in many ways define it. This history of men distraught and destroyed by desire begins, of course, with *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* itself and Werner Krauss's asylum director submitting to the repeated injunction "du Musst Caligari Werden!" "You must become Caligari!" There is also, of course, Orlac, who believes that his hands are in control of him rather than his head or his heart. And then there is poor Werner Krauss again in Pabst's *Secrets of the Soul* (1926) playing a man who, after a minor accident in which he cuts his wife whilst shaving the nape of her neck, is distraught over the idea that he does really want to kill her. Additionally, there is also Emil Jannings in Joseph von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel* (1930), so smitten with Marlene Dietrich's Lola Lola that he goes from respected teacher to destroyed man. Finally, there is Peter Lorre in Fritz Lang's *M* (1931), the child murderer driven to kill by a homicidal impulse that even he does not seem to fully understand.

In *The Forbidden Room*, this vision of a man seized by compulsion is Weimar cinema's legacy and Udo Kier's inheritance. And, while in *The Blue Angel* Von Sternberg soundtracks Emil Jannings's fall with Marlene Dietrich singing the sublime *Falling in Love Again*, in *The Forbidden Room*, Kier's desperate decline unfolds to the mockingly melancholic sound of *The Final Derriere* by Los Angeles duo Sparks. I hope that it is not too minor or incidental point with which to conclude, but I think that this gap between the pathos of the Dietrich song and the bathos of the Sparks track perfectly sums up the relationship that Maddin has with cinema's past. Far from treating it as sacrosanct or producing po-faced homages to it, Maddin embraces the reckless mad passion that is at the very heart of it. Perhaps the greatest connection between Winnipeg and Weimar, between Guy Maddin and German Expressionism, is the willingness to use cinema's

most expansive repertoire of tricks and artifices, to venture into the realm of the uninhibited and the irrational, in order to produce something both deeply authentic and thoroughly artificial.

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Figure 1. Maddin's historical Gimli in *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* (1988). (Copyright Guy Maddin, courtesy Winnipeg Film Group.)

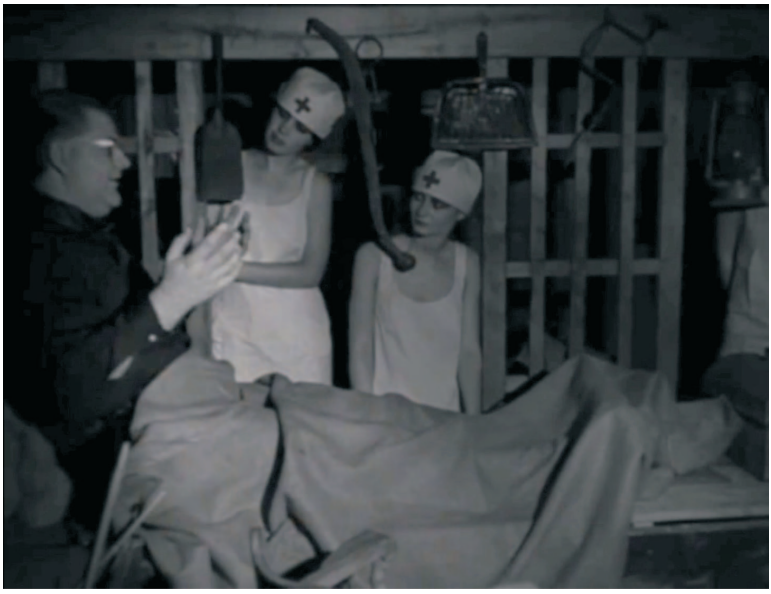

Figure 2. The citizens of Tolzbad assemble in Guy Maddin's mountain film *Careful* (1992). (Copyright Guy Maddin, courtesy Winnipeg Film Group.)

Figure 3. Guy Maddin's *Cowards Bend the Knee* (2003) draws extensively on Robert Wiene's *The Hands of Orlac* (1924). (Copyright Guy Maddin, courtesy Winnipeg Film Group.)

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Modernist Medievalism and the Expressionist Morality Play: Georg Kaiser's *From Morning to Midnight*

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Abstract. This article examines the modernist medievalism of Georg Kaiser's *From Morning to Midnight* (*Von morgens bis mitternachts*), discussing the influence of the morality play genre on its form. The characterization and action in Kaiser's play mirrors and evokes that of morality plays influenced by and including the late-medieval Dutch play *Elckerlijc* and its English translation as *Everyman*, in particular Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann*, first produced in Berlin in 1911. The medievalism of Kaiser's play is particularly evident when it is compared to Karl Heinz Martin's film version of the text, produced in 1920. The play's allegory and message, though contemporary, are less specifically historically contextual than the film's, while its central protagonist is more representative of generic capitalist subjectivity. The detective film shapes Martin's adaptation, obscuring the morality play conventions and therefore medievalism of Kaiser's earlier text.

Keywords: Modernism, Expressionism, Medievalism, morality play.

Many early twentieth-century avant-garde modernisms were, at least to some degree, medievalisms: that is, they referenced and reimagined European medieval systems of knowledge, belief, and aesthetics in their contemporary art. Theatre artist and sometime surrealist Antonin Artaud famously pronounced in his 1927 *Manifesto for a Theatre that Failed* that he believed "the Revolution most urgently needed consists of a kind of regression into time. Let us return to the mentality or even simply to the way of life of the Middle Ages, but really and by a kind of essential metamorphosis, and then I shall consider that we have accomplished the only revolution worth talking about"[1] (1988, 162).

1 "La Révolution la plus urgente à accomplir est dans une sorte de régression dans le temps. Que nous en revenions à la mentalité ou même simplement aux habitudes de vie du Moyen Age, mais réellement et par une manière de métamorphose dans les essences, et j'estimerai alors que nous aurons accompli la seule révolution qui vaille la peine qu'on en parle" (Artaud 1961, 25).

Expressionist visual artist Georg Grosz saw significant similarities between early twentieth-century and late medieval culture. In a 1931 radio interview, he compared the two eras: "I consider that the present time is similar to the final epoch of the Middle Ages. It seems as though we are standing at the beginning of a new world view, a new interpretation of everything. To put it more clearly, the ground we are standing on is fiery, cracked, and shaking, as it must have seemed to the painters at the end of the Middle Ages" (qtd. in Flavell 1988, 68). In Grosz's opinion, medievalism offered an appropriate modernist response to the challenges of early twentieth-century history and culture.

In Germany, many avant-garde artists adopted and adapted technologies and forms employed in the middle ages: for example, inspired by the work of medieval illustrators, Expressionist visual artists experimented with woodcut, producing contemporary images with what they considered medieval European technology. Many sculptors imitated the work of medieval carvers: Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's prototype for a larger sculpture *Iron Blacksmith* (*Eiserner Schmied*) was lauded by patron Karl Ernst Osthaus and University of Jena professor of archaeology and art history Botho Graef for its medieval style; according to Graef, medieval art was "the prime expression of the Nordic-German spirit" (Goebel 2008, 66, as well as 68, fig. 10). Other of Kirchner's sculptures – for example *Farmer with Cow* (*Bauer mit Ku*, 1925) (Henze 2007, 152, ill. 14) – resemble carvings found in the choirs and on the ceilings of medieval churches. And Kirchner's colleague Herman Scherer's 1924 *Lamentation of the Dead* (*Totenklage*) intentionally evokes the late medieval pieta (Henze 2007, 168, cat. 140).

Expressionist dramatists also looked to the European Middle Ages for inspiration. Oscar Kokoschka ironically referenced medieval romance in his horrifying *Murderer, the Women's Hope* (*Mörder Hoffnung der Frauen*, 1909); Georg Kaiser dramatized a fourteenth-century incident from the Hundred Years' War in his *The Burghers of Calais* (*Die Bürger von Calais*, 1914); and August Stramm evoked both medieval hagiography and nineteenth-century Gothicism in his *Sancta Susanna* (1921). As these and other theatre artists dramatized medieval subject matter and referenced various medieval visual arts in their texts, they also imitated particular medieval dramatic genres, the most often acknowledged being German mystery and Passion plays. A genre less often noted for its influence on the Expressionists, and therefore the focus of this paper, was the medieval morality play, an allegorical form dramatizing the experiences of a universal or typical protagonist tempted into sin and recalled to redemption and salvation over the course of the play's action. Most familiar to German playwrights and audiences

in the example of Hugo von Hofmannsthal's 1911 *Jedermann*, a revision of the form (in particular of the late medieval Dutch and English plays *Elckerlijc* and *Everyman*) for contemporary German audiences, the morality play was adopted and adapted in part or in whole by a number of Expressionist playwrights, who found its central assumptions, characteristics, and goals consistent with their own aesthetics.[2] As will be discussed, the clearest example of such a reimagining of the form was Georg Kaiser's *From Morning to Midnight* (*Von morgens bis mitternachts*). This play dramatizes the plight of an early twentieth-century Everyman, a bank cashier whose fall from "grace" into sin leads him on a modernist – therefore ultimately unsuccessful – quest for salvation.

A desire for social and aesthetic renewal, even revolution, inspired modernist medievalisms. Wary of claims that technology would solve the problems facing their nations before, during, and after the First World War, modernists tended to question the value of empirical knowledge collected and disseminated and aesthetic techniques utilized since the European Renaissance, sometimes regarding that knowledge and those techniques as unimportant or uninteresting, other times regarding them as dangerous and corrupting. Expressionists in particular suspected that the so-called European enlightenment of the eighteenth century had produced a host of artistic and social ills: the privileging of reason over imagination, a general overdependence on sight and devaluing of other sensory experiences, the privileging of the object in the world over subjective human experience, the disconnection of the human from the spiritual, the individuation of identity – and as a result of all these, the individual's harmful separation from the collective and alienation from his or her true spiritual and physical self. To heal both rifts, the Expressionists believed they needed to reconnect with pre-enlightenment cultures: the classical or the medieval. The European Middle Ages represented for them at once the height and childhood of European culture; if they could reconnect and become inspired by the medieval, they might start again from a point of particular understanding and insight.

It is important to stress that the Expressionists did not advocate a simple return to the medieval but rather called for a medievalist perspective in their aesthetics and in their art. The terms medieval, medievalism, and medievalist are as distinct from one another as are the more familiar terms modern, modernism, and modernist. The adjective modern identifies an historical period while the noun

2 Robert Potter offers Kaiser's *Gas* plays, Toller's *Masse Mensch* (*Masses and Man*), and Čapek's *RUR* as examples of texts likely influenced by the morality form, although he does not analyse them in any detail (1975, 231).

modernism and adjective modernist identify a group of particular philosophies and aesthetics within that period, or, in other words, particular understandings and representations of that contemporary (modern) world. Medieval similarly identifies an historical period, in Western Europe that beginning with the fall of the Roman Empire in the late fifth century and ending at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Medievalism and medievalist identify something else: again, understandings and representations of the culture of the medieval period, but, in most uses of these terms, within and from the perspective of another time and culture. A particular medievalism is a particular understanding of and practice inspired by medieval cultural products encountered and interpreted at an historical and cultural distance. The nineteenth century, for example, was marked by profound cultural interest in the Middle Ages and by cultural products that could be described as medievalist: Alfred Lord Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott* and *Idylls of the King*, Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, and William Morris's Arts and Crafts movement to name a few famous English examples. Participants in various medievalisms have been and are to varying degrees conscious of this distance and of the fact that they are interpretations, not reality. Despite Antonin Artaud's apparent call for the medieval to be restored, modernist medievalisms did not naively advocate a return to another, long-past era and culture but rather advocated the adoption and adaptation by modernist theory and practice of what were regarded to be medieval aesthetics, subject matter, and artistic forms. Modernists advocated the translation of these aesthetics, subjects, and forms into modernist idioms.

In the case of the morality play, aspects of the medieval genre compatible with Expressionist philosophies, politics, and aesthetics were adopted while those that were not were discarded or altered. Extant medieval examples of the morality play, an international form, differ considerably; however, theatre historians generally agree that plays belonging to this genre display certain shared characteristics and goals. Robert Potter has suggested that the "events which occur on stage in the course of the [morality] play are not mimetic representations of life, but analogical demonstrations of what life is about" (1975, 33). As Pamela King describes them, moralities "offer their audiences moral instruction through dramatic action that is broadly allegorical. Hence they are set in no time, or outside historical time, though their lack of historical specificity is generally exploited by strategically collapsing the eternal with the contemporary. The protagonist is generally a figure of all men, reflected in his name, Everyman or Mankind, and the other characters are polarised as figures of good and evil. The action concerns alienation from

God and return to God, presented as the temptation, fall and restitution of the protagonist" (King 2008, 235).

As for their central message or effect, Clifford Davidson argues that "phenomenologically, man is encouraged by these plays to see his life as wounded and in need of healing, or as unnaturally separated from the sources of all health and well being" (1989, 11). In Expressionist morality plays, the instruction or central message differs in some respects, as audience members are encouraged to break with old beliefs (for example, in God) and traditional institutions (for example, the church) and to reject conventional values for revolutionary human-centred ethics. However, Expressionist plays are allegorical in their replacement of individual characters with types; their settings or given circumstances are not naturalistic and are therefore to some degree universal or outside of time. Also, their central themes and motifs of human regeneration and transformation and their recognition of the individual's wounded state and need for healing easily harmonize with medieval morality prototypes.

Possibly the most well-known example of a medieval morality play is the Netherlandish text *Elckerlijc* (1496), more famous in translation as the English play *Everyman* (c. 1510–1525). These very closely related plays feature (somewhat unusually) a central character who has already fallen into sin and from the beginning is in need of salvation/transfiguration. Because characters and plot events will be important to understanding Kaiser's Expressionist text, a brief summary of *Elckerlijc*/*Everyman* will be offered here. In both plays, God sends Death (*Doot*) to tell Everyman that he will soon die and will need to make a pilgrimage and a reckoning of the deeds he committed while alive. Everyman tries to bribe Death for a slight delay; unsuccessful, he then asks if he may bring someone along with him on his final pilgrimage. Death jokes that he certainly may if he can find anyone "so hardy" (Davidson 2007, 25, l. 157) ("so koene" [2007, 24, l. 136]) to undertake the journey. Everyman first approaches the characters Fellowship (*Gheselscap*), Kindred (*Maghe*), and Cousin (*Neve*) and asks them to join him. All three refuse when they learn where Everyman is going. He next approaches his Goods (*Tgoet*), who informs Everyman that he cannot move because he has been so closely guarded, fettered and chained by Everyman over his lifetime, and that it would be better for Everyman to travel alone, since love of Goods and of money first led him into sin.

At this point in the play Everyman hears his Good Deeds (*Duecht*) crying. She tells Everyman she would happily go with him to judgement but cannot because his sins have bound her and have made her so weak that she cannot move. She

tells Everyman to ask her sister Knowledge (*Kennisse*) for advice. Knowledge appears and advises Everyman to approach the holy man Confession (*Biechte*), which he does, repenting his sins and undertaking acts of penance. Everyman's actions gradually release Good Deeds, making her mobile and able to accompany him on his journey. Everyman then calls on his Five Wits (*Vijf Sinnen*), Beauty (*Schoonheyt*), Strength (*Cracht*), and Discretion (*Vroetscap*), and together they begin his final pilgrimage. Ultimately, in sequence, all abandon him at the lip of his grave; only Good Deeds descends with him into the earth. At the play's conclusion, Everyman's soul is raised from the grave by an angel and transported into the "hevenly spere [sic]" (Davison 2007, 77, l. 899) ("Hemels pleyne" [Davison 2007, 76, l. 852]), his final redemption achieved.

Many adaptations and translations of *Elckerlijc*/*Everyman* were produced and circulated in Europe in the century after its initial composition and performance. Christiaan de Stercke published a Latin version of the play entitled *Homulus* in 1536; in 1539, Joris Langvelt produced a nominally Protestant Latin adaptation entitled *Hekastus*; and Thomas Kirchmeyer produced an "out-and-out Protestant" Latin version entitled *Mercator* in 1540 (Conley 1985, 11–12). These versions in their turn inspired further translations and adaptations. Jaspar von Gennep published a Low German version of *Homulus* (also drawing on *Hekastus*) in 1540, entitled *Everyman, the Wages of Sin is Death* (*Homulus, Der sunden loin ist der Toid*). Hans Sachs based his *A Comedy of the Dying Rich Man* (*Ein comedi von dem reichen sterbenden menschen*) (1549) on Langvelt's *Hekastus*. Johannes Stricker published *The German Gourmand* (*De Düdesche Schlomer*), influenced by both *Homulus* and *Hekastus*, in 1584. And Kirchmeyer's *Mercator* was translated into "French, Polish, Czech, and Russian as well as Dutch and High German" in the sixteenth century (Conley 1985, 12).

Expressionist playwrights including Kaiser could have been familiar with the original late medieval *Elckerlijc*, with its English translation *Everyman*, and/or with any of its many other adaptations and translations. A celebrated and long remembered revival of the English play at the turn of the twentieth century could and likely would have drawn their attention to the morality play as form. In 1901, *Everyman* was revived by the actor and theatrical manager William Poel for the Elizabethan Stage Society. This production premiered at the Charterhouse in London in July, was remounted at University College, Oxford in August, and was performed again at St. George's Hall, London in May of 1902. A month-long engagement followed at the Imperial Theatre, and the play toured throughout the United Kingdom that same year. Under Poel's former partner in

the venture, Ben Greet, *Everyman* subsequently travelled to the United States, touring extensively in that country in 1903 (Speaight 1954, 161–168; Potter 1975, 222–225; Schreiber 1975, 99–100).

According to Robert Potter, "Poel's production had made *Everyman* a contemporary fact, and the morality play a part of the twentieth century" (Potter 1975, 225), powerfully influencing early twentieth-century English, American, and European writers. In Germany, the production's impact can be traced through Max Reinhardt, who, as Robert Speaight first noted, attended the Elizabethan Stage Society's early performances of the play in 1901 (Speaight 1954, 165). Two years after witnessing this production, Reinhardt met the playwright Hugo von Hofmannsthal; likely not coincidentally, that same year Hofmannsthal began composition of his own morality play entitled *Jedermann* (Stevens 1973, 118). Acknowledged by the playwright to be an adaptation of *Everyman* and the previously mentioned *A Comedy of the Dying Rich Man* by Hans Sachs, *Jedermann* was produced for the first time by Reinhardt at the Zirkus Schumann in Berlin on 1 December 1911. This production then toured, with performances in Munich, Dresden, and Vienna (Stevens 1973, 129). Expressionist and other playwrights in Germany who had missed the *Everyman* revival and were not familiar with the morality play in any other form would have found it difficult to avoid news of Hofmannsthal's play and Reinhardt's production. Potter has suggested that *Jedermann* in fact "familiarized the German-speaking world with the abstract concept of morality characterizations," asserting further that "its influence was felt in the avant-garde drama of its own day which we now call Expressionism" (1975, 231).

Jedermann modifies and adds to the basic plot and characters of its sources and inspirations. Like *Elckerlijc*/*Everyman* it begins, in a considerably shortened section of the action, with God (*Got*) commanding Death (*Tod*) to call Jedermann on his final pilgrimage. Jedermann enters, proudly contemplating his possessions. He sends his Steward (*Vogt*) to collect a bag of gold needed to purchase a pleasure garden and tells him also to summon the Cook (*Koch*), whom he instructs to prepare a sumptuous feast for friends and family. The Steward re-enters with Jedermann's gold as his Friend (*Gesell*) and a Poor Neighbour (*Armer Nachbar*) arrive separately. The Poor Neighbour asks for alms; Jedermann initially refuses but later relents, offering him a single penny. The Poor Neighbour grumbles but accepts the meagre gift and leaves the stage. A Debtor (*Schuldknecht*) on his way to prison asks Jedermann to tear up a complaint the richer man has made against him. Jedermann refuses and the Debtor is taken away.

Jedermann's Mother (*Jedermanns Mutter*) arrives, foretells her own death, warns Jedermann that he too will die, and laments his bachelorhood. Jedermann protests that he is still too young to worry about dying as he is only forty years old but reluctantly promises his mother that she will live to see him married. Jedermann's Paramour (*Buhlschaft*) then enters the scene. The banquet Jedermann called for earlier in the play magically appears, a sumptuously-dressed table rising up from the floor. As Jedermann, his Paramour, and their guests sit to eat, Jedermann presages his own death, suggesting his guests will be able to pay their last respects to him at the feast. He then wonders how his Paramour would react if she were told he was to die within the hour and asks if she would remain his companion in death. The others discuss how to lift his melancholia – with hot wine, magical potions; they call for music and sing to distract him. Jedermann's mood lifts temporarily, but as his cousin sings, he hears a bell tolling off in the distance. The sound eventually disappears and he feels momentarily cheered. But Jedermann next hears a jumble of voices calling his name. The room grows dim and Death appears, informing Jedermann that God requires he settle his final account. Jedermann protests that he is ill-prepared, that he needs another twelve years to be ready to face God, but Death informs him that he must make his pilgrimage without delay. Jedermann asks for one additional day, night, and then hour to prepare his soul and to find a companion to accompany him on his journey. Death tells him he will not find anyone willing to travel along but before leaving allows him a short reprieve, warning Jedermann to use his time wisely. Jedermann first approaches his Friend, who initially promises to do anything for him, even to accompany him to hell, but breaks his promise upon learning where Jedermann is travelling. Next, Jedermann approaches his Fat and Thin Cousins (*Dicker* and *Dunner Vetters*), who refuse to leave with him when they learn the nature of his journey. Jedermann then calls for his Steward and other servants to collect together his money, which he decides must be carried with him on his pilgrimage. They bring a heavy chest out on stage but flee when they see Death appear to chastise Jedermann for wasting the extra time he has been given and failing to understand how to find a proper companion. Left alone, Jedermann panics and vows that he will not leave without his money. At this moment Mammon springs out of the chest and asks Jedermann what is troubling him. Jedermann tells Mammon that he has been summoned by God and orders Mammon to accompany him on his journey; Mammon refuses, explaining that he is comfortable where he is. Jedermann objects that Mammon is his property and must do as he wishes, a claim that makes Mammon laugh. In fact, Mammon

explains, Jedermann has been his servant, his Jumping Jack (*Hampelmann*) all along (Hofmannsthal 1957, 71). Mammon will remain on earth while Jedermann must pass away. Mammon retreats back inside his chest.

At this moment Good Deeds (*Werke*) calls feebly to Jedermann from a pallet. He initially ignores her, thinking she is calling for help or charity. When she identifies herself and offers to travel with him, he laments the life he has lived and the fact that his actions have made his Good Deeds so weak and ill. She advises him to speak to her sister Faith (*Glaube*), who then enters the scene. Faith is initially skeptical that Jedermann merits assistance and interrogates him on the articles of faith; eventually persuaded of his contrition, she reminds him of God's mercy when he despairs. A monk appears in the distance; Faith tells Jedermann that this holy man can help purify his soul. Jedermann falls to his knees, then prostrates himself in prayer. His mother enters the stage on her way to mass; she tells her servant that she hears angelic music. Before exiting, she claims that this music signifies her son has been saved and she can now die confident that she will meet him again in heaven. Good Deeds casts away her crutches, and Faith informs Jedermann that, no longer burdened by his sins, both sisters can now accompany him on his way. Jedermann rejoices and leaves the stage to be absolved by the monk. Just after he exits, a Devil (*Teufel*) enters to collect Jedermann's soul, but Faith, Good Deeds, and an Angel prevent the Devil from accosting him. After complaining about the injustice of Jedermann's long, sinful life and quick deathbed repentance, the Devil exits the stage in frustration. Jedermann then re-enters carrying a pilgrim's staff and dressed in a long white robe. Good Deeds accompanies him into the grave as Faith watches and angels sing.

Georg Kaiser's *From Morning to Midnight* (*Von morgens bis mitternachts*) bears more than a passing resemblance to Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann* and to its sources, and exhibits many characteristics of the generic morality play. The text's date of composition is uncertain: Kaiser claimed he wrote the play in 1912; however, Rhys Williams has noted Kaiser's tendency to predate compositions and suggests the text could have been revised or even written as late as 1915 (1988, 365). As it was published for the first time in 1916, only a *terminus post quem* and *terminus ante quem* for its composition can be identified. The earliest possible completion would still date the play to the year following Reinhardt's December 1911 production of *Jedermann* in Berlin, the same year it toured Munich, Dresden, and Vienna. Although Kaiser was not living in any of those cities at that time – he was in Seeheim-on-the-Bergstrasse and Weimar (Schürer 1971, 14) – according to Cynthia Walk he "regularly visited Berlin and frequented the cultural life of

the city" (2007, 180). Kaiser then could have seen Reinhardt's production of *Jedermann* or at very least could have heard or read about Hofmannsthal's play before or while composing his own text.

Kaiser's interest in medieval history and aesthetics was likely in part sparked and shaped by the ideas of socio-anarchist philosopher Gustav Landauer. Rhys Williams has argued that the two shared a "mutual respect and admiration" and that a "fruitful interaction between Landauer and Kaiser can be dated very early in Kaiser's development as a dramatist, at least as early as *From Morning to Midnight* […]" (1988, 365). Williams describes Landauer as "a profound enthusiast of the Middle Ages, though no uncritical medievalizing thinker" (1988, 366). "Like many influential figures in the early years of the century," Williams writes, Landauer saw "the medieval world as the high point of Western Culture, from which there has been a steady decline" (1988, 366). Landauer's admiration for the Middle Ages stemmed from his belief that Geist – as he described it, a "bridge of love between individuals" (Maurer 1971, 78), "a natural, not an imposed compulsion" (qtd. in Maurer 1971, 78), and as such "the necessary basis of culture in a nation" (Williams 1988, 366) – found its clearest active expression in medieval European Christianity. Christianity as a type of Geist "[permeated] all the social organizations of the medieval period and [wielded] the diverse human functions into a cultural unity" (1988, 366) – but did so only when expressed through the establishment of "freely-determined mutual relationships" within communities and not through state-mandated hierarchies and beliefs or through the imposition of orthodoxy and dogma (1988, 366). Williams suggests "there are hints here of the idealization of the medieval village community, self-sufficient and operating by barter, producing only what the community needs" (1988, 368). Landauer advocated the creation "within capitalist society [of] socialist communities which operate according to this pattern, and he ends his treatise [here *Aufruf zum Sozialismus* (*Call to Socialism*)] with a call to his audience individually to join such communities, withdraw their support in practical terms from capitalist society, and put into practice the idea of a socialism free from the state" (1988, 368).

Williams has persuasively argued that the action of *From Morning to Midnight* was influenced by Landauer's philosophies. The play dramatizes the central protagonist's slow discovery that money has no intrinsic value and that its use leads to broken and unfulfilling familial and communal relationships. I would add here that the play's medievalism extends beyond its idealization of pre-capitalist medieval social structures to its form: its action also mirrors and evokes that of earlier morality plays, particularly those plays belonging to the *Elckerlijc* family

tree. Williams notes but does not explore the central character's role in the play as a "kind of modern Everyman, taking upon himself the sins of the capitalist world and becoming its sacrificial victim" (1985, 372). Other critics have similarly commented on the play as morality without exploring the significance of its chosen genre. In an anthology of Kaiser's plays in translation, J. M. Ritchie in his introduction describes the text's protagonist as a "modern Everyman caught up in the dilemmas of contemporary life" (1971, 7). Carole Jane Lambert, in a more extended analysis of the play's medieval themes, allusions, numerology, and symbolism, suggests that Kaiser's use of flat characters in general "resembles medieval allegory and morality plays where each character represents only one trait such as Gluttony, Lust, Greed" (1986, 244). She too considers Kaiser's central character an Everyman (266), one "disillusioned, rejected, and betrayed" (1986, 274), but fails to compare his actions to those of the protagonists in Kaiser's potential sources.

Like Elckerlijc/Everyman/Jedermann, Kaiser's protagonist, the *Kassierer* or Cashier, is a "figure representing all of humanity:" he is a man typical of his particular profession but also representative of a general early twentieth-century capitalist subjectivity, embedded in a system of monetary exchange, lacking any notion of personal identity outside of that system. He therefore also embodies a broader early twentieth-century aesthetic and spiritual human inauthenticity. At the beginning of the play, the Cashier lacks self-awareness and functions more or less as the early twentieth-century equivalent of a bank machine, taking money from and dispensing money to patrons of the bank who embody vices and virtues: for example, the rich, pompous Fat Man (*Herr*) and the humble Maid Servant (*Dienstmädchen*). As Williams describes him, the Cashier is an "automaton, wholly submerged in his function" (1985, 369); "he accepts the conventional relationship between money and what it can buy without question, even unthinkingly, confining himself to the purely mechanistic role as a minor functionary in the capitalist economy" (1985, 369). His connection to money establishes a link between him and the characters Elckerlijc/Everyman/Jedermann, who all believe they own and control their Goods, not that their Goods own and control them. This misunderstanding of their agency in relation to capital comes to the Cashier after his theft of money from the bank. When an exotic Florentine Lady (*Dame*) approaches his counter and accidentally touches the Cashier's hand, he becomes newly conscious and his senses become engaged. The Cashier steals 60 000 marks from the bank, flees, and embarks on a journey, an Expressionist variation on Everyman's pilgrimage.

The Cashier first travels to the Lady's hotel room, hoping to persuade her to accompany him on his travels (the Lady here resembles Jedermann's Paramour). He is rebuffed, as she has come to town to help her son purchase a long-lost erotic painting by Lucas Cranach of Adam and Eve in the Garden before the Fall, and so he sets off alone except for his money. Pausing under a tree, the Cashier contemplates his next move; shifting snow exposes a hulking figure – a skeleton resembling and representing Death (*Tod*) – and the Cashier briefly considers committing suicide. But because he still has money to spend and various accounts to settle, he asks Death to return for him again around midnight.

The Cashier next travels home. There he finds his Mother (*Mutter*), Wife (*Frau*), and Daughters (*Töchter*), female equivalents of Kindred and Cousin in *Elckerlijc*/*Everyman* and the Thin and Fat Cousins in *Jedermann*. One of his daughters plays the piano, attempting to please him with music (the Overture to Tännhauser) while his Wife offers to fry chops for his dinner. The Cashier decides that the women represent nothing more than oppressive bourgeois responsibilities and petty, distracting pleasures, rejects their company, and moves on. Arriving next at a sports palace, a public arena full of crowds enjoying a six-day cycle race, the Cashier offers excessive prize money to the exhausted athletes, hoping to whip the spectating crowds into a frenzy. The crowds respond for a time but eventually hush with respect at the arrival of the king; the Cashier, disgusted by their deference, leaves. The Cashier then brings his ill-gotten goods to a nightclub where he hopes to distract himself, orders a final banquet of champagne and *spitzen*, and meets four masked women. After discovering the first is drunk, the second and third are not pretty, and the fourth is missing a leg, he abuses them and flees: like Jedermann, he is only temporarily distracted by women, alcohol, and music. In the final scene of the play, the Cashier attends a Salvation Army meeting where sinners are called publicly to confess and repent (recalling Elckerlijc's/Everyman's encounter with the holy man Confession and Jedermann's meeting with Faith and his absolution offstage by the Monk). Here the Cashier realizes something that Everyman, Elckerlijc, and Jedermann learn very early on in their plays – that his Goods, his money, will not be the means of his salvation but rather of his damnation. The Cashier discards what remains of the 60 000 marks he stole from the bank, throwing the money into the crowd of Salvation Army officers and penitents, who madly scoop it up. The police arrive to arrest the Cashier, tipped off by the Salvation Army Girl (*Mädchen*), the equivalent of Knowledge, Faith, or perhaps even Good Deeds, who earlier called the Cashier to repent and now will collect a reward for betraying him. Death appears again

in the form of a skeleton, manifesting in the wiring of a chandelier above the Cashier's head. The Cashier pulls a gun from his coat, shoots himself, and falls back against the Salvation Army cross sewn onto a backing curtain. Kaiser's stage directions tell us the Cashier's "dying cough sounds like an 'Ecce' – his expiring breath like a whispered – 'Homo'" (Ritchie 1971, 73) ("Sein Ächzen Büstelt wie ein Ecce – sein Hauchen surrt wie ein Homo" [1919, 120]).

Kaiser's adaptation of the morality form here is obvious, as are the similarities between his play and *Elckerlijc*, *Everyman*, and *Jedermann*. The Cashier first highlights his representative function when he visits the Lady in her hotel room; he sees the medieval painting she wishes to buy for her son and recognizes himself in the figure of Adam, telling the Lady, "I'm in the picture!" (Ritchie 1971, 32) ("Ich bin im Bilde!" [Kaiser 1919, 36]). As H. J. Schueler suggests, "in identifying himself with Adam, Kassierer becomes representative of all men" (1984, 100). In his identification with the first man and comparison of the Lady with Eve, the Cashier makes explicit their participation in a temptation and fall narrative. Death appears to the Cashier in the field, a kind of summoning of Everyman, a call to reckoning; like Everyman, the Cashier requests just a bit more time to find something or someone to bring him to redemption. Like Jedermann, he at first wastes the additional time he has been granted seeking out worthless companionship. His mistake seems more understandable, however, since unlike Elckerlijc/Everyman/Jedermann he is never told that Goods have damned and will damn him. He therefore takes his money with him, not personified as Goods or as Mammon (both as characters could speak and enlighten the Cashier about his error) but in the form of dumb objects, gold and paper money. Trying to buy his way into a secular heaven, he realizes too late that money has controlled and corrupted him.

The central moral message of Kaiser's play, then, the moral instruction one expects from a morality play, seems to be that competition and consumerism lead to exploitation and to the dehumanization of both the exploited and the exploiter. The Cashier who offers prize money to athletes (who then destroy their bodies for the entertainment of others) and the Cashier who offers money to destitute women in a nightclub (who sell their bodies for simple survival) is similarly controlled by money, made its subject, its puppet, and is also lost, purposeless, alone. Yet the Cashier has the ability to change his own fate. Like the central figure of the generic morality play in Clifford Davidson's description, the Cashier sees "his life as wounded and in need of healing, or as unnaturally separated from the sources of all health and well being" (1989, 11). The Cashier, however, is unaware how to proceed, how to make things better, like many in

pre- and post-First World War Germany and Europe. To the Cashier's confusion, his play lacks a trustworthy character with access to truth, an equivalent of the characters Knowledge in *Everyman* and Faith in *Jedermann*: living in a post-Kantian world, a world in which God has become inaccessible (or in Nietzsche's expression, dead), the Cashier has no access to moral truths except those created, tested, and chosen by human beings. The Cashier in his peculiar dilemma is medievalist rather than medieval: he is an Expressionist Everyman who must in the end determine his own morality.

It would have been better perhaps if, like Elckerlijc/Everyman/Jedermann, the Cashier had earlier mobilized his Good Deeds instead of placing his trust in his Goods. What might constitute Expressionist Good Deeds in the play, however, is a challenging question. Given Landauer's influence on Kaiser, the Cashier's action of renouncing capital and discarding money as a mechanism of exchange, the modern equivalent of Elckerlijc/Everyman/Jedermann preferring and privileging spiritual actions over material wealth, might constitute the most important act a repentant Expressionist Everyman could take. Landauer believed that individuals freed from the capitalist drive to compete, acquire, and consume would again recognize and fulfil their artistic and spiritual potentials. The best deed, then, would be the choice to act to embrace organic, voluntary socialism. But to make that choice and to take that action, the Cashier as Everyman would need to join in community with like-minded individuals; he cannot act alone. Even two individuals would be enough to realize this ideal, as the Cashier tells the Salvation Army Girl. "Masses left behind us? Crowd dispersed. […] Maid and Man. Ancient gardens re-opened. Cloudless sky. Voice from the silence of the tree-tops. All is well. (*Drum roll.*) Maid and man – eternal constancy. Maid and man – fullness in the void – beginning and end – seed and flower – sense and aim and goal." (Ritchie 1971, 72.) ("Menschenscharen dahinten. Gewimmel verronnen. […] Mädchen und Mann. Uralte Gärten aufgeschlossen. Entwölkter Himmel. Stimme aus Baumwipfelstille. Wohlgefallen. *Wirbel*. Mädchen und Mann – ewige Beständigkeit. Mädchen und Mann – Fülle im Leeren. Mädchen und Mann – vollendeter Anfang. Mädchen und Mann – Keim und Krone. Mädchen und Mann – Sinn und Ziel und Zweck." [Kaiser 1919, 117–118.])

After discovering the Salvation Army Girl's betrayal, however, the Cashier loses hope, stating, "here I stand. I stand above you. Two are too many. There's space for one only. Loneliness is space; space is loneliness" (Ritchie 1971, 72). ("Hier stehe ich. Oben stehe ich. Zwei sind zuviel. Der Raum faßt nur einen. Einsamkeit ist Raum. Raum ist Einsamkeit" [Kaiser 1919, 118].) In *Elckerlijc*,

Everyman, and *Jedermann*, a maid and a man step together into the grave at the end of the central characters' journeys, as Good Deeds in all three plays is gendered female. The Cashier in *From Morning to Midnight* meets death alone. Finding himself without a community, he commits suicide to avoid becoming trapped once again in the capitalist system he has renounced.

After their deaths, an Angel appears to collect Elckerlijc's, Everyman's, and Jedermann's souls and/or describes their arrival in heaven. In contrast, in *From Morning to Midnight*, no angel appears, only a Policeman (*Schutzmann*), who comments after the Cashier's death and in response to an explosion of lightbulbs in the chandelier above his head, "there must have been a short circuit" (Ritchie 1971, 73). ("Es ist ein Kurzschluß in der Leitung" [Kaiser 1919, 120].) From the perspective of another functionary of the state, the Cashier's decision to opt out of a corrupt system and the action he takes to effect his escape are nothing more than evidence of a minor systemic flaw; they do not signify individual moral agency or value. Yet the Cashier's act may still represent a kind of redemption. As Schueler observes, the Cashier at the beginning of the play discovers his identity as Adam; he then experiences a "fortunate fall" which should prepare the way for his salvation. This salvation cannot be brought about by God's intervention, by Christ's salvific sacrifice as the Second Adam – not in an Expressionist world. Therefore the Cashier "takes it upon himself to accomplish the task of his own and mankind's redemption" (Schueler 1984, 101). In Schueler's opinion, the Cashier fails to redeem himself and others because of his self-deification, his attempt to take on a Christ-like role (102); in attempting to make himself divine, the Cashier succeeds only in isolating himself (102–103). However, the reverse in fact seems true: the Cashier's isolation, his betrayal by the Salvation Army Girl and the others at the meeting and ultimately his failure to achieve community through the expression of Geist, precedes his suicide; his isolation drives him to act in a God-like way by choosing Death and by making Death his servant rather than helplessly answering Death's call.

The medievalism of Kaiser's *From Morning to Midnight* becomes more apparent when the play is compared with Karl Heinz Martin's experimental film version of the text produced in 1920. Martin had already produced Kaiser's play for the Hamburg Thalia Theatre in 1918 (Kasten 2003, 153) and gained considerable fame in Expressionist circles with his direction of the 1919 Berlin premiere of Ernst Toller's play *The Transfiguration* (*Die Wandlung*). According to Cynthia Walk, Martin in his screen adaptation of Kaiser's text attempted to build on his previous stage success by "importing the project of theatrical expressionism into film"

(Walk 2007, 185). In the process, Martin deemphasized the play's medievalism, making the film's aesthetic and generic allusions more contemporary. Jurgen Kasten argues the film appropriates Expressionist painting and graphic design in its two-dimensional sets (see also Walk 2007, 184), while Walk expands this argument, proposing the film exhibits more complex "cross-media" exchanges. She points out that the film's incorporation of visual art conventions "came via the theatre" (2007, 184); therefore the role contemporary scenography played "in mediating the style of the film decor" requires consideration (2007, 184). In her evaluation, the film is "neither filmed theatre nor simply derivative theatrical expressionism" (2007, 185); neither is it exclusively "high-culture art" (2007, 186). Walk argues that "the Cashier's story [in Martin's film] is adapted to the conventions of the detective film, the most popular serial film genre of the postwar period" (2007, 186). This adaptation overwrites and overwhelms all traces of the morality play found in Kaiser's text.

The film no longer dramatizes temptation, sin, and repentance but instead presents "a proto-typical five-act crime scenario, representing 1) crime, 2) discovery, 3) escape, 4) chase, and 5) capture" (Walk 2007, 186). The Cashier's fall is not compared to Adam's; the painting purchased by the Lady and her Son is a contemporary abstract female nude, not a lost medieval painting by Cranach depicting Adam and Eve together in the Garden of Eden. [Fig. 1.] Assuming that the painting is a portrait, the Cashier asks the Lady, "Is that you?" ("Das sind Sie?"), inquiring if she is the naked, headless woman reclining in the image. Martin's Lady, then, is not Eve, is more likely the familiar character of the cinematic vamp; exotically dressed and (like the image in the painting) visually overpowering, the Lady inspires the Cashier to commit a crime, unintentionally seducing and disempowering him, precipitating his fall. The Cashier propositions the Lady only to discover that she is not a criminal impostor nor someone who can be bought. The Lady, overwhelmed by their confrontation in her hotel room, faints across a settee. Before leaving, the Cashier sees the figure of the prone (and in his imagination, partially naked and headless) Lady posed and positioned as though she is the abstract nude figure in the painting, presented as a tantalizing commodity for purchase or an object to be taken by force. [Fig. 2.] The Cashier can do neither, cannot act on his desire. He flees and for the remainder of the film moves from place to place more to avoid capture than to find fulfilment, having experienced no spiritual enlightenment. In Kaiser's play, the police appear only at the very end; in Martin's film, cross-cut scenes juxtapose the Cashier with officers in hot pursuit as he moves through the city, attempting to throw them off

his trail. The Cashier's realization that the money he has stolen has no intrinsic value is present in the film but appears to have specific contextual and historical meaning: post-World War One inflation is obviously referenced. Walk describes a close up early in the film of banknotes "marked only with zeros" signifying "the emptiness of currency devalued to nothing" in the Weimar Republic (2007, 187). In the world of the film, the Cashier does not appear to realize that consumerism creates disconnection between individuals, opening the way to their exploitation. The film itself does not clearly condemn or even comment on the Cashier's mistreatment of his family, the cyclists, or the dancers in the nightclub.

Finally, the play's and the film's representations of death are very different. In Kaiser's play, Death first appears to the Cashier in a tree in the frozen field at the end of part one. Death does not reappear until the play's final moments, in the chandelier, when the Cashier chooses to commit suicide. In the film, Death does not appear at these moments or in these objects; instead, like the police Death chases the Cashier from place to place, appearing repeatedly within the action, seeming to catch up with and capture the Cashier at the Salvation Army meeting. As the plot unfolds, a death's head appears through the use of a cinematic dissolve over the faces of a number of female characters encountered by the Cashier as he moves through the city: a Beggar Woman outside the hotel, his Daughter as she tries to prevent him from leaving the family home, a Prostitute outside the sports complex, the Dancer with the wooden leg inside the nightclub, and the Salvation Army Girl moments before she betrays him to the police upon learning he has a bounty on his head. [Fig. 3.] Death in the play is gendered male; Death in the film is obviously gendered female. Further, the film seems to support the Cashier's rejection and suspicion of the women through whom Death manifests: these women all appear to represent authentic economic, social, physical, and sexual threats. Walk suggests the film participates in a "discourse of castration" prevalent in 1920s German cinema (2007, 187). Described by Richard W. McCormick, this discourse betrays an obsession "with the supposed loss of male power and authority" in post-war Germany, an obsession precipitated by the equation of "German national identity with manhood" and by changing traditional gender roles in the Weimar Republic (McCormick 2001, 25). Women's suffrage, constitutional equality, and increased presence in the workforce marked the early years of the Republic, bringing about a "crisis of traditional male authority, agency, and identity" (3). Again, the film's references are primarily historically contextual. The Cashier's suicide at the end of the film therefore reads very differently than his suicide at the end of the play. In the film, Death

seems less a choice than something the Cashier cannot escape, a necessary effect of his particular historical circumstance. He dies alone, but community in the world of the film, more so even than in the play, seems impossible. In Kaiser's play, the simplest of communities, "Maid and Man," is represented in Cranach's painting of Adam and Eve. In contrast, in Martin's film, the painting represents the individual alone, abstracted – and female. In post-World War One Germany, the male Cashier finds – or rather feels – himself to be excluded and superfluous.

Both versions of *From Morning to Midnight* express the plight of a modernist subject searching for and failing to find fulfilment. However, the medievalism of Kaiser's play works to create the impression its moral insights and instruction have a longer history, applying across centuries of human experience and across cultures. At the same time they are contemporary and provide a modern perspective on familiar human anxieties and challenges. Unlike the earlier Everyman characters in the morality play genre, the Cashier in the end fails to find redemption and connection. Death, a non-speaking role in Kaiser's play, unlike in its earlier generic counterparts, personifies only human knowledge of mortality – he is not presented as the agent of (a non-existent) God. The play's metaphysics differ radically from *Elckerlijc's*, *Everyman's*, and *Jedermann's*, but their central problems, medieval and modernist, are similar. All four texts ask how redemption might be achieved. Kaiser's play modifies the generic morality form of the other texts to dramatize a contemporary protagonist's failure to achieve salvation. But the text does not therefore contend that salvation is unachievable. It rather demonstrates that salvation is more difficult to achieve than earlier morality plays might suggest, and that it is impossible to realize beyond this world and outside of human community. In this way, Kaiser's play differs from Karl Heinz Martin's film adaptation, which presents a narrower focus on post-World War One Germany, offering a much bleaker, gendered view of a particular community challenged by past and present crisis and change.

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Figure 1. Karl Heinz Martin, *Von morgens bis mitternachts* (1920).

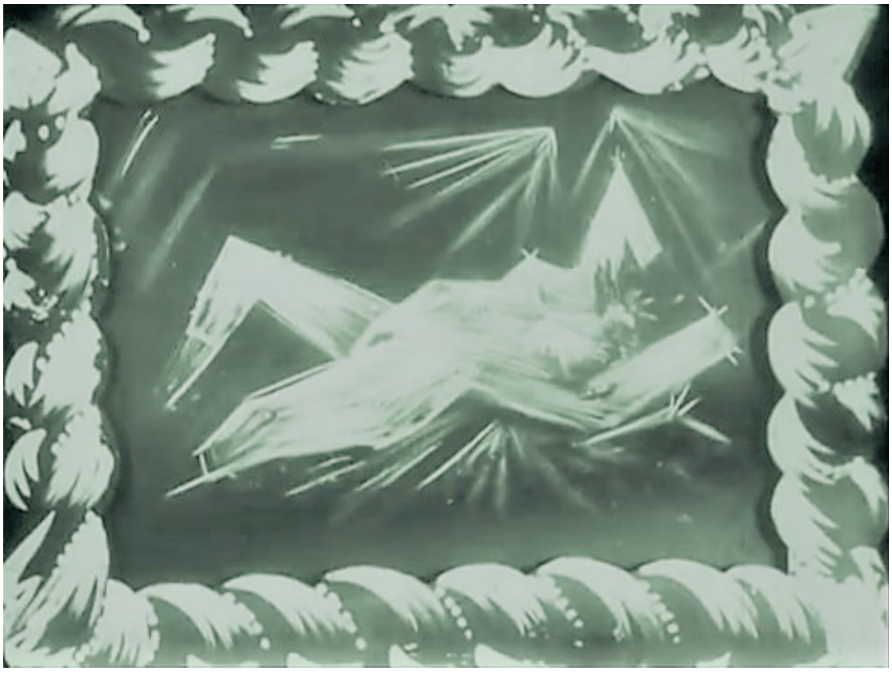

Figure 2. Karl Heinz Martin, *Von morgens bis mitternachts* (1920).

Figure 3. Karl Heinz Martin, *Von morgens bis mitternachts* (1920).

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Shadows Illuminated. Understanding German Expressionist Cinema through the Lens of Contemporary Filmmaking Practices

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Abstract. The article looks at German Expressionist cinema through the eyes of contemporary, non-commercial filmmakers, to attempt to discover what aspects of this 1920s approach may guide filmmakers today. By drawing parallels between the outsider nature of Weimar artist-driven approaches to collaborative filmmaking and twenty-first-century non-mainstream independent filmmaking outside of major motion picture producing centres, the writers have attempted to find ways to strengthen their own filmmaking practices as well as to investigate methods of re-invigorating other independent or national cinemas. Putting their academic observations of the thematic, technical, and aesthetic aspects of Expressionist cinema into practice, Ells and Saul illustrate and discuss the uses, strengths, and pitfalls, within the realm of low-budget art cinema today.

Keywords: Expressionism, cinema, filmmaking, authenticity, interdisciplinarity.

In this paper, Gerald Saul and Chrystene Ells discuss – on the basis of their creative experience – how analytical knowledge of German Expressionist film movement and its aesthetic and conceptual tropes, as well as production practices, can inspire contemporary independent filmmakers. German Expressionism has deeply influenced the visual language of cinema, and though many of the methods of subjective storytelling, pioneered by the Expressionists have been incorporated by contemporary storytellers, the etymology of these cinematic tropes is still not widely understood. With the increased access to newly discovered and restored historical works, however, the vault of Expressionist films has opened to a new generation of scholars, filmmakers and audiences.

The Caligari Project – a multidisciplinary arts festival, held in Regina, Canada – reconfirmed the unwavering fascination with German Expressionism. Organized by local artists and academics, and held over a twelve-month period in 2016, the Caligari Project was a celebration of Expressionist pioneers in cinema, visual arts, music and theatre, and facilitated the in-depth exploration of Expressionist film techniques as well as their historic context. For the filmmakers involved in the project, the festival presented a welcome opportunity to enrich their production experience thanks to a post-modern return to narrative and formal techniques of cinematic Expressionism – approaches to acting, cinematography, and editing – but also to its production and budgeting methods.

As filmmakers with first-hand experience in resuscitating these almost century-old cinematic techniques in the films they made for the Caligari Project, Ells and Saul relate below their hands-on experience with German Expressionist cinematic and conceptual approaches, and the invigorating influence of these. The first part of the chapter therefore scrutinizes production methods, visual style, recurring themes and narrative structures of the historical movement, and the second looks at how these were integrated within their own works.

As is well-known, German cinematic Expressionism – while part of an international multi-disciplinary aesthetic movement, which emerged in Central Europe in the early 1900s – was actually born in the early years of Weimar Germany and ended with the rise of the Nazis.[1] The social forces that influenced German Expressionist cinema were both artistic and financial, facilitated by the growing collaboration of filmmakers after World War One. Although rooted in early artistic experiments with abstraction and the work of the Symbolists, cinematic Expressionism manifested a distinct reaction to the culture shock of WWI, which wrenched western culture away from its 19th-century values. While film production in pre-war Germany was strictly hierarchical, the post-WWI economic and political circumstances called for free collaboration of artists from film, cabaret, visual art, dance, theatre, music, and literature. This situation existed for a short period of time, yet it stimulated an outburst of innovative energy.

The last vestiges of German cinematic Expressionism were wiped out by the establishment of the so called socially positive art, forcefully supported by the Nazi government circa 1937. This compelled Expressionist filmmakers to either

1 While sources agree that the first German Expressionist film, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) marked the beginning of German cinematic Expressionism, there is discrepancy as to its finale, with some authors claiming that it came with the premiere of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* in 1927, whose enormous budget almost sank UFA and forced Erich Pommer to quit as its leading producer. Others shift the final date in 1931, when *M* – another of Lang's classics – was released.

change their artistic style; leave Germany or face extreme repercussions. By the mid-1930s most members of the Expressionist film community had relocated – first to France and then to Hollywood, which claimed such iconic figures as film producer Erich Pommer, who was instrumental in launching and sustaining the movement; directors Fritz Lang, F. W. Murnau, Wilhelm Thiele, as well as a number of camera, staging, and lighting experts.

Film has always been a complex and generally expensive medium. The problems with daunting technical costs, funding sources, and marketing, all stretch back to the first days of cinema. In the early 20th century, American filmmakers left New York to avoid the tangle of financial and legal constraints of the raging patent battles, enforced by the Edison Corporation (Bach 1999, 30). Moreover, in their search for reduced costs of filming, they settled on the US West coast, where the sunny climate advanced cost-effective open-air shooting. As Hollywood became an established film centre, so did the Hollywood production aesthetics: continuity editing, naturalism, and most importantly, the signature happy ending (Tsivian 2004, 342). Yet before the beginning of WWI, silent films from various countries – thanks to their adaptability to different language markets – continued to find wide audiences internationally. However, the war, and especially the post-war devastation, dealt the European and British cinemas a hard blow, severely limiting their ability to hold on to their national markets, let alone compete internationally. It did not take long to recognize the existential threat the growing Hollywood empire represented to national cinemas worldwide. Yet the threat of "Americanism (or naturalism) that has been so violently forced upon us" was recognized as the much bigger threat to the future of film as art (Reimann 2016, 439–440). Luckily, by that time the former belligerent countries had already acknowledged the mobilization power of film, and once the peace treaties were signed, they quickly passed protectionist laws meant to preserve and promote their national cinemas, which generated wide support for preservation of film as part of national cultures.

The situation in Germany was more complex. According to Thomas Elsaesser, a strong film community had been formed around the Universum Film AG (UFA) studio, "the only film company ever to think it could compete with Hollywood" (2016, 3). There were also smaller film production studios that have sprang up during the war, which – thanks to the wartime distribution quotas, imposed on foreign films – were also coping. Yet lifting of the embargo on foreign films – along with the crippling financial obligations and retributions, imposed on post-war Germany – almost dried up the market for anything German outside Germany,

and thus accounted for a completely different filmmaking situation in 1919 (Brockmann 2010, 13). With German currency devalued, German filmmakers were also denied the possibility to make films abroad, which forced them to explore alternative methods, restricted to local studio shooting.

Expressionism as a Style

In her biography of German film producer Erich Pommer, Ursula Hardt describes the struggling of the German film community to find a method of turning these constraints into assets. Several prominent filmmakers – Robert Wiene, Fritz Lang, G. W. Pabst, F. W. Murnau, Arthur Robison, Paul Leni, and Paul Wegener – were tasked by Pommer and other producers to devise works that would uphold a look and feel that is fundamentally different from that of the romantic and realistic foreign films, made in Hollywood, France, Italy, and Denmark (Hardt 1996, 48). The revolutionary-like solution could be formulated along the lines of "if you can't beat them – change the rules." Pressure to use new tools prompted these filmmakers to explore a different side of cinema, which is eloquently described by director Robert Wiene: "naturalism," he wrote in 1922, acknowledges that "diffused light is real and studio lighting is a lie" (2016, 436). Yet, he goes on to say, "expressionist artists discovered [that] there is another, second reality of the photographic plate, different from that of the human eye," and concluded that "expressionism [...] places the soul above nature" (2016, 436).

By incorporating uniquely dark and complicated stories, fantastical settings and set designs, unnatural and metaphorical shadows, lighting and stylized acting, the Expressionists created a set of stylistic hallmarks that allowed them to advertise their films as unique, which proved to be an effective marketing strategy. Therefore, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (*Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, Robert Wiene, 1920), *The Golem* (*Der Golem, wie er in die Welt kam,* Paul Wegener, 1920), *Destiny* (*Der müde Tod*, Fritz Lang, 1921), *Nosferatu* (*Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens,* F. W. Murnau, 1922) and *Warning Shadows* (*Schatten – Eine nächtliche Halluzination*, Arthur Robison, 1923) were not only distinct from anything seen on film before, but also critically and internationally successful. Even after budgets stabilized and distributions prospects improved during the post-war years, German films continued to utilize the established Expressionist conventions, although often moving away from their basic tenets.

To be sure, most significant artistic movements have been theorized post factum, and even then, with mixed results. In the words of the famous French New Wave

historian Michael Marie, what the "fragile notion of [German] Expressionism demonstrates" could easily be challenged if the list of its alleged common traits is applied to more than two films from the historic movement (Marie 2003, 28). Yet Expressionism, he rightfully claims, "continues to return through the windows of critical discourse" (2003, 28). Therefore not all films made in Germany at that time and even by the above-mentioned directors, were strictly speaking Expressionist in the manner displayed by *Caligari* or *Nosferatu*. Nonetheless, the undisputed pre-eminence of style brings German cinematic Expressionism into the fold of European avant-garde Expressionist movement in visual arts, theatre, music, and literature, and precludes attempts to define it as a specific film genre.

As an organically evolving cinematic style, Expressionism has naturally opened up to borrowings and redefinitions for generations to come. Director Josef von Sternberg, for example, while using a more naturalistic style in his German film *The Blue Angel* (*Der blaue Engel*, 1930), allows for a particularly strong Expressionist influence to shape the garish backgrounds of the underworld Cabaret of Marlene Dietrich's Lola Lola, and paints the tragic downfall of Emil Janning's Prof. Immanuel Rath. Similarly, Fritz Lang's meticulously stylized sound film *M* (*M – Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder*, 1931) represents a bridge between his Expressionist German films and his later *film noir* work in America. *M* is set in an abstract world, where danger lurks around every corner and social norms are reversed, with paupers and thieves taking on the roles of judges and juries, and where the narrative point of view flips from objective to subjective, effectively pulling the audience into the tortured world of Peter Lorre's unhinged child molester.

Low Budget Cinema and Expressionism

After emigrating to America, Austrian-born cameraman and lighting expert John Alton published *Painting with Light* in 1949. His book was the first one to be written by a major cinematographer on cinematography, and to lay the ground work for the metaphorical use of studio light. Alton's influence on Hollywood, more specifically the continuity he secured between German Expressionism and American *film noir* (Schrader qtd. in Bergstrom 2014, 38), reveals that connection to be not so much theoretical but practical, a result of expertise, migrating from one country to another. Foster Hirsch explains: "these early Expressionist films, with their tormented protagonists in flight from an alien society, and their stylized urban settings, exerted a deep influence on the subject matter as well as the visual temper of the American *film noir*. Expressionist motifs filtered into *film noir*, in

diluted but nonetheless significant ways, because the German style offered an appropriate iconography for the dark vision of the forties thriller, and also because a number of German directors fled to Hollywood from a nightmare society, bringing with them the special sensibility that permeated their early work" (1981, 57).

While funding is rarely proportional to the quality of art – as Orson Welles once observed, "the enemy of art is the absence of limitations" – it does affect the choices of the film producer (qtd. in Jaglom 1992, 74–78). In highly commercialized film production centres (most notably Hollywood), large crews work under top-down management, efficiently carrying out the intense labour of making films. Creative decisions are made by producers and directors, without collaborative discussions or consultations with the production crew. Each crew person, on the other hand, contributes to the creative whole according to management specifications, in a manner similar to an assembly line, where efficiency is prioritized over innovation.

Conversely, the loss of human and financial capital had a major impact on post-war film production in Germany, derailing established hierarchies and curtailing the use of large crews of specialized technicians. Left without funding or infrastructure, and almost no access to world markets, the members of the relatively small community of German filmmakers were forced to wear multiple hats in their respective film productions and solicit help from friendly artists and designers. By working in teams that were small, less hierarchical, and diversely skilled, filmmakers could collaborate better and easier, thus getting used to taking on jobs above or below their status or standard crew position. Such fluidity of responsibilities saw set designers influencing narrative decisions, and directors getting involved with more technical aspects of the production, which resulted in what was basically an ideal situation for creative innovation (Elsaesser 2016, 29). The stylistic hallmarks of early Expressionist films like *Caligari,* reflect the expertise of painters, carpenters and costume designers, recruited from theatre, visual art, and underground cabarets. Fritz Lang thus became an excellent expert in cameras, optics, and mechanical contraptions, whose crown achievements were *Metropolis* (1927) and *Die Nibelungen* (1924), his most complex works.

A closer look at the production of *Caligari* reveals an unmistakable interrelatedness between funding and aesthetics. Shot in 1919 and released in 1920, its cost was a meagre $18,000, less than half the cost of a regular low budget feature made in Hollywood at the same time. In *Caligari,* the camera and lighting are secondary to set construction, design, costumes, makeup, and performance. While the camera does little more than record a theatrical presentation since the

film's famously flamboyant shadows are in fact painted on props and backdrops in a bold and striking manner, described eloquently by Lotte Eisner: "cubical houses falling obliquely forward, with crooked and irregular windows and shapeless doors that look like ravenous jaws, facing on narrow streets dark as night that zigzag into nowhere" (1980, ii).

She sees the role of set designers in *Caligari* as instrumental in shaping the Expressionist aesthetics since – once written – "the script was immediately handed over to them" (Eisner 1980, ii). She goes on to quote the "strong adherent of Expressionism, Walter Reimann," who declared that "the sets should not be three-dimensional plaster creations but built up by a series of large painted canvases" (Eisner 1980, ii).

Yet just seven years after *Caligari*, the production costs of *Metropolis* went over one million dollars, and allegedly put an end to German Expressionism by pushing into bankruptcy Erich Pommer, its powerful and creative producer. Nonetheless, Expressionist aesthetic devices – subjective point of view, extreme compositional angles, forced camera perspectives and optical illusions, emphatic shadows and unnatural sets – went on to mark the visual style of Weimar cinema throughout the early 1930s. This spirit of experimentation is best demonstrated by Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (*Der letzte Mann*, 1924), where the cinematographer used a miniature (by 1920's standards) camera, transported on a clothesline, to create a shot that captures the unrelenting spread of gossip that haunts the main character. Although Expressionist narratives are difficult to comprehend by contemporary audiences, the films themselves remain watchable because of their vital cinematic language. The subjective lighting and extreme graphic composition, used to convey psychological tension in Lang's *M*, *Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler* (*Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler*, 1922) and in Arthur Robison's *Warning Shadows* (1923), have remained stunning to this day. The propensity of their visual devices to enthral the viewer, but to also reveal with self-reflexive zest their craftsmanship, has helped make the evocative German Expressionist style truly attractive for low budget filmmakers.

Expressionism and the Externalization of Mental States

Another major contribution, made under the growing influence of Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung in the 1920s, was the pioneering interest of German Expressionists in deep psychological recesses, hitherto uncharted by cinema. It is important therefore to note how much the look of these films contrasts with the *classical* look of mainstream cinema at the time, whose naturalism could be

compared to the Renaissance art, with its open framing considered a window onto the outside world. The Expressionist screen, on the other hand, comes through as a portal onto an inside world, through which – as in *Caligari* – the audience is transported into the nightmarish space of the twisted inner world of the narrator. In it, like in contemporary films strongly influenced by the Expressionist masterpiece like *Shutter Island* (Martin Scorsese, 2010) or *Fight Club* (David Fincher, 1999), the delusion is shared by both the audience and the narrator. In another Expressionist classic, *Warning Shadows*, a magician at a dinner party flipsides the waking consciousness of the guests with its unconscious shadows, making them reveal their darkest secrets and lustful desires. The viewers are not just observers of this shocking reversal but – because of the effectively inventive camera positions – feel themselves as participants in the ensuing carnal drama. The construction of this uniquely nightmarish world, where no one – viewers included – is innocent, has certainly inspired many an imitation with various degrees of originality and effectiveness as it allows the director to not only tell a story, but to also create the uncanny realm that story evolves.

The impact of Expressionist fascination with the murky recesses of human psyche – and the distinctive way they were epitomised on screen – continues to be strongly felt to the present day. It is enough to mention American director Tim Burton, whose films are consciously intertextual with regard to both images and themes, borrowed from German Expressionism. In his *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), for example, the eponymous protagonist is not only a visual replica of Cesare the Somnambulist from *Caligari*, but the story itself is full of references to man-made creatures gone wrong, familiar from early silent films like *The Golem* (1915) and *Frankenstein* (J. Searle Dawley, 1910). Even filmmakers, whose work tends to be more naturalistic than Burton's, also demonstrate affinity for Expressionist narrative and stylistic devices. In the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (Peter Jackson, 2001–2003), for example, Peter Jackson portrays the Evil from the Mordor realm with unmistakable Expressionist touch. The imbalanced framing, oblique architecture, sharp angles in costuming, landscapes and shadows, and high contrast lighting – which reduce the desaturated palette of Mordor to almost pure black and white – are all elements drawn from *Nosferatu* and *Caligari*, considered to be among the earliest cinematic examples of horror cinema. Furthermore, Jackson's design displays unmistakable Expressionist influence in the striking juxtaposition of Mordor and the Dwarfish realms to the heroic Elven one. With its low lighting contrasts, rich colour palette, and overall design of majestically towering silhouettes, symbolizing nature and purity, the Elven

realm is heavily influenced by Art Nouveau and Art Deco, thus bringing to mind the striking contrasts in Lang's *Metropolis* between the upper, civilized, genteel world of Art Deco fountains and exotic birds, and the lower, shadowy world of the workers, immersed in death, fear, and suffering.

German Expressionism, Experimental Cinema, and the Caligari Project Films

It should be clear by now as to why contemporary independent filmmakers frequently draw on German Expressionism in terms of style, themes, and production methods. Since the main challenge for indie production is sustainability, small collaborative teams are standard, especially in lower or no-budget films, where creative challenges are prioritized over higher wages, and conducive of work environment with a blended hierarchy of jobs and duties. It is therefore not uncommon for an indie film to have a professional gaffer working as a camera operator; a writer doing production design, or a sound recordist performing as an actor. As the careers of such diverse filmmakers like David Lynch, Jim Jarmusch, Guy Maddin, and Jane Campion demonstrate, it is through such passion projects that new directions in the art of cinema emerge. It is also true that while an independent filmmaker's first, often no-budget film, is swept through production, distribution, and exhibition on the buoyancy of cast and crew, their next film is usually fraught with funding issues. Cast and crew might do whatever it takes to get an occasional low or alternatively funded dream project off the ground, but they cannot make every film a labour of love. People need money in order to live, and their commitment to the production is inevitably measured against remuneration. This naturally constrains improvisation and experimentation during the shooting stage as time becomes a significant restricting factor, which cash-strapped filmmakers are unable to circumvent. This pattern leads to ghettoization of filmmakers, who work on low budget and independent productions, and – as is often the case – to being looked down upon as amateurs or hobbyists by their mainstream industry counterparts. To make matters worse, low budget and independent films could rarely find distribution outside the film festival circuit. Yet work on a smaller scale, despite the perennial funding challenges, could be a unique professional experience for all those involved on and off set, including funders and producers.

Needless to say, the sustainability of the low-budget to no-budget filmmaking model is particularly indispensable for filmmaking communities in smaller cities,

regional centres, and certainly for cinematic counter-culture movements in large centres. Therefore, one of the goals of the Caligari Project was to revisit the historical Expressionist production model and test its strengths against a new generation of independent filmmakers. During 2016, three short films were made by two of the principal organizers of this interdisciplinary cultural event. Chrystene Ells (in collaboration with Berny Hi) made *Der Glöckner* (2016), and Gerald Saul made *Eyes of Sorrow Moon* and *The Testament of Frankenstitch* (2016). Each of these works took a new approach to German Expressionism, furthering explorations of its aspects, which have already influenced both Ells's and Saul's earlier works – from mysterious stories, rooted in arcane psychological worlds, to stylized lighting, design and performance, to the inventive use of low budgets. Therefore each of their films, as it were, was designed as a post-modern intertextual pastiche, paying homage to the cinematic movement, being at the same time closely aware of the pitfalls of any superficial imitation of its formal aspects.

Der Glöckner

The collaborative team Chrystene Ells (director) and Berny Hi (cinematographer) designed *Der Glöckner (*German for bell-ringer) as an authentic Weimar film. On the basis of in-depth research, they chose a three-fold approach: in technical terms, they adapted to the contemporary reality of their shoot as many practices of the German collaborative production team model as possible; thematically, they chose from a wide range of Expressionist tropes, archetypes, and psychological discourses; visually, they remained true to Expressionist design and performance, emulating images, staging patterns, and scenes. Ultimately, Ells and Hi aimed at a universally knowable film, which would replicate the silent-era cinematic offerings by relying mostly on the visuals and physical performance, restricting to minimum the usage of contemporary technology. Thus spoken words and intertitles were eschewed as in Murnau's *The Last Laugh,* while the project was shot on celluloid,[2] and all visual effects were created in-camera. Iris-out transitions and the fading out of a translucent ghost-like character were created physically through camera manipulation, rather than using current CGI practices.

In the spirit of most German Expressionist films, Ells and Hi staged and shot all scenes but one in studio, thus securing maximum control over the visual storytelling. As Eisner writes, in-studio shooting became a prevalent practice

2 For budgetary reasons the smaller 16mm gauge was used rather than the historically accurate 35mm.

of German Expressionism under the dominant influence of contemporaneous theatre, helmed by Max Reinhardt, also known as the "magician of light" (1980, i).[3] Through their dramatic visualizations, Expressionist directors were aiming at creating that elusive *Stimmung* – an untranslatable German word, used to describe the mood or atmosphere, created by stylized performances, otherworldly environments and chiaroscuro effects (1980, i).

The budget for *Der Glöckner* was $10 000[4] – inordinately small if one is to calculate the actual expenditures against conventional production planning, which would bring the cost to an estimated $150 000.[5] Modelling the production after the historic approach to Expressionist cinema was therefore driven by both aesthetic and finances. Local visual artists and theatre designers generously agreed to build the sets, while artists, friends, a handful of actors, and emerging filmmakers staffed most of the cast and crew. Costumes were borrowed from a local theatrical company and altered by a theatrical designer. A few professionals with industry experience worked pro bono, while team members tried their hands at various filmmaking capacities. Ells and Hi produced, wrote, designed, cast, and edited the film. In addition, Ells sketched the storyboards and designed the sets, which she also painted, while Hi worked with the carpenters. She drew on her theatrical background for the design of the *Caligari*-inspired decors of canvas and wood, made in the style of stage flats and drops. On set, Ells directed the actors in the manner of silent film directors, coaching their performances verbally while the camera was running. Hi worked as cinematographer and camera operator.

The production of *Der Glöckne*r explored the ensemble methodology of the Expressionist production model. On one hand, encouraging input on set about disparate ideas could syphon untapped layers of meaning with regard to design and style, cinematic vision, and communal creative engagement and ownership, thus bolstering the filmmaking experience and benefitting the project. On the other hand, however, full and active participation in the process of all voices threatens to slow shooting to a crawl, which, due to the tight budget and timeframe, can invariably raise tensions on set, and eventually negatively affect

3 From 1901–1934, theatre producer and director Max Reinhardt operated a total of thirty German theatres, designing extravagant revolving stages, intricate lighting plots, and unusual staging techniques. His influence on lighting and staging of crowd scenes for early German cinema can be seen in many films including those of G. W. Pabst, Fritz Lang, and later on American director Otto Preminger.

4 The funding was a mixture of personal contributions and government grants. Similarly, the Weimar government also supported its film industry financially, since it was among the few viable national exports at the time (Burns 2013, 78).

5 This figure includes the equivalent cash value of all deferred and donated labour and resources.

the quality of the project. Ells and Hi navigated this very fine line, inviting creative crew participation as a method of encouraging commitment, stopping short of the inevitable ensuing confusion and endless discussion by ensuring the creative process was ultimately coordinated by director Ells, who channelled all efforts and ideas towards a unified vision and cohesive style, constructed on the creative and thematic scaffolding that was developed before shooting began. As *Caligari* demonstrated, even if all creative departments (sets, costumes, lighting design, etc.) were given creative autonomy during the pre-production period, once shooting began, it was Wiene who unequivocally took charge of bringing together all aspects into one coherent whole (Burns 2013, 116–117).

Der Glöckner takes place in what could be defined as a typical Expressionist milieu – a Central European mountain village circa 1914 (and thus reminiscent of the place and time of *Caligari*), [Fig. 1] and reveals the depressingly claustrophobic world of the protagonist, who is a bell-ringer at the local church. The flatness of the sets, painted in abstract broad strokes, conveys his two-dimensional existence, daily drudgery and isolation. Watching the village life from on high, the Bell-ringer comes through as the archetypal *everyman* of Expressionism, the eponymous central character of *From Morning to Midnight* (*Von morgens bis mitternachts,* 1920), Karl Heinz Martin's adaptation of Georg Kaiser's play.

A self-conscious pastiche of German Expressionism, *Der Glöckner* pays homage to the elaborate designs of this unduly neglected classic by construing in a similar manner the flimsy flat walls of the Bell-ringer's village. Indeed, *Der Glöckner* represents a compendium, so to speak, of intertextual references to both well-known and almost forgotten Expressionist works. There are, for example, the unmistaken references to *Caligari* with regard to the in-camera iris scene transitions, and the miniature, two-dimensional town sets. Then there is the backlight silhouette effect, enveloping Belle in her dancing dream sequence. [Fig. 2.] Combined with other optical effects, the silhouette effect brings forth the uncanny nature of the Bell-ringer's beloved in a way Lang portrays the demonic spirit that seizes the False Maria in *Metropolis*. There is also the episode of a soldier, leaving his bride behind as he heads to the front, influenced by *Asphalt* (Germany: UFA, 1929), a little-known film by Joe May. Moreover, the portrayal of soldiers in trenches comes straight from *Homecoming (Heimkehr,* 1928), another late Expressionist film of May's. The ominous invading army, on the other hand, is depicted metonymically by soldiers' shadows, cast on the village walls [Fig. 3] – a formal device, inspired by *Warning Shadows*.

The garish sets of *Der Glöckner* are neither a shocking end in themselves, nor is the clownish makeup of the Bell-ringer meant as a sole homage to Emil Jannings's down-trodden doorman from *The Last Laugh*. As is typical of postmodern cinematic authorship, there is nothing accidental in the self-reflexive artifice of *Der Glöckner,* where all hybrid elements work together in fostering a complex and simultaneous interplay between ironic alienation from characters, and warm empathy for them.

Moreover, in their preparatory work, Ells and Hi did not only study the cinematic conventions of German Expressionism, but also familiarized themselves with the critical and psychological discourses of the time. Thus in light of Expressionist symbolism, which is closely related to its contemporaneous interest in psychoanalysis and analytical psychology, the bell-tower could be interpreted as a stand-in for the Bell-ringer's persona; the bell itself for his psyche; and his young beloved Belle for his estranged soul or *anima*.[6] The tower also appears on the 19th Tarot trump card, called The Falling Tower. As Sallie Nichols explains: "for, whoever lives exclusively high above the earth loses contact with it, with his fellow men, and inevitably with the instinctual, earthy aspect of himself. He becomes isolated. The panoramic view, statistical and intellectual, tends to obliterate the warm personal contacts of everyday life" (1980, 288).

The film opens with a shot of Belle, seen from the Bell-ringer's subjective point of view. It reveals an unusual-looking young girl who shows up inconspicuously on the edge of the crowd whenever the bell is rung. Throughout the film, the girl gets closer and closer to the Bell-ringer, and when finally the bell rope breaks, she appears before him in the bell-room, wounded. As the bell is tolled for a funeral, Belle appears in mourning clothes. Finally, she haunts the Bell-ringer's dream, dancing in a bell-shaped dress as a perfect *anima* projection, seeking union with his psyche.

In the final sequence, as the town gets destroyed by enemy shelling, the top of the bell-tower is blown off, and the bell tumbles to the square below, irreparably cracked. The Bell-ringer emerges from the church rubble, and picks up Belle, lying mortally wounded next to the broken bell. She strokes his face and expires in his arms. Devastated, he spends the night grieving by the broken bell until Belle's semi-transparent ghost rises from the rubble, embraces the hunched Bell-ringer, and fades into him, visualizing what Jung called reintegration of the psyche. The

6 According Carl Gustav Jung, "the feelings of a man are so to speak a woman's, and appear as such in dreams. I designate this figure by the term *anima*, because she is the personification of the inferior functions which relate a man to the collective unconscious" (1968, 99).

destruction of the bell-tower directly evokes the archetypal symbolism of the falling of the Tarot Tower, and the opportunities it yields for liberation and integration, prompting the return of Belle, the *anima* that had been projected onto the world.

At dawn, the Bell-ringer walks away from the destroyed town and the broken bell, which stands for his former divided self. Transformed and integrated, he turns toward the rising sun, and confidently steps into the three-dimensional world, leaving all vestiges of his former two dimensional self behind. This final vast prairie shot is the only one taken outside the studio, [Fig. 4] thus emphasizing the disparity between the abstract two-dimensional sets and the natural world, between the lifeless realm behind and the vibrant terrene ahead, and between the Bell-ringer's old and new self. The symbolism of this scene alludes to what Jung calls the *transcendent function*: the result of a meshing or dialogue between the conscious and the unconscious mind (in this case personified by the *anima*), which leads to individuation or psychic wholeness.[7]

In leaving the old world behind, the Bell-ringer becomes a modern man, described by Jung as one who has become "unhistorical," for he "has estranged himself from the mass of men who live entirely within the bounds of tradition. Indeed, he is completely modern only when he has come to the very edge of the world, leaving behind him all that has been discarded and outgrown, and acknowledging that he stands before a void out of which all things may grow" (Jung 1968, 197).

In addition to Jung, *Der Glöckner* references other contemporaneous intellectual obsessions, most notably the need to re-evaluate the Romantic view of progress. Thus while before WWI, the superiority of human reason – in tune with Enlightenment ideas – had been lauded as a positive aspect of the natural order, the war's destructive end prompted a radical turn towards the natural world for healing and relief. The naïve faith in technology and progress was swiftly swept away by unconditional trust in the spontaneity of nature as the sole remedy for rationalist artifice. This sentiment is illustrated by the final shot of the film, where the Bell-ringer confidently paces away from the overwrought artificial sets, and into the unknown void of the natural, three-dimensional world. And although in most German Expressionist films nature was reconstructed in studio, with its final shot *Der Glöckner* comes closest to Murnau's *Nosferatu* and Lang's *Die Niebelungen*, the two most prominent films from the era to boldly mix

7 "The tendencies of the conscious and the unconscious are the two factors that together make up the transcendent function. It is called 'transcendent' because it makes the transition from one attitude to another organically possible" (Jung 2015, 3029, para. 145).

two-dimensional Expressionist set designs with location shots. The indexical nature of the cinematic image has always attracted the attention of film theorists, and it is enough to mention the preoccupations of the early German theorist Siegfried Kracauer with the "redemption of the physical reality" in fiction film (1960).[8] Additionally, specific interests of André Bazin, the intellectual architect of French New Wave cinema, relate to the sudden encounters with realness – or with the auratic aspect of the pro-filmic reality – as a particular moment in the cinematic text, which "ruptures or short-circuits representation producing an effect of pure temporal distance, of materiality and its loss" (Galt 2006, 73). Bazin calls this phenomenon "aesthetic catalyst" when describing the effect of the "concrete forest" alongside the contrived artificial settings in *Die Niebelungen*. In his view, no amount of artistry could match "the trembling of just one branch in the wind, and the sunlight […] enough to conjure up all the forests in the world" (Bazin 1967, 111).

Therefore taking the production out of the studio environment and under the open sky represents yet another key moment in Ells's and Hi's faithfulness to German Expressionist aesthetics. The metaphysical importance of this paradigmatic shift cannot be overestimated as it signals a decisive move out of the confines of the early cinema aesthetics. As Christina Stojanova writes, "catalyzed by the turmoil of the Great War and refined in its aftermath, the swiftly evolving international language of cinema […] has challenged, deconstructed and even subverted all pre-existing aesthetics and cinematic approaches, clearing the way to its current capacity of a quintessential audio-visual metalanguage […] particularly important in one of the most urgent philosophical and cultural debates of our time, that of technological progress and its consequences" (2017, 150).

The Testament of Frankenstitch and *Eyes of Sorrow Moon*

In his two experimental shorts, made for the Caligari Project, Gerald Saul remains equally close to the aesthetic and conceptual legacy of German Expressionism as a way of exploring new venues for independent cinema. Saul was particularly inspired by the pragmatism, inventiveness, and excess, demonstrated in *Metropolis* and Murnau's *Faust* (*Faust: Eine deutsche Volkssage*, 1926). He took particular interest in their use of miniatures, double exposure, and forced perspective, as

8 Kracauer is also the author of *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of German Film* (1947), one of the foundational texts on German Expressionism.

well as in the complicated mechanical stages of *Dr. Mabuse*. Building on these, Saul applied contemporary digital tools alongside historical techniques. While both works explore visual Expressionist tropes, *Eyes of Sorrow Moon* is more narrative-based than the conceptually-based *Frankenstitch*.[9]

A combination of animation and puppetry, *The Testament of Frankenstitch* [Fig. 5] was shot on artificial sets, incorporating practical effects like projections, mirrors, strings, and magnets. Digital effects such as image compositing, graphic enhancements, and symbolically tinted colours were added in post-production. Along with a number of devices and themes, drawn from German Expressionist film, Saul was mostly inspired by fairy tales as the basis of early horror cinema. The story of *Frankenstitch* contains madness and delusion; natural versus artificial worlds; twinning and doubling; suicide, sacrifice, transformation; tricksters, ambiguity, pantomime, fantasy and magic as well as mad scientists and artificially created life; anguish and despair; lies and betrayal. Though the events of the story incorporate aspects of the hero's journey, they are structured through a more mathematical pattern.

Frankenstitch is a monster, made out of cloth by Edison, a fictionalized version of the great American inventor. The artificial creature is meant to become a vessel of Edison's intelligence, thus ensuring his immortality as a gambit in Edison's ongoing battle with Tesla, a fictionalized version of another great inventor – the Serbian Nicolai Tesla. Inspired by the original script of *Metropolis,* their characters, rivalry, and the construction of artificial intelligence have however little in common with the real-life dispute of Edison and Tesla over the use of AC current. The complicated story of the tragic love affair between Fredersen, Rotwang, and Hel in *Metropolis* – lost for a long time but recently rediscovered – is now part of the restored latest version of the film. In its full version, however, this story – like the one of *Frankenstitch* – is difficult to grasp in a single viewing. In Saul's film, the monster is lured into Tesla's lab, located at the centre of the moon, where he finds himself in a mirror chamber, strongly remindful of Lang's *Dr. Mabuse* and *Woman in the Moon* (1929). Moreover, while in the lab, Frankenstitch finds Tesla's creation, the Bride, and falls in love with her. [Fig. 6.]

The fight of Tesla and Edison in the mirror chamber generates multiple reproductions of themselves, alluding to the popular Expressionist doubling trope. It is enough to mention the True and the False Maria in *Metropolis*, and surely *The Student of Prague* (*Der Student von Prag*, Henrik Galeen, 1926), where

9 The title refers both to "Frankenstein" as well as to "Stitchpunk," a subgenre of Steampunk, which takes place in a world inhabited by macabre crudely sewn cloth-based toys or puppets.

the mirror image of the eponymous Student turns into his evil doppelganger. [Fig. 7.] When the glass cracks, the moon explodes, and all *Frankenstitch* characters fall to earth, thus replicating the traditional fatalistic connotation of a broken mirror as a symbolic disruption of one's identity, yet another well-known Expressionist narrative trope.

Frankenstitch brings together an array of complex character interactions, allowing only for a very brief exposition of each new development. Each character in this experimental mathematical-based storytelling structure is introduced in a sequence of one-on-one conversations with another character. As *Frankenstitich* runs only six minutes, this rigorous structure places serious demands on the ability of the viewers to familiarize themselves with the personages, to place them within the plot, and to contextualize their complicated relations. In order to make the story visually intriguing, live action faces were superimposed onto miniature figures, and then animated on backgrounds in constant motion, thus making the experience deliberately overwhelming.[10] Telling the story this way points to Saul's intention to explore and distil a distinctly non-Hollywood structure, stemming from the classical Expressionist films, yet closer to contemporary Expressionist cinematic renditions like Guy Maddin's shorts *Heart of the World* (2000) and *Odilon Redon or The Eye Like a Strange Balloon Mounts Toward Infinity* (1995).

Saul's second short, *Eyes of Sorrow Moon* [Fig. 8] tells a story of a family coming to a town where strangers are not welcome, and thus puts the distrust of the strange other at its core. Fearing their boy would be ostracized for his appearance and uncanny psychic ability, the family tucks him in the attic. The child's growing anguish and desperation, caused by the social repression he is subjected to, constitute yet another common motif of German Expressionism, explaining the self-loathing of characters like the pianist in Robert Wiene's *The Hands of Orlac* (*Orlacs Hände*, 1924). All the more that – as Expressionist films show us – psychological distress leads to unwise and ultimately self-destructive choices as those of the murderous Martin Fellman in G. W. Pabst's *Secrets of a Soul* (*Geheimnisse einer Seele,* 1926).

The only spoken words in *Eyes of Sorrow Moon* are in the opening scene, when the mother's voice is heard telling her boy in the attic the story about his three older brothers. Illustrated by an animated inset, the story follows a fairy-tale structure, describing how the first two sons fail, but the third, the fool, succeeds (von Franz 1995, 221–222). The events of *Sorrow Moon* proceed in a Scheherazade-like way of a story within a story but transcend the archetypal narrative to reveal what

10 In 2017 this film was awarded a "Worst Screenplay" award at the Whoops Film Festival in NYC.

happens to the ostracized *fourth* son. His only companions in the attic are a rat, a spider, and a moth, who offer him food and friendship. The spider – taking his cue from an illustrated book – attempts to kidnap the Mayor's daughter and bring her to the attic to keep the boy's company. Predictably, the girl dies, and the townsfolk set the boy's house on fire. Through a magical transformation, visually similar to the one of the robot turning into the False Maria (*Metropolis),* and the assassin, remoulding his face (*Woman in the Moon)*, the boy grows wings and escapes to the moon, wherefrom he fetches water to quench the fire. Freed from the prison of his parents' fears, he sets off on his own journey.

Both *Frankenstitch* and *Eyes of Sorrow Moon* were realized on micro budgets. In *Sorrow Moon,* the shortage of financing was compensated by a carefully planned pre-production process. The props and costumes were made by the director, while the studio shoot with actors was restricted to one day. The small crew consisted of young professionals who knew each other, were able to execute various filmmaking tasks, and were above all inspired by their common passion for Expressionist film aesthetics.[11] Moreover, as an editor of both films, Saul was able to additionally save time by shooting only scenes he considered essential, foregoing the level of coverage and number of takes considered standard by larger productions. The two actors performed on minimal sets, interacting with puppets operated off-screen by strings and wooden rods. Based on fairy tale tropes, the film world is immersed in lighting effects, swirling portentous sky, and fog – reminiscent of Murnau's *Faust* – animated live on set by using a rear projector thus creating a veritable *Stimmung* effect.

Costs were further minimized during post-production by combining live action scenes with animated insets in post-production, and by replacing period Expressionist techniques with current technology. For Saul it was better to remain true to the spirit of the movement, instead of pursuing meticulously the letter of early technological effects available to German Expressionists in the 1920s.

Eyes of Sorrow Moon is a highly stylized short film, where Expressionist aesthetics are as important in conveying the story as are subtitles. While the dangers of the world are implied through darkness, shadow, and swirling skies, the unnatural movement of the protagonist reinforces additionally the uncanny atmosphere. The tortured pantomime of the lead actor is enhanced by his make-

11 As part of the same student cohort at the Film Department (University of Regina), the cinematographer and the two crew members made an excellent team thanks to their flexibility on the set. As a matter of fact, staffing crews with members from film-school cohorts is a widely known successful strategy for young filmmakers, but rarely sustainable outside independent film projects.

up, large and emotive eyes, painted on top of his eyelids. [Fig. 9.] Performing blind, the actor had to rely on the silent film directing methodology – that is, on the director's continuous verbal instructions while the camera was rolling. Using words like strings, manipulating every gesture of the performer, was a hallmark of Expressionist acting, which boldly sacrificed naturalism for emotive movement as *Caligari*, *Nosferatu*, and *Hands of Orlac* eloquently demonstrate. This style of acting was the only way of bringing together bizarre stories with stylized locations, creating the unique sense of cinematic unity German Expressionism has been appreciated for nearly a century now.

Sorrow Moon, unlike *Frankenstich,* follows a linear story, which – as in *Der Glöckner* – ensures an easier rapport with the audience, without sacrificing its radical aesthetic or production model. As independent filmmakers, Ells and Saul have often experienced in the past restrictions of low budgets, small production crews, and distribution difficulties. While enjoying more creative freedom than commercial filmmakers, as a rule they have less access to audiences. North American independent milieu is indeed a small flame when compared to Hollywood inferno. But what if there were a way out of competition with Hollywood, a way of standing alone? The Caligari Project experience has confirmed what their German colleagues discovered back in the 1920s and proved that it was indeed possible for filmmakers from smaller film centres to stand their ground – individually as well as collectively – and produce sustainable works, if they were brave enough to circumvent the rules and expectations established by commercial cinema.

Every great dream begins with a dreamer. It has been nearly a hundred years since viewers first saw the mysterious cabinet of Dr. Caligari open on the screen. Indeed, students of film history may be tempted to see the legacy of German Expressionism only in the stylized confection of surreal shadows, dense symbolism and psychological confusion. Yet – as the filmmakers of the Caligari Project have discovered – a complex and devoted research into the aesthetic and production practices of this cinematic movement could uncover a wealth of experience. For, along with building the foundations of contemporary cinematic language, German Expressionism passed down to us a unique production model for creative innovation through inspired collaboration.

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Figure 5. Nicolai Tesla, with face and voice of Erik Sirke, tempts the colourized figure of the Frankenstitch monster, with superimposed face and voice of William Bessai-Saul, in *The Testament of Frankenstitch* (2016). (Copyright G. Saul.)

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TRANSGRESSING THE FRAMES

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Last Year at Mulholland Drive: Ambiguous Framings and Framing Ambiguities

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"Sense is not the point: the responses are the point."
Stanley Kauffmann (2001, 28)

Abstract. This article proposes a cognitive-narratological perspective on David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* (2001) and the numerous contrasting interpretations that this film has generated. Rather than offering an(other) interpretation of the film, we aim to investigate some of the reasons why Lynch's highly complex narrative has gained a cult – if not classic – status in recent film history. To explain the striking variety of (often conflicting) interpretations and responses that the film has evoked, we analyse its complex narrative in terms of its cognitive effects. Our hypothesis is that part of *Mulholland Drive*'s attractiveness arises from a cognitive oscillation that the film allows between profoundly differing, but potentially equally valid interpretive framings of its enigmatic story: as a perplexing but enticing puzzle, sustained by (post-)classical cues in its narration, and as an art-cinematic experience that builds on elements from experimental, surrealist, or other film- and art-historical traditions. The urge to narrativize *Mulholland Drive*, we argue, is driven by a distinct cognitive hesitation between these conflicting arrays of meaning making. As such, the film has been trailblazing with regards to contemporary cinema, setting stage for the current trend of what critics and scholars have called complex cinema or puzzle films.

Keywords: narrative complexity, framing, puzzle film, art-cinema, David Lynch, *Mulholland Drive*.

The continuing cultural impact of David Lynch's enigmatic neo-noir thriller *Mulholland Drive* (2001) is striking in several respects. On the one hand, as critic Ignatiy Vishnevetsky has noted, *Mulholland Drive* is "an avant-garde film by most metrics," occupied with "warping filmic narrative to the edge of incoherence" (2015). Indeed, upon its release, Lynch's film was criticized by many viewers and critics for being incomprehensible or chaotic (see Andrews 2004, 25). At the

same time, however, *Mulholland Drive* also gathered acclaim from a large share of moviegoers and critics: it earned director Lynch an Oscar-nomination, launched the career of lead actress Naomi Watts, gained a cult following, sparked countless analyses and readings, and ultimately became a key film that "defined the modern puzzle-box movie" (Vishnevetsky 2015). Today, almost two decades after its debut, discussions around *Mulholland Drive* have far from subsided. They even seemed to return to full swing following the film's 2015 re-release in the esteemed Criterion classic films DVD series, and its number one spot in BBC's 2016 massive poll of 177 film professionals, electing it as the best film of the 21st century so far.[1]

The main reasons for *Mulholland Drive*'s success, besides the idiosyncratic affective qualities of Lynch's trademark style, tone, and tropes,[2] have arguably been the film's narrative complexity and hermetic themes. Skillful analyses, clever explanations and creative interpretations of its plot, riddles, and possible meanings have been offered by the dozens, across both popular and scholarly platforms, and discussions on the film's thematic and narrative (in)coherence continue to attract fans, critics, and scholars alike.[3]

This article does not seek to provide another hermeneutic inquiry about *Mulholland Drive*'s potential meanings, or all the thinkable thematic or allegorical reasons behind its fragmented organization; rather, what interests us is the question *how* the film's particular narrative complexity has attracted, fascinated and divided such a relatively large audience in the first place, and how it, to this day, keeps on spawning so many different and frequently contradictory interpretations. *Mulholland Drive*'s complex narrative forms a remarkable case, not only because of the sheer amount, but particularly also the *diversity* of the responses it triggers. We hypothesize that one of the key reasons behind the film's persistent attractiveness lies in a balance that it maintains between at least two different clearly distinct options that viewers have in making meaning of its enigmatic story. These, we propose, can be understood as emerging from two different, incompatible, but equally reasonable framings allowed by the film's narrative strategies.

1 See *http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20160819-the-21st-centurys-100-greatest-films*. Last accessed 26. 02. 2019.

2 For a quick glance on such Lynchian tropes – "A road at night. A woman's crimson lips. Red drapes and a spotlit stage. […] a flicker of a lightbulb or a swelling rumble on the soundtrack, […] an untimely pause or a charge of déjà vu" (Lim 2015, 6) – see Kevin B. Lee's (2015) video essay, based on Dennis Lim's comprehensive book about Lynch's cinema, *What Is "Lynchian"? https://vimeo.com/196761519*. Last accessed 26. 02. 2019.

3 See, among others, Lewis 2002; Nochimson 2002; Buckland 2003; Andrews 2004; Hudson 2004; McGowan 2004, 2007; Olson 2008; Bartyzel 2010; Nieland 2012; Akser 2012; Mittell 2013; Campora 2014; Lim 2015; Winter 2015; or Bailey 2015. On IMDb, to date (26. 02. 2019), there are 1844 user and 293 external reviews of the film.

The Narrative Complexity of *Mulholland Drive*

Effects of complexity – that is, a sense of temporary or permanent cognitive confusion regarding comprehension and meaning making – can be achieved through various formal-structural manipulations across most key parameters of film narration (see also Kiss and Willemsen 2017). Looking at the popular complex films that emerged from the mid-1990s onwards, one can observe experimentations in time (e.g., non-chronological arrangements of events, reversed or inversed telling, multiple timelines, spatiotemporal fragmentation), in narration (e.g., notable information gaps or overloads, incongruities, ambiguities), in focalization (e.g., unreliability, internal focalization, hidden focalization shifts and unmarked subjective realism), in character continuity (e.g., split personalities, duplications, Doppelgängers) or in complex spaces and storyworlds (e.g., multiple, multi-dimensional or parallel universes, impossible storyworlds, ontological metalepses). Of course, many of these storytelling strategies are not new to feature films, let alone to the literary narrative tradition.[4] The complex and disruptive narrative forms that found their way to the mainstream film from the mid-1990s onwards were already pioneered and explored in earlier traditions of filmmaking, most notably in 1930s avant-garde films, the European modernist art cinema of the late 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (see Bordwell 1979; Kovács 2007, 120–140), and, somewhat less radically, even in the 1940s Hollywood film noir (Bordwell 2017).

Mulholland Drive draws from all these previous traditions, both in narrative and stylistic terms. However, especially for a project emerging from a commercial context,[5] Lynch's film is radical in its undermining of narrative stability, mostly because it overthrows many of the above listed parameters at the same time. The film starts out as a seemingly traditional crime story in which a woman (Laura Harring) survives a car accident, suffers from amnesia, and flees into the home of a young would-be actress Betty (Naomi Watts). No longer able to remember her real name, she introduces herself to Betty as Rita. When in Rita's bag the two find a large amount of cash and a mysterious blue key, they commit themselves to investigating Rita's real background and identity. However, Betty and Rita's

4 Although there is an extensive history of complex narrative experimentation in literary traditions such as modernism, the *nouveau roman* or the postmodern novel, narrative complexity in literature does not seem to have reached the widespread, mainstream appeal that complex films currently have.

5 *Mulholland Drive* was originally commissioned by the ABC channel, subsidiary of Disney, as a pilot of a potential television series. About the protracted and haunted production history of the film, see Buckland 2003 and Mittell 2013, respectively.

journey soon disintegrates into a series of perplexing and uncanny scenes (including a Hollywood director in a casting procedure impeded by mobsters, an underworld cowboy, a story of an unhandy hitman, a nightmare manifesting in an eerie creature behind a Winkie's diner, and more), some related to, while some seemingly loose from the initial plot. The organization and hierarchy of the primary and side-events appears non-causal and a-chronological, often lacking clear spatial or temporal markers. In addition, through metaleptic destabilizations, the focalization of the primary story becomes fuzzy and intensely ambiguous, leaving spectators to wonder how and whether events are connected – in terms of spatial, temporal, causal and/or thematic relations – at all. The plot further disintegrates during the final twenty minutes of the film, when earlier introduced characters re-appear in different incarnations, under different names and roles (Betty now seems to be Diane, a has-been actress, also played by Naomi Watts), fundamentally riddling the story with contradictions and incoherencies.

Especially for first time viewers, it may appear as if *Mulholland Drive* features subjective unreliability, multiple ontological levels, contradictory and paradoxical elements, a non-linear progression, plus an overstimulating amount of information and incomplete plotlines, all at once. Notwithstanding this excessive complexity (which was experienced particularly strongly at the time of its release), the film apparently also kept many viewers' narrative interest alive concerning questions as to how the zigzagging events and unresolved plotlines are related, how stable character identities can be inferred from a story that constantly changes their identities, and whether episodes are embedded in each other as dreams, realities, fantasies, parallel universes, allegories, or perhaps are just meant as a set of powerful standalone scenes and playful self-reflections on Hollywood filmmaking.

Responses to *Mulholland Drive*'s Complexity

Mulholland Drive has spawned (and keeps spawning) a remarkable amount of speculation and interpretations. From its release onwards, critics, as well as the general audience have been divided over the film, even questioning whether a (relatively) stable and coherent interpretation of it is possible at all. Sampling the available responses from critics, roughly two types of dealing with the film's complex narration emerge: treating it as either (1) a perpetually elusive mystery with no (need for a) logical way out, or (2) as an exceedingly challenging puzzle that the viewer must solve.

(1) On the one hand, many commentators see Lynch's film as fundamentally incoherent and therefore intentionally anti-narrative. For instance, according to film critic Roger Ebert, "*Mulholland Drive* isn't like *Memento*, where if you watch closely enough you can hope to explain the mystery. There is no explanation. There may not even be a mystery" (2001). Likewise, writer and editor Jennifer A. Hudson argues that the film "remains a spiral, a circle, a series of unexplained pulsions that blur and destabilize traditional concepts of intellectual sense. […] Once *Mulholland Drive* becomes your universe, you will find yourself lost in confusion" (2004, 17, 23). Whereas some reviewers found this to be a reason for dismissing the film – accusing it of being a "chaotic" "dead-end journey," a "headscratcher without continuity" (for an overview see Andrews 2004, 25) –, the perceived lack of narrative coherence was hailed by other interpreters as the film's primary achievement. For example, *New York Times* critic A.O. Scott argued that while *Mulholland Drive*'s "tangled story will be experienced by some as an offense against narrative order, […] the film is an intoxicating liberation from sense" (Scott 2001). Many interpreters who have taken this position imply that *Mulholland Drive*'s fragmented anti-narrative makeup primarily serves not story-relevant, but more aesthetic, thematic, expressive, or even meta-fictional aims. Such interpretations assume, as Justus Nieland argued, that *Mulholland Drive* is "exploiting the ambiguities of art cinema, setting into motion its most obviously self-referential categories (time, cinema, spectatorship, authorship)" (2012, 97). Reflecting on the amount of symbolic and symptomatic readings of *Mulholland Drive*, Jason Mittell has highlighted how many of its reviewers have felt that the resolution of the film requires "beneath the surface" interpretation, "where we can find readings of the film as illustrating Lacan's theories of fantasy, desire, and reality; evoking contemporary technologies of virtual reality; dissolving boundaries between semiotic oppositions; offering a lesbian tragedy as an indictment of homophobia; and critiquing the dream-crushing logic of Hollywood cinema, among many others" (2013, 28).

(2) On the other hand, however, another, equally substantial group of viewers does not see *Mulholland Drive* as fundamentally or intentionally incoherent at all. Rather, they read it as a puzzle that just needs some rearranging and deciphering for the story to make logical sense. In Matthew Campora's words, "a growing consensus of commentators" argues that "although *Mulholland Drive* has affinities with the open-ended narratives of art cinema, its fragmented multiform plot structure does allow for a coherent narrative reading" (2014, 69). Building on the categorization of critical work by David Andrews (2004, 25), Campora divides the

interpretations of this set of reviewers up into two camps: critics who have argued that the film is a fully coherent "utterly comprehensible" narrative of subjective realism, and those who find that the film is complex, but "mostly comprehensible with varying degrees of incoherence" (2014, 74). Jason Mittell has noted how this share of viewers and critics tends to behave like "forensic fans" (2009). For them, making sense of the film is mostly "a question of comprehension, trying to make coherent sense of the film's narrative events" (Mittell 2013, 27).[6] Regardless of the accuracy or (scholarly) value of the different interpretations, this forensic engagement is paramount to the pleasure the film offers to many of its viewers. The evidence for this unappeasable puzzle-solving appeal can be found not only in academic journals and books, but especially also on many blog posts, websites, and online discussion boards. As Lynch biographer Dennis Lim notes, "audiences who responded to *Mulholland Drive* loved it precisely for its unique architecture as a puzzle movie that required some degree of assembly in the viewer's head" (2015, 154). This pleasure taken in piecing together the film's story differs from the earlier identified – more symbolic, thematic or subtextual – responses in that it is occupied with story logic, re-ordering of scenes and occurrences into a more or less stable, chronological, causal, and diegetically motivated chain of events.

So how can these contrasting interpretive stances co-exist? We see these divergent responses as two fundamentally different ways of dealing with the narrative's complexity: one works to preserve incongruities by attributing a variety of artistic strategies or meanings to the incoherence, while the other is mainly occupied with resolving and naturalizing the complexity and ambiguity into a coherent story. We propose to understand these two meaning making pulls as two different ways of framing the film's narrative complexity, both of which are evoked and afforded by Lynch's film through textual and contextual cues.

Frame Theory and *Mulholland Drive*

Frame theory provides a particularly useful conceptual tool to get a grip on viewers' interpretive operations. In its most common use, frames refer to dynamically applied structures of memorized knowledge that become active in response to familiar situations and settings. In the words of its pioneering theorist Marvin Minsky, a frame is "a data-structure for representing a stereotyped situation, like

6 "The most common explanation for the film's narrative is that the first 80% of *Mulholland Drive* is Diane Selwyn's (Naomi Watts) dream imagining herself as Betty Elms while the final act portrays the reality she is trying to escape" (Mittell 2013, 27).

being in a certain kind of living room, or going to a child's birthday party. Attached to each frame are several kinds of information. Some of this information is about how to use the frame. Some is about what one can expect to happen next. Some is about what to do if these expectations are not confirmed" (1974, 1). Frame theory offers a heuristic tool to conceptualize mental structures of knowledge that function top-down (in response to available bottom-up cues) to control the cognitive effects of a given situation. Frames can be seen as cognitive shortcuts that help to set expectations, steer attention, recognize patterns, detect novelties, determine salience, evaluate available information and choose further actions. Framing then refers to the activity of selecting the clusters of knowledge and interpretive stances deemed the most appropriate in response to the given situation.

Cognitive narratologists have widely adopted the notion of frames (or scripts or schemata)[7] to conceptualize how narrative understanding takes shape by recourse to memorized knowledge and patterns from previous real life and mediated experiences (for example, see Bordwell 1985; Branigan 1992; Jahn 1997; Herman 1997; or Caracciolo 2012). In the case of film viewing, frame theory offers a tool to describe how viewers rely on previous experiences, knowledge, and strategies in their encounter with new cinematic narratives. This can be particularly important regarding complex narratives, the challenges of which often test and play on viewers' reliance on their knowledge clusters. Some cases of complex, non-conventional, or anti-mimetic narratives may even foreground or even problematize these basic processes, emphasizing the central role of framing decisions (such as to what genre, style, or artistic tradition we take a work to belong to) in interpretation and evaluation. As Liesbeth Korthals Altes has noted, "as soon as contexts are less clear in their framing indications, readers need to select between alternatives according to the relevance context they construct for the case at hand" (2014, 33). Moreover, as she continues, "some kinds of texts, and some kinds of reading strategies, require that we hold in mind alternative, conflicting framings and oscillate between them, as this may result in pleasurable ('aesthetic') mental activity" (2014, 33).

As indicated, we consider one of the main reasons behind *Mulholland Drive*'s persistent attractiveness to be a balance that the film maintains between at least two different pulls on viewers' meaning making, as evident from the contrasting responses by critics and viewers. This, we propose, can be understood as emerging from two different but equally reasonable framing options of the film's

7 "Whereas scripts typically represent sequences of events, frames and schemata represent points in time" (Alber 2009, 94).

complexities between which viewers' meaning making can oscillate. As we will elaborate below, the two opposing poles of these pulling forces are

– on the one hand, a classical narrative drive, nourished by immersive story patterns and familiar generic and narrative conventions;[8]

– as well as this narrative drive's post-classical puzzle variant, asking from viewers to reorganize linearity, chronology, or untangle embedded levels, thereby luring them to keep trying to restore narrative order from the complex narration; and,

– on the other hand, the option of an art-cinematic appreciation, which offers an alternative to the problematized classical narrative recuperations of story logic, and which is fed by the recognition of elements from experimental, surrealist, or other film- and art-historical traditions.

The mutability between these simultaneously enticing positions, we assume, leaves the interpretative process in a permanent instability that is paramount to the film's complexity, as well as its sustained attraction. To understand the different framings of *Mulholland Drive*, the analysis should focus on both formal-textual characteristics of the film's narration as well as its relevant contextual components (genre tradition, production and reception histories, etc.).[9] The next two sections aim to provide a detailed explanation about the ingredients that make up the opposing but co-existing forces through which the art-cinematic and (post-)classical poles allow simultaneously applicable interpretive framings.

8 Classical narration is the dominant paradigm of film storytelling, and also the mode of film viewing that most western spectators are mainly accustomed to (see Bordwell 1985, 156–204). Traditionally, classical narrative films have been constructed in ways that allow viewers to integrate the presented events into a chronological event-chain that provides a clear cause and effect logic, and that leads to some kind of closure with regards to main goals and questions posed in the story. Classical narration also usually implies that the story adheres to the laws of the everyday world in terms of spatiotemporal, logical, and physical laws (unless indicated otherwise, either by explication or through established genre conventions) and implies a sense of realism in that spectators have epistemological access to the story's ontologically knowable world.

9 After all, viewers do not just respond to textual cues – such as style or narration – when making sense of a complex narrative, but also work with contextual, paratextual and intertextual inferences – such as knowledge about a film's context of production, its relation to other films, genres and film-historical traditions, or earlier meaning-making that they found successful with comparable films – in order to choose pertinent interpretive pathways. We propose that the experience of narrative complexity emerges from this contextually situated, dynamic interaction between spectators and a work of narrative art (see also Kiss and Willemsen 2017).

Framing Complexities: Art-Cinematic Readings

The first set of responses that we identified links *Mulholland Drive* to the tradition of art cinema – or, more specifically, has used interpretive and evaluative routines from the art cinema tradition to get a grip on the film's excessive narrative complexity. Art cinema has been recognized as constituting a narrative mode (Bordwell 1979; Kovács 2007) and/or institutional context (Neale 1981; Thanouli 2009; Andrews 2010) of filmmaking, characterized by its own formal, stylistic, interpretive, contextual, and economic norms that are often defined in opposition to the classical narrative film.

To substantiate such readings of *Mulholland Drive*, critics and scholars often point to *textual* cues connecting Lynch's film to notable art films and traditions, such as the surrealist cinema of the likes of Luis Buñuel (beyond Nieland 2012, 111, see for instance also Eig 2003, or Panek 2006, 66), German Expressionist cinema (Campora 2014, 70-73), or the associative, dream-like trance films such as Maya Deren's 1943 *Meshes of The Afternoon* (Perlmutter 2005). The most frequent comparison is that to the cinematic modernism of the late 1950s, 1960s and 1970s found in the films of prominent auteurs such as Federico Fellini, Ingmar Bergman, or Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet.[10] For András Bálint Kovács, contemporary complex films like *Mulholland Drive* are "systematic manifestations of several sophisticated modernist narrative procedures 'infiltrating' probably the world of quality Hollywood production" (2007, 60).[11]

Many of the film's narrative strategies and thematic choices indeed seem inherited from the art-cinematic tradition: the dissolution of boundaries between reality and dreams, hallucinations, fantasies, or subconscious projections (or

10 Modernist art films have pioneered many forms of complex storytelling in film narration, foregrounding ambiguities, contradictions, permanent gaps, spatiotemporal fragmentation, distorted and highly subjective narration (often including dreams, memories or fantasies), thematic or even political emphases, loosened causality, and other relatively radical modernist techniques (for encompassing overviews, see Bordwell 1979 and Kovács 2007, 57–62).

11 Other scholars too have drawn such connections between techniques explored in earlier – mostly modernist – art films and narrative experimentations trending in contemporary complex films (e.g., Cameron 2008; Klecker 2011; Campora 2014; Kiss and Willemsen 2017). To illustrate the habituation effect of complex storytelling techniques, Cornelia Klecker recalls the analogous movement in literary history by which "modernist novels, such as works by Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, were exceedingly avant-garde at the time they were published, yet they became established classics in the second half of the twentieth century" (Klecker 2011, 24). According to András Bálint Kovács, "the fact that *Mulholland Drive* was not only made but that director David Lynch was awarded an Oscar nomination for it proves that narrative ambiguity, which was introduced into modern cinema by Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet as a highly avant-garde artistic element, forty years later has finally become a mainstream norm" (Kovács 2007, 60).

however else one might rationalize some of the film's perplexing story paths), as well as its deconstruction of realist spatio-temporality and character-integrity are easily associated to the surrealist films of the pre-1930s European avant-garde (Ebert calls *Mulholland Drive* "the first surrealist film of the 21st century" [2002]), as well as to the post-war European modernist tradition (Ingmar Bergman's 1966 *Persona* is probably the most often-cited title of reference). Besides its manifest conflation of objective (zero focalized) and subjective (internally focalized) modes of narration, other strategies of storytelling that are particularly reminiscent of the post-war European modernist tradition are the film's utilization of metafictional and self-reflexive elements (thematizing the struggles of its own creation, Lynch's film often invites a comparison to Federico Fellini's 1963 *8½* [*Otto e mezzo*]), the story's foregrounding of ambiguities and incongruent versions of events (Alain Resnais's 1961 *Last Year at Marienbad* [*L'année dernière à Marienbad*] is another recurring association, being one of the few films that can concur with *Mulholland Drive* in terms of the amount and variety of interpretations that it has spawned), and the deconstruction of elementary – and therefore rarely challenged – parameters of classical narration (for instance the bizarre shifting, splitting or collapsing of characters – which is not uncommon in art cinema, such as in Bernardo Bertolucci's 1968 *Partner* or, indeed, Bergman's *Persona*).

These associations with art cinema are further reinforced by Lynch's trademark style: his idiosyncratic offbeat cinematography – hand-held obscure point of view shots, superimpositions, shaky focus, etc. –, lighting – more atmospheric than communicative –, acting and characterization – remember Betty's inconsistently extreme acting skills "from guileless pretending to majestic double-dealing" (Toles 2004, 8) –, and choice of soundtrack – eerie soundscapes and dreamy but ominous music from Angelo Badalamenti's "darkest yet" main theme (Norelli 2009, 41) to Rebekah del Rio's a cappella version of Roy Orbison's *Crying* –, all together convey a hypnotic and expressionistic quality.

Prototypically, as Torben Grodal writes, "art film combines stylistic innovation with a claim to higher meaning" on the narrative level (2009, 207–8). For many viewers, *Mulholland Drive* ticks both boxes. Cued by these narrative, thematic, and stylistic elements, and possibly further guided by contextual knowledge (e.g., knowledge of Lynch's earlier work and his reputation as an 'auteur director; the film's success at the Cannes Film Festival; or its presence in the context of arthouse institutions or academic journals), viewers may find sufficient reason to conclude that the ambiguities of *Mulholland Drive* should be understood and interpreted in light of the art-cinema tradition.

Framing a film as art film comprises a reasoned appraisal relating to a significant set of cognitive, interpretive and evaluative routines, distributed to viewers through art cinema's narration, institutions, and practices. Especially when confronted with the excessive complexity of "non-naturally coded texts" (Fludernik 1996, 36), experienced art-cinema-literate viewers can make use of a variety of symbolic or even symptomatic meaning-making strategies that are alternative to their more referential and explicit narrativizing routines trained in classical narratives. In other words, when a story's complexity or confusing effects become extensive or foregrounded, and leave little chance for a classical narrative recuperation, the art-cinema frame of viewing can offer alternative interpretive paths, promoting the construction of meaning beyond the more strict mimetic and referential narrative sense. Art films have traditionally cued, invited, and perhaps even trained viewers to downplay the importance of plot, concrete events, and explicit meanings. Invoking a broader pallet of possible mimetic recuperation, they promote poetic, lyrical, associative, contemplative allegorical, style-driven or expressionistic modes of meaning making (see also Bordwell 1979; Grodal 2009, 207–209; Kiss and Willemsen 2017, 156–163). One may for instance infer that a narrative's *incoherence* forms the film's deliberate point, as, for example, signalling the fallibility of memory, illustrating the instability of perception, or representing a fundamentally ambiguous *condition humaine*.

As we noted, many such readings have been inferred by viewers of *Mulholland Drive*. Interpreters have seen the film as, among others, a deliberate "reversal of coherence" demonstrating the point where "language fails to define and construct reality" (Hudson 2004, 23), an illustration of "the role of fantasy in providing reality with structure" in a Lacanian fashion (McGowan 2004, 68), or as an "embodiment of postmodern theory" such as the hyperreality of simulacra, the pastiche as blank, meaningless parody, or the Lacanian construction of self (Bartyzel 2010). Apprehension under the art-cinematic frame is also more prone to recognize explicitly 'meta-fictional' forms, directing attention at the very process of narrative understanding and its raw materials, or at the artistic or medial tradition in which a work self-consciously stands. In his book on Lynch, Justus Nieland epitomizes this meta-fictional aspect of art-cinematic readings, claiming that "the historical horizon of art cinema is of particular relevance [for *Mulholland Drive*] because of the familiar challenges its modernist textuality poses to the kinds of personalities associated with Hollywood cinema – their psychologies, their affects and motivations, their relationships to the structuring of space and time, their status as erotic spectacles, their 'aura,' and their reification in stardom" (2012, 96).

Framing Complexities 2: (Post-)Classical Narrative Readings

Notwithstanding these art-cinematic interpretations of *Mulholland Drive*, an equally substantial share of viewers does not downplay the possible coherence of the film's events and their referential meaning at all. Rather, these forensic viewers see the film as a puzzle to be solved, and pursue explanations and interpretations that provide narrative logic and closure to its challenging story and structure. We would not suggest that these attempts are misguided, or that such viewing strategies are not being film-literate enough to possess and employ the necessary modernist or art-cinematic meaning-making competences (although familiarity with art-cinematic conventions and routines can certainly play an important role). Rather, we would argue that next to its invitation of applying art-cinematic framings to its ambiguities, Lynch's film simultaneously warrants an explicit and referential meaning-making of a more classical narrative stance, appealing to coherent narrativization, real-life cognitive parameters and other conventional mimetic patterns.

It must be noted that *Mulholland Drive* appeared at a moment when more art-cinematic viewing strategies had begun being applicable to more mainstream fiction films. In Dennis Lim's words, "*Mulholland Drive* coincided with a mounting appetite for narrative complexity. Audiences were by then accustomed to the shifting time signatures of Quentin Tarantino's movies, or to the gentler fissures in the films of the Polish director Krzysztof Kieślowski, who explored the cosmic patterns of interlocking lives in *The Double Life of Véronique* (1991) and the *Three Colours* trilogy (1993–1994). The rug-pulling trickery of hits like *The Usual Suspects* (Bryan Singer, 1995) and *The Sixth Sense* (M. Night Shyamalan, 1999) popularized the notion of narrative as a game; Christopher Nolan's reverse-chronology *Memento* (2000), another amnesia neo-noir, was released several months before *Mulholland Drive*, and temporal loops were becoming an increasingly common device, in such films as *Donnie Darko* (Richard Kelly, 2001; *Primer* (Shane Carruth, 2004) and *Déjà Vu* (Tony Scott, 2006)" (2015, 155).

Most of these contemporary complex films, however, retain fairly classical narration in that they counter their complexities with a strong reliance on classical storytelling patterns, ensuring their viewers' narrative interest, sense-making drive, and, ultimately, comprehension. Although *Mulholland Drive* arguably appeared as part of this emerging line of "mainstream complexity" (Kiss 2012), it cannot be unproblematically grouped with these (post-)classical narratives. Lynch's film strays away from many principles of classical narration maintained by puzzle

films like *The Sixth Sense* or *The Usual Suspects*; but simultaneously, unlike most modernist art films, it also preserves some powerful features of classical narrativity. These appeal to viewers' habitual narrativizing urge, luring them into attempts to construct a more-or-less objective, causal, and chronological story.

In the final section of this article, we call up and review five (post-)classical storytelling strategies common to many contemporary complex popular films, which also seem to actuate interpretive cueing functions in *Mulholland Drive*. These classical narrative cues include the presentation of stories with [1] a high degree of tellability, [2] local and global narrative cohesion devices, [3] palpable genre conventions, [4] the opportunity for character identification as well as [5] recourse to naturalization and rationalization.

[1] The notion of tellability is used in narrative theory to refer to the quality that makes a story worth telling (or engaging to listen to). Although this quality is highly subjective and context dependent, some elementary features make certain stories more tellable than others. Jerome Bruner observed a key feature of "canonicity and breach," meaning that "to be worth telling, a tale must be about how an implicit canonical script has been breached, violated or deviated from" (1991, 11). That is, for a story to be worth telling, something out of the ordinary should happen in it. Such script breaches, however, can themselves be highly conventionalized, as the driving forces behind most classical and canonical narratives are (e.g., murder mysteries, romantic encounters, quests, impending threats to peace, and so on).

In terms of establishing a tellable story, *Mulholland Drive*'s exposition could have been that of a highly classical mystery plot. In the opening half hour, the narration rather rapidly establishes an initial setting, incites the action through unexpected events, poses further questions, and paves the way for additional complications – all conforming to the classical crime narrative tradition. Viewers are being introduced, in a swift action-reaction pattern, to a woman who is threatened by a gun but then involved in a mysterious car crash, suffers memory loss, and flees into the house of Betty, a young aspiring actress. Together, they start a quest to uncover the true identity of the amnesiac woman, who carries a large sum of cash and a mysterious blue key. Most certainly, these central questions and enigmas hook many viewers just by playing on the element of curiosity. After all, as Raphaël Baroni reminds us, "it is assumed that there is a general human interest for stories reporting events that have a certain degree of unpredictability or mystery" (Baroni 2011). In short, before *Mulholland Drive*'s narrative submerges in its more experimental and potentially incoherent paths (around the two-third

mark), the film first sets in motion an eventful and suspenseful plot with high tellability, posing well-defined mysteries and narrative questions. These work to bias viewers to actuate an explicit and referential classical narrative reading based on potentially familiar narrative parameters.

[2] Similar story-centric inclinations are stimulated by the film's fairly conventional use of narrative and stylistic techniques on the local micro-level (i.e., within and among directly connected scenes). Again, especially in the opening parts – which set viewers' first hypotheses, and are therefore crucial in determining the framing through which one approaches the film – *Mulholland Drive* features many familiar formal-structural elements known from classical plotting. David Bordwell's term, cohesion devices, brings a common denominator to such narrative strategies, identifying them as "formal tactics that link passages at the *local* level – from scene to scene or from one group of scenes to another […] usually serving to tighten up linear cause and effect" (2002, 95 – our emphasis).

Many of the scenes of *Mulholland Drive* adhere to rules and norms of classical filmic representation – principles based on providing smooth continuity in information distribution. Simply put, by its apparently undisturbed chain of action-reaction, the film *looks and feels like* a classical Hollywood movie following the laws of classical narrative filmmaking. As Todd McGowan observes, "the *mise-en-scène* conforms on the whole to the conventions of the typical Hollywood film: scenes are well lit, conversations between characters flow without awkwardness, and even the plainest décor seems to sparkle" (2004, 68). Also "the editing also tends to follow classical Hollywood style, sustaining the spectator's sense of spatial and temporal orientation" (2004, 68).

Yet although events initially seem connected in an ordinary, logical manner, are organized "according to a familiar temporal logic," and "occur in chronological order and follow the laws of causality" (73), their combination on the global macro-level does not provide a clear, coherent and cohesive story.[12] In this sense, *Mulholland Drive* fits the definition of Umberto Eco's "impossible possible world" (1990, 77): it presents a storyworld that is seemingly coherent and in compliance with the logic of real-world laws, but which also introduces narrative elements – or even an overall narrative structure – that will strike viewers as incongruent or impossible (with regard to both the internal laws of the storyworld and our sense of real-world logic).

12 A less ambiguous but quite clear and bold signalling of global incongruity happens in Lynch's *Lost Highway*, where protagonist Fred Madison (Bill Pullman), at two different and locally unproblematic moments in the plot, buzzes himself at the door of his home to report: "Dick Laurent is dead."

[3] Another key contributor to the film's classical narrative appeal is Lynch's evocation of popular cinematic genre conventions – in plot, but also through prototypical characters, settings, tropes, patterns, cinematography and style. Genre conventions commonly guide viewers in their apprehension, comprehension, and evaluation of films, as these conventions come with strong expectations and interpretive routines, predominantly tied to the classical narrative tradition. As such, issues of genre are often central in framing decisions.[13]

Like in his television series *Twin Peaks* (with Mark Frost, 1990–1991, 2017), or feature films like *Blue Velvet* (1986), *Lost Highway* (1997) as well as *Mulholland Drive*, Lynch's stories frequently revolve around central mysteries that are very strongly generically coded. As Elliott Panek notes, both "*Lost Highway* and *Mulholland Drive* use the detective trope to provoke the audience into looking for answers that the film doesn't provide" (2006, 76). The recognition of familiar thematic (an enigmatic femme fatale, a hitman, a mysterious creature, mobsters and cowboys) and stylistic tropes (a dark and dreamy soundtrack, chiaroscuro lighting and inquiring camera movements) signals a neo-noir detective mystery, cuing viewers into framings that activate a genre-specific routine: to inspect, puzzle, and deduct along with the characters. The recognition of the classical mystery genre in *Mulholland Drive* fosters viewers' expectation and desire that their investigative efforts in resolving both the story's and the narration's mysteries will ultimately pay off – after all, classical narrative genre films commonly provide such closure and coherence.[14]

In *Mulholland Drive*, strong generic patterns may put viewers on a classical narrative track of resolving the film's complexities, thereby downplaying art-cinematic readings that would accept or even celebrate unresolved ambiguities as an artistic, authorial strategy.[15] Investigative, puzzle-oriented readings of the

13 As Daniel Chandler highlights, "key psychological functions of genre are likely to include those shared by categorization generally – such as reducing complexity […]. Genre theorists might find much in common with schema theorists in psychology: much as a genre is a framework within which to make sense of related texts, a schema is a kind of mental template within which to make sense of related experiences in everyday life. From the point of view of schema theory, genres are textual schemata" (1997).

14 This desire can be strategically played upon. For example director Christopher Smith, in the DVD commentary (2010, Icon Film Distribution) to his exceedingly complex *Triangle* (2009), reveals his strategy to appeal to his viewers' interpretive routines trained in the horror genre. According to him, viewers engage with his film's complex incongruities in a rational and analytical manner "because it's a horror" – that is, "because it's a movie that is watched primarily by an audience that are very into logic, and they want it to make logical sense" (Smith 2010).

15 Monika Fludernik emphasizes the importance of genre cues with specific regards to the interpretation of difficult narratives. She argues that: "when readers are confronted with potentially unreadable narratives, texts that are radically inconsistent, they cast about for ways

film are further reinforced by recurring narrative patterns and props such as the mysterious blue key and box. These items appear salient and significant because of their recurrence during pivotal moments of the film's narrative; yet what exactly they signal, or how they could work as narrative orientation points, is left unclear or ambiguous, making these objects some of the most discussed and speculated about elements in the film's story.

[4] Another strategy often found in contemporary complex films is the appeal to classical forms of character identification. Classical film narratives typically present accessible protagonists with whom viewers can connect and resonate relatively easily; they are psychologically transparent, meaning they have rational motivations and clear goals, display relatively unambiguous behaviour, and are emotionally and actively invested in the story's events and action. Such lifelike classical protagonists – the types about whom we easily come to care – play a key role in winning our affection, empathy or identification, thus enhancing a narrative's tellability by providing viewers' entry points into the story.

In the opening hour of *Mulholland Drive*, Rita, Betty, and film director Adam (Justin Theroux) all seem to provide such access points. Both Betty and Rita function like detectives, channelling the curiosity and rationalizing urge that viewers may have while trying to figure out the story's mysteries. Naomi Watts's Betty particularly appears as a highly classical, quite generic protagonist (at least during the first two thirds of the film): she is a warm-heartedly kind character with "the attractive innocence of a new arrival in Hollywood, someone eager to make her way as a performer" (McGowan 2004, 77). Throughout the film, however, these familiar and unambiguous character traits become increasingly unstable – a disintegration that strongly contributes to the feeling of overall narrative fragmentation and incoherence towards the end of the film. Nonetheless, the confusing changes, through which Betty gradually departs from the heroine role and ultimately morphs back into her alternative (or real) frustrated Diane Selwyn, come only late in the plot, right when immersed viewers may have felt just one step away from untangling the film's puzzle.

[5] Strong incongruities, like strong narrative incoherencies or inconsistencies in character integrity, ask for naturalizations – mimetic motivations that rationalize such discrepancies within the story(world). The term naturalization was coined by Jonathan Culler (1975) and later influentially appropriated by Monika Fludernik (1996) to describe interpretive strategies by which readers (or

and means of recuperating these texts as narratives – motivated by the generic markers that go with the book" (1996, 34).

viewers) reconcile textual inconsistencies by fitting them into overarching sense-making patterns. The earlier discussed art-cinematic readings of *Mulholland Drive* provide examples of one type of interpretations that alleviate detected incongruities: they offer naturalizing readings of the fragmented plot structure as, for instance, Lynch's deliberate reversal of coherence and destabilization of traditional logic (Hudson 2004), as an intoxicating liberation from logical sense (Scott 2001), as a Lacanian psychoanalytic study in the construction of identity and the self (Akser 2012; McGowan 2004), or as an examination of postmodern concepts such as the simulacrum (Bartyzel 2010). Viewers who take a more classical narrative frame of viewing, however, tend to opt for different naturalization strategies. Rather than through indirect intellectual or discursive interpretive efforts like those that characterize the above art-cinema readings, naturalization within classical narrative framings is usually sought in more direct referential parameters and diegetic motivations on the level of the storyworld. Most mainstream movies that feature complex storytelling provide *mimetic motivations* through which viewers can rationalize the film's narrative anomalies: one can think here of supernatural, (pseudo-)scientific, (quasi-)rational or (quasi-)realistic storyworld elements such as time machines, crooked quantum mechanical reasoning, or focalizing characters who suffer from mental illnesses or hallucinations. Mimetic motivations like these offer explanatory mechanisms that direct viewers' attention towards the internal laws of the storyworld, and that downplay the need for the invocation of allegorical or symbolical paths of naturalization. Amateur as well as scholarly forensic fans of *Mulholland Drive* have vigorously sought for mimetic storyworld motivations to explain, naturalize, and rationalize the film's confusing narrative makeup, construing it almost invariably as a projection of one of the characters' subjective reality. Although interpreting incongruous narrative events as someone's exteriorized subjectivity had long been a strategy primarily associated with art cinema (see, among others, Kawin 1978; Bordwell 1985, 206), the success of films like David Fincher's *Fight Club* (1999), Spike Jonze's *Being John Malkovich* (1999), Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (2000), or Ron Howard's *A Beautiful Mind* (2001) had made subjective realist narration (and its corresponding viewer interpretations) a mainstream trend by the time *Mulholland Drive* was released. As a result, many interpreters have sought to resolve and naturalize Lynch's mysteries by assigning focalizers from whose minds the narrative anomalies originate (for a comprehensive account, see Campora 2014). Attempting to discern what belongs to a dream, fantasy, or perhaps a post-mortem hallucination, and what to the reality that frames it, many

viewers have argued for various relatively consistent explanations of the film as being largely a dream (the imaginary world of Betty) that covers up (and/or is occasionally disrupted by) a darker narrative reality (the actual life of Diane). *Mulholland Drive* contains many clues that cue and support this subjective realist reading, ranging from the film's stylistic tropes (reminiscent of surrealist and expressionist techniques) and the signposted ruptures between the plot's first and second movements (a clear division that also characterizes *Lost Highway*, yet seems badly missing from Lynch's utterly confusing 2006 *Inland Empire*), to the incongruently returning characters (appearing in different roles) and other, more specific narrative clues such as the cowboy's potential *raisonneur* role in telling Betty/Diane that it is "time to wake up" (a moment that many interpreters take to be an authorial intervention indicating a dream narrative). Notwithstanding the abundance of these clues and triggers, the exact relation between the subjective and objective frames of narration remains indeterminate, resulting in a well-balanced ambiguity that can allow for a rich interpretive game in which narrative elements can still acquire a range of different meanings.

Interpretive Multi-Stability as a Viewing Effect

In sum, *Mulholland Drive* offers a powerful demonstration of how different framings and viewing stances can entail very different appraisals of the same work. The resulting effect of the film's manifold affordances and viewers' potential oscillation in-between those is reminiscent of what Tzvetan Todorov has called "the fantastic" in literature (1975). Todorov characterized the fantastic as a particular (temporary or ongoing) *hesitation* – a "cognitive uncertainty" as to how a story's strange elements should be understood or explained: either as part of the "uncanny" (i.e., as originating from the subjective perception or mental state of one of the characters) or of the "marvellous" (i.e., as part of a supernatural storyworld). Moreover, according to Todorov, the fantastic requires not only "a hesitation in the reader and the hero; but also a kind of reading, which we may for the moment define negatively: it must be neither 'poetic' nor 'allegorical'" (1975, 32). Remarkably, while in *Mulholland Drive* elements of uncanny and marvellous fiction are both in the mix, poetic or allegorical modes of reading are also afforded by the film's ambiguous narration. Expressionistic, surrealist, allegorical or authorial motivations all may become part of a continuous cognitive framing and re-framings that viewers can try out in their meaning making. It is exactly this distinct interpretive multi-stability, allowing viewers to apply and keep switching

between a multiplicity of cognitive framings, that has arguably made Lynch's film one of the most enduringly debated pieces of 21st-century cinema.

It must be noted that in the case of *Mulholland Drive*, this interpretive elusiveness may for some viewers also enhance the viewing experience beyond the strictly narrative – i.e., by affording stronger engagement with the film's perceptual, bodily, affective, or associative effects. In a 1997 article reporting from the set of *Lost Highway*, David Foster Wallace eloquently captured this powerful aesthetic potential of Lynch's cinema. Contemplating what fascinates him about Lynch's work, Wallace noted that "David Lynch's movies are often described as occupying a kind of middle ground between art film and commercial film. But what they really occupy is a whole third different kind of territory. Most of Lynch's best films don't really have much of a point, and in lots of ways they seem to resist the film-interpretative process by which movies' (certainly avant-garde movies') central points are understood. […] This is one of the unsettling things about a Lynch movie: You don't feel like you're entering into any of the standard unspoken and/or unconscious contracts you normally enter into with other kinds of movies. This is unsettling because in the absence of such an unconscious contract we lose some of the psychic protections we normally (and necessarily) bring to bear on a medium as powerful as film. […] This is why his best films' effects are often so emotional and nightmarish" (1998, 170). *Mulholland Drive*'s cinematic (anti-)logic can indeed feel all the more nightmarish exactly because it escapes our grasp. But this, as we have demonstrated, does not stop viewers to appraise the resulting experience.

In light of current debates in film theory, it is interesting to observe how the diverse interpretive framings of *Mulholland Drive* mirror, and actually expose, different stances in the *theoretical* conceptualization of narrative complexity in general. Film scholars have been divided in their attempts to understand, categorize, and evaluate the wave of complex narratives in contemporary film. Dispute has emerged over whether contemporary complex films should be seen as an altogether new phenomenon, with distinct strategies, conventions and viewing effects, or as still belonging to and rooted in the tradition of classical narrative cinema. On the one hand, some have proposed that today's complex films are merely "trickled down" mainstream incarnations of previous art-cinematic storytelling experiments (e.g., Kovács 2007, 60; Cameron 2008; Klecker 2011), whereas other scholars have argued that the trend should mostly just be seen as a series of intensified variations – mere complications – of long-established and prevailing classical narrative principles (see, most notably the

consistent contentions of Bordwell and Thompson 2013).[16] Also others have sought to define contemporary complex films as some form of novel hybrid, seeing them as a new and distinctly post-classical breed of puzzle films that question or deconstruct the narrative principles by which they are governed (such as linearity, causality, coherence and congruity, or the relative trustworthiness and transparency of narration) and that "suspend the common contract between the film and its viewers" (Elsaesser 2009, 19; see also Thanouli 2006; Buckland 2009, 2014; or Elsaesser 2017). Although it was not our intention to directly engage with these ongoing scholarly debates here, it became apparent that in the case of *Mulholland Drive*, viewers' stances actually correspond to all these different conceptualizations. Perhaps what this soft conclusion signals is a reminder that theoretical definitions of narrative complexity are themselves imbued with framing activities and interpretive stances, and that the scholarly and critical discussions of these films might concern the elusive workings of interpretation as much as they concern formal developments and shifts in film narration and narratives per se.

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16 David Bordwell finds that the "debate about postclassical Hollywood raises the question of how to gauge change over history. On the whole, I think, critics have exaggerated the novelty of current developments. This isn't surprising, since our perceptual and cognitive systems are geared to take a great deal for granted and to monitor the world for change. We are sensitive to the slightest break in our habits. More prosaically, many humanities professors are by temperament keen to spot the next big thing. But if we want to capture the nuances of historical continuity, we don't want every wrinkle to be a sea change" (2006, 9). Bordwell and Thompson have the impression that most contemporary puzzle films like Christopher Nolan's 2010 "*Inception* might be complicated rather than complex" (2013, 53), and find contemporary complex films to be essentially "part of business as usual" (Bordwell 2006, 73).

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Haptic Transgression. The Horror of Materiality in Kurt Kren's Films

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Abstract. The article investigates two seemingly conflicting critical approaches of haptic and transgressive cinema, which emerged along with the corporeal turn in film studies, in the late 1990s and early 2000s. While haptics operates with undistinguishable figures and demands extreme closeness and an active caressing gaze, transgression is usually seen from a distance and subverts the social, political and ethical order. The paper attempts an examination of the Austrian avant-garde filmmaker Kurt Kren's Actionist films and enlightens how these two opposing strategies can be present together. Giving a detailed analysis of the films, the article describes an expanded definition of Linda Williams's body genres, in order to create a new category of horror: the horror of materiality.

Keywords: haptics, transgression, Kurt Kren, avant-garde, Viennese Actionism.

The primary aim of this article is to examine, through the terms of haptic and transgressive cinema, a few selected works from the oeuvre of the Austrian avant-garde filmmaker Kurt Kren, which he made in collaboration with the Viennese Actionists Otto Mühl and Günter Brus. In contemporary film theory the phenomenological approach has become more and more popular as theorists like Vivian Sobchack, Barbara Creed, Linda Williams and Laura U. Marks highlighted the spectator's body as a key element of the cinematic perception and interpretation; Marks has also made the haptic aspects of certain experimental films prominent[1] (see Marks 2000, and also 2002). While phenomenological approach is frequently used to examine not only contemporary films which show certain sensitivity towards sensuality and the material (for an examination of

1 Marks's (2000) claims are based on her own encounters with artists' media. She describes in a phenomenological approach films, videos, digital media, independent television, performances and visual arts made by experimental media makers.

early cinema, see Dahlquist et al. 2018), it still does not seem to be a permanent approach regarding experimental cinema. Even though this kind of increased sensitivity is not quite a contemporary phenomenon in experimental film, it is rarely applied persistently by theorists to analyse the different sensuous examples of experimental cinema. The cultural, artistic environment of the 1960s along with the corporeal turn strongly inspired the creation of such works as Carolee Schneemann's *Fuses* (1965), Barbara Rubin's *Christmas On Earth* (1963) or the aforementioned Actionist films of Kurt Kren. These works seem to attract the haptic and phenomenological approach so intensely that we may find the use of these methods unavoidable and most relevant. The different forms of transgression have become quite important subjects for contemporary film theorists such as Martine Beugnet and Joel Gwynne. Nevertheless, the acknowledgement and examination of these transgressive aspects were already present in the American filmic discourse of the 1960s, especially in relation to experimental films of the underground scene (Osterweil, 2014). This observation seems to be confirmed by Amos Vogel's book, *Film as a Subversive Art* (1974). The founder of the avant-garde cine-club *Cinema 16* made these subversive aspects the main topic in his book, which is an especially significant work for my thesis because of its special emphasis on experimental cinema. Through experimental films, the book shows the diversity of transgression, which often originates from cultural memories, taboos and traumas, and manifests in violence or liberating sexuality.

Otto Mühl and Günter Brus, two artists of the Viennese Actionsts originally invited Kurt Kren to document the actions they performed, but Kren, instead of just documenting, created his own work of art. Regarding the perceptive aspects, a phenomenological approach might also address the question of the border-line position of these films, as they originally documented live performances, while the resulting films themselves may be screened in a cinematic environment, and also exhibited in museums or galleries. The experience of watching these performances may be powerful but the perception itself is fragmented by nature. As a result of constant selection, the attention always shifts between spectacles, salient for the viewer. Therefore I suggest that watching someone else's selected "expressed experience" (Sobchack, 1992) in a movie theatre does not make the experience necessarily unfamiliar, however it is much more intense and it extinguishes the extant distance of the performance due to its formal radicalism. Exhibiting experimental films raises another question of perception. In this situation, it is important to make the distinction between a spectator and a viewer, due to their reflection to perceptual differences. In a gallery, in the audience there

are spectators, whose perception is non-linear: they are not immovable, and they perceive artworks both in a bigger curatorial context and in each other's context. In this completely changed milieu, it is questionable that a constantly looped experimental film remains a film, at all, or becomes something new. Accordingly, the haptic aspects of Kren's Actionist films can work most effectively in a dense cinematic environment, where there are viewers in the audience (not only spectators who are passing by), who have fixed positions, and perceive the films linearly (from the beginning to the end).

Kren's works can be seen as haptic cinema not only because they are experimental films characterized by a quite radical film form which contains serial editing, close-ups and extreme close-ups, but also because of their objects and forms which come from a highly materialistic, performative tradition. After World War II, fine artists like Otto Mühl, Günter Brus, Hermann Nitsch and Rudolf Schwarzkogler decided to amplify the duo of art and revolution, starting with the creation of the idea of material painting. Its real essence was that they did not want to represent or reproduce anything from nature but to attract the attention to what was actually visible on the surface: the fabric. Being involved in such a happening-like event, urged an intense sensory feeling in both the creator and the viewer. As Paul Sakoilsky puts it in his article, *Breaking Out of the Reality Asylum. Thoughts on Hermann Nitsch and the Orgies Mysteries Theatre* (2010), these artists were devoted to the belief that an absorbed sensual awareness of our surroundings automatically broadens consciousness and in my opinion, this is related to the concept of touch. During an action, the sensory, invigorating methods were absolutely intuited and directly seen by the audience. According to Nitsch, pouring, spraying, spreading over and throwing red liquid evokes an intense sensory arousal (2010, 4–13). Eventually, they planned to turn the place of the action into a sort of theatre of orgies, to make the whole event similar to a ritual with paint, flesh, blood and intestines. Viennese Actionism grew from this realization (Nitsch 2010, 14–22). While the Actionists subverted the tradition of fine art and concept art utterly and joyfully, Kren carried out their notion on the filmic level of the action and resulted in a total disruption of the film form. By doing so, he presented a completely fresh attitude towards the portrayal of an object in a cinematographic act. Therefore the other term I intend to use is related to the subject and the nature of these captured performances, which are mostly transgressive. Even if being haptic does not necessarily imply transgression itself especially because being able to constitute something as transgressive often requires the use of optical images, most of Kren's Actionist films are subversive

since they violate the usual practice in almost every possible way. Since in these cases transgression plays a significant role, I would also like to include this aspect in my analysis. Before going into deeper examinations, I find it necessary to point out a few possible incongruences regarding the terms in question. While haptic cinema can be closely related to Marks's definition, transgressivity has still remained a characteristic lacking any accurate contemporary theorization in the field, therefore in this article it will be interpreted variously depending on the different authors.[2] In the following section, I will introduce the theoretical basis of haptics and transgressive cinema, as well as define the terms I will use later on, in order to confer the criteria of my later examinations.

Haptics

Haptic perception usually refers not only to sensation by touching but to even more: it carries some kind of physical activity, as well. It is a kind of sensation that has highly stimulating functions and one that makes a connection between the visual and the rest of the senses by involving them in many ways. As Vivian Sobchack claims one does not experience a movie only through the eyes but the whole body takes part in the process of perception and interpretation by using the information of the carnal knowledge of his/her sensorium (Sobchack 2004, 53–84). Haptic visuality as a perfect tool to achieve this kind of bodily activity, involves the body in the process of seeing to a greater extent, thus, the sensual experience happens primarily through tactility and kinesthetics. As Marks points it out – based on the observations of art historian Alois Riegl which he made in relation to the haptic style of ancient Egyptian art and the optical style of Roman art –, haptic visuality is contrasted with optical visuality because it presumes the observation of the subject from a very short distance, which makes identification hardly possible. Through haptic visuality one can experience touch not merely on the surface of their body, but in a more sensuous way it can also be captured inside the body itself. As a matter of fact, haptic images encourage and invite a bodily relationship between the viewer and the image by being multisensory. They are able to create – as Marks says – a "dynamic subjectivity" between them (2002, 3).

Riegl, essentially a curator of textiles, adopted a close and tactile way of looking which strongly assisted – as Laura Marks writes in *Touch. Sensuous Theory and*

2 Although it is indispensable to identify and reflect on this problem, it will not be further discussed in the article, since it does not jeopardize or significantly affect the results of my analysis.

Multisensory Media – "the play of the eyes among non- or barely figurative textures" (2002, 4). Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari allocate haptic as a "smooth space" in contrast to "striated space." It is a space that has to be moved in an endless allusion to the immediate environment. According to them, the confined spaces – similarly to Riegl's close way of looking, as Marks points it out – are driven by haptic perception, which deals with their particularity. Through haptic perception, the haptic critic drives the smooth space by being engaged with glimpsed objects and ideas and by revealing the possible connections between them. In terms of hermeneutics, they give up the control over understanding. Instead of decoding and identifying they fuse with the material by moving on the surface of the object, almost touching and scanning it with their eyes. Accordingly, visuality is completed with hearing, touching, smelling, tasting and also the sensation of motion.

As Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener (2010) also claim in their book *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses*, there is a well apprehensible relationship between the spectator's body and the images on the screen. There is "a cinematic space that is both physical and discursive" (2010, 4) which makes the encounter between the film and the viewer, cinema and body possible. The viewers take part in the film experience, the event itself, the components of which – such as bodies, objects or even the different surroundings on the screen – communicate with and reflect on each other through their surfaces, distances, textures, optical or even bodily markers. Alongside the strong physical attendants – for instance, the senses of vision, tactility and sound, the diversity of perceptions (which are or at least many of them are based on philosophical issues) –, the temporality of action and awareness are present, as well. They are as crucial to cinema as they are to the spectator. During the experience, the spectator is both a participant and an observer (Elsaesser and Hagener 2010, 3–13).

As cinema is not essentially verbal, film makes meaning through its materiality, bringing forth a unity between the perceiver and the object. Correlating with this materiality, but apart from Elsaesser and Hagener, Marks raises the possibility of thinking about film as skin in her book *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (2000). Skin itself traverses and repositions the relation between inside and outside, between Self and Other. In cinema, the transformation and transgression between these very same things make the way cinema works similar to the working of the body. Introducing this prospect might make it a bit easier to understand the tactility of vision. Haptic visuality provides the spectator the opportunity to "touch" a film with their eyes. If we accept Marks's hypothesis, this perception of film as skin means that film is as

conductive and susceptible as human skin. As a result, the experience of the film among spectators can be pictured as several encounters of skins, which mark each other and leave shared footprints. Many of the works that have these same peculiarities recall individual and cultural memories by bringing the allurement to materialize knowledge and experiences of the senses to being. Haptic images urge the observers to react, give a response to what they see. It is a personal, embodied way of acting; it assists the progress of obtaining "sensory impressions" (Marks 2000, 2). According to Marks, haptic images bring attention to the physical organization of sensory experience (2000, 1–23).

In many instances, haptic cinema goes back to the concept of early cinema, more accurately to the idea of Tom Gunning's "cinema of attractions" (2002, 7). This explains a truly embodied response in which the illusory image allows the identification with the action onscreen and gives a chance to an instantaneous bodily reaction to the screen. Accordingly, haptic criticism turns back to the concerns of theorists like Béla Balázs or Dziga Vertov, who stressed the importance of the relationship between the spectator's body and the film image. Haptic cinema works with images which occasionally signify figures but then draw off and stop showing them fully. In other cases, they move so close to the camera that nothing is visible anymore. Haptic cinema does not make figures entirely distinguishable, and this fact will become apparent in Kurt Kren's films. Indeed, it puts the object into question so the viewers' own imagination must decide what they are seeing. Haptic images pull the observer too close to see correctly, and this is what Marks calls erotic (2002, 15). Hence, she suggests that a haptic image itself is erotic (2002, 13–14). However, this is not always the case, and will address this when discussing Kren's films. Although these films contain haptic images which allow viewers to give up their need of understanding and identifying the object of visual erotics to keep its unknowability, in the case of the respective films I find it rather difficult to set aside the constant presence of "abject" and the lack of immersion which inhibit the spectators from giving in to the eroticism of haptic images.

Since embodiment and sense perception have moved into a more and more important place for many artists, haptic visuality appears in cinematic genres such as experimental film. The main goals and basic attitude of experimental cinema, mainly rooted in classical avant-garde movements, make these artworks perfect subjects for "haptic criticism." Most of the experimental films are non-commercial and non-narrative; they turn the attention towards the apparatus, the materiality and film form (Kuenzli 1996, 13–27). They use the medium in a reductive way and have a close connection with other art forms. Both the formal strategies of

experimental cinema aimed at the viewers' perception, and the narrative elements connected to sexual representation – occurring in these films in some kind of experimental approach – are present in the films that will be analysed here.

Transgression and Subversion in the Cinema of Sensation

Transgression in film, as Joel Gwynne gives the brief definition of the term in *Transgression in Anglo-American Cinema: Gender, Sex and the Deviant Body* (2016, 1–9), aims to cross certain socially constructed boundaries and to go beyond tradition in both narrative form and narrative function. And even though haptic cinema and transgression do not always go together, transgression cannot be separated from what Martine Beugnet (2007) calls the "cinema of sensation" because it relies greatly on the medium's corporeal, materialistic and sensational dimensions. Transgressive and subversive images consistently have a certain tactility. The cinematic discovery of a sensual, incorporated understanding of realism can be expressed in a mutual connection of "subjective body and objective world" (2007, 32). The films that are going to be discussed here, frequently show a sort of bodily abjection. Therefore, Julia Kristeva's idea of the "abject" is not avoidable in relation to Kren's Actionist films. Kristeva's term is connected to both transgression and the body (skin and touch). On one hand it does not recognize any boundaries, standards or principles of behaviour. It intentionally subverts identity, system and order. On the other hand, she also includes in this category the different kinds of body fluids such as urine, faeces, saliva or tears. These are not really part of the body, neither are completely separate from it, which puts them into a similar category as skin is. Barbara Creed refers to Kristeva's term in her book *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (1993) in connection with horror films; in general terms, abjection is a mechanism of removing the non-human from the human or separating the entirely formed subject from the partially formed one. This and the importance of rituals, by which societies are able to revive their first contact with the abject and then exclude it, are both quite close to the original Actionist performances and the films of Kren (1993). Watching Brus's close-ups of self-mutilation with a razor in *10/65 Selbstverstümmelung,* or Mühl as he serves his penis on a plate as a Christmas meal in *9/64 O Tannenbaum,* not only endorses the viewers to regain contact with the abject but also provides an opportunity to confront with the questions of processing social traumas or moral and ethical matters.

The triggering of a clearly tangible visceral reaction in the observer often takes place as a result of watching graphic violence or sex, or any violently digressive exchange between subject and object. This drives the whole action toward the range of abjection. As Beugnet (2007) suggests in relation to French film, the cinema of sensation balances between pleasure and abjection by arousing serious ethical issues. The transgression of boundaries supervenes stepping over the border of order and disorder, uniformity and heterogeneity, public and private. Avant-garde filmmakers discussed here experiment with the physicality of film and from time to time adopt subversive elements – sometimes from other genres, such as pornography or horror – which build on sensory shock. By inducing a state of shock, they disapprove of and judge the currently existing *status quo*. By this token, the transgression and subversion of the experimental films in question are determined to confront the spectators with ethical matters and social taboos, and of criticizing the currently existing social model.

Introducing Amos Vogel's thoughts on this matter, which he presents in his book *Film as a Subversive Art* (1974), helps to strengthen the case of subversion. He goes back much further in the past, looking for causes of the emergence of subversion in arts, photography and cinema. He introduces the Freudian notion of taboo and, extricating the term's layers of meaning, uses it as a potential explanation. Reflecting on the taboo that forbids watching or touching certain things deemed "unholy," it is possible to create a system of firmly controlled and enforced rules of order and social supervision by naming the taboos themselves (objects, acts, persons etc.). As for the object of the taboo, in Vogel's interpretation, one views it as infectious and as something that can transmit its "virus" to those who break the rule. As humans have always been attracted to objects and acts that were forbidden, these embody both the abhorrence and the enchantment at the same time. Therefore, the fear of contagion becomes as great as the fear of temptation. Connecting the above-mentioned ideas to cinema, the way the taboo image affects spectators can be understood by examining their physiological and emotional reactions. Cinema makes it possible to witness real death, torture, the act of giving birth, and sex. Watching such scenes, viewers can share the feeling of the exciting guilt of the *voyeur* which goes together with the fear of punishment: they take a look at something they do not have the right to see. By this token, I propose for further consideration that the films discussed below embody these tabooed images which are able to bring on the aforementioned complex position of the voyeur.

6/64 Mama und Papa

The first film Kren shot was *6/64 Mama und Papa*,[3] a document of one of Mühl's material actions. It was projected on 16 mm film, like all the Actionist films, and was originally shot silent and on coloured film. Some details are not entirely visible but rather impressionistic due to the chosen style of editing, though we can see a woman and a man interacting with each other in some familiar and less familiar ways. Through a detailed examination of this film, I aim to point out its connection with Beugnet's concept of the cinema of sensation, by emphasizing its corporeal, materialistic and sensational dimensions. The performers, man and woman, are both covered with various materials. The material that covers their whole body seems similar to clay; it is lutulent, thick and distorts their body so much that they look almost non-human. This clayish substance does not only cover their body but almost everything around them and they never come out of it. Even though the male character gives the impression of passivity, he is the director of the happening; whatever she does, it has a great impact on him, he becomes the leading man. Everything is about him, his desire and pleasure. The woman offers her breast to him, lets him touch her and probably goes down on him. Although the viewer has the impression of watching oral sex, due to the structure of montage it is not quite evident; it remains an associative series of images. The two characters imitate the various roles of being a mother, a father, and a child or having a sexual intercourse and even giving birth. We can see a close-up of the woman's vagina while the same lutulent, clayish material that covers them is pouring out of it, and right after this we can see the man's head between her legs seemingly imitating a newborn baby.

Referring to Stan Brakhage's *Window Water Baby Moving* (1959), I would suggest that in these two films – despite their salient differences – something very similar happens: in *6/64 Mama und Papa* the characters invest themselves in the roles of mother and father and imitate the action of giving birth; while in Brakhage's film, he filmed himself and his wife and the actual birth of his first child. We also see close-ups of the woman's vagina, but instead of clay pouring from it, the baby is born. [Figs. 1–2.] The two films also show similarities in the editing style and use of composition. Since Brakhage's camera eye is the "mind's eye" (Osterweil 2014, 94), he records what he actually sees, and not what he is

3 In the titles of his films, Kren always uses two numbers: the first one refers to the film's place in the chronological order of his works, the second one specifies the year of production.

trained to see.[4] Therefore the images are more impressionistic and abstract than concrete. Watching the labour of his wife, he catches the otherwise unrevealed functions of a body giving birth. The upside-down, repeated and sometimes canted footage is combined with more direct images of the body, such as close-ups of his wife's face, belly or vagina. The increased tactility of these images evokes exceedingly strong bodily reactions in the spectators. What is more, the fact that such events had not been filmed so explicitly before – except for medical training films – makes this work of art excessively subversive as well.

The transgressiveness of Brakhage's film is obvious by revealing a completely natural event which was considered taboo at the time. Kren perverts this very same organic process: on the one hand because it is a taboo, on the other, showing it like this, in an outrageously shocking form, it is an even bigger taboo. It becomes something we do not have the right to see but excites us, however, this voyeuristic excitement is combined with the feeling of shame and a certain fear of punishment (Vogel 1974, 310). In the same way, by foregrounding the materialistic aspects and the sensuous values of these films, Kren brings bodily abjection close to the spectator. These films are also undoubtedly haptic with their frequently repeated close-ups and extreme close-ups that confront the viewer with the harsh materiality revealed in such a perspective. This makes the recognition of the images almost impossible. Focusing strongly on the interacting surfaces and the material, distorts what Brakhage calls "the man-made laws of perception" (1963, 20). This method encourages a new way of experience that builds up in the viewer during the screening. Although Brakhage exploits an extremely intimate moment, he still preserves something honest and fragile from the whole event, therefore he seems to be an almost poetic documentarist artist compared to Kren.

In contrast to the scenes described above, there is another group of sequences in *6/64 Mama und Papa*, where the woman is passive, sometimes posing as a model, growing stiff as a sculpture or just lying down helplessly while the man paints her body and throws diverse pulverulent and fluid materials at her. While she is still naked, the male character is wearing ceremonious clothes for this part, acting as a real master of ceremony. Instead of the earth-like colours of the previous sequences, the most dominant colours here are red, green, white and yellow. He splodges her body with red, green and white paint that looks like flour; he pours milk and other liquids on her, then feathers fall down and stick to

4 When it comes to visual compositions, he suggests that one senses images as if one were dreaming, remembering things or becoming aware of colours and conjectural figures after closing one's eyes (see Brakhage 1963).

the liquids that cover the woman's body. What makes the whole event's feast-like nature stronger is that it seems like the woman is placed on top of a table and the man, with a knife in his hand, is cutting vegetables onto her naked body. She is the main dish, surrounded by all the bounty in this grotesque feast. Decorated with a red flower that is seen sometimes in her posteriors or her genitalia, she is a mother, a sexual object and the main dish at the same time. Laying her on an astounding altar she is offered as a sacrifice for fertility which manifests itself in the different kinds of materials poured into and pouring out of the orifices.

Here I would like to mention Linda Williams's (1991) idea of the corporeality of spectators and her concept of the so-called "body genres," which she originally applied to Hollywood mainstream narrative genre films. She discusses three genres – horror, melodrama and pornography – which culturally belong to the lower end of the hierarchy of film genres. The films she analyses expose the body while it experiences intense, uncontrollable emotions, they show the human body in its most inarticulate manifestations dealing with body fluids. They violate the basic rules of aesthetic by eliminating the distance between spectator and the work (cf. Elsaesser and Hagener 2010, 124–145). Although the films I examine here are not genre films, the phenomena she describes is quite similar to the experience generated by Kren's works. Despite of its strong presence in the three genres listed above, this experience is not genre specific, it rather relies on the appearance of certain themes and the following of particular formal strategies. Accordingly, the aforementioned works of Kren can be considered body films, which operate through the visceral sensation of horror and a sort of monstrous pornography. Thus, what we can see here is an interesting mixture of body horror and pornographic elements where the raging material eventually conquers the people who fail to defend themselves. The sight of these bodily reactions and violations of the body, on the one hand, and the use of serial editing, close-ups and extreme close-ups which enhance the hapticity of the images, on the other, have a similar effect to what Williams describes as: "an apparent lack of proper aesthetic distance, a sense of over-involvement in sensation and emotion." (Williams 1991, 5.)

This performance mirrors the critical and somewhat parodistic attitude of the Viennese Actionists – to be exact, that of Otto Mühl – to the body's natural processes and the diverse spectrum of gender roles, which are built in social conscience and are held as deep as crass taboos. In *6/64 Mama und Papa* – as a matter of fact, this stands for all the Actionist films – this aspect is combined with the unrestrained filmmaking attitude of Kurt Kren. As stated above, Kren was asked by Mühl to film his actions. Mühl wanted him to document the event carefully so it would show

the whole happening as it was performed in a certain place at a certain time. It should have simply mediated the Actionists' motivation and concept of fine art but not contain an additional layer of someone else's activity. What actually happened here was that Kren took control into his own hands while he was filming these actions, "undermined this effort to make an autonomous film out of the footage" (Hamlyn, Payne, and Rees 2016, 252) and presented them in an unexpected way.

The camera goes so close to his subject that it dissolves in the material and nothing else remains but the impenetrable texture itself, then it suddenly steps back and gives a wider view for a second, but this is such a short time that it becomes lost in the turmoil of images. Kren rarely lets us actually see what happens; the action is rather built up from impressions, so it can never be complete. Whereas he keeps going closer and closer, he holds a distance between the viewer and the subject. As a result of the frequently used close-ups and extreme close-ups, the spectators are never connected to what they see on the screen, at least not in a traditional way. It is quite discernible that the actions themselves were highly tactile, and through the chosen montage technique, the director enhances the tactility of the original performance and makes it more passionate, aggressive, erotic, subversive and dynamic. He uses his mathematically compiled serial editing style, familiar from his early structural films. The rapid, single frame sequences are merged with quick shot/counter-shot sequences, thus the spectators are not connected to a story or a protagonist (as in a traditional film viewing) but a connection is established between the material itself and the observer's body. Kren uses the footage to build up his own ornamental-organic order of the scenes that is far-removed from any chronological order or cause-and-effect relation between the shots. With this method, he abstracts every potentially recognizable aspect of the subjects by converting them into almost geometric figures or the semblance of action paintings and gesture art revealing an extreme sensitivity towards form and materiality.

Chauvinism, Orgy and Animal Instincts: *7/64 Leda mit dem Schwan* and *9/64 O Tannenbaum*

In the following films – which were also recordings of Mühl's actions –, *7/64 Leda mit dem Schwan* and *9/64 O Tannenbaum,* it becomes more and more evident how he transforms these performances. The *7/64 Leda mit dem Schwan*,[5]

5 This film was never really completed because the model, quoting Kurt Kren, was "pissed off" by the possibility of having sexual intercourse with a live swan. Kren used some sequences from *Mama und Papa* to fill the film (cf. Hamlyn, Payne, and Rees 2016).

as the title shows, is based on the Greek mythological story, which is the target of Mühl's cynical parody. The material action does not borrow anything divine from mythology, only a questionably moral, profane aspect of it. Although, according to the story the swan should be Zeus, it does not make an attempt to impregnate the woman, who lets the animal circulate around her and step on her body while it is covered with feathers and a red liquid, which Mühl constantly pours on her. Even if this chauvinistic performance, resembling porn made with animals, is happening right in front of one's eyes, viewers see a series of highly graphic, abstract images. Though Kren amplifies the haptic and subversive characteristics of the actions, he also alienates them from themselves and aestheticizes them.

The same can be noticed in *9/64 O Tannenbaum*, which is a radical, impetuous criticism of the Christmas celebration. Its transgressivity greatly relies on crossing socially constructed boundaries and – as all the films discussed here – on going beyond narrative form and function. Under the Christmas tree, instead of presents, there is a dining table, which is full of food and there is a naked man in the middle of the whole installation. His body is covered with pieces of the dishes and red paint. This scene is similar to the one in *6/64 Mama und Papa*: to the viewer it feels like the course of events joins a huge orgy as part of a sacrifice on an altar. It is not just food they serve but a woman's breast and a man's penis, along with eggs. These sequences are broken off with scenes where a naked woman stands in front of a white canvas and a man pours paint of various colours on her, imitating the act of action painting. In this way, the images of the woman's body covered with paint with the canvas behind become similar to abstract paintings. The style of frame by frame editing transforms the film into a collection of highly graphic, abstract, gesture-like and impressionistic pictures with which Kren reveals the harsh and aggressive ambience of the performance and highlights its thick materiality with consecutive close-ups. The power of these films is partly gained from the vibration of colours that has an intense effect, appealing to the deeply hidden animal instincts of humankind. This is an important component of the film's mechanism and at the same time a feature that makes Otto Mühl's films so different from Günter Brus's actions.

In order to make more precise observations on these works, I chose to watch the original copies of these films in Top Kino, a small cinema in Vienna. In a cinematic environment, where one can encounter the images through the surface of the huge screen, it became quite evident how the viewers can take part in a film experience both as a participant and an observer, as Elsaesser and Hagener suggest (2010). Haptic visuality is not simply manifested in the close-ups of

the rugged surfaces of body parts but in the tactile materiality of the celluloid as well. Watching the films in the cinema, I could see why Marks thinks about film as it is similar to skin and how haptic theory is connected to the idea of cinema of attractions. As an observer I was positioned to be involved in the act I was watching onscreen, and this situation made me give an immediate bodily reaction to the images. Haptics and transgression work together in these films. These recorded happenings involve nude men and women who are participating in real sexual acts which often turn into sexual violence. The images directly attack the spectator's defence mechanism and morals. This subversive gesture evolves in its encounter with the haptic images. It is transformed and enriched by the precarious material of the celluloid.

Fragile Impressions: *8/64 Ana*

Kren started to film the actions of Günter Brus after Otto Mühl asked him to do it or, as Kren remembers it, after Mühl "pushed him" to do it (Hamlyn, Payne, and Rees 2016, 201).[6] Their first film was *8/64 Ana*. This work happens to be a quite personal one because Ana was Brus's wife and they were the only participants in the action. This originally silent, black and white film suits – if not adapts – the action painting style of Brus, who usually ran through a hanging white paper with a black paint brush (2016, 201). Indeed, something very similar can be seen in the second half of the film as well.

This and most of Brus's actions are in sharp contrast with those of Mühl. The pure aggression and overly concentrated erotic chauvinism which pervades Mühl's material actions and intends to prey upon the darkest sides of human nature, where the definition of taboo is not interpretable, is lacking from almost all of Brus's actions, or at least it is articulated in a different way. As far as *8/64 Ana* is concerned, it is a very haptic but a less transgressive piece. The plot of the action is hardly explainable due to the film form, though it seems that it is a recorded performance of action painting where not only the paper, wall or canvas but also the human body is a carrier of paint, as Brus tries to capture rugged, brisk gestures and fractures of movement. The spectators have to rely upon their impressions much more than in the case of *6/64 Mama und Papa*. It is truly expressive how the naked, painted figure of Ana and Brus is shown with

6 Since Mühl and Brus were friends and Brus became extremely depressed because he did not have the chance to get exposure for his actions, Mühl asked Kren to film some of Brus's actions, as for them, the films functioned as adverts too (Hamlyn, Payne, and Rees 2016).

the reverse shots of objects, such as the different parts of a bicycle, becoming geometric forms and graphic patterns in front of the lenses, using close-ups and extreme close-ups. This beautifully smooth fragility of the image gives an extremely lyrical[7] aspect to its abstract expressionism, which is familiar from the contrasted imagery and exaggerated visuality of the German Expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1920). The rapidly edited, sharp graphic forms of the film make the images look like cubist paintings, though the basic concept of Actionist art had nothing to do with Cubism. In the case of *8/64 Ana*, the haptic aspect of the celluloid gets a much more emphatic role. As a result of using a very low-light-sensitive film for shooting, the images of fast moving figures became painting-like.

At this point I would like to get back to Marks's ideas connected to the erotic, which she describes as something that derives from the oscillation between the optic and the haptic, the movement between distance and closeness. It can also be described as the loss of visual control caused by haptic images and limited visuality to let ourselves become one with the surface instead. But it is also apprehensible – on a phenomenological basis where the spectator actively takes part in the process of cinematic perception – in the intersubjective relation between viewer and film image (cf. Marks 2002, 12–20). Although these characteristics are detectable on the visual level of most of the Actionist films of Kren, it is only *8/64 Ana* in which the erotic, as outlined by Marks, is really effective. To have a true impact, eroticism needs a certain level of immersion. The rhythm of editing and the constant presence of abjection in other films alienates the spectator and results in a lack of immersion, a loss of the erotic aspects of haptic images. If they achieve anything, it is more like what Gaylynn Studlar calls "masochistic identification"[8] (2002, 18) in which, as Marks puts it, it is possible that the film viewers even give in to a literally shimmering surface, which in this case is the material itself, rather than identifying with characters. In contrast, the slower editing style and haptic images of *8/64 Ana* enable the viewer the immersion they need to be engaged with the surface and arouse eroticism. This way, one gets the chance to lose themselves as subjects and be opened and impressionable to the other.

7 Lyrical in this context does not refer to P. Adams Sitney's (2014) concept of lyrical film. It rather regards Brus's sensitive, almost poetic approach to the object.

8 Although she distinguishes between Studlar's theory which is based on the Lacanian psychoanalytic model and her phenomenological approach which aims to understand embodied spectatorship, she also acknowledges that haptic visuality has some of the qualities mentioned above. I think that the aspects of masochistic identification I was referring to before can be seen in the films Kren made in collaboration with Mühl even without exchanging the phenomenological examination with a psychoanalytical one.

The Darkest Moments: *10/65 Selbstverstümmelung*

Their next film was *10/65 Selbstverstümmelung* in which there is only one person: Brus. Although the Actionist films of Kren are documentaries (as they record performances), because of the individual artistic program of Kren these films formally diverge from classical documentaries. *10/65 Selbstverstümmelung* has a central place in this spectrum: besides its experimental aspects, it still keeps elements of a more classical thinking, therefore it is slightly closer to a traditional documentary film. The only subject of this keenly documented self-mutilation[9] is the artist himself. At the same time, Kren does not want to utilize the stimulating power of the colours here either, so this, too, is a black and white film. Its strength lies elsewhere: with its slower rhythm it lets the spectator closer to the subject and lets them sympathize with him. In contrast with *8/64 Ana*, it is both highly transgressive and haptic, but the observers do not simply get involved by feeling what is happening on their own skin but by partly identifying themselves with Brus. The restrained pain and suffering mediated by the film makes one scream along with the silent howling of the artist. His body is covered in a white, thick clayish material. With the help of close-ups, the viewer can feel how it is spreading around his body while he is crawling on the floor in his great agony and is flaying his skin with bare hands. [Figs. 3–4.] He is a live sculpture. In his darkest moment, he turns against himself and starts to truncate his own body with knives, razors, crowbars, scissors and he stabs drawing pins in his chest and chin, placing them in a straight line. Although the film does not deal with body fluids explicitly, it is strongly connected to Kristeva's (1980) idea of abject, which also implies self-abjection. This overwhelming, tactile experience of self-terror closely connects this work to the sensation of horror. The monstrosity of both the self and the material unbreakably weighs on him and due to the sensuality of the images, on the viewer as well. Through shaky camera movements circling around Brus's body, Kren captures the fragility of this extreme state of mind. Although the director sometimes slows down to prolong the involvement in the event, he also preserves something with his fast editing style, so when he gets to the emotionally exaggerated points the imagery becomes radically expressionist. He constantly interchanges focused and unfocused shots, unusual compositions and jump cuts, and breaks off the chronological order of the action.

9 The title, *Selbstverstümmelung*, means self-mutilation.

Conclusion

In this analysis of Kren's Actionist films, I tried to point out how the co-operation of subject and film form can enhance haptic aspects, and how easily the haptic and the transgressive can be connected in the wide range of the cinema of sensation. During my research I had the chance to watch the original copies of Kurt Kren's Actionist films at a screening in Vienna, where I experienced how powerful and outstanding these works are, and how they affect the spectator's body and mind. It only became evident to me how wonderfully detailed these pictures really are by watching the films in a small theatre. It is not only the subject, the action itself that operates with materiality but we perceive the texture of the celluloid, the 16 mm film as a carrier as well. The partly distorted images carry a tactile materiality of their own. Kren's basically Structuralist editing process merges the crushed, fragmented pieces into one expressionistic parade, which makes the experience mostly impressionistic to the observer. Kren does not simply document the event, but by keeping some kind of distance and adding his own characteristic, personal style, reflects on it and the film itself becomes an interpretation.

Besides the sensuality of the images, the content of these films is extremely transgressive. Being placed on the border of pleasure and abjection, the continual violation of social boundaries, the offense against the either secular or religious laws of the society by portraying violent sexuality, distorted and naked bodies, body fluids, self-mutilation, perverted religious holidays and gender roles combined with the chosen film form make the Actionist films wonderful examples of the oscillation of haptics and transgression. The Actionist attitude, in essence, subverts the laws and processes of nature. The Actionists avoid all sorts of dignity. What happens here is that Kren does not show the subject of the performance but the material. The material always comes first. To this end, he tears it apart until it stops being an action. He abstracts but also highlights and enhances until he raises the whole thing into aesthetic heights. The actions are unvarnished and brutal, but the disturbing and the disgusting things appearing on the screen also acquire a picturesque quality. The imagery becomes haptic to such an extent that these experimental documentaries turn into breathtaking body horrors.

Kren is closely related to Brakhage by the similar perception they create in their films. Brakhage claims in his book *Metaphors on Vision* that "man-made laws of perception, or compositional logic" should not rule the eye (1963, 20). The spectator's experience of the variety of intangible objects, continual movements and uncountable colours should be mirrored on the screen. As a result, viewers

perceive the images as they perform the dance of lights and colours on their eyelid. Even though there is no strong connection between Kren and Brakhage when it comes to the matter of the spectator's experience, the Austrian filmmaker created something similar in his Actionist films. At the same time Kren, in contrast to Brakhage, makes the material transcendent, not natural. Emphasizing the material so much, Kren draws a line between human and non-human. He shows his subjects as if they were in a state of constant metamorphosis.[10] He points out the crisis or loss of identity, questioning the relation between subjectivity and body and also the consequences of embodiment.

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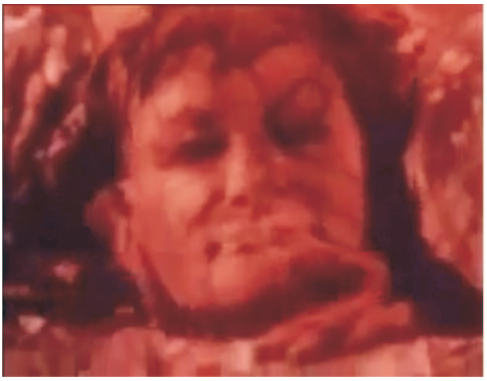
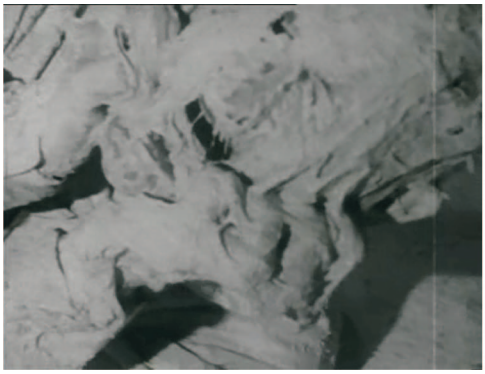
List of Figures

Figures 1–2. In *6/64 Mama und Papa*, after seeing an extreme close-up of a sort of clayish material pouring out of a woman's vagina, we can see a man's face between the woman's legs, covered with the same material. In another scene of the film, there is a naked woman whose body is painted by a man during a feast-like event.



Figures 3–4. *8/64 Ana* is a play with light and texture. In some of the scenes of *10/65 Selbstverstümmelung*, Brus imitates to skin himself. Through the use of extreme close-ups, Kren captures the monstrosity and the horror of the event.



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Rhythms of Images and Sounds in Two Films by Robert Bresson

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Abstract. Robert Bresson did not only distribute musical excerpts and sounds in his films, but also often conceived the whole film running in a general rhythm, including the repetition and variation of shots in their contents and length. David Bordwell (1985) considered Bresson's films as examples of the style centred "parametric mode of narration." More than that, after Jean-Louis Provoyeur (2003), we consider that many shots in Bresson's films have a characteristic of "denarrativization," a conception based on musicality, devoid of representational constraints. One example is the tournament sequence in *Lancelot of the Lake* (Bresson, 1974), in which visual and sound elements are repeated as a "cell" with variations in length, angle of shot and with addition or suppression of elements. The author also analyses some aspects of *The Trial of Joan of Arc* (1962), in which the rhythmic sensation is created by the procedure of repetitive alternation of image, speech and space.[1]

Keywords: Robert Bresson, rhythm in cinema, repetition, denarrativization.

A Rhythmic and Denarrativized Cinema

The films of French director Robert Bresson employed rhythm as a guiding principle. The director himself stated in his book (written in the form of aphorisms): "*Rhythms.* The omnipotence of rhythms. Nothing is durable but what is caught up in rhythms" (Bresson 1977, 31). This aspect made many scholars consider them as having a "musical structure," although actual music was utilized with great parsimony.

Rhythm is one of the means by which Michel Chion's (1994 and 2002) concept of transsensoriality materializes in cinema. Chion defines transsensorial

1 An initial version of this paper was presented in the "Visual Culture" Working Group, at the IAMCR conference in Montreal, Canada, July 12–16, 2015.

perceptions as those which are carried by the channels of more than one sense, just like it happens with rhythm. For Chion, rhythm is not produced by an auditory sensation alone, but by everything that has "sensorial variations:" "rhythm is everywhere; in the past, for example, at night, in the days before the electric lights, it was present in the pulsations of candlelight" (Chion 2002, 57).[2] In Bresson's films, in addition to the rhythm of sounds and musical excerpts, there is also a rhythm created by elements of repetition and variation in the shots, in their contents or duration. Jean Pelegri stated that, in Bresson's films, it was a matter "of orchestrating the visual rhythms, of composing them in a musical way" (Pelegri 1959, 1).[3] Jean-Louis Provoyeur (2003) considers that Bresson seems to privilege effects of symmetry and repetition: there are often almost identical shots which are constantly repeated along the film or in a sequence which is mostly responsible for the rhythmic sensation in his films. This is also close to what David Bordwell called a "parametric" mode of narration – the other three modes being "classical," "art-cinema" and "historical-materialist narration" (1985). Bordwell suggested the word in reference to the use of the term "parameters" chosen by Noël Burch in his book *Theory of Film Practice* to describe film techniques like the spatial-temporal manipulation of editing, the possibilities of framing and focus, and so forth. To Bordwell, a parametric narration is a style-centred one, that is, a large-scale structure determined by the stylistic choices of the author and not by the events of the narrative, and in which redundancy is a basic condition. Specifically taking into account Bresson's cinema, extreme repetitiveness is a means to create a parametric narration, as considered by Bordwell.

Moreover, Provoyeur (2003) considers many shots, or images within shots in Bresson's cinema that could be understood as "denarrativized" (*dénarrative*): they appear devoid of narrative content, as if the narrative and the filmic were separated in them. "The whole aesthetic of Bresson is condensed in the 'denarrativisation,' which makes the image go *underneath* the filmic narrative, a procedure that he conjugates under multiple forms (deframing, fragmentation, ellipsis, offscreen, tendency to geometry and abstraction etc.), which have the goal to throw *outside the image*, that representation of the action which makes, since Aristotle, the very material of the narrative." (Provoyeur 2003, 15, italics in the original.)[4] Provoyeur

2 Our translation from French. In original: "le rythme est partout; autrefois, par exemple, la nuit, avant la lumière électrique, il se trouvait présent dans la lumière palpitante des chandelles et des bougies."

3 "Il s'agit d'orchestrer des rythmes visuels, de les composer d'une manière musicale."

4 "C'est dans la dénarrativisation, qui fait de l'image en-deça du récit filmique, que se condense toute l'esthétique de Bresson, procédé qu'il décline sous de multiples formes (décadrage,

does not mean that Bresson's cinema is non-narrative, but, in those moments, the filmic would predominate over the narrative aspect.[5] Provoyeur then affirms: "the shot in Bresson does not tell, it shows" (2003, 96). This may recall the dichotomy evoked by André Gaudreault between "showing" and "telling" in early cinema, in which the very first years were characterized by the aspect of showing, described by Tom Gunning in his concept of "cinema of attractions" (2006). In spite of a supposed victory of the narrative aspect in mainstream cinema, there are many films up to our present days in which the "showing" aspect has predominated. Those denarrative shots in Bresson are such an example.

Although we could argue that in the concept of "denarrativization" there is a kind of return to a supposed purity of cinema advocated by many cinema theoreticians, we consider these so called "denarrative" shots more in the relationships between Bresson's dialogues, lines, and poetry – as stated by Estève (1983) –, eligible to being associated to a sensation of rhythm. This connects Bresson's cinema with the experiences of the avant-gardes in painting and cinema of the 1920s and 1930s, because the denarrative shots grant a major emphasis to formal aspects of the images and sounds, especially repetition and variation, as it happened in the case of the avant-gardes.

Repetition and variation are fundamental in music. At the beginning of the 20th century, the search for a correspondence between image and music was very important in painting, for example, in the work of Francis Picabia, Wassily Kandinsky, Adolf Hölzel, Paul Klee, Robert Delaunay and others. For Karin von Maur (2004), the fascination of those painters for music can be explained by its immateriality and its independence from the injunctions of reproduction of the visible world and that is also why music, an immaterial art, became a model for many abstract paintings.

The temporal dimension led the painter Hans Richter to the cinematograph, in which time is a constitutive aspect. At the beginning of the twenties, Richter made the series *Rhythm 21, 22, 23*. Trying to define it, he stated: "the articulation of movement, for me, is the Rhythm. And rhythm is the articulated time. And so is in music. But, in film, I articulate time visually, while in music I articulate it

fragmentation, ellipse, hors-champ, tendance à la géométrie et à l´abstraction etc.) qui, toutes, visent à rejeter hors de l'image cette représentation de l'action fait, depuis Aristote, la matière même du récit."

5 Bordwell also considers that the dominance of style is not in abstract or nonnarrative films, and his "parametric mode of narration" is applied to films in which there is still a syuzhet (the selection and organization of story events) (1985). Bresson's films are actually examples eluded by Bordwell.

by ear" (Richter in Maur 2004, 161). It is a statement close to some of Bresson's, as the French director considered – above all in his film-making – the rhythm generated by the repetition of images and sounds, much more than the injunctions of the narrative: "all those effects you can get from the repetition (of an image, of a sound)" (Bresson 1977, 26). Bresson also considered the correspondence of images with music. "Images. Like the modulations in music." (Bresson 1977, 26.) For Jean Mitry, the experiences of the avant-garde cinema of the 1920s aimed to construct a "visual music [...] by means of a significant rhythm in itself" (Mitry 2001, 174).[6] Château (1992) remarks that those films were silent, that is, even if they had musical accompaniment in their exhibition, the musicality should be, as observed by Mitry, something intrinsic to the images in movement. The common aspect between painting or silent cinema and music would reside in rhythm.

Nevertheless, sounds were very important in Bresson's cinema and they construct, together with the images, the whole rhythmical sensation transmitted by it. At the beginnings of sound cinema, the search for a correspondence between cinema and music appears very clearly in the writings from the thirties and the forties of director Sergei Eisenstein (2002), who takes into account the sound of music as well. Considering movement as a common trait between cinematic images and music, Eisenstein tried to elaborate a model of correspondence between them. The rhythm was a fundamental aspect for Eisenstein, that is, the "*key to the measured matching* of a strip of music and a strip of picture" (Eisenstein 2002, 105, italics in the original). It is the case of the conception of the "Ice Battle" sequence of *Alexandre Nevsky* (Eisenstein, 1938), which was analysed in details by the director himself (Eisenstein 2002). At the beginning of the sequence, two musical phrases by Sergei Prokofiev (the composer of the film music) are alternated, not always coinciding with the change of shots. Eisenstein explained that the "gestures" could be interpreted as musical (for example, the first chord in each musical phrase functions as a "starting platform") as much as the movements of the eye along the frame (in shot 8 of the sequence, for example, it passes from the character in the foreground to the line of soldiers in the distance and to the right).

"Bend context to form and sense to rhythms," stated Bresson (1977, 31), who also expressed an expectancy of a kind of correspondence between images and sounds when creating a film. "Dig into your sensation. Look at what there is within. Don't analyze it with words. Translate it into sister images, into equivalent

6 "*Faire du cinéma une musique visuelle, s'exprimer au moyen d'un rythme signifiant par lui-même.*"

sounds. The clearer it is, the more your style affirms itself." (Bresson 1977, 27.) Film-making for Bresson was the materialization of complex sensations into images and sounds. It was the affirmation of a style, as in the definition of Bordwell's "parametric mode of narration."

Provoyeur (2003) also considers an approximation between Bresson and the soviet avant-garde[7] as both have editing as a very important principle. "Cutting. Passage of dead images to living images. Everything blossoms afresh" – wrote Bresson (1977, 43). He considered that separate pieces (images, sounds, elements of a shot) would gain a new dependence when put together and that would be the very step in the creation of film as an artwork (Bresson 1977). Moreover, the great fragmentation characteristic of Bresson's editing emphasizes the sensation of repetition and variation that will generate a sensation of rhythm in his films.

Bresson: Repetitions and Variations – the Omnipotence of Rhythms

In Bresson's films, shots of doors, stairs, elevators, and so on are particularly frequent and the sound associated with them is also essential. Precisely those shots led many critics to describe his films as tedious and repetitive, in a pejorative sense. For example, already in 1945 (in relation to a film that is usually considered as pre-bressonian, that is, before the consolidation of Bresson's style), Luc Estang (1945) wrote an ironic criticism about the shots of characters climbing up and down the stairs and elevators in *The Dames of Bois de Boulogne* (*Les dames du Bois de Boulogne*), in a quite exhaustive list, which, under a different perspective, constitutes for us an extensive panorama of the film's vertical rhythms. According to the critic's description: the character Hélène, coming home from the theatre, takes the elevator; her lover Jean gets into it to go down after the conversation with her; she climbs the stairs to meet Agnès and her mother (the "dames" of Bois de Boulogne) in their apartment; the two of them also get to their new home climbing up the stairs; they climb down to talk on the telephone in the building's hall and up again, as each conversation finishes; after the first sequence in the Bois de Boulogne, Jean and Hélène go up and down with the elevator; Jean climbs up the stairs of Agnès's apartment to visit her; there is also a movement of double descent – elevator and stairs – as Jean leaves suddenly Hélène's home taking the elevator and she reaches him getting down the stairs; and so forth.

7 To Bordwell (1985), the soviet avant-garde would employ another mode of narration, which would have its fundamental principle in the rhetoric.

A similar list, more or less extensive, could be made based on Bresson's other films. His preference for shots of doors, stairs and elevators is one of the aspects considered by Provoyeur (2003) as denarrative in Bresson's cinema. They usually begin as empty spaces, which a character enters and then leaves it again empty to go back to the offscreen space (a space that has an essential role in Bresson's films and where many actions, the narrative itself, take place). They can also be fragmented, containing only part of a character's body or of an object, like the ones we see in the tournament's sequence in *Lancelot of the Lake* (*Lancelot du lac*, 1974).

Moreover, in many films by Bresson, we can consider that there are what we will designate here as "cells of image and sound:" a series of shots which is repeated, mostly with variations, all over the film or in a single sequence, like the tournament sequence of *Lancelot of the Lake* that we are going to analyse later. In *A Gentle Woman* (*Une femme douce*, Robert Bresson, 1969), the shots of the maid opening the curtains in the morning function as such a cell. The film, a Dostoyevsky adaptation of the novel with the same title, handles about the suicide of a young woman, after being continuously humiliated by her husband, the owner of a pawnshop, in which she was a former client. The shots of the maid shows a routine, although we shall say, in the sense pointed out by Deleuze, that repetition never belongs to the order of the Same and contains in itself the difference (Deleuze 1968). For example, after the protagonist couple's big crisis – the one in which the wife puts a gun to the husband's head in the middle of the night – the opening of the curtains in the next morning brings a feeling of suspense: would the husband be hurt? (Dead he cannot be, as he is the one who tells us the story and appears in the present.) In a later sequence, after the wife's night of feverish delirium, the opening of curtains could point to a feeling of relief, as a new day begins, or to the inexorable march to her suicide. Then, the same action of opening the curtains gets in each of those sequences a different feeling and signification.

In this film, another fundamental repeated cell, the one of the suicide of the main female character, forms an enveloping frame, as it can be found at the beginning and at the end of the film. Confirming the rhythmic function of such an enveloping frame, we observe that, in many of his films, Bresson employed excerpts of the same musical piece at the beginning and at the end. It is the case of the roll of drums in *The Trial of Joan of Arc* (*Le process de Jeanne d'Arc*, 1962) and of the excerpts from Monteverdi's *Magnificat* in *Mouchette* (Bresson, 1967). Because of the presence of rhythmic cells with greater evidence in them, we will now focus on *The Trial of Joan of Arc* and *Lancelot of the Lake*.

The Rhythm of Alternations of Spaces and Speeches in *The Trial of Joan of Arc*

The Trial of Joan of Arc is composed by a series of interrogatories, which Bresson took from the authentic texts of Joan of Arc's trial in Rouen in the 15th century. The rhythm of the film is a result from the recurrence of sounds of doors, footsteps climbing up and down the stairs, as well from the alternation of many elements: the inquisitors' questions and Joan's answers; the spaces of the courtroom and of Joan's cell (at the beginning of the film [Figs. 1a and 1b]) or the alternation between the cell and the corridor (when the interrogatories move to the very cell of the prisoner); finally, there is also the ping-pong of shot and reverse-shot technique, which constitutes the basis of almost the entire film.

As for that last element, each one of the shots of shot and reverse shot has a different duration: the camera sometimes focuses only Joan's face and we hear the off-screen inquisitor's voice, and vice versa; there are also sequences in which the person who speaks is always on-screen. Those different combinations of what is on- or off-screen help to create the film's general rhythm.

Pichonnier (*Fiches filmographique*, no. 184) considers the general rhythm in *The Trial of Joan of Arc* as a result of many elements: the succession of spaces; the dialogue's pattern, which is based on the alternation of questions and answers; shot and reverse-shot technique; the repetition of terms inside a speech or in different speeches; the periodic retaking of the main themes of accusation; the regular use of speech lines in English (the cries of the public: "Burn the witch!").

Regarding the spaces, we have, from the first interrogatory until the first admonition of bishop Cauchon, a pattern in which the space of the courtroom (which is the initial place of the interrogatories) alternates with the space of Joan's cell. This pattern is partially interrupted (we shall recall that such ruptures of rhythms and atmospheres are also utilized, in an expressive way, in musical pieces in general) when the interrogatories are moved from the courtroom, where we have a sound design containing the public's bustle, with the punctuation of speech lines in English, to Joan's own cell. In this space, we lose the composition of all those sound elements, while, in compensation, the characteristic of alternation gets even stronger between Joan in her cell and the Englishman Warwick, her enemy, in the corridor (there are even some moments, when the image of the interrogatory is shown from Warwick's point of view, through the keyhole, as well as from his point of listening, with a reduction of the sound volume).

The pattern of alternation of spaces continues almost unchanged in the film until a very important rupture of rhythm happens at the end, when Joan is brought to her execution. Jean De Bongnie (1967) considers that at that moment the film loses the *staccato* of the alternations in a speedy pace, which had dominated until then, – the rhythm of the "intrepid confrontation" –, to become a sustained "organ note" at the image of the vanishing smoke over the stake where Joan was burned.

Difference and Repetition in *Lancelot of the Lake*

Lancelot of the Lake is based on the legendary stories about Arthurian Round Table and the love between Lancelot and Guinevere. In the film, the knights are back at Arthur's castle after the frustrated search for the Holy Grail. It is a moment of crisis and an invitation to a tournament is accepted with joy, while the knight Mordred tries to unveil the forbidden love of Guinevere and Lancelot and plots against Arthur.

Rhythmic patterns of sounds and images are very important all along the film, especially in the tournament's sequence. Altogether in it, we hear the bagpipe nine times, with the same melody that announces the beginning of what we are calling rhythmic-melodic-audio-visual[8] cell: bagpipe (image and/or sound) – flag – horse's legs – Gawain's face – image and/or sound of the spear [Figs. 2a–2d].

This cell is repeated and varied all over the sequence, as stated by Baroncelli (1974), Martin (1974) and Cugier (1985). "The repetition of the same action, in which, each time, one of the elements is modified from a basic structure [...]: bagpipe – flag – horse. Then, the elements vary and tighten themselves, the themes are articulated (the stands, the spear, the falls, the crowd's bustle, the 'Lancelot' pronounced by Gawain) till the departure of the knight in the white shield [...]. Each element refers to the whole and everything is a matter of rhythms." (Martin 1974, 100.) "The tournament episode, where everything is suggested by the serial combination of some rigorously selected visual and sound elements: bagpipes' music, ascent of flags, backs of horses launched to gallop, noises of disjointed armors." (Baroncelli 1964, 15.) "That universe of details, of burst elements, is propelled forward by the repetition-transformation of elementary cells (for example: bagpipe, flag, horse, fall), serial combinations which include light modifications, alterations, variations of shot angles." (Cugier

8 It is rhythmic because of the way of the succession of shots, melodic due to the bagpipe, and audio-visual, as there are, like in Chion's (1994) concept, sounds and images creating a meaning together.

1985, 123.)[9]Although two of the above quotes refer to "serial combinations," the way in which the sequence is edited resembles much closer the minimal music[10] of Phillip Glass and Steve Reich than the Serialism of Schoenberg. Therefore, similarly to what happens in the minimal music and as Martin (1974) considered, we observe that the basic cell is gradually varied and receives new elements, like the images of the fallen knights (knocked down by Lancelot), and Gawain's speech ("*Lancelot!*"). Bordwell (1985) also considered that parametric narration, to which Bresson's cinema is an example, has characteristically an additive pattern, not a serial one.[11]

On the other hand, the somewhat stereotyped aspect of the tournament sequence is also an evocation of the film's medieval sources, in which the repetition of a sequence of actions with additive elements also occurs. In his notes to *Lancelot ou le chevalier à la charrette,* Jean-Claude Aubauilly describes: "same notations, same progression, same ending. Horse battle with spear, then with sword if none of the two knights fell down from the horse at the moment of the first confrontation; then, battle on foot, with sword; battle for a long time indecisive with serious wounds to both parts and, finally, the victory of the hero, who forces the opponent to ask for mercy, as he cuts the straps of his protecting helmet" (Note to Chrétien de Troyes 1991, 439).

A similar succession of the battle phases occurs in the tournament of prose narrative *The Death of King Arthur*. "So Lancelot stand in the stirrups, got into the middle of the rows and hurt the knight that he first met in his direction so heavily,

9 "La répétition d'une même action, mais en modifiant chaque fois un élément, à partir d'une structure de base […] : cornemuse-oriflamme-cheval. Ensuite les éléments varient et se resserrent, des thèmes s'articulent (la tribune, la lance, les chutes, la rumeur de la foule, le 'Lancelot' prononcé par Gauvain) jusqu'au départ du chevalier au bouclier blanc. […] Chaque élément renvoie à l'ensemble, et tout est affaire de rythmes." (Martin, 1974.) "L'épisode du tournoi, où tout est suggéré par la combinaison sérielle de quelques éléments visuelles et sonores rigoureusement sélectionnés: musique des cornemuses, montée des oriflammes, croupes des chevaux lancés au galop, fracas des armures disjointes." (Baroncelli, 1974.) "Cet univers de détails, d'éléments éclatés est propulsé vers l'avant par la répétition-transformation de cellules élémentaires (exemple: cornemuse, oriflamme, cheval, chute), combinaisons serielles qui comportent de légères modifications, altérations, variations d'angles de prises de vue." (Cugier, 1985.)

10 The Minimal music has characteristics like: the reiteration of elements, a steady pulse, a gradual transformation and, often, additive process and phase shift. In his analysis of that sequence, André Targe (1989) also mentions the music of Phillip Glass, but the author restrains these comparison only to part of the sequence (between Gawain's recognition of Lancelot and the close-up of the spear) due to its greater repetitive and symmetric character.

11 Bordwell (1985) also evokes a possible influence of integral Serialism in the rise of parametric narration in Modern Cinema, but he gets to the conclusion that this narration mode functions more in the additive manner of the musical forms of "theme and variations" or "rondo" than in the complex way of Serialism.

that he knocked him and his horse down to the earth; he spurred again the horse to gallop, because his spear was not broken yet, struck another knight and hurt him in such a way that neither shield nor harness prevented a grim and deep wound in the left side, but he was not deadly wounded. He struck him violently, so that he fell down from the horse so heavily, that he got dazed with the fall and his spear broke into pieces [...]. And Lancelot, as soon he had his spear broken, took his sword and began to give great blows to the right and to the left and to strike knights and to kill horses and to take shields off from the necks and helmets from the heads." (*A morte do rei Arthur* 1999, 35–37, our translation from Portuguese.)

According to André Targe (1989), there are, in the whole sequence of the film, three points of change of the initial cell and their beginnings coincide with the shot of Gawain's gaze (one of these is the already mentioned moment, when we hear, for the first time, the only word spoken in the whole sequence, "Lancelot"): Lancelot's arrival; his recognition by Gawain and the shots from Lancelot's point of view of his opponents; the close-up of the spear, that, in its turn, cancels the images of the flag's raising and of the bagpipe.

For example, by Lancelot's arrival, the cell is even prematurely aborted: we only hear the sound of the bagpipe over its image and the raising of the flag: all that comes after that can be considered the beginning of another cell, as the new-comer prepares himself for the tournament under Gawain's curious gaze. From that moment on, the element of the opponents' fall from the horse is included in the cell.

The last cell has something like an extension in the end, as we see a sequence of similar and small shots of a series of knights being knocked down by Lancelot. The accelerated editing that occurs then confirms Lancelot's invincibility and reminds us of the repeated short shots of the trees being cut down in Bresson's next film, *The Devil Probably* (*Le diable probablement*, 1977).

It is also important to consider the role of sound, which is employed many times, as usual in other films by Bresson, in anticipation to the image or off-screen. Bresson stated that the tournament's sequence "was edited by ear" (and the director continues the phrase: "as, indeed, all the others in the end" – Arbois 1974).[12] As a matter of fact, the use of sound is an element of the variations of the cell. Sometimes, the sound of the bagpipe comes before its image, or we do not even see it. In the majority of times, the sound of the spear's shock against the opponent's shield is heard over the shot of Gawain and Arthur in the stands. It is

12 "La séquence du tournoi a été montée par l'oreille […] comme d'ailleurs finalement toutes les autres."

precisely because of those discrepancies between image and sound that the first point of synchronization[13] of the sound of the spear with its image – identified by Targe (1989) as the shot 53 of the sequence – gets emphasized. As Targe (1989) observes, this very point marks also the semantic relationship between the name Lancelot and his weapon, the lance.

The tournament's sequence is an example, in Bresson's works, of a repetition that is not simply the return of the Same, but that contains the difference (Deleuze, 1968), as Targe considers: "the apparent repetition is never sterile, redistribution of the same. It is the sign of permanent mutation, an invitation to break the canons of cinematographic representation. Mobilized in all the extension of its technical codes, the material brings into play its own history, tells us of rhythm, symmetry, explosions. Reaching the moment of equilibrium, it scuttles its organizing principles to invent others, continuously" (1989, 97).[14]

There are other repetitive series showing the same action in *Lancelot of the Lake*. For example, when the knights depart to the war against Mordred, there is a quite accelerated editing, with many successive shots of horses being saddled – swords being put in their cases – knights mounting their horses – helmets' visors being moved down – spears being given to the knights. The helmet is an important element in the punctuation of the sequence just before the tournament, when, on their way and riding their horses, Arthur, Gawain, Mordred and other knights wonder about Lancelot's whereabouts. Each character that gets into the conversation has his first speech preceded by the lifting of his helmet's visor, the sound of which coincides sometimes with a horse's neigh. The end of the conversation is precisely marked by the lowering of Gawain's visor.

Conclusion

Rhythm is more than a sole musical concept. It is constituted by different senses, a transsensorial (Chion1994 and 2002) perception. On the other hand, not only sounds but also images can be understood as having rhythm. Paintings and silent abstract films of the 1920s are an example of that.

13 The point of synchronization is actually a concept by Michel Chion (1994): it is a salient moment of synchronous encounter between concomitant audio and visual elements.

14 "l´'apparente répétitions n'est jamais stérile, redistribution du même. Elle est l'indice d'une mutation permanente, invitation à briser les canons de la représentation cinématographique. Mobilisée sur toute l'étendue de ses codes techniques, la matière met en scène sa propre histoire, nous parle de rythme, de symétrie, de rayonnement. Parvenue à l'instant d'équilibre, elle saborde ses principes organisateurs pour en inventer d'autres, continuellement."

In the films of Robert Bresson, we observe a great concern with the rhythm of images and sounds acting together. It occurs, for example, as a consequence of the repetition and variation of what we have called "cells," a set of shots or images and sounds which recur in a single sequence or across the film. Many of them, such as the frequent shots of doors being opened and closed, would be dispensable in the editing in a traditional cinematography and have a "denarrative effect." As those shots are more linked to film form than to the narrative (like in Bordwell's "parametric mode of narration"), they can be used for the sake of creating rhythm, by means of repetition and variation, getting more approached to a musical conception and less dependent on representational constraints. In the tournament sequence in *Lancelot of the Lake* a cell constituted by the image/sound of a bagpipe, the raising of a flag, horses' legs, Gawain's face and a spear is repeated and varied in an additive (with additional shots, for instance, the close-up of the spear) or subtractive manner (having some of the shots, like the image of the bagpipe or of the flag eliminated). The extreme repetitiveness of the sequence and the additive procedure also refer to the medieval sources on which the film is based. As for *The Trial of Joan of Arc*, the rhythmic sensation is created by a procedure of repetitive alternation: of images (intense use of shot and reverse shot), of speeches (the questions and answers of the trial) and spaces (the alternation between the court and Joan's cell in the first half of the film and, then, between Joan's cell and the corridor of the prison).

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Human-Alien Encounters in Science Fiction: A Postcolonial Perspective

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Abstract. An (un)conventional encounter between humans and alien beings has long been one of the main thematic preoccupations of the genre of science fiction. Such stories would thus include typical invasion narratives, as in the case of the three science fiction films I will discuss in the present paper: the *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956; Philip Kaufman, 1978; Abel Ferrara, 1993), *The Host* (Andrew Niccol, 2013), and *Avatar* (James Cameron, 2009). I will examine the films in relation to postcolonial theories, while attempting to look at the ways of revisiting one's history and culture (both alien and human) in the films' worlds that takes place in order to uncover and heal the violent effects of colonization. In my reading of the films I will shed light on the specific processes of identity formation (of an individual or a group), and the possibilities of individual and communal recuperation through memories, rites of passages, as well as hybridization. I will argue that the colonized human or alien body can serve either as a mediator between the two cultures, or as an agent which fundamentally distances two separate civilizations, thus irrevocably bringing about the loss of identity, as well as the lack of comprehension of cultural differences.

Keywords: postcolonial, identity, memory, hybridization, *Avatar*, *The Host*, *Invasion of Body Snatchers*, Science Fiction film.

For a long time in the history of science fiction the figure of the alien had undergone major changes thus shaping various cultural fantasies about either monstrous and evil alien invaders, or friendly and peaceful Others. Science fiction portrays alien-human encounters either in a positive, or in a negative way, however, one thing is certain: each encounter can be interpreted as a certain border crossing, a transgression, in which a great number of differences (biological, cultural, social) on both sides appear to be responsible for the majority of the conflicts. The alien, if portrayed as a terrifying, hostile entity, could be interpreted as a metaphor for human isolation, for human monstrosity, and, thus, reflect on our unspoken and unrevealed desires. While attempting to analyse

the experience of the encounter between man and alien, Michael Beehler uses the concepts of Freud and Kant (the uncanny and the sublime) for explaining experiences of internalization, or "naturalization," and externalization, or "expulsion." The "illegal alien," as Beehler puts it, threatens the *institution* of mankind – his "anthropology." So, the alien represents a crisis in human's ability to designate themselves, and the search for the alien becomes the human being's search for determining themselves (Beehler 1987, 34–39).

Moreover, the presence of the alien is always already bringing about an existential threat for humankind: people have to face the horror that they are not in the center of Creation any more, and can easily become suppressed, hunted down.[1] Such anxieties are easy to track in the huge number of invasion films that appeared in the 1950s and 1960s, and expressed America's fears of being attacked and annihilated by the communists in the Cold War era. The reported sightings of UFOs in the 50s, and the emerging popular urban legends about such flying saucers undoubtedly added to the rise of a certain subculture which created extreme versions of science fiction plotlines, that is, the paranoid-type of invasion stories, in which the anthropomorphic aliens did not merely resemble humans, but managed to take over humans (their minds and/or bodies), assuming both their appearances and identities. On the one hand, this parasitic relationship brings into question the problem of dominance: aliens, being superior to humans in terms of technology as well as morality, sometimes appear as wise intergalactic judges of men, deciding whether the irresponsible and utterly dangerous, yet painfully emotional and, thus, valuable humankind deserves to survive on planet Earth, or, since mankind is unable to change, it should be exterminated (see, for example, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, Robert Wise, 1951; Scott Derrickson, 2008). On the other hand, starting with the 40s one can observe a tendency in science fiction, an inversion of the Wellsian invasion pattern, according to which humans take the role of alien conquerors, and try to colonize less advanced worlds. In one way or another, the encounter with the alien Other is always a disturbing and life-changing, not to mention culture-changing experience. While analysing the encounter of the discourses of the Other in science fiction and in postcolonialism respectively, Jessica Langer draws parallels between "the science fictional Other and the Orientalized Other" and argues that "in science fiction, otherness is often conceptualized corporeally, as a physical difference

1 The most obvious example of hostile, domineering, and invading aliens can be found in H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* (1898). In the novel, the alien tripods aim at conquering and colonizing Earth.

that either signposts or causes an essential difference, in a constant echo of zero-world racialization" (2011, 82). The creation of racial as well as cultural divisions serves as a major tool of colonialism, especially in Sci-Fi stories of humans conquering aliens, which closely corresponds "to the historical dehumanization of indigenous colonized people – even, perhaps especially, when those 'aliens' are humans themselves" (Langer 2011, 82).

Apart from the fact that fear from the Other can be interpreted, in a Freudian sense, as a representation of our repressed fears, Patrick Lucanio asserts that it can also be a symbol of "transformation, directing us toward an individuated life" (qtd. in Telotte 2001, 48), that is, pointing at our own place in the universe, as well as our potential for overcoming all obstacles and dangers in general. In addition, the idea of transformation can also be understood in this context as a process of reconciliation with the alien, in and through one's coming of age. In my reading it is precisely the (alien-human) body that serves as a means of colonization, that is, a complete eradication of humanity, or, on the contrary, as a means of healing the horrors of colonial encounter, of restoring the sense of self-determination.

The three films I propose to analyse – the *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956; Philip Kaufman, 1978; Abel Ferrara, 1993), *The Host* (Andrew Niccol, 2013), and *Avatar* (James Cameron, 2009) – are all invasion narratives, yet each of them deals with the idea of border-crossing, of transgressing the boundaries of cultures and races in rather peculiar ways. In analysing these films I am interested in the specific moments of (violent) colonial encounters and the ways of recovering from the effects of such encounters. I will argue that in almost all cases the preservation of memories as well as remembering the past and, to a certain extent, hybridization will serve as crucial elements in the process of self-preservation of both the colonized subject and the colonizer, and will become essential ways for recovering/finding cultural identity.

"An Impostor or Something"

The *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is a typical American invasion-type science fiction horror film, the first version of which appeared in 1956, directed by Don Siegel, starring Kevin McCarthy and Dana Wynter.[2] There were two remakes of the film, one in 1978, directed by Philip Kaufman, starring Donald Sutherland, Brooke Adams, Veronica Cartwright, and another one in 1996, directed by Abel Ferrara, and starring Gabrielle Anwar, Billy Wirth, and Terry Kiney. In all three

2 The film is an adaptation of Jack Finney's science fiction novel, *The Body Snatchers*, from 1954.

versions the core elements of the plot are the following: an alien invasion occurs on Earth, at the beginning in a silent, but very meticulous way, that is, the seeds of alien life forms have fallen from space, and survived on Earth in the form of plant seeds, which later on develop into pods, and, if placed next to a sleeping human being, become able to grow into a duplicate of that person. When the pod fully grows and acquires all physical features of its host, it will be awakened to full consciousness, and will be able to absorb all memories and personality traits of the sleeping human being, yet it will be unable to copy certain essential human traits: emotions, feelings, and a sense of empathy. After the birth of the pod person,[3] the original human being's body disappears forever. The main conflict of the storyline centres on one or two characters who discover the secret invasion and try to put an end to it. Their attempts to fight the aliens are presented differently in the three adaptations: sometimes they manage to call the world's attention to the problem (1956's film), or they might even be able to stop the invasion by themselves (1996's version), but other times their fight proves to be futile, and thus they fall victim of their tragic destinies (1978's version).

In the common storyline of the Body Snatcher movies the extraterrestrials appear as ruthless colonists, who later present themselves to the protagonists as a race that brings harmony and peace to mankind, and claim that colonization, hence the ultimate taking over of humanity, is an inevitable, yet not entirely unpleasant process. What makes this type of colonization so frightening is the delayed discovery of the invasion itself, since these types of aliens, as Matthew Bennell, the main character of the second film (1978) realizes, do not come to Earth on metal ships, as one would expect them, but in a rather treacherous way: they silently sneak into your house, and replace you while you are asleep.

In the original film (1956) the story is told in retrospect by the main character, Dr. Miles Bennell, a doctor in the small California town of Santa Mira. As he comes home from a scientific conference at the beginning of the film, he realizes that many of his patients suffer from some kind of mental disease, a strange type of hallucination: they all believe that their close relatives are not the same, that they were changed somehow, replaced by a weird doppelganger. The first sign of the disturbing changes that have taken place in the town is perhaps the figure of the little boy running away from home, and hysterically crying about his mother not being his mother any more. One of the patients of Dr. Bennell, Wilma, also claims that her uncle Ira, with whom she lives, has also been changed, and he is

3 The film brought about the appearance of the term "pod people," now part of American slang, denoting rigid, emotionless persons.

no longer her "real uncle." She is certain that the person who pretends to be her uncle now is "an impostor or something." To the question of the doctor: "how is he different?" Wilma answers: "That's just it. There is no difference you can actually see. He looks, sounds, acts, and remembers like Uncle Ira. […] But […] there's something missing. He's been a father to me since I was a baby. Always when he talked to me there was a special look in his eye. That look's gone. *Dr. Bennell*: What about memories? There must be certain things that only he and you would know about. *Wilma*: There are. I've talked to him about them. He remembers them all down to the last small detail, just like Uncle Ira would. But Miles… There's no emotion. None! Just the pretense of it. The words, gesture, the tone of voice... everything else is the same, but not the feeling. Memories or not, he isn't my uncle Ira" (*Body Snatchers*, 1956).

Miles Bennell tries to find a logical explanation for this peculiar behaviour, and asks for the help of the local psychologist and his friend, Dr. Dan Kauffman, who explains to him that whatever is happening in the town can be simply a case of "mass delusion," a rather strange psychological disease, which spreads from person to person, but the effects eventually wear off in a few days. The same happens to Wilma: in a short time she excuses herself of behaving in a silly way, and assures Dr. Bennell that she is no longer in the need of any physical or psychological treatment. By this time it is obvious for the spectator that Wilma has also been replaced. The appearance of the duplicates produces an uncanny sense of anxiety – in a Freudian sense –, since the doppelgangers emerge via the possession of someone's mind and body. The image of the "impostor or something" is, according to J. P. Telotte, "largely about a fear of the other, about what is 'out there,' but also about what that otherness means for the self, the fundamental strike it makes at your own sense of security and identity. In this case that fear is eventually justified by the revelation that alien seed pods have begun 'snatching' people's bodies while they sleep and replacing their real selves with something inhuman" (2001, 19–20).

The dehumanization of humans is perhaps the greatest threat in all science fiction storylines, and it is one of the most disturbing types of invasion narratives. As Vivian Sobchack argues: "while we may react with varying degrees of detached wonder to invading Martians or Metalunan Mutants who are distinctly seen as 'other' than ourselves, our responses to those aliens clothed in our own familiar skins are another matter entirely. We expect unnatural behavior from something seen as unnatural, alien behavior from something alien. What is so visually devastating and disturbing about the SF films' 'taken over' humans is the small,

and therefore terrible, incongruence between the ordinariness of their form and the final extraordinariness of their behavior, however hard they try to remain undetected and 'normal'" (2004, 120–121).

When passionate humanity is gone, and the cold, inhuman alien race takes control, the colonization of Earth seems to be almost inevitable. This also takes us to the realm of the uncanny, that is, the familiar disturbed by the unfamiliar. Something that was known, ordinary, and secure, suddenly becomes dangerous and unknown, thus creating a sense of anxiety, a sense of the whole world's just being not right, being ultimately distorted. The snatched body, the simulacrum of human beings itself becomes a very effective symbol of colonial encounter as well. It is precisely this newly forged body, in which the host's memories and personality traits are also absorbed, that functions as the ultimate means of colonial control and the final eradication of the colonized subjects. In this sense, the colonized body ensures the survival of the alien race and denies all possible forms of communication or comprehension between the two races.

The process of snatching people's bodies also raises the question regarding the problematic relationship between colonizer (aliens) and colonized (humans) and the need to (re)claim one's personal identity in order to survive and find their own place in the world. The protagonists in all three movies, desperately, not only try to reclaim their lost values (e.g., replaced family members, lost homes), but also attempt to heal/restore their highly wounded selves: they try to deal with the trauma of colonial encounter and try to figure out a way of survival. I claim that there are two levels in which the story of the Body Snatcher movies works. First, such a film works on the level of personal survival and coming of age through preserving one's humanity, that is, his or her identity. Remaining human in a world colonized by aliens is a rather impossible task, yet it seems to be the only option for the characters of the movies; it is the only way they can reclaim their own lost lives as well as their future. On a second level the story is an example of both conquer and resistance through mimicry. The pod people take control through imitating and essentially "becoming" the colonized subjects, while humans fight back through pretending that they have already been snatched. They repeat the cold, emotionless behaviour of the colonizers, of the pod people, thus they essentially perform a mimesis, which, in the sense of the term used by Homi Bhabha, undermines the authority of the alien colonizers. Mimicry "inheres in the multiple acts of translation, inaugurating a process of anti-colonial self-differentiation through the logic of inappropriate appropriation" (Bhabha 1994, 150). In the films' world the impostors are also copied and fooled by humans. Mingling with the pod people

through imitating their attitudes, their emotionless facial expressions, and their wide-open, dull eyes seems to be the only way of escape and survival for the human protagonists, until emotions give them away. The otherness and the estrangement of the protagonists in the new world taken over by the aliens are suggested on many levels and in various ways in the three film versions.

The perception of the horrors of colonization is perhaps best exemplified in the case of the third adaptation, in which one can observe a completely unique approach to the initial story of body snatching. The story is told from the point of view of Marti (Gabrielle Anwar), a teenage girl whose father receives a job at a military base, so the whole family has to move there. The teenager's narrative point of view is important here for two reasons: first, because it foreshadows a coming of age story, that is, a rite of passage of the protagonist, and second, because it sets the tone for the forthcoming human resistance. Marti appears throughout the film as a rebellious, typical teenager, who is not getting on well with her stepmother, and, typically for her age, thinks that even her father acts against her. The loneliness and isolation that she experiences within her own family suggests that she will have to face isolation on a very different scale: after the colonization takes place, she and her boyfriend will remain the only humans on the base, the only ones of their kind. According to Nicole Brenez, Marti goes through three stages in her escape, which I also interpret as stages of her growing up: first, she disrupts the marital relations of her parents, then she discredits the stepmother, and finally she takes the mother's place as she becomes the mother figure for her little brother, Andy (Brenez 1988, 4).

This film version of the Body Snatchers is undoubtedly the most haunting among all, since it brings the issue of alien colonization in the heart of a family. Marti witnesses the transformation of her close family members, starting with herself, and is forced to deal with the horrible, half-developed duplicates. She attempts to defeat them, cheat on them, and ultimately manages to escape them. In this sense her coming of age occurs in and through her process of resisting alien colonization.

"I See You"

James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009) is another story about invasion, yet in this one humans play the role of colonizers. The story takes place in the far future, and envisions Earth as a no longer habitable planet: all natural resources were used up and people live in crowded urban environments with little hope of getting access

to a more decent way of life. The main character, Jake Sully (Sam Worthington) is a former marine, whose legs are paralysed and who lives among miserable conditions. One day he receives news of his twin brother's death and gets a chance to step in his place in completing a certain Avatar Program. Therefore, he has to travel to Pandora, a faraway planet, where humans set up entire mining colonies in order to extract a precious mineral, the unobtanium. This mineral could solve Earth's energy problems and could also bring huge profits for the administration responsible for dealing with the energy crisis. The protagonist learns that Pandora is the home of a rather primitive, humanoid type of species, called the Na'vi, who live in perfect harmony with nature, and worship a mother goddess, Eywa, who can be found everywhere, in all living beings. Humans are more technologically advanced than the giant, blue-skinned Na'vi, and in their process of violent colonization they conquer more and more territories thus taking away the lands from the indigenous locals. In order to learn more about the planet and get closer to the Na'vi in an attempt to fully colonize them, humans have created the Avatars, these half human, half Na'vi hybrids, who can be remotely operated by the colonziers. The avatars were created from human and Na'vi DNA; this is why it is only Jake Sully who can transfer his consciousness into the body of the avatar that was genetically engineered from his twin brother's DNA. As Jake starts to inhabit the avatar body, and gets to know the Na'vi better, he undergoes a profound process of initiation and self-knowledge that results in sympathizing with the colonized race, then becoming a full member of their tribe, and finally becoming the leader of the Na'vi resistance.

Many scenes of the film are about how Jake experiences and gets used to his new body, the tall, blue-skinned avatar, and how he tries to blend in the Na'vi tribe and learn more about their culture. He has a kind but severe teacher in the person of a female Na'vi, Neytiri, who happens to be the daughter of the tribe's leaders. Neytiri always scolds him, telling him that he is too blind to see the way of the Na'vi and that he is clumsy in the forest and behaves like a big child. The expression that the Na'vi use for greeting, "I see you," can be interpreted on another level meaning "I see your soul, I understand you, I comprehend your whole existence." Jake is unable to "see" the real values of the locals at first, but as he learns more and more about the world of the Na'vi, about how living beings are connected to each other and to the all-encompassing nature-mother, Eywa, he comes to his age and finally manages to see the natives for who they really are. Thus, his new identity is developed always under the influence of and in reflection to the cultural identity of the Na'vi group.

Victor Turner in his *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* describes the formation of the identity of the "liminal personae," of the "threshold people." In Turner's view personal identity as well as group identity formation is a constant process of reflection and always subject to revision. A community always defines and views itself as related to how others perceive and judge the same community (Turner 1991). As Sartre argues: "I am possessed by the Other: the Other's look fashions my body in its nakedness, causes it to be born, sculptures it, produces it as it is, sees it as I shall never see it. The Other holds a secret; the secret of what I am" (qtd. in Nandy 1983, 17). Self-identification is always a part of coming of age processes, of rites of passage. As Turner claims, rites of passage occur in every human culture, and refer to those periods when an individual is put on a trial, when they have to leave the community in order to fulfill a personal duty (that of growing up). Thus the term of "liminal personae" could stand for either a person or a whole group who is in transition from one phase to another (e.g., a child growing up). "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon" (Turner 1991, 95).

Turner also asserts that the person who undergoes the initiation must "be a *tabula rasa,* a blank slate, on which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group, in those respects that pertain to the new status" (1991, 103). This is precisely what happens to Jake Sully. He, as a human, belongs to the colonizers, yet when his conscience is transferred to the avatar body, and he lives and acts like one of the Na'vi people, he feels closer to them than to his own race. He sometimes feels that he is caught in-between the two races, the two cultures. The remotely operated avatar in this sense can be interpreted as a mediator between the two groups: humans and the Na'vi. The technological superiority of humans serves as the main divide between the colonizers and the colonized: in the film the Western myth of technological progress stands at the core of humans' colonial ideology. Jake belongs to both groups, yet he does not truly belong anywhere. As a human he is an outsider in his own society, because he can no longer serve his country with his paralyzed legs. As a Na'vi he is not yet fully accepted into the tribe, he has to prove that he is worth being called one with the people. While analysing virtual online identities (avatars), and making use of Lisa Nakamura's

concept of "identity tourism," Langer asserts that avatars "act not only as erasures of possibilities outside of them, but they also act as *reinscriptions* of the particular chosen identity types" (Langer 2011, 87). Thus, Jake Sully's choice to be one with the Na'vi deconstructs the very notion of race as the sole means of identity formation.

When Neytiri first takes him to her tribe, to the Omaticaya, he almost gets killed, until Moat, Neytiri's mother, examines him and decides that he should be given a chance. When Jake says he wants to learn, Moat, the spiritual leader of the tribe asserts: "we have tried to teach other Sky People. It is hard to fill a cup which is already full" (*Avatar*, 2009). The Na'vi call the half human avatars dream-walkers, demons, and consider them as spiritually inferior to them, because they are unable to comprehend the deep connections between Pandora's living beings.[4] Thus, in this case the colonized indigenous race decides to take in the former marine, in order to learn more about him, and, eventually, to teach him their ways, so that he can learn to "speak and walk" as they do. They consider the mindset, the greedy, aggressive behaviour of the colonizers as something which is more related to insanity, and they attempt to cure Jake out of it. So Jake's rite of passage begins: he not only learns the language and the rules of the tribe, but also has to prove himself as a warrior and a hunter, that is, he has to grow into spiritual maturity and manhood.

Reflecting again on Turner's theory, a rite of passage can not only occur in the case of one individual, but also in the case of communities, societies. In the film the Na'vi people and their culture are strongly violated by the colonizers: their homes are destroyed, their families are lost, and very soon they find themselves as outcasts, as a lonely, helpless group, praying to their goddess for survival. As a defeated nation they quickly realize that they need to reclaim their lost lands, their homes, together with their cultural heritage, and, ultimately, the control over their own destinies, their own lives. That is, the always peaceful natives need to go through a rite of passage to rebuild themselves and save the entire Na'vi race. Subsequently, they also enter a liminal phase in which they have to deal with the horrors of colonial encounter. They have to "grow up" not only in the sense that they should step out of the role of being an infantile, uncivilized, inferior culture,

4 Humans are stereotyping the Na'vi in their turn. They call them "blue monkeys," and whenever they talk about them, they express a typical imperialist attitude. They consider the Na'vi people uncivilized, savage, who need to learn English and go to school. This, of course, resonates with Edward Said's description of the westward expansion of the United States in the process of which they were taking away the lands of Native Americans, killing many of the indigenous people in the process (1993, 8).

as the colonizers would label them, but also in the sense of realizing that they must take more aggressive steps if they want to survive, and they have to stick together not just as one tribe, but also as an entire nation.

Switching Sides

Andrew Niccol's film, *The Host* (2013), is an adaptation of Stephenie Meyer's novel of the same name, and quite faithfully to its source text tells the story of alien invasion from a romantic perspective. In *The Host* a parasitic alien life-form takes over the entire humankind in a way very similar to what we could see in the *Body Snatcher* movies. The aliens, called "Souls" look like small, shiny caterpillars, and once they are implanted into a human being, they take control over their body, absorbing all the memories and emotions, but erasing the host's consciousness. According to Ashis Nandy, there are two types of colonialism: the first one refers to the taking of lands, to the occupation of territories, while the second one occurs as a direct consequence of the first one, that is, the conquest of minds, selves, cultures, "pioneered by modernists who thought that imperialism was the messianic bringer of civilization for the colonized world" (qtd. in Ghandi 1998, 15). One can intercept both types of colonization in all the three movies. In the *Body Snatcher* films and in *The Host* the conquest of minds literally happens when the aliens occupy the bodies of the hosts, thus taking over not just Earth, but all human history and culture as filtered through memories and knowledge still inscribed in the minds of the human bodies. In *Avatar* the human colonizers try to force the Na'vi to accept their "dominant" culture and civilization, by building roads and schools for them, and by trying to teach them English.

In *The Host* the Souls justify their conquest of Earth by maintaining that they are a peaceful race, and because humans are violent and destructive they deserve to be eradicated.[5] A handful of humans stay hidden throughout the alien conquest, and form a resistance. One of the members of the human resistance is Melanie Stryder (Saoirse Ronan), who later becomes captured by the colonizers. The colonizers implant a Soul in her body, called Wanderer. Wanderer is an old, experienced Soul, who has already travelled to a great number of planets and has lived in many bodies. Upon waking up in Melanie's body she has to realize that humans are different from all the living beings she has ever seen and/

5 The same reasons are used in the *Body Snatcher* films in the scenes when the aliens explain the need for colonization, and in *Avatar*, when humans try to convince themselves about the inevitability and righteousness of colonizing the Na'vi.

or lived in, because Melanie would not give up her consciousness and would fight to regain control over her own body. Wanderer is surprised by the intensity of Mel's human emotions and memories. At first she tries to fulfil her part in the colonization process by accessing Melanie's memories and thus providing information to the Seekers (hunters of remaining humans) about the whereabouts of the last group of human resistance. However, in a short time a bond is formed between Wanderer and Melanie, so the colonizer decides to help her host escape and get back to her family.

Having access to Melanie's memories plays a crucial part in this process. Wanderer, or as she is later called Wanda, realizes that Melanie keeps herself alive by constantly remembering who she is and by reliving memories of her past. In this way she not only maintains her humanity, but also manages to bring closer to Wanda the things she values in human life. Remembering is a painful but necessary action for both of them, because through remembering they can find a way of dealing with the trauma of colonization, moreover, this is the only way Wanda is able to hear and understand the point of view of the colonized host. As Bhabha argues, "remembering is never a quiet act of introspection or retrospection. It is a painful re-membering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present" (1994, 63). As Wanda looks into Melanie's memories she not only learns a lot about her host's past life – of how much Mel loved and still loves her little brother and her boyfriend – but also begins to better understand humanity and make sense of what has happened to an entire race which now faces almost complete extinction. This kind of remembering is essential both for colonizer and colonized, since it is only possible to survive together, as being mutually dependent on one another if they comprehend each other's backgrounds and motivations. Speaking of sites of memory, Péter Gaál-Szabó argues that they "are able to mediate memory across generations on both individual and collective levels and can easily contribute to the negotiation of the memory content through their functionality" (2017, 80). In the case of the encounter between Melanie and Wanda within the same body one can easily observe that Wanda's visualizing, as well as reliving Melanie's memories would lead to a preservation and nurturing of human cultural memory, together with the other's, that is, Wanda's alien consciousness and vast experiences of previous lives and inhabited worlds. One aspect of cultural memory, as Gaál-Szabó understands it, is "the necessity of interpretation by participants evoking memory, which is closely connected to identity negotiation" (2017, 77). When Wanda relives Mel's memories, and decides to help her go back to her beloved ones, she

also decides to go against her own kind and take part in the human resistance. Wanda's choice brings about a different meaning of alien-human encounter in the context of the film: that of acknowledging the colonial past, and creating the possibility of continued resistance. As Leela Ghandi claims: "the postcolonial dream of discontinuity is ultimately vulnerable to the infectious residue of its own unconsidered and unresolved past. Its convalescence is unnecessarily prolonged on account of its refusal to remember and recognize its continuity with the pernicious malaise of colonialism" (qtd. in Langer, 2011, 84–85).

Comprehending human nature and cultural memory as connected to identity is very similar to what Jake Sully experiences in the *Avatar*, when he finally understands the essence of the profound biological and spiritual network through and in which the Na'vi live. Neytiri shows Jake the trees called Utraya Mokri, that is, the Trees of Voices, which provide access to the voices, the memories of Na'vi ancestors. When Jake himself is connected to the trees, he is also able to hear them, and understands that they are alive forever within Eywa. Similarly, Melanie in *The Host* is able to show Wanda all those past memories – cheerful and painful – that determine who she is, so Wanda starts to love and appreciate her so much that she is ready to face all kinds of dangers even risk her life in order for Melanie to be happy and free again. When Wanda and Melanie reach the secret home of the human rebels – an underground network of caves – they are at first almost killed and then looked at with disgust, since the hiding humans do not see Melanie within, but only the evil alien, a parasite, who has taken over the girl's body.[6] Being afraid of provoking the remaining humans, Melanie and Wanda do not reveal at first that Melanie's consciousness is still alive within the body. However, Melanie's uncle, the old and wise Jeb Stryder becomes suspicious. He says to Wanda: "I started thinking… When they put one of you in our heads, do we still exist? Trapped in there? If our memories are still alive, are we? You gotta believe some people wouldn't go down without a fight" (*The Host*, 2013).

When the humans finally realize that Melanie is still alive and Wanda is trying to save and protect her, their initial hostility towards the alien race disappears and gives way to mutual understanding and dependence. In this situation colonizer and colonized rely on each other. Wanda teaches the humans how to remove the invaders from the bodies without hurting the Souls, so that people can get a chance for reclaiming their planet and their lives. She is even ready to sacrifice herself for Melanie, by choosing to die, thus giving back the body to

6 In contrast with the *Body Snatcher* films in *The Host* there are very visible physical signs of otherness: once a body has been infused with a Soul, the person's eyes become blue and shiny.

her. Nonetheless the film has a happy ending: both of them survive. All in all, the negotiation of identity, that is, fighting and then temporarily making peace over the same body is possible through a painful process of coming of age. Both Wanda and Melanie have to learn a great deal of things about each other, and even if Wanderer is an old and very experienced Soul, dealing with the human world and with the extremely strong and deep human emotions and memories proves to be a hard and purgative, but beautiful process of learning, something that, as she admits at the end, is worth dying for. Seeing through each other's perspectives determine Melanie and Wanda to outbalance the deconstructive effects of alien colonization with a new, recuperative work that would provide a healing of old wounds and a possible vision of a future in which the two species can coexist in a mutually dependent relationship.

Conclusions

In the above analysed three films alien-human encounters were characterized both by traumatic experiences of losing one's identity, home, and culture as well as by possibilities of making up for the losses, of working through the traumas of colonization not only individually, but also as communal attempts to understand and endure transformations in the existence of a culture. Colonial encounters in the three science fiction films are portrayed as processes in which the human and/or alien bodies play crucial roles. In the *Body Snatcher* movies the bodies taken over serve as means of dominance of one species over the other (that is, the emotionless aliens take away feelings, the essence of humanity), and there is little hope for human survival or reconciliation with the invaders. In *The Host*, however, it is precisely the body of Melanie Stryder which becomes a site of negotiation for regaining, preserving, as well as rebuilding the host's identity, while in *Avatar* it is Jake Sully's genetically modified avatar body that serves as a means of hybridization and reconciliation between the humans and the Na'vi. The stories of these invasion movies work on both the levels of individual and communal histories, as they present possible ways of healing the wounds of colonial encounters via personal or communal coming of age stories, as well as through making use of one's memories.

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The Experiences of Women Professionals in the Film Industry in Turkey: A Gender-Based Study

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Abstract. The article is based on 20 in-depth interviews with women professionals conducted for a more comprehensive study focusing on gender roles within the film and television industry in Turkey. This study examines the career possibilities for women, the experience of being a woman working in television and cinema, and the working environment, including work-life balance issues, experiences of discrimination and experiences of sexism. The hypothesis of this study is that film industry is male-dominated, and women have to struggle to be able to prove themselves in this industry in the 21st century in Turkey, where the position of women is made even more difficult by the gender role codes and the structure of Turkish society.

Keywords: film industry, gender, women, gender role, Turkey.

The World Economic Forum assessed the gender gap in 134 countries by measuring the extent to which women have achieved equality with men in four areas: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment (Hausmann et al. 2010, 6–7). According to the Forum's report in 2010, Turkey is ranked the 126th. This shows that gender inequality is very high, Turkey usually scores poorly in rankings of gender balance in both politics and economics. The changes in approach towards women in Turkey began to emerge with the declaration of the republic. In the first years of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk acknowledged the importance of women in both social and business life. In a speech he made in Izmir in 1923, Atatürk emphasized the importance of women in social life, saying: "everything we see in the world is the work of women" (Doğramacı 1992, 79). Turkish women won the right to vote and to be elected in 1933 with their legal rights granted by civil law. In the first elections held in 1937, there were 18 female members actively working in the Parliament. This result corresponds to 4.5 percent of the parliament of that

time (Doğramacı, 1992, 81). This became the most important indicator that women have equal rights with men at work as well as at every level of society.

However, media industry, which has an intensely female employee basis, has become one of the industries in which discrimination is most experienced. Doğramacı (1992) states that private broadcasting in Turkey – especially in the last twenty years – has provided new opportunities for women. In 2015, according to the report of the Turkish Statistical Institute (www.tuik.gov.tr), women made up 25.9 percent of Turkey's total labour force. There are no reliable records about the number of people employed in the film industry in Turkey which could clearly show the statistical differences between males and females. Nevertheless, according to the report by the Department of General Directorate on the Status and Problems of Women, Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry (2004), with the increase in the number of private media companies during the last decade, the number of working women, particularly in the film industry, has increased. Yet, the proportion of women in managerial positions is still at insignificant levels. Gender-desegregated data on employees in the different sectors of the media is scarce. Therefore, reference can only be made to some fragmented sources of information. For example, women held only 1,873 of the 11,322 yellow ID cards given to journalists in June 2000; in the autonomous Turkish Radio and Television Institution (TRT), women hold 2,030 of the 8,180 personnel, and 116 of the 214 managerial posts. In the latter, women are concentrated mainly in middle management and they make up only 1% of the high-level management posts. The annual ratio of women-oriented programmes on TRT television channels is 6.9%, and on the radio channels, it is 15–17% (General Directorate on the Status and Problems of Women, 2004, 4). Tanrıöver (2000, 185) states women used to be only in front of the camera, as actresses, until the 1980s. Later, however, although the cinema sector was affected by the economic crisis, women started to enter this sphere as well.

The Aim of the Study

The present study discusses the relationship between gender roles and the positions of women professionals in Turkish film industry based on the following research questions: Is film industry a male-dominated sector in Turkey? Do women have to struggle to be able to prove themselves in this industry? Is this industry promising for women particularly due to the gender roles codes and the structure of Turkish society?

In line with the aim of the study, an in-depth qualitative method[1] was selected and semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 20 women professionals in the film industry. The 20 participants were asked open-ended questions about themselves and the film industry they have been working in. All participants were required to have at least four years of work experience in film industry. It was important that participants come from Turkey's largest cities because cultural texture and its reflection on gender roles in big and small cities in Turkey is different. Participants belong to the age group of 25 to 40 years old because we assumed that this age range adequately reflects the cultural codes of contemporary Turkey. Participants were required to have at least a bachelor's degree because the relationship between education level and being individual was also considered. The interviews were conducted face-to-face by the researcher. The interviews were undertaken between 18 February and 22 September 2016. The questions were related to gender roles and their outcomes for women professionals as well as related to the general overview of film industry. The questions of the in-depth qualitative interview were the following:

1. How long have you been working in this sector? What positions have you held?
2. Is cinema/television sector male-dominated or woman-dominated?
3. How does society perceive your job?
4. Is there gender discrimination in film industry?
5. Have you ever been molested?
6. Are there any advantages for a woman in this industry? If so, please explain.
7. Are there any disadvantages for a woman in this industry? If so, please explain.
8. How would you define film industry in Turkey in three sentences or less?
9. Do you see that film industry is a good field of work for women? If so/not, why?
10. What position is better for a woman in cinema-television sector in Turkey? Why?

1 An in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme, or situation. The in-depth interview is useful when researchers want detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviors or want to explore new issues in depth. Interviews are often used to provide context to other data (such as outcome data), offering a complete picture of what happened in the program and why (Boyce et al. 2006, 3).

Theoretical Background and Gendered Segregation in Turkey

There is an interaction between gender and social structure. Gender roles are affected by the social and cultural codes of the society in which they are produced, but they also simultaneously play a role in shaping these codes. "Gender" is a different concept from "sex," which basically refers to biological differences between men and women. While sex points to physiologic differences, gender encompasses a cultural structure, which embodies the social and cultural meanings of and expectations of men and women (Dökmen 2004; Rice 1996; Lips 1998). According to Unger and Crawford (1993) gender is determined by psycho-social properties that categorize an individual as man or woman (see also Erus and Gürkan 2012, 207). Men and women are different in social, cultural, economic and political aspects, and based on such differences (see Gentile 1993; Fausto-Sterling 2012; and Bem 1983), this separation is not neutral. It is structured in the social organizations such as ideology, family, economy, law, and politics that organize the daily life of individuals. It defines roles for men and women in line with the dominant ideology. Gender roles are strengthened through institutions such as family, school, and media, and they are based on hegemony and repetition. In sociology, the notions of gender and sex have been discussed, among others, by Ann Oakley, who examines the unequal division among men and women based on social structure (1972). Social roles produce social expectations in connection with social statutes (Marshall 1999, 624). Gayle Rubin (1975) discusses gender as a sex-gender system, in which the social gender is described as enhancing the idea of a biological gender. It implies that the gender image for both sexes is being distorted due to gender being socially constructed. In gender theory, there is also the discussion of the power aspect being built into the gender system: the male is the norm, the female is the follower (Fausto-Sterling 1993).

The notion of gender roles is used for reflecting on gender stereotypes or differences, which are constructed by society. Sex roles include social expectations, which limit the activities experienced by men and women. Social expectations cause pressure on people, who have to follow the rules (Kaypakoğlu 2004, 20). After babies are assigned as girls or boys by the society, they start to learn cultural meanings. The cultural meanings of sex are seen as gender roles. Gender role is a set of expectations which is described by the society and related to sex. During this socializing process girls and boys learn which objects, games, jobs, and events are favourable for them (Dökmen 2004, 16).

Sex roles can be described as cultural expectations, which determine how men and women must act in their daily lives in a society (Zanden 1990, 228). Sex roles contain the ideas of men providing food and women providing child-care. This can be considered as a division of labour among men and women in the public area. Working in the public area is rewarded with power, money, and prestige, but on the other hand, working in the private area is seen as worthless and isolated (Zanden 1989, 227). As Oakley (1972, 204) states, humans created the concept of gender, thus gender is associated with a social construction. According to Blackstone (2003, 336–337), the social construction of gender is determined by the fact that individuals, groups, and societies ascribe particular traits, statuses, or values to individuals purely because of their sex, yet these ascriptions differ across societies and cultures, and over time within the same society. Gender roles are the roles that men and women are expected to occupy based on their sex. Blackstone (2003, 337) states that many Western societies have believed that women are more nurturing than men. Therefore, the traditional view of the feminine gender role defines that women should perform in ways which are nurturing. On the other hand, men are assumed by traditional views of gender roles to be rulers/leaders/controllers, etc. While these views continue to dominate society, alternative views on traditional acceptances about gender roles have been achieved. In the situations in which roles are not clearly described, male leaders are more prescriptive and more mission-oriented, while females are more democratic and considering the team spirit (Mayers 1996, 199). Mayer's claim is relevant to gender roles.

Sex roles include the acceptance of inequalities. Social roles and especially sex roles shape and reflect the structural and cultural characteristics of society (Kammeyer, Ritzer, and Yetman 1997, 34). On the one hand, women produce an important part of economic growth in Turkey. On the other hand, women's duties in daily household work, in child-care, in the education of children, as well as childbirth are obstacles for women to enter working life. Regarding the type of work that they do, women are concentrated in certain sectors and businesses. Women have to choose "women's jobs" in their working lives. Sectors and businesses determine women's places in professional life.

Findings

Female-dominated areas in film industry are as follows: assistant to producer, assistant director, costume designer, editor, guest coordinator. The number of women is higher than that of men in the departments such as make-up, costume

and assistant. It is possible to encounter this situation not only in Turkey but in European countries as well. For example, the data obtained from the reports of the European Women's Audiovisual Network (EWA) (European Women's Audiovisual Network Reports 2006–2013, 20–21) is quite striking: most of the participants in these reports believe that there is gender inequality in the sector. While the countries with the highest inequality are Germany, United Kingdom, and Austria; Croatia is perceived as the country with the lowest inequality. According to the EWA report, likewise, the proportion of female directors in European countries is as low as in Turkey, except for Switzerland. It is not wrong to say that this is related to the gender codes of the Turkish society. While there are (almost) no women in the duties of the commander, women are (only) dominant in costume and make-up designer as well as in assistant positions.

a) It is a male-dominated sector

In Turkey, a patriarchal society, males dominate film industry, just as other industries. According to the report of Turkish Statistical Institute (www.tuik.gov.tr), in 2015, while employment of men was 65%, the employment of women was 27.5%. All interviewed women remark that film industry is male-dominated in Turkey. This is relevant to gender. As Turkey is a patriarchal society, men come before women, particularly in professional life. Men are the heads of the households and women are good wives, good mothers. From this point of view, while many of the working areas in film industry – such as technics, directing, etc. – are filled by men, other areas – such as editing, costumes, make-up, art direction – are more open for women because they do not need physical strength. The above stated are corroborated by interviewees 1, 11, 18, 19, and 20, who state that: "this sector is male-dominated, but men dominate all sectors in Turkey." Moreover, interviewees 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 13, and 14 explain that "there are always more men than women in film sets. The technical crew is almost 100% men. Women usually work in the departments such as production, direction, editing, make-up and cast departments. There are more women in costume department than men." As it can be seen, tasks that require physical strength are performed by men, while tasks that require aesthetic sense are done by women.

b) Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

There is a strong connection between sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and gender roles. Common examples of sexual harassment include unwanted touching, the invasion of personal space, making sexual comments about a person's body or attire, and telling sexual jokes (Uggen and Blackstone 2004). Gutek (1989) claims that women's sexualities are more perceived than men's sexualities, that woman's sexualities are at the forefront of increasing sexual harassment. On the other hand, the sexuality of men at the workplace is not very prominent. Men tell some sexual jokes and use offending language regarding to women. Cleveland and Kerst (1993) demonstrated the links between institutional, personal, or interpersonal-strength traits to sexual harassment. Social and institutional power sources form the basis for working conditions that can increase or prevent sexual harassment. Women who work in male-dominated occupations such as film industry, and who are young, single, or divorced are the most likely to experience sexual harassment (Jackson and Newman 2004). Besides this, gender discrimination, which causes women to be deprived of their full and free participation in daily-life activities involves various issues such as non participation in decision-making mechanisms, not benefiting from public opportunities, living in unhealthy conditions, encountering obstacles in working life, being harassed at the workplace or experiencing unfairness. While many of the interviewees state that "I have not been harassed with hands, but I have been harassed with behaviour and phone-calls," the other interviewees underline their experiences as follows: "men wrapped their hands around our necks and started to talk about the so-called works on the first day of the set… I was not able to be angry, just ashamed and surprised… But if we react, they can do this only once, or a few times verbally." These statements highlight the relationship between sexual harassment and sex. Moreover, gender discrimination is about the lack of basic services for women, about having unequal conditions compared to men, about the violence, the politics and the low representation of women in working life. Regarding sexual discrimination, many of the interviewees state that "there is discrimination. There are many physical differences between women and men. In the set, we have no chance to do something else during working hours. Unfortunately, it is very hard to explain to the opposite-sex some special days such as period days." The following statement is also dramatic: "as a woman, when I started to work as a director, first I had to prove my technical knowledge to the technical crew to make them get work done. Because if you are a woman

director, all male-dominated technical crew may think some thoughts such as "well, just a woman," and they may try to lie to you. This male-dominated crew respects male directors all the time. Male directors do not have to make an effort to establish authority." It is possible to say that the reasons why women are not accepted as directors are related to the patterns of social roles that women should undertake. A director manages and orders, but a woman cannot rule and order.

c) Is the Best Job for a Woman Being a Teacher?

Sex segregation in occupations continues for several reasons. Firstly, cultural beliefs about what is an "appropriate" job for a man or a woman exist. Using in-depth interviews, it is possible to identify patterns of sex segregation. According to the interviewed women and their social environment, it can be discussed what is considered suitable for women as a job in society. Secondly, opportunity structures for men and women differ. Women often find that their opportunities for career advancement are adversely affected after returning from child-rearing leave. Finally, there is evidence that working mothers pay a price for motherhood. Child-care is the responsibility of women even if they work in Turkey. Sex stereotypes, just as other stereotypes, reflect the observations related to what people do in their daily lives. If a set of people are monitored as they are undertaking activities, it is believed that these people have essential abilities and personality characteristics for these activities (Dökmen 2004, 84). Moreover, when we look at the employment rates in 2015, it can be seen that 70.1% of men are employed, compared to 30.6% of women (tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr). In light of this information, the interviewed women underline that working in the film industry is hard and society perceives this job as not being the best for women in countries such as Turkey. These comments summarize the idea very well: "if your motto is 'the best job for a woman is being a teacher,' this job never suits you. You will never be able to be an ideal mother, wife, friend, daughter, cousin because of its difficulties and irregular working conditions. You are tired, busy; you cannot even manage to go to the cinema at all. You will have to work when everyone is on holiday; when they work, you will have to work again. The fear to this question is with you all the time: 'When I go back to my job from maternity leave, can I stay in my job or do I have to find a new job?'" It is possible to point out from all of these comments that there are many problems in women's working life. According to Kazgan (1979), women do not have such a long history if considering their professional life in Turkey. He mentions that

women's professional life is related to their educational background and their marital status. There are no proper job opportunities for undereducated women; they can mostly work in low-paid jobs related to household chores. This claim is supported by the following comment: "this sector is not stunning, especially not for women. For example, while I do my best in my job, the male crew does not respect me. My female identity stays in front of the sets. I have tried to go to the sets without my female identity, but the male crew does not accept it." The other says: "I work in an office; all I do is to produce, to create a meaning. In this sense, working in an office with famous people is stunning for a woman. However, there is no stunning way for a woman because of the difficulties."

d) "I Have a Job, but Not a Family!"

Being a woman is hard in societies such as Turkey since all women are socialized to prepare them for "being a good mother" and "being a good wife" by their parents and by the other socialization ideological apparatuses such as educational institutions, families, religion, and media. According to Donovan (2000), there is a tradition of idealizing the role of the "housewife" in societies that tend to seclude women. In Turkey, especially before establishing the republic and during the first years of the republic, this view was very strong.[2] However, after establishing the Republic and during the modernization process of Turkey, women were needed as labour force. In this sense, women started to go out from the private area to the public area by entering business life.

Moreover, Seger (2003, 76) mentions that mothers need to balance family and work. Many women, mothers or not, see balance as essential to being healthy and effective. Although it is not unusual to hear from workers in any field that they want less work and more play in their lives, there is a difference in film industry. The interviewees' comments about their jobs and family lives are dramatic. Half of the interviewees state that working in film industry is quite hard, especially for women. "Irregular life conditions affect negatively our families. For example, I was pregnant and I had to work until the mornings under very much stress for a big project in the 4th and 5th period of my pregnancy. I cried many times and I had a nervous breakdown. I could not see my husband's face for many days. Moreover, I had no idea about the fate of my job after going on maternity leave, after having a baby. I started to think, come what may, but I don't feel safe. Not

2 Still, some women are not allowed to work by their husband or their families in some parts of Turkey.

being able to make plans as a family is one of the worst matters. The answer to this question: Shall we go somewhere two weeks from now? The answer does not exist, because it is not clear which day you have to work two weeks from now. I miss planning summer holidays." As sex roles are prescribed by the society, there is some pressure on people to act accordingly. For example, there is a strong belief in Turkey that married women must do housework. Notably, their mothers, their husbands, their neighbours, and their friends consider them responsible for doing housework. The interviewees made these comments as well: "working hours are so fuzzy. I as a woman may be harassed or be abused. Mobbing is so popular in this sector, and if you are a woman, you definitely could be under psychological pressure." "Working hours are fuzzy and we have to work for many hours. Therefore, we do not have quality time for our families, friends. This is not the right job for women who would like to get married or have a kid." Consequently, women in professional fields must choose between their families and their jobs. Especially in film industry, they are affected by poor working conditions. According to all interviewed women in this study, film industry's working conditions, the workers' rights, and social insurance are terrible.

e) Is the Job Promising (Attractive) for Women?

According to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC 2009, 7), gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies of the program, in all areas and at all levels. However, it is possible to say that there are difficulties in practice, as can be understood from the answers given by the interviewees. The interviewees say that film industry is not promising for women because of the gender gap in Turkey: "the sector is worse now than when we started. There are severe issues with the payment system, as they try to avoid paying social insurance. However, this is not legal. If we look at the case of Turkey, every sector has problems. I like my job whatever happens, and first of all, I tell these issues to everyone who wants to work in this sector. If they want to, despite all these, then they can succeed. Sometimes they may be unhappy because of the stress or tiredness. The most important thing is to be able to say 'it is worth it.' I cannot say something absolutely sure about the future of the sector. Lots of TV series are made, they are useful for both advertisers and the government. Therefore nobody is made redundant, but I cannot know how things will go on." Grassroots movements, such as feminism and women's rights and human rights

movements have made significant inroads in the fight against gender inequality in general. However, the women given voice in this study think that film industry is not attractive enough for them: "working in film industry is not appropriate for women in Turkey because women have a challenging job in the industry. Unfortunately male opposition against women is really strong and this prevents women's career." On the other hand, the feudal system still exists in Turkish society and in this sector. One of the interviewees sums this up in this way: "I see that all women in our society need to be supported by men to be able to get a prestige in professional life. This is related to feudal society. This reality has been revealed in this industry."

Conclusions

There is no data on the exact number of female professionals in film industry in Turkey. However, we can assume that the number of female directors, assistant directors, and camera crew is very low in the country. Moreover, film industry in Turkey is not promising for women, and women encounter here many difficulties – such as discrimination, sexual harassment, family problems, etc. Many women experience physical, sexual, psychological pressure and economic discrimination in this industry. Long working hours and bad working conditions have become one of the foremost issues to discuss besides the issue of occupational accidents, and there seems to be no permanent solution to solve these issues.

Based on the interviews, although all the participants have a bachelor's degree in this industry, they cannot advance in their careers. Women can rarely rise in their organization's hierarchy because they encounter some unknown and unforeseen obstacles. This phenomenon is described as the glass ceiling effect (Hymowitz and Schellhardt 1986). According to the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (1995), this term refers to "artificial barriers to the advancement of women and minorities." These barriers reflect "discrimination […] a deep line of demarcation between those who prosper and those left behind." In many professions, women cannot break through the glass ceiling to the upper level of management just because they are women. Therefore, the number of women decreases towards the top of the hierarchy. Many popular beliefs regarding women and men support this issue. For example, the idea "women do not have the ability to lead" as opposed to men, who also set the standards for social values and behaviours. Men are seen as appropriate for decision-making roles at all times. This situation is relevant to sex and gender. Öztürk-Akar (2012) and Köse (2013) state that the

most appropriate profession for women in Turkish society is being a teacher. This also coincides with the comments of the interviewees. When working in the profession they want, that is, working in film industry, the highest position they can raise to is that of assistant director. Since the gender roles referring to women in society are obstacles for women to be able to express themselves in their own professions, we found that the typical patriarchal thoughts still prevail in film industry, which is considered to be far away from traditional values. Therefore, women in film industry work in very difficult conditions and they cannot advance in their profession because of gender-role perceptions – as shown in this study.

All interviewees describe film industry as a male-dominated one. Moreover, 99% of women working in film industry have experienced sexism, which is a substantial amount indicating the strong connection between sexual harassment and gender roles. The professions in Turkey have horizontal stratification and they are divided into women's jobs and men's jobs. As Kocacik and Gökkaya (2005, 207–212) show, women's jobs consist of low-status, low-wage, temporary, precarious jobs, which require no qualifications, while male jobs require authority and responsibility and are highly paid, continuous and secure. Most women are also exposed to psychological harassment, or mobbing, at the workplace, and they are put in the second place in many areas and often have to handle the obstacles in the way of their professional life due to the necessities and responsibilities of and in their family life.

The interviewees also underline that working in film industry as a woman is difficult and this profession is not suitable for women. This is attributed to cultural beliefs and gender roles. Women working in film industry may encounter many difficulties in society. It is possible to state that the general public does not consider film industry a real industry in Turkey; people consider making movies and TV shows as a hobby of the rich. People have general ideas for employees in this sector, namely that men are successful and productive; women are simply referred to by their identities in front of the screen. This study is also a preliminary research for issues addressed by the so-called second-wave feminism regarding different classes of women such as Turkish, Kurdish, Alawite, lesbian, bisexual in Turkish film industry.

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