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Jarmo Valkola

# Perceiving the Visual in Cinema

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

JYVÄSKYLÄ 1993

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## Semantic Approaches to Film Form and Meaning

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## ABSTRACT

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The study examines the contents and co-ordination of perceptual, cognitive, stylistic and semantic elements of film form and meaning, understanding cinema as a medium of re-experience, of discovery and creation. It is a phenomenon in which meaning arises as a function of perceptual, emotional, and intellectual activity, in which the world is grasped as a dynamic presence.

According to the study one can understand cinema's universe as a kind of microcosm, a world with its own order and logic but also a world with associations and connotations related to its viewing process. One can speak of cinematic semantics, with which one can understand the exploration of cinematic meanings concentrating on specific cinematic things such as exploring the meanings of moving images, succession, montage-combinations and camera-effects.

According to the study a film shot is a descriptive unit more than a narrative one because narratives are made up of descriptions and a narrative is a subtype of description. Cinema is a performance art like theatre, but cinema is also a pictorial art, and pictorial signs are iconic in one respect and arbitrary in every other. In cinema montage is thinking through images because cinema is the only form of art which is a succession of images in the same space.

Cinema "syntax" in itself is a creative force, because it makes possible the formation of a large number of film phrases and requires audience participation. The concept of orchestration plays an important part in the formulation of a cinematic master plan. The functions of orchestration are related to those of editing because, in a way, the writing of a script also starts the editing process: it deals with the thinking through images and an image is always a mixture of various elements with many things happening simultaneously. Orchestration is some kind of superstructure, which refers to the elements of the cinema and has to do with the quality of the film.

According to the gestaltpsychologist way of perception the meaning of the stimulus is to function as an interface between two kinds of texts, the one being the object itself and the second being the spectator's mind, which alone contains the meaning that it associates with the text's

otherwise empty signifiers. The meaning in cinema's visual perception is constructed in the mind. Visual considerations carry relatively more weight in the structure of cinema than it seems, yet they are hard to describe and assess. In short, if we are to understand how the visual qualities of the cinema work, we evidently need a different sort of critical and theoretical approach than what is usually practiced.

The study contains analyses of different kinds of films. Fritz Lang's *M* is an example of a synthetic film form condensing many present tendencies. It is structured around a rigorous organization of the film's formal articulations. In *Un Chien Andalou* Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali are exploring and using conscious irrationality to facilitate finer and deeper meanings. The bewilderment results from how flexibly and routinelike the spectator's thinking recognizes the film's contradictions and symbolic impossibilities. Maya Deren's film *Meshes of the Afternoon* is an example of modernist fragmentation and the pluralization of subjectivity, identity and the denial of unitary consciousness. Busby Berkeley's dance numbers give possibilities for the abstract and constructive tendencies of high culture to approach the populist level. They contain a flux of ideas, in a criss-cross of semantic operations.

Keywords: Cinema, cinematic, visual, visual thinking, visual perception, semantics, surrealism, dreams, Lang, Buñuel, Deren, Berkeley.

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Jyväskylä 12.1.1993

Jarmo Valkola

*CINEMA*

*Mine eyes have seen*
*inverted, on the worshipped screen,*
*projection of deceit dimension.*

*Apologetically removed to the far rear*
*super-ventriloquist and super-seer*
*daily devoted, tells his thousand beads from twelve to twelve*
*tells his celluloid and speckled string by his lone star.*

*And I have heard the amplified, inflected word*
*recite the usual rosary:*
*reduce the triangle to two;*
*and with the fitting of the brittle shoe.*

*Circumlocation on the too real wheel*
*finds twice reflection:*
*once upon the screen*
*and once upon the transient, evacuated minds possessing pews.*

*Maya Deren (1937)*

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# 1 GROUNDINGS AND CONNECTIONS

## 1.1 Observing Ideas

> "Why do people go to the cinema? What takes them in to a darkened room where, for two hours, they watch the play of shadows on a sheet? The search for entertainment? The need for a kind of drug? All over the world there are, indeed, entertainment firms and organisations which exploit cinema and television and spectacles of many other kinds. Our starting-point, however, should not be there, but in the essential principles of cinema, which have to do with the human need to master and know the world. I think that what a person normally goes to the cinema for is *time*: for time lost or spent or not yet had. He goes there for living experience: for cinema, like no other art, widens, enchants and concentrates a person's experience - and not only enchancts it but makes it longer, significantly longer. That is the power of cinema: 'stars', story-lines and entertainment have nothing to do with it."[1)]

The above shows how the Russian director Andrei Tarkovski has looked at the cinema. For Tarkovski the aim of art is connected with the explanation of being a human, so art is one of the ways to approach the world.

Jean Mitry writes:

> "As a sculptor brings forth from clay a fabulous divinity, the filmmaker, shaping reality itself, reconstructs the world in his image, bringing it to light in strangely new ways. In this the film is a revelation, deciphering, discovery. And in this it is the greatest of all arts, because it is not only a spectacle, a writing, a means of telling a story in images more or less charged with sense, but a magic vision, the intuitive *co-naissance* of the worlds, offered in a constantly renewing testimony."[2)]

For Jean Mitry, the cinema is a medium of re-experience, of discovery and creation. It is a phenomenon in which meaning - never fully predetermined - arises as a function of perceptual, emotional, and intellectual activity; and in which the world - never fully meaningful - is grasped again as dynamic presence.[3)]

Gerald Mast has pointed out that "any work of art is a selfcontained little universe, a microcosm complete in itself".[4)]

And an interest in universes like that is based on the fact that they offer us something that is different compared to natural universes. The universe of a work of art is finite and orderly, and its order is perceptible and comprehensible because it functions under certain laws, it has a logic of its own .[5)]

One can understand cinema's universe as a kind of microcosm, a world with its own order and logic but also a world with associations and connotations related to its viewing process; and when a spectator puts his soul into that world, he or she sees that it is a "picture" of that world; one can feel oneself "inside" that picture, but in a second one can move "outside" that picture and observe the whole process.[6)]

To experience cinema is based on a two-way tension of that kind. Thus, as we watch films we are under many simultaneously appearing stimuli. Cinema is composed of visual images (whether coloured or black and white ones), spoken or written words, music, actors, sets and so on, of many ways of telling its emotions and ideas to the public.

Trevor Whittock defines the film image as follows:

> "The simplest way to define the film image would be to identify it with a single frame extracted from the film strip. But such a definition would possess serious deficiencies. Psychologically it is wrong. When watching a movie, we experience action, movement, and sound, not a static frame. We need to accept as images the gesture of a hand, say or the ringing of a telephone. In order to conform then to ordinary discourse and common experience, a looser definition of film image is necessary. This suggests that the film image should be thought of as any simple object or event, normally perceived and regularly identified as a single entity, that is presented on either the screen or the sound track."[7)]

Furthermore, cinema is also one way of telling a story and in building up a film the directorial decisions aim toward a "drama of the cinema", as Stefan Scharff has stated.[8)] Cinema has developed and evolved from photographic story telling into more sophisticated forms of expression. Scharff makes a further distinction between "easy" films and the "complex" cinema of stylistic organization.[9)] So the difficulty comes from the critic's ability or inability to "read the cinematic text" that lies below the hypnotic effect of the narrative.[10)]

The narrative elements of cinema chiefly consist of themes, a plot, place and time settings, characterizations, and relationships in conflict or harmony. One can say that the subject matter of a narrative originates as

a concept in the mind of a creator and becomes concrete and dramatic through the modes of expression of a certain medium. Now, the medium used to communicate a developed sequence of events profoundly affects the nature of the emotions and ideas conveyed to an audience by the narrative. These similar elements can also be found in other art forms, but what makes cinema unique is the way in which these narrative elements are utilized, how they are transformed into the dramatic reality seen on the screen because, for example, our apprehension of a character seen on the screen depends on how camera-editing dynamics and elements of presentation are explored.

## 1.2 Art & Expressions

In approaching the structure of art Rene Wellek has pointed out that "structure is a concept including both content and form so far as they are organized for aesthetic purposes".[11] And he continues: "The work of art is then considered as a whole system of signs or structures of signs, serving a specific aesthetic purpose." [12]

Jean Mitry describes the supreme value of art as a mediation between man and his own *impuissance*, his feelings of disharmony with and in the universe.[13] Mitry thinks that artistic impulse ultimately expresses man's inexhaustible and unsatisfied feelings for the absolute. Needing to explain, to preserve, and to control the mysterious, fleeting, and ungraspable present, man developed tools (science, art, religion) in such a way as to possess a simulacrum.[14]

In contemporary works, which are related to our own cultural tradition, the footnotes are in our head due to our sharing a common culture and experience. Raymond Durgnat thinks:

> "It begins to seem that whereas high culture's currently prevalent aesthetic theories assume that the artist is active and the spectator passive, in fact the artist is active and the spectator is active too. And if their activities don't exactly overlap, they're bound to collide somewhere in the middle of the work of art."[15]

Brian Lewis, again, points out:

> "In short, the artwork does not simply offer a 'reflection of reality', but first and foremost it offers a type of *engagement*: it projects a state of being with the world in which the ineffable finds itself controlled ... Mitry holds in common with Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and other existentialist aestheticians a view of the artwork as an invitation among individuals to share a certain valued life experience. The art work is a communication, and at the same time a revelation of being, in some full aspect of its particularity."[16]

In cinema, systems of this kind are based on the artist's choices from elements of construction. According to Juri Lotman every image on the screen is a sign: it has meaning, it carries information.[17] And in doing that, it implies two kinds of meanings: first of all, images on the screen reproduce some sort of objects of the real world, and so a semantic relationship is established between these objects and the screen images (objects become the meanings of the images reproduced on the screen); on the other hand, the images on the screen may be augmented by some additional, often totally unexpected meanings. One can call them additional meanings, which can be symbolic, metaphorical, metonymical, and so on.[18]

Cinema has been called a chain of visual impressions running and interlocking in an uninterruptible succession of graphic bombardments.[19] What this is to say, is that visual thinking and cinema language have to be understood as a certain kind of intellectual activity, because in a creative cinema a most simple kind of scene involves a massive series of directorial decisions that go far beyond the realistic situation behind the scene.[20]

## 1.3 Interactions

Cinema has been labeled as a kind of mixture of arts, a kind of synthesis, which is to say that cinema, in addition to its own modes of expression (like montage), has a certain way of utilizing familiar elements from other forms of art (like acting, lighting, dressing and so on), and of combining them into a syntax of its own.[21] A spectator who is used to looking for realistic acting, location settings and detailed psychology, might be lost with films that are composed largely of visual images. Often the fact that most films also tell stories, like novels, accelerates the aims to look at the cinema and its core from a literary point of view. That is why the debt coming from literary criticism leads to conclusions by which the literary core of cinema is connected with psychological understanding, exact definitions, search for motive, and so on. That is how the search for visual qualities of the cinema can be omitted by referring vaguely to the aspects of style, and by doing so, not defining what the concept of style is in that connection.[22]

According to David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson:

> "A film will tend to repeat and develop specific techniques in patterned ways. This unified, repeated, developed, and significant use of specific film techniques we shall call *style*."[23]

Bordwell and Thompson point out that "film style interacts with film narrative in many ways".[24] So style and narrative are not isolated from each other, because often film techniques - which are not usually connected with the definition of style - support and enchant the narrative form.

> "Mise-en-scène, camera framing and movement, continuity editing, and other devices can function to advance the cause-effect chain, create parallels, or manipulate story/plot relations. But also, film style may become separated from narrative form, attacking our attention in its own right. Unusual camera movements, discontinuity, editing, and other uses of film technique can call our attention to the techniques as a somewhat independent system."[25]

With style we deal with the subjectivity of the author as Durgnat has stated:

> "Style is simply those pieces of content which arise out of the way the artist makes his basic points."[26]

So, according to this definition, the question whether style is more important than content is a misleading one, and that is why the distinction between "literary content" and "visual style" is particularly misguided because even in literature much of the "content" comes from the "style", as Durgnat has further pointed out.[27]

Because of its analogies with drama and novel, the analyst of fictional narrative film can draw upon literally thousands of years of critical analysis - stretching back through Aristotle's *Poetics*, which laid out the fundamental critical categories (plot, character, spectacle, etc.) which go echoing on, even now, through the columns of one's daily paper's film reviews. Generations of Hollywood practitioners have put down on paper their accumulated how-to-do-it structural wit and wisdom. More recently theoreticians have attempted to deploy the machinery of linguistic and folk-tale analysis in order to understand how narrative films are put together. But astonishingly little work has been done on non-narrative forms, the visual systems of the cinema. It seems likely that the structures of visuality are distinctly different from the structures of literal approaches. Visual considerations carry relatively more weight in the structure of cinema than it seems, yet they are hard to describe and assess. In short, if we are to understand how the visual qualities of the cinema work, we evidently need a different sort of critical and theoretical approach than what is usually practiced.

My aim in this study is to research how cinema and cinematic processes of meaning develop and evolve according to certain qualities and epithets. I shall define the entities connected with cinema and its perception against cinema's essential background, which, according to my view, lies in the visual organization of the whole. That is why I

understand cinema and the outlinings risen from it to be a vast and extensive visual system. How it produces meanings is a prevailing question. How the issue of meaning and the ways of its definition, function, and importance vary within different filmmaking practices is one of the eternal interests of my approach. An emphasis is laid, however, on the visual and stylistic meanings as well. As the main interest lies in the visual qualities of the image, cinema's aural qualities are left in the background, even though they also form an interesting area in approaching the essence of the cinema.

Anything that mediates information can be called language, which leads us to the problem how to define a language. There is a temptation to call everything language, although one might want to restrict the term solely to verbal language, which, in a way, is too narrow a restriction.

On one level film resembles reality, and on another it resembles language, and both of those analogies are so wide and rich that they have expanded film theory to the degree of paralysing it. Between the years 1930-1960 the relationships between film and reality controlled the intellectual dialogue around cinema and its essence because it was felt that cinema's nature as a medium was photographic. That is why its essence was based on realism, and if one had been very strict with the meaning of this word, there would have been great difficulties in defining cinema's fantasy and its dimensions; but luckily enough, fantasy was not totally excluded (it had its chances in *Disney* cartoons and musicals). Yet, if those who really believed in cinematic realism had taken this analysis very seriously, they would have been in great trouble.

Between the years 1970-1990 the academic discussion of cinema's essence has been profiled by the comprehension of film as language, the paradigms borrowed from structural linquistics, semiology and structuralism, the ideas of how cinema is amalgamated by ideology, and how film form is manipulated by certain code systems, and so on.

So, as for cinema and its essence, the analogies to language have been versatile. Following Raymond Durgnat's formulation[28], I suggest that film is not language in any other way than metaphorically, and that its nature is not a realistic one, this being one leading viewpoint in this study.

## 1.4 Images of the Mind

Maya Deren expresses:

> The mechanical similarity between the lens and the eye is largely responsible for the use of camera as a recording, rather than a creative, instrument, for the the function of the eye is to register. However, it is in the *mind behind the eye* that the registered material achieves meaning and impact. In cinema this extension has been ignored. The meaning of the incident or experience is here made an *attribute of the reality in front of the lens* rather than a creative act on the part of the mechanism (including the human being) behind the lens."[29)]

One possibility in approaching the cinema's essence is the idea of film as a dream with certain audiovisual forms. Dreams take abstract ideas - like emotions, which are abstract - and use memories putting them into an audiovisual way of presenting things; so the audiovisual forms of film and dream are taken from reality, but they are very soon liberated from that reality into the smallest unit of perception, for example into colour patches.

The more one looks at the cinema's much-vaunted realism the more it seems to dissolve. The cinema is exciting not because it is more realistic but because it offers a *mental* continuity, and because its ideas are resonances of experience.

Durgnat, again, thinks:

> "The cinema's unprecedented popularity, is not, I suggest, due to any intrinsically greater massiveness of impact, but simply to the fact that it requires less training in its 'literacy' than any other art form. It presents its images to the eye just as the mind presents images to the mind's eye, Its narrative form is exactly that of the dream. Hence the ease with which anyone understands its narrative ellipses, its temporo-spatial jumps, its sequence of short scenes. To be popular films do need a linking idea (usually narrative). Only *avant-garde* minorities like the dream-like film; the popular film may have dream elements and overtones but these must be rationalized into a story. In its mind's eye continuity the film is surpassed only by literature - which requires an understanding of the particular language and perhaps a high degree of literacy; in fact stream-of-consciousness novels are relatively sophisticated."[30)]

Film or cinema is not purely a dream, but a visual mental process. One way of noticing that is to watch films like Norman McLaren's *Begone Dull Care* (1949), which uses colour patches. There you have the same kind of effect as if you were rubbing your own eyes and you would see colour patches floating here and there. They are images, but not photographic or realistic ones, they are solely produced by our nervous system. It is a question of physical reality, a question of activating one's colour perception which produces images; one can see the patches in

one's eye as things; one can treat them as external objects which one is perceiving.

It is obvious that films do resemble dreams. Maybe films also resemble images of the mind while we are awake, let us say a certain kind of visual memories, as in many Tarkovski's films.

Tarkovsky's way of utilizing camera movements reflect the rhythmic pulsation concealed beneath the outside appearance of reality, provoking strong emotional responses and contemplation.

Vlada Petric defines:

> "Encouraged to search for something beyond the image as an *analog* of reality, allowed to ponder upon the presented events/objects, the viewers engage in their own reflection upon what they perceive on the screen. A close analysis of climactic sequences in the two Tarkovsky films shows that they contain many features characteristic of dream process, such as the bizarreness of the situation, strong physical motion, obfuscated peripheral vision (elimination of the image's borders), the flickering effect (light pulsation), an unexpected change of chromatic tonality, spatial-temporal discontinuity, pictorial distortion of objects, decelerated motion, a fluctuating focus (blurring) - all of which contribute to the acceptance of unusual occurrences taking place on the screen."[31)]

But there are also viewpoints according to which film is not a dream because, as soon as you say that film is a dream, the danger lies in the fact that people think you are saying: Film is hallucination, it hypnotizes you, it is an extremely powerful way of presentation, it confuses the spectator's mind in relation between film and dream.

There are differences: first of all, a dreamer always writes his or her own script, which he or she considers an extremely exciting one. So a dreamer has made up a dream for him- or herself, and while we are watching a film, it is always someone else's story about other people. While watching a film, we fully understand that film is distinct from us, it is fiction and we are in the cinema. So there is a contradiction between the image on the screen and our being there, although in principle we are not blurred by the existence of the film, by the existence of the images on the screen.

Film is a set of ideas which are presented by the help of images and sounds.[32)] Film is remarks about external reality, and the structure of an image is pictorial, so it is a question of the structure of human visual perception. The structure of sounds is acoustic, it is the structure of acoustic perception. Visual perception is built around light, it is the question of how light behaves and what kind of information it can produce and how it produces that. Aural perception is formed around sounds and they behave very differently from light and give us very different information. In a sense, thinking is coordination by the associations of sight and sound.

Let us take an example: a light reflecting from a table gives us

information about its shape and position, but the sound of a table gives us no information whatsoever because you can hear no sound from it. But if you make a sound by knocking it, you get information about its material (whether it is made of wood and so on), but no information about its shape.[33)]

That brings us to the conclusion that information given to us by picture and sound is based on different structures. When light moves inside a camera very straightforward, the camera cannot see behind the corner, as cannot our eyes, but the sounds are moving in all directions, so our ears can hear sounds from the corner.

It is difficult to define the differences between these structures, because they have no similarities, and that is why the difficulty of theory lies in the fact that you cannot define the differences because the things are so different by nature.

As a conclusion one can say that the structure of cinema is the structure of two sensory systems, sight and sound, and it is also the structure of thinking because you need that to co-ordinate the whole process.

## 1.5 Semantic Processes

There is no single method covering this study, but as I understand film as a mental, visual process, and as the emphasis lies in the exploring of cinema's visual and stylistic meanings, the semantic processes dealing with film visuality are crucial to my point-of-view.

The concept of ´semantics´ originally refers to philology, where it means the research of meanings with words, and from where it has gradually slid into the meanings themselves and into the research connected with them. There is a willingness to connect semantics with natural verbal language, as linquistics call it, and then it can be either a special area inside linquistics or a wider feature of it. The general semantics is not to be restricted only to words, but also to syntactic meanings and wider references.

Extensions of this kind can change into exceptions or break totally and gain independence through that, and then we can refer with semantics to all kinds of meanings. We can also talk about visual semantics and we can think, not only of signs and symbols, but of the structures of the meaning inside the mind itself.

Rudolf Arnheim writes:

> "My contention is that the cognitive operations called thinking are not the privilege of mental processes above and beyond perception but the essential ingredients of perception itself."[34)]

So it is a question of treating cognitive material on any given level, and every process that may be included in thinking takes place, at least in principle, in perception. Visual perception is visual thinking, confirms Arnheim.[35] One can also say that thinking is internal perception; it comes from one memory trace within the mind encountering other memory traces. Thinking is the *mind perceiving itself.*

A difference between passive reception and active perceiving is contained even in elementary visual experience:

> "As I open my eyes, I find myself surrounded by a given world: the sky with its clouds, the moving waters of the lake, the wind-swept dunes, the window, my study, my desk, my body - all this resembles the retinal projection in one respect, namely, it is given. It exists by itself without me having done anything noticeable to produce it. But is this awareness of the world all there is to perception? Is it even its essence? By no means. That given world is only the scene on which the most characteristic aspect of perception takes place. Through that world roams the glance, directed by attention, focusing the narrow range of of sharpest vision now on this, now on that spot, following the flight of a distant sea gull, scanning a tree to explore its shape. This eminently active performance is what is truly meant by visual perception."[36]

What cinema does, or what an image does, is just as much reality as all the other things in the world (because one is looking at it, so it must be reality), but it rearranges that reality because the cinematic form is a different form. So, instead of "through that world roams the glance directed by attention", in cinema one's glance works in the order dictated by the film director; it is directed by his attention and by the form of the film. And instead of his focusing at will, he is giving a close up, or a long shot, and the camera makes one follow "the flight of a distant sea gull", or it prevents one from doing it. Film form is a different order of perception on a world which in some ways is the same as ours, in other ways different. While one is sitting in a cinema watching images, one can also see the cinema and the other people, and one can see that the image is only an image.

One can refer to smaller parts of that visual world or to its whole framework; so it is a changing, developing and evolving process, while all the aspects are subject to continued confirmation, reappraisal, change, completion, correction, deepening of understanding.[37]

One can speak of *cinematic semantics*, with which we can understand the exploration of cinematic meanings, concentrating on specific cinematic things like exploring the meanings of moving images, succession, montage-combinations and camera-effects. So, in this connection the interest focuses on all kinds of visual and stylistic meanings of cinema.

Thus the question is of the perception of phenomena and thinking (logic), in which there lies a human being's chance of gaining informa-

tion about reality by *perceiving* it with the help of experience and thinking.[38] But as Gordon Rattray Taylor writes in *The Natural History of the Mind:*

> "However, the genius of a Goethe or a Shakespeare, a Sophocles or a Tolstoy, A Milton or a Racine, seems to be of a somewhat different kind. Here it is the imaginative projection which counts, the power to identify with the emotions of the others and to express them in words and simulated deeds. This demonstrates that thought is not solely a matter of intellect. There is a constant interplay between the coolly reasoning cortex and the impulsive, excitable mid-brain. And this is true not only of the works of geniuses but of the 'thinking' of everyday life."[39]

Most thinking is world-gathering and associating, memories coming up in weird orders, and a lot of thinking is approximation between trial and error which might have logic, but there is a difference between that which is determined by logic and which is permitted by logic. What is determined by logic forces very straight thinking, what is permitted by logic includes all the trial and error processes, hypothesizing and the normal way the logical mind works.[40]

> "Cultural changes have compounded the perennial reasons for multiple approaches. Art-house and avant-garde films were geared not to exhaust their meaning but to reveal enough of it, in single or very few viewings; but now video permits 'readercontrolled', repeated, close reading; and academic film study offers a new 'density of interpretation'."[41]

When I am talking about cinema and film I mean moving images generally, which include photography, electronics, television, video and further interactive media. My main interest, however, lies in what is traditionally understood as cinema, which is moving pictures of a world in movement (though there may be films consisting entirely of still pictures, but they, too, have rhythm).[42]

With the help of these understatements I shall make an attempt to define cinematic essentials, the nature of cinematic meaning process, the visual meanings in perception of cinema and the meaningful dimensions of cinematic style related to theoretical thinking and to cinematic examples.

# 2 VISIBLE THOUGHTS

## 2.1 In Search of Cinematic Essences

Visual perception, as I emphasized in the introduction, is not a passive recording of the stimulus material, but an active concern of the mind. When we are interpreting the functioning of the senses thoroughly, we must keep in mind that they did not come out as instruments of cognition for cognition's sake, but evolved as biological aids for survival, so perception is purposive and selective; it has certain aims and, as Rudolf Arnheim[43] has emphasized, active selectivity is a basic trait of vision.[44]

When something appears or disappears, moves from one place to another, or changes its shape or color, it also changes the perceiver's role, and in watching films with moving visual images, that kind of connection brings out new information, changes the previous positions. Raymond Durgnat has pointed out that the reading of a picture is a sequence of mental events exactly like reading some other reality.[45]

Juri Lotman has stated:

> "The world of the cinema is extremely close to the visible appearance of life. The illusion of authenticity, as we have seen, is one of its integral properties. But this world has one rather strange feaure; it always consists, not of all reality, but of a segment carved into the shape of the screen."[46]

From the above we can draw the conclusion that the world of the cinema is a divided and segmented world. That is why there exists a possibility of emphasizing one thing in relation to other things, and the artistic world of cinema arises from all those combinations and possibilities which the different, but suddenly brought-together unities will produce.

Although we can think that the main difference between the cinema image and the rest of the world is that the cinema image is incompatible with the rest of the world, because you can see the rest of the world, there are really two issues in there: one is the quality of the image itself, and the other one is the fact that this image is in a weird relation to the rest of the world.

According to Noël Carroll, "representation, in the sense of classic realism - which encompasses literature, theater, fine art and film - is suspect because it is illusionist."[47)]

This is one way of creating an independent world, and it may be that the value of this kind of object lies in how it is able to reveal the feelings and emotions of its creator, or how an artist can produce meaningful characteristics to the materials he or she is working through.[48)] And further on Carroll thinks that contemporary film theorists have been prone to call mimetic pictorial representations "illusions". [49)]

But consider the realistic representation of a horse: it might be a snapshot, a painting, a statue or a strip of film, a single shot. Why would one say that a realistic shot of a horse is an "illusion" - and Carroll goes even further asking if it makes sense to call such representations "illusions".[50)] Perhaps these things might be called illusions of real things because they represent those things: plays and films are often treated as if they were optical illusions, but as Carroll further points out referring to psychological theories "human organisms do not simply rely on what is imprinted on their retinas for their beliefs but also depend on other evidence and information that surround the moment of perception."[51)]

Illusionists explained that when we are looking at a cinema image that is all we are looking at, that is all we see. But it is not true; for example, when we are looking at a television image, we see everything around it. Likewise, when you see an exciting scene in a film, you know that you are sitting in a chair, your whole body tells you that.

Christian Metz thinks that the moving image is so life-like that the only way you can tell the film is not real, is by going up and touching the screen, especially when looking at a black and white film.[52)] Many contemporary film theorists seem to think that photography + movement equals the total cretination of the spectator.

In my opinion you can see that a photograph is a photograph, and you know that it is not an illusion because the image is real: it is a real thing as an image; you can see it as an image, and that is why the illusion belief has its problems.

Gordon Rattray Taylor defines:

> "When we look at a picture in which depth is important, say a street receding from us, we naturally apply scaling and interpret small human figures as being the same size but further off than larger figures, ignoring their 'real' size as measured on the surface of the paper. This leads to a well-known illusion, in which solid bars of equal phenomenal length are

> placed across a pair of receding railway lines. The upper bar naturally appears larger than the lower, and if it was really part of the picture it would indeed have been larger. In a sense there is no 'illusion'. The only question which arises is whether we are expected to treat the picture as an object (and not apply scaling) or as an impression of a scene (and apply scaling). It is a discrimination we often have to make. When a picture restorer examines the cracks in the paint, or a critic the brushwork, he is treating the picture as an object. The railway lines 'illusion' succeeds inasmuch as it leaves the brain doubt which stance to adopt."[53)]

## 2.2 From Narrative to Description

Metz is right in saying that it is really *movement* that produces the strong impression of reality into cinema.[54)]

The above is related to narrative cinema mostly, although there are other kinds of cinema which do not always tell a story; for example, the talking heads that one sees on a television screen are not necessarily telling a story but, instead, talking about their problems. All the forms of discourse are not narrative: commercials are not usually narrative, and a lot of newsreel is not that either because, if in a newsreel one sees somebody laying a foundation stone, it is not actually a narrative; accordingly one can agree with Durgnat that a film shot is a *descriptive* unit more than a narrative one.[55)] Thus, if someone gives you his or her opinion, or describes his or her state of mind, none of that is narrative. People always think of pictures as being pictures of objects, but supposing you have a landscape, it is not really an object. Then, what is a picture? It is a description of a scene. One can talk about objects in pictures and one can talk about scenes in pictures, and most scenes have objects in them, particularly in photography because, when you do a drawing, you can do a drawing of an object in itself with no background, no scenery, but when you take a photograph, it is usually in a *scene*.

In *Film Language* Christian Metz writes:

> "The cinema begins, where the ordinary language ends: at the level of the "sentence" - the filmmaker's minimum unit and the highest properly linguistic unit of language. We then no longer have two arts: what we have is one art and one language (in this particular case, language itself)."[56)]

Metz feels that narrative has a structural role in movies, and narratology can seem to offer structures independent of those visual and formal characteristics which repel the paradigms of structural linguistics.
Further on Metz points out:

> "It is within the framework of this opposition between the narrative and the image that one can perhaps explain, the awkward, hybrid position of description. We all assume that description differs from narration, and that is a classical distinction, but, on the other hand, a large number of narratives contain descriptions, and it is not even clear that descriptions exist other than as components of narratives."[57]

Durgnat, on the other hand, feels that narratives are made up of descriptions and that a narrative is simply a *description* of a series of events, and narrative is simply a subtype of description.[58]

Description is usually what we have in mind when we want something understood or explained:

> "The *definition* of an automobile tells us very little about the ensemble of functions and factors that may be (a) indispensible to it, (b) regularly associated with it, or (c) potentially open to it. But the *description*, such as one might find in an automobile manual, requires many pages and includes complicated diagrams, involving us in ancillaries like gearboxes, alternators, carburetors. There are as many kinds of description as there are areas of discourse. Psychoanalytical man differs from biological man, surgical man, anatomical man, social man. Each area of discourse is a conceptual structure, or system, partly autonomous from other systems, but destined to link with them in a 'structure of structures', or systems of systems, which would be a complete knowledge of man and which we cannot at present articulate."[59]

Even within the special area of *visual appearance*, a man can be described cubistically, futuristically, romantically, expressionistically, naturalistically, or impressionistically. In each subarea there are as many subareas or subtypes of discourse as there are painters (or filmmakers), and the progression grows because new areas keep evolving, or aggregating, from the obsolence of existing ones.[60]

Durgnat thinks that there are competing tendencies in description:

> "The first involves a stress on *usual characteristics*. Thus a gun turret is no part of the definition of a tank, and tractors also have tracks, but a description of usual characteristics will initially point out both turrets and tracks (until and unless design trends change). There is also a tendency toward minimalism (essential or principal or crucial points only), and one toward fullness. Indeed, very few literary descriptions, however elaborate or flowery, achieve the fullness they imply, for reasons Joyce's *Ulysses*, Butor's *Degrés*, Ponge's *Le Savon*, and Queneau's *Exercises de Style* demonstrate. For description usually has a guiding context other than the object itself, which frees the writer from the normally impossible and futile burden of detailing the thing in itself, exactly, completely and without contamination from (relevance to) outside factors."[61]

The *impression* of objective description centers on (a) an ostentatious exclusion of obviously external thoughts about the described and (b) an unusual concentration on one or two token aspects of the object. In contrast, a fully naturalistic description of phenomena in terms of their

relation to the social or other systems and structures of which they are part normally requires free reference to physical context, social context practical function and necessary concomitants. Such a description is nonobjective when it refuses to isolate the object from its human context or structure, and is intersubjective in that it allows certain phenomena of appearance and association.[62]

Following Durgnat's formulation "a shot is a view from a fixed point or (in the case of track or pan) a line (i.e., a continuous series of points)."[63] Insofar as a shot is a scene, it is a description, and Durgnat goes on:

> "Once we have firmly grasped the fact that the shot is a construction out of physical chronotopography (or topochronometry), where - as the sentence is not, it is entirely obvious that the correspondences between sentences and shots - or linguistic units and cinevisual units - can only be incidental - the product of semantic constructions from form. Since spatial-visual coordinations precede the acquisition of language, it is impossible to argue that visual-spatial perception derives from linguistic structures."[64]

Julian Hochberg writes:

> "A more interesting issue arises in the various attempts to demonstrate the *Whorfian* hypothesis: that our thought processes and perceptions depend on our language. There is really very little evidence that linguistic structure affects our perceptions of the physical properties of objects that we are actually looking at, however. Colors that are easier to name are in fact remembered better (Brown and Lenneberg, 1854), but there is no evidence that they are actually perceived differently. Moreover, the ways in which preverbal infants categorize colors (as estimated by the way in which they direct their gaze from one color to another, in an extremely interesting procedure employed by Bornstein *et al.*, 1976) are essentially identical to the ways in which adults categorize or group colors. The structure of language does seem to affect how we encode and remember things, especially if those things are words or ambiguous pictures. But there is little evidence that our perceptions of physical properties are, under normal conditions, significantly affected by linguistic structure: The structure of the physical world is far more ubiquitous and powerful than that of language."[65]

Durgnat thinks that Metz has confused the word "shot" with the "image", because any shot showing movement must already be a sequence of differing images, parts of which move relative to other parts.[66] Visual and verbal functional equivalence seem to depend on very different semantic content:

> "The shot is certainly a grouping unit, a syntactical unit, but as Metz understands, film has relatively little syntax and what it has isn't a condition of intelligibility as is that of language. Moreover, verbal syntax commonly obeys directives from other structures. The form of the text corresponds to the references of the text. For example, the order of sentences and clauses may correspond to the stages in a process or an argument,

> just as paragraphs and chapters do. Exactly the same is true of breakdowns into shots, choice of angle etc. Far from being a linguistic rule, it is a semantic rule about correspondences between linguistic and prelinguistic structures. The structures of film are largely function of our knowledge of the world (of which other films are only a part), and our expectations as to what we will - or need to be - shown."[67]

Metz analyses and groups shots according to his syntagmas. Metz's syntagmas are relatively long units, which remain closer to stylistic choices, and the director organizes them mainly on the basis of his aesthetic intentions.[68] For Durgnat these syntagmas are inert categories, knowledge of the world, because film theory already understands how the juxtaposition of shots generates meaning (spatial or intellectual): montage theory is clearly a psychosemantic theory which subordinates forms to processes of comprehension.[69] And secondly: the linguistic coupling of paradigms and syntagma risks mutilating the semantics. Metz has a category of "descriptive" syntagma, but he groups it under the chronological syntagmas, so his description of descriptive content is very summary:

> "A shot of a tree with a shot of a nearby stream and a shot of a distant hill together constitute a landscape. But if this were the content of the syntagma, it would be unnecessary; a long shot would do it."[70]

Metz reduces description to a statement of the bare fact of juxtaposition. Most of Metz's syntagma theory concerns chronology, narrative and spatial relationships, but though he assigns narrative a dominant role, "none of his narrative syntagmas are defined in purely narrative terms."[71] More likely, they are dominated by space-time considerations, which are functions of description. There are descriptions which exist outside narratives altogether, and there are descriptions which exist in the course of a narrative, but they can be abstracted, and there are narratives which are descriptions of connections of events.

> "Many types of film sequences correspond to descriptive passages. The establishing shot does not merely specify the locale for a narrative event; it has an informative (descriptive) function. Similarly with many close-ups. Many films linger on landscapes, constituting description rather than establishing a story point."[72]

Durgnat thinks that none of Metz's syntagmas explain the celebrated "Gods" sequence in Sergei Eisenstein's *October* (1927)[73] because this sequence is non-narrative. It is based not merely on contrast, and not merely on variations of "one idea" (God), but constitutes a metaphor, or rather a complex way of differences and distinctions, of forms and connotations, which constitute an argument. The images of the Christians' God are compared with pagan deities, via the generalizing idea (God), until He, too, is "contaminated" by fierce, ignoble, or ludicrous pagan forms:

> "This contamination of connotations requires (1) a careful selection of statues, viewpoint, visual material, (2) editing interactions, and (3) a clear general context (vulgar Marxist atheism). In other images, relations and contexts, these very artifacts might illustrate the cultural richness of Third World art. Experimental re-editing might clarify the extent to which our preference for one interpretation or another derives from (1) the internal content of each shot, (2) their ordering within the sequence, (3) their overall context and (4) spectator choice."[74]

Interactions of this kind are possible because, on descriptional level, there are many elements working together in each shot. Semantic substance is essential in two examples, Harry Watt's *Nightmail* (1936) and Joris Ivens's *Rain* (1929).[75]

*Nightmail* is a documentary that follows a train from London to Edinburgh. This journey constitutes a space which is both continuous and non-continuous. The editing principle depends less on space traversed than on images juxtaposed. The journey hardly constitutes a narrative, more lyrical moments and aspects of description instead.

In *Rain* a shower begins and ends in a city, so the film becomes a description of a shower. It is a cityscape and rainscape with ambiguously simultaneous or successive shots, so the film corresponds to a painting. There are also more lyrical moments than moments of narration; it is a description of a shower and not a narration of it.

Durgnat thinks that "chronology is merely a precondition for narratives, but they require something more besides: a sense of potential alternatives playing a significant role."[76]

> "And since film is a visual form, it is impossible not to adduce visual descriptions: still-lives, landscapes, portraits. However marginal these genres may seem, if one restricts one's attention to movies, we must remember that film also includes 'home movies' which are normally descriptive."[77]

These feelings and emotions can be pure abstractions, and the result may be totally fictious. Brendan Prendeville describes:

> "Abstract reasoning happens independently of verbal and numerical processes; it is 'put into' these in order to test its applicability and its thoroughness. Spatial thinking feeds on our physical involvement with things, facilitates the mental manipulation of structures; its opposite depends on, or develops, a fluency with conventional systems, verbal and numerical. The first grows out of private experience, the second shows a 'public' concern for 'the way we do things'. The first generates experiments on the environment, the second controls these. The second operates predictably, according to law; the first operates unpredictably, according to individual (or 'inner') experience."[78]

## 2.3 Conceptual Dimensions

According to Ian Jarvie,[79] it is not the material object that is being addressed when we consider the very possibility of thinking about film in general; we can loosely speak of content, referring usually to a form of narrative. The object of this kind of thinking is not material, and it is not immaterial or mental either. The people and the objects in the cinema are concrete, but the relationships between them are abstract, and some of them are just as much part of the picture as the object, because the distance between them is just as concrete as the objects. Therefore, the stories in films, the plots, themes and meanings are also abstract objects.

For Ian Jarvie the fundamental question of methodology in philosophic aesthetics is: How can we think, write and talk about arts?[80] This notion leads us further to questions about the nature of art itself: Are films art, what is cinema and so on? Throughout the history of cinema aestheticians have tried to define the essence of cinema, the purity of cinema. Raymond Durgnat has stated that cinema is a "mongrel muse".[81] The "purity" of cinema only lies in the way in which it combines diverse elements to its own "impure" whole.[82] So the cinematic essence is in the interaction - how it integrates other art forms - and then there is the possibility of cinema to exist "between" and "across" their boundaries.[83] And this is the way how cinema can gain its own dignity by being a mixture. Further on Durgnat thinks that the definition of cinema, as we know it, is a succession of moving images in the same place.[84]

Traditional aesthetics saw that the essence of cinema was in movement and cutting, but if cinema is a mongrel medium, then we must relate movement and cutting to all its affinities. Consequently, we have to take a new look at the cinema, to look at screen editing in a new way.

Cinema is a performance art like theatre, but cinema is also a *pictorial* art, and pictorial signs are iconic in one respect and arbitrary in every other. Traditionally there has been very little talk about cinema's theatrical affinities, because of the heavy burden on montage and cutting. But a visually minded theater director can also guide the spectator's eye by controlling the whole stage and using cinematic effects, manipulating the space between actors; thus theatre-space can also be very fluid and pictorially interesting.

During the silent period miming in cinema was very effective; there was no use for picture or words, although a silent film often treats words as if they were pictures, and uses typography and calligraphy in a kind of expressive way, which for example literature does not do, because literature actually does not understand the shapes of the letters. In Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's *Sunrise* (1927) the letters illustrate the drowning of a woman. That is an example of how letters can be half

words and half picture, how a sign which is not pictorial turns into a pictorial sign. The basic element of theatre is not the setting, it is the presence of the actor. Cinema, again, uses actors because the story film depends upon the actor's personality, his ability to use gestures, postures, atmosphere and physiognomy. So, cinema is a way and an act of showing things, an art of mise-en-scène.

But cinema is also an art of visuals in motion, and Durgnat has further defined that "apart from current avant-gardes (e.g. kinetic art) the only other arts of visual movement are ballet and mime - both theatrical arts".[85] But the director with a strong and sophisticated visual sense can make most of what we call pictoriality, the ability to cast and read sophisticated messages in a visual form. In other words, it is a question of nuancing the elements of cinema.

André Bazin spoke of cinema as an idealistic medium,[86] which was one way of creating an illusion of reality through some aesthetic and other choices. That is how Bazin's view shows how film theory either implicitly or explicitly posits the question of cinema's basic nature as a medium or language - in general, how cinema produces meanings - and also the question of the relationship of cinema and reality.

> "Achieving the truth of a film image - these are mere words, the name of a dream, a statement of intent, which, however, each time it is realised, becomes a demonstration of what is specific in the director's choice, of what is unique in his position. To seek one's own truth (and there can be no other, no 'common' truth) is to search for one's own language, the system of expression destined to give form to one's own ideas."[87]

The above shows how Andrei Tarkovski has classified his thoughts about the role of the cinema. Tarkovski feels that cinema has its poetic meanings; although the methods might change, the only objectivity is the subjectivity of the author.[88]

When we think of film history and theories around it, we can look at it as if its different phases could be some kind of answers to the basic question of cinema's language (nature and structure) and consider cinema's relation to reality a kind of photographic form of reproduction and a form of expression. Accordingly, we can think of certain important phases from that point of view, certain "moments" in film theory and history, which have defined the basis of cinema. We can speculate the ideas of Bazin, Eisenstein, Epstein, Vertov, Pudovkin, Arnheim, Mitry, etc. They all have tried to clarify cinema's conceptual dimensions; yet, according to Gerald Mast, they haven't succeeded well enough:

> "True, they have defined some kinds of cinema; they have defined some of the qualities unique to those kinds of cinema; they have defined the characteristics and devices they find most valuable in some of those kinds of cinema; they have simply not defined cinema."[89]

Mast says as follows:

> "A work of cinema is an *integrated succession of projected images and (recorded) sounds.*"[90]

This definition would apply to slide shows. Mast feels that the appeal of cinema is some kind of cumulative kinetic hypnosis of the uninterrupted flow of film and time. It corresponds to Tarkovski's central idea of cinema as a time-art. In connecting video with this one can talk about time-based arts, as Roy Armes writes in *On Video*:

> "A video image is actual, not real, and we remain aware that it is a rendering of reality, even when it gives us undigested segments of real time sounds and images. In this respect video recording resembles sound recording more than photography: however precise it may be, it carries with it an awareness of possible contrivance, of artifice."[91]

Tarkovski expresses his conception in the following quotation:

> "The dominant, all-powerful factor of the film image is *rhythm*, expressing the course of time within the frame. The actual passage of time is also made clear in the character's behaviour, the visual treatment and the sound - but these are all accompanying features, the absence of which, theoretically, would in no way affect the existence of the film. One cannot conceive of a cinematic work with no sense of time passing through the shot, but one can easily imagine a film with no actors, music, décor or even editing."[92]

Mast sees that the flow of film moves steadily, but within that forward flow one can distinguish between three kinds of "movement", three kinds of succession: (1) *literal* (the succession of frames), (2) *imagistic* (the succession of shots) and (3) *structural* (the succession of "events").[93] Mast also thinks that Eisenstein was one of the classical film theorists who built their theories on the premise that the imagistic succession of shots (rather than the literal succession of frames) was the essence of cinema art.[94]

This is what Mast says:

> "Visual succession in a film is an optical illusion, the illusion of wholeness and continuity produced by the movement of celluloid through the projector. Cinematic succession makes whole out of mere pieces: (1) an apparently fluid whole out of obviously disparate frames; (2) an apparently spatial or temporal or imaginative whole out of obviously disparate shots; (3) an apparently structural whole out of obviously individual 'events'."[95]

The photographing of reality is an essential trait of some kind of cinema, but it is not the essence of cinema itself, although Siegfried Kracauer has claimed that "the basic properties of film are identical with the properties of photography. Film, in other words, is uniquely equipped to record

and reveal physical reality and, hence, gravitates toward it".[96]

Eisenstein and Arnheim had slightly different opinions on that subject because they felt that the cinematographic process was not mere copying of reality, but - as Arnheim stated[97] - the cinema reduces three-dimensional life to a two-dimensional surface, and through that it alters our perception of it with lenses, which see unlike the eye, and with camera angles, which see as the artist wants to see.

Related to that, Gerald Mast thinks:

> "But do we perceive the projected image as two-dimensional at all? The very fact that we call one object in the projected image apparently close to or far away from another implies that there is some kind of mental translation of the two-dimensional image into three-dimensional terms. In the cinema, when we see large and small, we translate our perception either into close and far (based on our awareness of relative distances and the sizes of objects in life) or into not so close or far but deliberately distorted for some effect by the lens. We perceive the projected image as a kind of three-dimensional system, once we have learned to translate it (which means that we must learn to watch cinema, just as we must learn any system of translation - and just as we learn to translate sizes into distances in life)."[98]

Eisenstein, among other Russian theorists, was the first to see the full possibilities of the early fragmentations of space and time in cinema. The emphasis was on cutting, which depended on showing. That is how Eisenstein brought to film an eye as 'painterly' as that of the German expressionists; Eisenstein-type of editing became part of film language generally and featured particularly in the work of film theoreticians and documentarists, who were often the same people.

> "In *The General Line* (1929) Eisenstein shows peasants rejoicing over the operation of their first cream-separator. Eisenstein's plastically superb sequence, ostensibly watching it 'through their dazzled eyes', is also an expression of exhilaration in visually plastic terms - whirling, shining - and comes to stand for the fertility of nature - intercut images of bull and suckling calves give the cream a layer of Freudian meaning; it is *mother's* milk."[99]

Stefan Scharff thinks that, like science, cinema works with a set of facts and has the ability to reduce larger phenomena to primary components.[100] Further on, he thinks that the resulting cinematic experience is the sum of several processes operating together, because visual forms converging with factors of meaning create tensions, and cinema solves the problems of functioning on so many perceptual levels at once through its own specific structures.[101] As Durgnat has stated,[102] the theoreticians wanted to prove that cinema was a fine art, with its own "purity", even if the "passive" camera had to content itself with passively recording reality. And the documentarists tended to take what they were photographing as "given", as something which they were not creating so

much as interpreting. According to Durgnat, the formal language of cutting can be analysed into four elements:

> "There is the 'collison' of one composition against another - as in Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, and of course, in Marker's *La Jetée*, which is cut from still images, and shows how cutting can exist as forcefully between static images as between moving ones. Often again, the static elements of the image can be 'carried away' by bold movement, which becomes the predominating element, so that images can be cut as movement-against--movement (as in the example from *Intolerance* and in the *Odessa steps*). In the films of Jean Renoir, the individual image is often so loose and free as hardly to exist as an entity, and the whole view of man is implied in their cameras' continuous movements, through 'free', 'continuous' space. In other films again, the composition of individual images is not merely displeasing, or comparatively neglected; yet the central action is strongly and carefully modulated (as in the metronomed sequences from *Our Daily Bread* and *Queen Christina*).[103)]

So we can think that all these different styles are merely a matter of emphasis, and they can be counterpointed in various ways. Juri Lotman has demonstrated that there are two tendencies present in the language of cinema: one based on the repetition of elements or on everyday or artistic experience, which establishes expectations, and another which violates this system of anticipations, singles out semantic bundles in the text. According to Lotman, furthermore, at the basis of film meaning we find a displacement, a deformation of customary orders, facts or appearances of objects.[104)]

Lotman is quite strict in his distinction between convention and novelty, whereas we most often seem to swim through life, expecting a stream of surprises. When something unusual happens, we scarcely think that it has violated our routines. That is a point of view which semiotics use a lot: the human mind works with extremely rigid patterns, the meaning is specified, everything is coded, conventioned, and stereotyped, and language tells you what the structures are. If reality is different from the structures of language, one hardly notices it because one's mind is so bound into what comes over it. In real-life operations one moves through a continually fluctuating world, and even in routine-like walking cars turn up in unexpected places and one suddenly bumps into people; so the whole life is a series of surprises, and one's mind is adjusted to deal with that; one is not surprised to be surprised.

Aesthetics often praise poetic symbols for their richness of connotations, rather shortchanging signs, whereas semiology, defining itself as the science of signs, commonly proposes that connotations are fickle or elusive.[105)] Durgnat prefers to emphasize the speed with which context and/or style can transform a simple-denotation sign into a complex-connotation symbol:

> "It often happens that denotations may be rapidly thrust to the periphery of meaning while a connotation takes over. Thus 'rose' can rapidly and normally come to denote one of its own connotations: beauty, freshness, blushes, erotic excitement, the female labia; or thorns and therefore blood and martyrdom (but even here, there is always the idea of a *loving* martyrdom...); or the purely technical processes of horticulture; or the 'English rose'... etc."[106)]

And further on:

> "It will be seen that the same item, 'rose', possesses various connotations, some of which it would be distinctly paradoxical to bring together (it would be strange, or witty, or metaphysical, or mannerist to describe a rose by mixing horticultural-technical terms with erotic ones). Or one might move from 'rose' to 'thorn', from 'thorn' to crown of thorns', and from there to 'Jesus', who would become the 'rose of man'. The move from 'thorn' to 'crown of thorns' requires/reveals (1) a specifically Christian culture, and (2) pressure from ideas of sustained suffering as glory, etc. And one element in literary art, as in chess, is that of unexpected move. Though *permitted* by connotation chains, it is not *determined*, in its context, by them."[107)]

So, at each stage language permits many alternative moves, and a creative thinker proposes particularly unusual but valuable ones.

Consequently, a thinker must subtly control the relations of his concepts to the matter for which they stand. In order to acquire sufficient generality, these concepts must transcend the particular aspects of the experiences from which they are taken. In spite of their abstractness, they must continue to reflect the relevant features of their referents. The risk of neglecting this obligation is particularly great in concepts that do not directly envisage their applications but replace or superimpose upon them other images at a more abstract level.

Durgnat, again, expresses his conception:

> "Pleasure, pain, emotions, moods, ideas, values and moral commitments are not only subjective but also intersubjective, that is, social facts, and as much every bit as hard and objective as physical factors. Insofar as their complexity and changeability connotes fickleness and elusiveness, the criticism must be of the crudity of our measuring instruments. Parallels to the changeability of meanings, as of moods, morale, and morality, lie in meteorology and climatology, whose complex configurations must accommodate spectacular spot crises, like typhoons, unique deviations from relatively stable norms, overall climactic areas and tiny microclimates, and slow historical changes, like ice ages."[108)]

Related to the above, Durgnat points out: "A phrase like 'mental climate' should assert the objectivity and dynamism of the psychic aspects of culture - without isolating them from external influences corresponding to geology, astronomy, etc. But so strong is our current fixation on solid objects, that even that metaphor can shortchange the *solidity* of human appetites..."[109)]

In *Contrary Imaginations: A Psychological Study of the English Schoolboy* Liam Hudson says that there are people with two kinds of imaginations, convergers and divergers.[110] Convergers are those who are looking for regular patterns, coherence and strict logic; they become scientists and mathematicians. Divergers are people who, as soon as you present them with a pattern, think of it as a surprise, or play with it; they become artists. So Liam Hudson's tests are one approach in differentiating arts from science, although he admits that "creativity" is in both cases intimately connected.[111]

Given so many coexisting structures, with repermutations, flexibilities, impurities and incompletenesses, it is not surprising that sets and networks often provoke multiple interpretations. This multiplicity is distressing only if one requires a work of art to be a definitive statement or to facilitate an (objective) interpretation.

As Durgnat points out:

> "Without falling into solipsism, or denying that artworks can be relatively unambiguous, or that, even given ambiguity, some interpretations are better than others, it is often useful to think of a text as an *objet trouvé* whose meaning is projected into it by the reader; it is an object to help him clarify his thought, more like a chess game with many outcomes than a riddle with only one answer."[112]

In a cognitive process one thing leads to another, but it is not a digression, and the things that one remembers must also be chunked. Gordon Rattray Taylor thinks that memory, like perception and other brain functions, must be hierarchic.[113] And there are not only chunks but also chunks of chunks and chunks of chunks of chunks. Each level may have a different code.[114] R. L. Gregory writes in *Mind in Science:*

> "One might say that hypotheses of science serve as chunks for conveying large amounts of information economically, and that object perception is the chunking of bits of sensory information so that we *see* objects."[115]

## 2.4 Selectivity and Continuity

The first step in analyzing a film is to segment it into sequences. A sequence is a major part of the film, consisting of at least one shot and usually more than one shot. A sequence is not an arbitrary division, but rather it is demarcated by certain cinematic devices (fades, dissolves, cuts, black screen, sound shifts, and so on). There may also be sequences that run straight from each other, and cuts can take place inside a of them. If one has a montage sequence, the definition of that is that it is a

series of cross-fades, a series of dissolves. Moreover, a sequence has a conceptual coherence, and sequences form meaningful units. In different sorts of films we may find different sorts of sequences; most of them in a narrative film are called scenes.[116] If the camera is moving, the scene changes as much as in montage sequences, although somewhat mere slowly. If one does a 180-degree pan from a close-up of a view and the camera moves around, the beginning and the end are just as different as in a reverse angle cutting.

From about 1924 till the forties a typical visual structure of a scene in a Hollywood cinema would be something like what Durgnat has suggested.[117] It would open with an establishing shot, setting the scene and stimulating the atmosphere. The next would be a two-shot of the protagonists, usually in what the French call *'Le plan americain'*, i.e. a head-to-knees, although this gradually tended to give way to a head-to-waist. Close-ups would be reserved for the climax of the scene - first a close 'two-shot', then a close-up of each character - briefly returning to the mid-shot or establishing shot to reconnect the climax to the dramatic context. A title or a fade would precede the establishing shot of the next sequence.

André Bazin describes the classical film as being like a photographed play; the story events seem to exist objectively while the camera seems to do no more than give us the best view and emphasize the right things.[118] David Bordwell thinks that narration can, in fact, draw upon any film technique as long as the technique can transmit story information because conversations, figure position, facial expressions, and well-timed encounters between characters all function just as narrationally as do camera movements, cuts or bursts of music.[119] In characterizing classical narration Bordwell uses Meir Sternberg's formula, according to which there are three spectra[120]:

> "(1) A narration is more or less *self-conscious*: that is, to a greater or lesser degree it displays its recognition that it is presenting information to an audience. (2) A narration is more or less *knowledgeable*. The issue of knowledge involves point-of-view. (3) A narration is more or less *communicative*."[121]

Bordwell thinks that Sternberg's formula is helpful in analyzing classical narration.[122] Bordwell seems to think that a filmmaker starts with a certain structure which he or she then keeps applying; but one can also think that a filmmaker starts with a certain general idea which he or she then works towards a structure and keeps inventing the structure each time, and on doing so, he or she can invent a different one each time. Once a filmmaker has invented a structure, he or she tends to use it again, so frequently a filmmaker's style does fall into patterns.

As Rudolf Arnheim expresses it:

> "The motion picture in itself is an event: it looks different every moment, whereas there is no such temporal progress in painting or in sculpture. Motion being one of its out-standing properties, the film is required by aesthetic law to use and interpret motion."[123]

Consequently, for a spectator many kinds of shifts in viewpoints (through variated camerawork) may be completely invisible because he or she looks through the images, not at them, and therefore has little or no idea where one shot ends and another begins. A sense of the image appears to a spectator only when the film draws attention to itself, or when a spectator has made a close study of the medium.

For Kracauer the motion picture's filmic qualities were connected with spatiality and its compositional values,[124] and for Arnheim uniquely cinematic properties were actually filmic ones, equally applicable to still-photography as to motion pictures.[125] Arnheim dealt with the absence of space-time continuum, which for him meant the way how editing alters spatial and temporal continuity, but according to Mast, as we speak of the term "cinema", we are dealing with a unique way in which the cinematic *process* uses film material:

> "It adds the vector of time to the filmic dimension of space; it complicates the simple spatiality of the still photograph by adding elements of continuousness (of movement, of sound) and succession (of frames, of events)."[126]

Further on Mast stresses that film (still photography) is a spatial art; its elements exist *simultaneously* in space, whereas cinema is a temporal art; its elements appear *sequentially* in time.[127] Photography depends on freezing the movement of that moment, so photography falsifies the world by freezing it, and by falsifying, it gives the world expressive strength. Film works exactly the opposite way: it starts with a movement, and it unfreezes the world; even when the world is static, one can, by moving the camera, give movement to the static world. Film is not a photographic art so much as it is a performance art because still-photo thinking is a reverse of moving thinking. So one essential filmic operation can be considered sequential linking of spatial images. But with Mast we have this problematic view that, instead of adding the vector of time to the filmic dimension of space, it can be maintained that in film time is beginning already. With a film one does not see a still photograph which then begins to move. What happens is that one sees a movement, and often one is not conscious of the shot as a highly organized composition.

One could say that film really works with two space-time continua: one is the film with all its cuts and omissions (that is the concrete one that we actually see when watching a film), but then this suggests the continuum of the diegesis. So, if there is a scene with the hero standing in a gondola, and in the next scene one sees him on a pagoda, the

actual continuum is a splitium, but through our knowledge of the real world we know that he must have travelled from Venice to China.[128] In a film one actually does not see the diegesis, the story, but instead, one sees moments out of which one's knowledge of the world tells that there must have been a story. So, film absolutely relies on a spectator's eagerness to invent a story.

As we have seen previously, cinema is labelled by selectivity, viewpoints, which are developed through choices. Even the shortest documentary contains a lot of organizing, a point of view of fiction. So the essential cinematic strategy contains the idea by which one can hide things in a film, in order to gradually reveal them. Through this kind of mechanism a series of cinematic shots shape into a series of emphasises, throughout the selective and manipulative role of the camera. That is why film is not a reproduction of reality, because, once a scene has been cut into shots, we are not working anymore with the reproduction of reality; instead, we are working with the statements referring to that reality. In a sense film seems "real" because it reproduces the way we see things in the world; it has not got so much to do with the fact that it reproduces the world exactly, but it reproduces the way in which we look at it. Cutting into shots sometimes corresponds to selection and manipulation, like when in a film one hides themes in order to reveal them, which sometimes corresponds to the way in which one normally uncovers reality (one sees a thing in a long shot, then walks up to it, and it is in close-up; then one walks around it, and it is like a cut or camera movement). In many films this may reproduce normal perception, which in one sense is manipulation and in another it is not. Selection can rely on natural processes, natural perception, and it can rely on manipulation as a trick made by the filmmaker. Most of our thinking goes on in the intervening areas between reality and fiction, which can be called speculation or hypothesizing; that is an area of uncertainty.

In cinema it is possible to work with small, restricted shot-dissections or shot-breakdowns. A good example is the musicals of the 1930's with Busby Berkeley, with their heavy shot-breakdowns. He had this idea of *monocular vision*, which was not based on any film theory, but was a very analytical approach. In his early production numbers he followed a stage practice of constructing a spectacle, which looked much the same from different viewpoints. But then he realized that the film camera gave him this monocular vision which is the alternation between different viewpoints. He felt that the world of cinema was completely fictional. Yet, according to Hollywood-thinking the public felt that cuts actually disrupted the story; so its attraction had to be concentrated on other matters in a film-image, so that it would be possible to make the transitions between shots look as smooth and elegant as possible. A very strong fixation of visual perception inside an image is movement and all the meanings connected with it. That is why in a Hollywood film cutting

was mostly connected with movement because it has a controlling meaning for the eye and the look, and then the attention moves away from the shifting image, which makes cutting look "softer". But if, instead, we cut into strong, fixed, and planned lines, the visual perception becomes more "fragmentary" and cutting more manifested.[129] Cutting on movement is not required for continuity rules, it is required for smooth cuts.

The continuity rules were derived from this viewpoint, which were usually followed in Hollywood, although they were no absolutes. They were actually the basic conditions of all cinema, not just of Hollywood cinema. The Americans choose the smooth part, which gives the Hollywood continuity, and the Russians choose another way of presenting. The basic reason for these rules was that real space - the space which the screen picture suggests to the spectator - has 360 degrees. When we move through real space, we know where we are because we have just moved through real space to get there. But the cinema spectator looking at a screen picture has to remain facing the screen; he or she does not move through real space, and each cut is (by definition) a sudden omission of space. Now, some shifts the spectator can work out quickly, but when the camera moves round to "the other side" of an action - from whichever side it started - all the rights and the lefts of the action reverse the direction. It is rather like a mirror-image in that respect. This sudden jump around every movement and position into its opposite can be (a) a visual shock and/or (b) more or less confusing: "Where am I?"[130]

The basic continuity rules are:

1) The exit / re-entry rule, or *"Rule of opposite re-entry"*, which means to carry a movement, look, or space in a straight line across a cut, to have it re-enter from the side of the screen opposite the side which it left. Similarly for top/bottom and opposite corners etc.

2) *"Don't cross the line"*, the line - the 180 degree line, the action line, the action axis; found (a) in any shot, when one draws a line along the camera's line-of-view to meet; (b) a line drawn between most prominent objects being furthest apart in or near the action; (c) this line is the 180-degree line, so (d) don't let the camera cross it and then turn around to watch the action from the other side. But you can cross the line to get closer to something (e.g. to pick out someone in a close-up); yet, you must not turn the camera round. But on this side of that 180 degree line, the camera can turn right around up to the 180 degrees. That allows you to use two different methods: (a) Reverse angles, a shot at more than 90 degrees to the previous - anything up to 180 degrees. To that extent, it is the other way round, a "reverse direction", as you come right up towards the 180 degrees; (b) over-shoulder shots, which are a common case of the near 180 degrees. Reverse the angle to see in a corner of the screen the back or the side of the head or shoulder of the person facing the face which you are centring on. It is often useful as a quiet reminder of the presence, the dramatic potentialities of the "silent partner".

3) *Cut on movement*, because movement pre-empts the eye's attention and softens any clashes that might occur between strong static shapes.

4) *Change the angle*. When you cut between shots of the same scene or object from different distances, change the camera-position by absolute minimum 15 degrees. The same reason, as for rule 3, plus that the actors can not repeat movements absolutely exactly, and the angle-change distracts the eye just enough.

There are also various other points. Eg. when cutting between two faces, slant each at a different angle to the other, to avoid the clash of a flat-on--face shapes. The angle-change changes the perspectives, and therefore also the face-shapes.[131)]

According to Bordwell & Thompson,[132)] the basic purpose of the continuity system is to control the potentially disunifying force of editing by establishing a smooth flow from shot to shot. All of the possibilities of editing are directed to this end. Firstly, graphics are kept roughly similar from shot to shot; the figures are balanced and symmetrically deployed in the frame; the overall lighting tonality remains constant; the action occupies the central zone of the screen. Secondly, the rhythm of the cutting is usually made dependent on the camera distance of the shot; long shots are left on the screen longer than medium shots, and medium shots are left on longer than close-ups.[133)]

My point-of-view is that the basic purpose of continuity system is not that one is controlling something; it is more that one is telling the spectator where things are in relation to each other, compensating for the fact that the spectator can not move his or her eye around a continuous space. The graphics are not kept roughly similar from shot to shot, and the figures are not balanced and symmetrically deployed in the frame; the overall lighting tonality remains constant except when it does not, and the action occupies the central zone of the screen except when it does not.

Why would greater distance in a shot slow down the rhythm? One reason could be that the greater the distance is in the shot the more detail there tends to be in the shot; therefore the eye takes longer to look at all the things. Another reason might be that distance makes the spectator think that it is a long way, so one gets there more slowly. On intuitive grounds one can claim that the more distant the camera is the more detailed the shots are; therefore, the longer the spectator takes to read the shot the greater the distances are on the screen.

Raymond Durgnat thinks:

> "We would rather paraphrase Thorold Dickinson and say that *all* continuity rules can be broken, provided that (a) you know them and/or the reasons for them, (b) other elements in the shot convey, swiftly or slowly as required, the information which is thereby lost, and (c) your target

> audience will sense and respect the meaning of any transitory confusion."[134)]

Consequently, in criticizing Christian Metz's underlinings, Durgnat feels that Metz virtually abolishes the pictorial when he suggests that the needs of movie narratives shape the 'language' of film.[135)]

> "Not at all: the visual syntax of a non-narrative like, say, Joris Ivens's *Rain* is exactly identical with that of his lyrically descriptive, loosely narrative *New Earth*, which is identical with that of 'visible editing' (a.k.a. 'dynamic editing', 'Russian editing') in narrative movies like Machaty's *Ecstasy*: and it is only another dialect, perhaps only another idiom, of the 'invisible editing' whose rules of decorum Hollywood usually preferred, but didn't hesitate to abandon, whether briefly or at length." [136)]

Thus, although visible editing and invisible editing are often found in the same film, it is possible to distinguish them as predominant styles because they represent a different spatial syntax.

Durgnat describes:

> "One exploiting the subliminal disorientation and kinetic 'jolt' when successive spaces don't quite match (but come near enough to doing so for the mismatch to register), whereas visible editing, which is equally cavalier it its disrespect for the 'real' space of the 'implied illusion', avoids the zones of dynamic discrepancies."[137)]

## 2.5 Montage between Images: Memory, Eye and Look

Arthur Koestler has stated:

> "The mind is insatiable for meaning, drawn from, or projected into, the world of appearances, for unearthing hidden analogies which connect the unknown with the familiar, and show the familiar in an unexpected light. It weaves the raw material of experience into patterns, and connects them with other patterns; the fact that something reminds me of something else can itself become a potent source of emotion."[138)]

Julian Hochberg writes:

> "Even pictures, though they are man-made and symbolic are not arbitrary, but share stimulus features with the scenes that they represent. Considered as symbols in a strict sense, pictures are symbols of special kind - they are *iconic* symbols, which work by virtue of the features shared with the objects and scenes they represent."[139)]

In cinema montage thinks through images because cinema is the only form of art which is a succession of images in the same space. All the

other visual forms of art generally consist of one image only, and all the aspects related to editing are made inside that one image. So the composition of an image or the succession of points of interest, or the structure of the image related to looks, colours or other aspects, are organised into one image, and the eye moves in the space inside this image.

Although cinema is montage between images, the cinematic image is a compilation of different elements; thus, as in painting, there are also visions inside one single image. And the complexity of cinema is not so much based on the fact that cutting between images would replace the montage inside an image than on the fact that we are dealing with both things at once: we are controlling the movements of the spectator's eye, and what is more important, we are controlling the movements of the spectator's thoughts inside one image, and then we put them against the following image.

But, because cinema is also an art of movement, it can not be just a question of montage inside or between images, but also a vision of how movement relates to the lines of the look, how it transforms and guides them.

The spectator's thoughts tend to follow the line of the look, if there is a strong look; and if there is an element of surprise, then the thoughts of the spectator tend to move with the look. Thus, cutting in cinema does not happen only between the pictorial points of interest, but also according to the action lines and directions in a film. There are many things happening similarly, and no simple rules to explain it all.

D.W. Hamlyn writes in *In & Out of the Black Box: On the Philosophy of Cognition*:

> "But memory is a much more complex phenomenon than that. It is easier to make sense of what one perceives if it is familiar, or if that kind of thing is familiar, but what is involved in finding that thing familiar and finding that kind of thing familiar may be quite different. A further point is that one may find something familiar without any explicit recollection of when one experienced it or something like it before. A theory that connects memory essentially with information storage is of a part with a memory theory based on the idea of memory traces. That is to say that it presupposes the setting up and maintenance of some state of the system which has its effects upon other states of the system."[140)]

Richard L. Gregory thinks that memories are similar to perceptions, as we experience the present with the senses:

> "I argue that perceptions are hypotheses of the present and immediate future. Like perception, memory depends upon gap-filling, and guessing from inadequate (stored) data. It seems appropriate to suggest that memories are hypotheses of the past. They are thus closely related and linked to perceptions."[141)]

Memories are bits of the past, and on this account, they are not links with reality; they are samples of past reality, which thus, in some sense, still exists. Gordon Rattray Taylor thinks that "in general the different components of memory lead to one another and we pursue elusive memories by exploring the associations which we do recall."[142] In his opinion, also, "memories are marvellously cross-indexed."[143]

> "Sometimes meeting an old acquaintance after many years will bring memories flooding back; sometimes a smell will do it; or, as in the instance made famous by Proust, a tiny incident such as dipping a cake in tea. But usually these hypermnesic records seemed to be formed during or just before an emotional stress. Details which one was not even aware of perceiving at the time come back."[144]

If thinking takes place in the realm of images, many of these images must be quite abstract since the mind operates often at high levels of abstraction. In Chris Marker's documentary *Sans Soleil* (1982) the structure is *mosaic*. It is not only a question of images and what might link them, but a question of spaces between the images, relations between images in space and in time. The whole of a mosaic is almost invariably embedded in a larger architectural and geographical whole. Free-floating images connect different cultural manifestations, rituals and practices conjuring the past. For Marker it is impossible to reconcile the realist status of the images with their fluctuating status in time. Words and images are laden with meaning, and the narration goes forwards and backwards, in a style that reproduces associative thought processes. It is a way of expressing extremely complex states of consciousness and awareness far beyond anything summarizable as a theme or as a mere perceptual disruption or formal defamiliarization. Marker's film creates a complex set of psychological, emotional, and intellectual adjustments of a viewer's attention. Marker's style reminds us that meaning is enacted. It is not a quality of an abstract system of themes and ideas nor a more or less fixed stance toward other more or less fixed, logical, perceptual, or representational norms. It is the consequence of an activity, a performance, the result of a series of shifting choices. One feels Marker's stylistic choices being enacted and continuously revised within the flow of the images. The author is felt to be vigorously *in* the text, meditatively moving around it, adjusting relationships, creating connections, comparing, discriminating, and judging different positions. Consequently, Marker's method gives us a very special sense of what meanings are and how they are made in time and with difficulty. They are always in process, up for revision, adjustment, enlargement, and correction.

Steve Jenkins describes:

> "Until that point, films like Marker's (if there are any others) can only be works in progress, tentatively articulating the experience of someone who 'after so many stories of men who have lost their memory ... has lost

> forgetting'. The paradox being that the images which are used to construct a memory ('I wonder how people remember things who don't film, don't photograph, don't tape') become the memory itself."[145]

It is well known that we can only remember a small number of unrelated items in immediate memory (something between five and seven), and in order to remember a larger number of items, they must be committed to more permanent storage in an encoded form (i.e., in an abstracted, symbolic or reduced form). Julian Hochberg thinks that, because the succession of our eye movements is often quite rapid (about 4 per second), an observer will normally make more fixations during the inspection of a single scene than he can hold in his immediate memory.[146] That is why some parts of his perception of the scene must draw on encoded recollections of his earlier glimpses.

Further on Hochberg speculates:

> "Because our eyes register fine detail only within a very small *foveal* region of the visual field, we must learn about the visual world by a succession of glances in different directions. Such glances are made by *saccadic* eye movements, whose endpoints are decided before the movement is initiated (i.e., saccades are *ballistic* movements): where one looks is decided in advance. Therefore, the content of each glance is always, in a sense, an answer to a question about what will be seen if some specific part of the peripherally viewed scene is brought to the fovea. In viewing a normal world, the subject has two sources of expectations: *(i)* he has learned something about what shapes he should expect to meet with, in the world, and about their regularities; and *(ii)* the wide periphery of the retina, which is low in acuity and therefore in the detail that it can pick up, nevertheless provides an intimation of what will meet his glance when the observer moves his eyes to some region of the visual field."[147]

Related to the above, Hochberg points out: "The fact that looking at static pictures is a temporal process has always been evident to students of composition, who discuss "leading the eye" in some obligatory sequence over the layout of the picture."[148]

Leo Braudy, again, writes:

> "But the most characteristic element in any film is the way it presents all its objects - animate as well as inanimate. In films every object has four dimensions - the realities of length and height, the suggestion of depth, and the potentiality of significance."[149]

In cinema, when thinking about interest or tension points in pictures, we can think that the spectator does not see the composition as an abstract graphic structure because the composition is regrouped around his or her interest points, and a typical interest point is usually an interesting face or something rapidly changing inside the picture. The interest point is often ahead of the action because the spectator is looking to see what is going to happen. In watching a scene the spectator's look covers many

interest points, so one can, without moving an eye, shift tension from one thing to another. Thus one can speak about tension points within the look. When an actor is looking at the camera it is often difficult to tell whether he is doing it or not. And talking about eye-lines, it is difficult to trace the definitive direction of the look.

Another extract of Hochbergs:

> "From Berkeley on, most philosophers, physiologists, and psychologists had started with the assumption that we cannot account for our perceptions of space in terms of information in visual stimulation, and had gone on from there to try to discover how we made up for this inadequacy. The first real challenge to this tradition came from James J. Gibson, who started with the inescapable fact that people *can* perceive space by means of vision alone, and concluded, therefore, that some kind of information must be present in visual stimulation. The *gradient of texture-density* is a particularly promising high-order variable for this purpose. If you look straight ahead at a homogenously textured surface, the density of the texture does not change from one part of the optic array to the next."[150]

So every time an observer moves toward any rigid surface, the elements in his visual field undergo a process of expansion; and this gradient of expansion forms a pattern that will be different for each orientation of the surface, for each direction and speed of the observer's motion, and for each distance of the observer from that surface.

The cone of the look related to the world gets quite wide, and apparently the area of the sharp focus in the eye is tiny. One of the artificial elements of the cinema is that the frame restricts the cone of the look to the rectangle of the screen. So, when you are looking at an eye, you cannot tell whether it is looking into that zone or whether it is looking somewhere else. Because the area of the eye's sharp focus is so tiny, it gives us one reason why people - in watching moving pictures - look around within the screen. It also explains why one can shift focus in a film shot because, if the spectator is looking at a face in the background, it is possible to throw the foreground out of focus, and the spectator does not notice that it is blurred because of the sharpfocusing on the part of the screen. It is actually all in the same focus to the spectator, all in the same focal plane, but because the spectator is looking at a different section of the screen, he or she does not see it. In making a film analysis and looking at everything very closely, one can see those parts which have clearly gone out of focus.

The Americans developed a storytelling which was based on the dynamic thinking of the story, sharp dialogue and a plot which explains as little as possible and maximies the speed of the narrative. The story is full of surprises, swifts, little shocks. This is one point of editing, because under the Hollywood-speciality, when the elements of the film are chosen, all other things are left out except the ones which are definitely needed. According to that kind of thinking , it was a question of "the

story point-of-view". And while we are always speaking of the story and its qualities, we omit the extent of how this kind of thinking about cinema also demands a certain kind of editing.[151)]

> "Classical editing requires so many discrepancies of scene space, graphic space, edited space, and so on, so many jumps, only subsequently explained, of scene, action and issue, so many purely provisional imputations of consequentiality, that, as psychologist Julian Hochberg remarked, it's a royal road to understanding how the mind works. And Piaget's *Main Trends in Psychology* leaves no doubt; thinking, from perception on up, is pluristructuralist, in co-ordinating structures (visual, verbal, acoustic, etc.) radically and systemically different from each other, sufficiently loosely and flexibly to accommodate constant 're-view' of constantly changing input. Similarly, thought is efficient when it's neither too loose to register contradictions, nor too tightly coherent to suppress competing hypotheses."[152)]

The montage-tradition in the history of cinema is often called dynamic or visible editing; so then we have cutting which is self-evident and graphically dynamic. From the Hollywood point-of-view we undermine the cutting with the story; we concentrate on the narrative and try to make the cutting as invisible as possible. The Russians specialized on dynamics, collisions between shots, while the American interest concentrated on creating different kinds of relations, so the story is a relationship between people in time and space. This is the so-called *Classical Hollywood Syntax*,[153)] an idea about montage being a syntax: in a similar way as we are joining words according to certain kinds of syntactical rules, we are also joining shots according to some cinematic rules. The definition of syntax in linguistics only exists in verbal language, but visual structures, and therefore visual syntax are profoundly different from the linguistic ones, yet people often make mistakes confusing verbal syntax with other kinds of relations. One of the differences is that verbal language is entirely arbitrary, so there are strict rules in relating different words with each other in this way; visual syntax, again, is not arbitrary, and so it does not need strict rules.

Stefan Scharff writes:

> "Syntax treats word relations according to *established usage*, and adherence to such usage is obligatory. A nonsyntactical sentence has the wrong ring to it and will be rejected intuitively by the native speaker. Because film images so closely resemble reality, simple communication in film can be achieved without any established 'grammatical' order, as when real events are captured in real time by the camera or staged uninterruptedly in front of it."[154)]

One problem with the cinematic continuity is that it is not a syntax, and from time to time there are reasons to break the continuity lines or cross them, for example, if one wants to create an illusion or effect about dramatic explosion. But if doing a thing differently has some kind of

meaning, then it is not a question of syntax, but a question of discourse, a way of telling something. So, continuity is not a syntactic question, but a question of how you choose what you have to say.

Cinema "syntax" in itself is a creative force, because it makes possible the formation of a large number of film phrases and requires audience participation. According to Scharff "a cinematic syntax yields meaning not only through the surface content of shots but also through their connections and mutual relationships."[155)]

In the montage theories, cutting is always a positive factor: a conflict between shots, a collision between them, creates a kind of lyrical effect, part of the whole structure of the film.[156)] The deletions in a Hollywood way of thinking about cinema tend to become passive, but it is rather difficult to put the Hollywood-model and the Russian way opposite each other because Hollywood very quickly learned and made up all the things the Russians were doing, and partly because "The Golden Age of Russian Montage" lasted, maximally thinking, only ten years.[157)] Very typical of montage cutting is to break a scene into short cuts, which gives a cubist impression (many Modernists associated film editing and Cubism). The sections of the space come forward, they are cut away and thrown into the screen one after another because the decisions in compiling a film will determine the shots that are included, and the action is made up by the way the shots are chosen. So, there is an enigma in what kind of visuality is needed. Then the work is redone, the action and the writing of the story split, in order to get the final effect.

A more "European" way of thinking about cinema for example in the late twenties, was called pictorialism[158)] because the European directors were not just thinking about relationships between images, but their interest was in the image itself. Although the interest lies in a single image, there is also the question of how to compile images in a way that conveys the mood. Continuity is important when we are telling stories, when people are moving, doing things, changing places, etc. But when we are dealing with streams-of-consciousness, like the French Impressionists,[159)] there is an almost constant need for discontinuity because the story is often told as a series of brief flashes. Accordingly, there lies a need for developing an almost conscious discontinuity. For example Rene Clair's *Entr'Acte* (1924) contains impressionist montage sequences.

## 2.6 An Example of Synthesis: the Description of Fritz Lang's *M*

In the cinema of the late twenties one can see certain kinds of emphasises, which were condensing at the beginning of the next decade,

when films were made that, in a synthetic way, condensed many present tendencies. One example is Fritz Lang's film *M* (1931), which used the American way of dynamic storytelling, the Russian way of montage and ideas, and which also had a very architectonic, pictorial structure of images with all its monumentalistic and expressionistic references.

*M* opens with the case of Elsie Beckmann, a schoolgirl who disappears and after a while is found slain in the woods. Since her murder is preceded and followed by similar crimes, the city lives through a veritable nightmare. The police work feverishly to track down the child-murderer, but succeed only in disturbing the underworld. The city's leading criminals, therefore, decide to ferret out the monster by themselves. For once, their interests coincide with those of the law. This is a motif which was also used in Bertolt Brecht's *Dreigroschenoper*: a gang of criminals enlists the help of a beggars' union, converting its membership into a network of unobtrusive scouts. Even though the police meanwhile identify the murderer as a former inmate of a lunatic asylum, the criminals, with the aid of a blind beggar, steal a march on the detectives. At night, they break into the office building in which the fugitive has taken refuge, pull him out of a lumber room beneath the roof, and then drag him to a deserted factory, where they improvise a "kangaroo court", which eventually pronounces his death sentence. The police appear in time to hand him over to the authorities.

Fritz Lang (1890-1976) was originally an architect and became famous as a film director even in the early twenties due to his strong visuality. When we think of the cinema of those days, we can distinguish the three traditions: (1) Russian influence, which concentrated on montage, (2) Hollywood-influence, which concentrated on narrative, and a kind of (3) "European" influence, especially in German cinema, which was heavily concentrated on the visual qualities of an image. While the Americans were dynamic in storytelling, the Germans were, during the silent period, much slower, and many German films at that time were melodramatic in agreement with the story and naive when compared to American films. The Germans emphasized the meaning of the image, and one way to emphasize it was German Expressionism. Films like Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) or Karlheinz Martin's *Von Morgens bis Mitternacht* (1920) set forth a type of Expressionism, which was one form of pictorialism. There are also other German traditions such as monumentalism ( which is a very useful point of view related to the aesthetics of Lang's films), ornamentalism (Ernst Lubitsch) or rococo (Lotte Reiniger).[160)]

Being originally an architect, Lang had a way of thinking through large, heavy, squarelike forms; so he built his images in a geometrical, architectonical manner. One of the strong cinematic developments in the 1930s was the break-through of realistic cinema, and Lang's *M* can also be considered an example of social realism since it deals with social

(political) organizations. It can also be called poetic realism, because during that time in France Rene Clair and Marcel Carné were making their own soft, pessimistic and realistic films in a poetical way, while the Germans were doing their rather harsh, monumentalistic and a bit more cynical films according to certain realistic moods.[161)]

Fritz Lang has stated:

> "Everybody says that I'm dull and pessimistic. Of course some of my films show gloomy things about people and life, some of the later ones might even be pessimistic. Although I think that my films are portraits of time, when they have been made ... I did always films about persons, who were fighting against the circumstances and traps, which they were driven into. I don't see it as pessimism."[162)]

Amongst Hollywood-scriptwriters there was, at that time, a general tendency to write a film in three acts,[163)] and one point of view in approaching the structure of a film deals with that: we can ask if a certain film fits in with the three-act structure, and if it does, then what are the acts? It is a surprising thing to notice how often films fit in with not only three but even five acts, as in an Antique tragedy.[164)]

The first act of *M* deals with the antagonism of the murderer and police. Before that, in a brief proloque, Lang shows the initial push of the story, the tragedy of Elsie Beckmann. The first act consists of a detective story, which includes a stop; then the hunting of the murderer fails, and what begins to happen is that the underworld feels alert because of the police-hunt. The criminals start reacting because they must find the murderer, so they can commit their own criminal activities in peace.

This is the reason why the second act of *M* deals with the underworld activities and the race to catch the murderer; it is a race between the police and the underworld. The third act of *M* starts approximately when they catch the murderer. So, the third act of *M* deals with the captivation of the murderer and the improvised trial, which follows.

The moral theme of the first act is clear: the bad murderer is haunting innocent children, so he has to be caught. The moral theme of the second act is more complex, because the question - Who is going to catch the murderer? - expands into the following questions: Which one of the organisations, the police or the criminals, is stronger? Who is controlling the city: law and order or the queer underworld? So there is a lot of tension in the second act, because it is a bit confusing if the criminals will succeed. It is a contrast of methods, because the police seem ineffective; they are dealing with the wrong tracks, working behind papers, which the criminals seem to take advantage of.

In the third act there is a new moral point of view: Who has the right to convict the murderer? Do the criminals have the right to do it? We are dealing with the vision of lynching, which the control of the police will resume at its tracks, and we know that the murderer will gain

normal trial. The childmurders are only a catalyst, neither is the film a depiction of the murderer's psychology. *M* deals with the ideas that there is something bad turning the whole social structure upside down, into turbulence and chaos, and that the criminal organization, a force of anarchy, is competing with the police about the control of the town.

Let us recall of the social background in Germany at that time: The Weimar republic was under collapse, the Nazi party and the Communist party were both well organized groups, revolutionary forces, and they were fighting with the police over the control in the streets; furthermore, the depression in 1929 had brought with it a sense of losing control, inefficiency into society.[165] Therefore, in a way, Lang's film is using the atmosphere of the time.

In his two-part Dr. Mabuse -film (*Dr. Mabuse, Der Spieler / Inferno des Verbrechens*, 1922) Lang had created a poetic thriller and melodrama of an evil master criminal, who controlled the whole underworld, fighting an open war against all institutions. Dr. Mabuse's agents were creating social chaos and he himself was performing under different disguises.

As Siegfried Kracauer manifested:[166]

> "The world it pictures has fallen prey to lawlessness and depravity. A night-club dancer performs in a décor composed of outright sex symbols. Orgies are an institution, homosexuals and prostitute children are everyday characters. The anarchy smoldering in this world manifests itself clearly in the admirably handled episode of the police attack against Mabuse's house - an episode which through its imagery intentionally recalls the tumultuous postwar months with their street fights between Spartacus and the Noske troops. Circular ornaments emerge prominently time and time again. Both the tricky floor in a new gambling club and the chain of hands formed during a spiritualist séance are shown from above to impress their circular appearance upon the spectator. Here, as in the case of Caligari, the circle denotes a state of chaos."

We can find this kind of circle also at the beginning of *M*, in the first image of *M*, which shows us children in a backyard, and later there are other shots with similar kind of circle shapes. Those shapes are very powerful, and although a shape does not have just one particular meaning, what is important is how one shape contrasts with the shape from another (the following or previous shot), and what is essential is that every shot has its own pictorial unity. In this opening shot the circle refers to a certain kind of innocence, and one can think that this kind of circle is a democratic shape (like a round table), although there is a leader in the middle; but later on in *M* we see men sitting at a round table, and then the circle does not refer to innocence at all. The circle is a system of contrasts, whereby the same thing means different things in different shots. This brings forth the ambiguity of symbolism. It is so influenced by the context that the form of the symbol determines only a

few aspects of the meaning.

Jean Mitry, among others, recognizes a connection between symbolism (Mitry uses the word *symbolisme*) and film language. He describes each as a means of expression which is capable of conveying its semantic content through a series of impressions, sensations and inferences, not as precisely clear ideas, but as extraordinarily powerful ones, ideas which are "felt".[167] According to Brian Lewis Mitry recognizes that each makes possible an experience which may not be exhausted by a paraphrase, as it involves a "wave movement", a plenitude of activity, sensual, emotional, and intellectual.[168] For Mitry film is directly a phenomenon of images. While both symbolism and film language work through sensations, inferences, and associations, these events, in poetry, begin in an act which is primarily conceptual - the recognition and comprehension of verbal structures. Film language, on the other hand, arises directly out of the perceptual process itself, and that is why film language parallels more closely that aspect of the thought process toward which both the representational cinema and poetic symbolism aspire: a prerational ideation which begins in the association of images, and moves from perceptions and sensations toward emotions and ultimately to "felt ideas".[169]

There is also this feeling of hierarchy, which is a constant factor among German films during the twenties. One can say that if Americans believe in laughter and good will, Germans again think that order and hierarchy will keep the world going. Thus, is this a feature common to German culture, or is it a natural way of approaching its goals through films like *M* or *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*? At any rate, it is well done in *M*, where every picture has its own structure. Besides, in a way, architecture is a very natural way of depicting social structures because architecture clarifies the shapes that people will follow, and *M* uses architectorial shapes because the images of *M* have a certain kind of monumentalistic nature.

The first image of *M* has a fatalistic nature, due to the shadows. There is something else besides innocence in it. The camera pans up and we can see a woman (somehow edgy). In this scene there is a strong feeling that the working class is trapped, exhausted inside this heavily-built community, so we have the whole philosophy of social relationships revealed to us in the very first shot. And there are these barriers that leave the people inside a cage, so it is a repetition of motives in different forms.

And next we have this two-shot with women, with the same feeling of worriedness; but when one of them thinks of her child, it cheers her up a bit, because the child brings joy into her life.

There is a sudden omission of continuity when the woman goes through the door into the apartment: Lang crosses the action line. There is also the European kind of camera movement when the camera tracks

the woman inside the apartment.

How does Fritz Lang tell us that the woman has a daughter? At first we have the image of the woman's face and the next image is from the school. Both of those images are geographically thinking in totally different places, but when they are connected, there is a strong analogy between them. The woman is glances at a clock, looking happy; we see the happiness before we know the reason for it. This is a common way in films: to show the reaction before we have the motif; and often in films the information presented comes in the reverse order, so we start with some action and give the reason for it later on.

Next comes this very architectural shot of the school front entrance. If Lang had had some other philosophy, then the alternative method would have been a straight cut from a woman's face in a close-up to an image of a happy child running towards the school door. That is how we can cut from one person to another, but Lang cuts from a person to architecture, and this is a selective choice with a certain kind of feeling. Where the child is waiting, we have this hard shot of a concrete wall; yet, in a way, it is a happy shot, because we do have this woman in the mind. There is a feeling that we are in the thoughts of that woman, the way she is thinking of the situation, the child coming from the school. So, although it is an objective shot, it is also a mental shot, like a mental image in the woman's mind. Then a policeman comes and helps the girl to cross the street. That is a kind of reference to later events, because in that situation the policeman is very capable of handling things; later we do have problems with the police activities.

One problem in *M* is that the story must already be told to a certain extent at a very early stage; commonly in films nothing will happen unless there is the presentation of the possible happenings before, unless we do have the preparation for happenings. In *M* we move with the child to a poster, which is there telling us what might be happening. So there is a preparation of the situation before the murderer arrives. However, if we think of the whole story, this kind of information is not necessary; but here we have this whole trouble taken care of, and it is a very economic way of seeing things. In terms of reliability it is a very artificial matter that the child is throwing a ball against the poster many, many times just before the shadow of a murderer appears. Still it all works and seems quite natural.

In *M* there is a general feeling that these children are under the threat of many kinds of dangers. First we have this shadow image of the murderer, which is a close reference to German Expressionism, the use of shadows being one of the big sensations in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* in 1919.

Kracauer expresses the same as follows:

> "*Caligari* also mobilizes light. It is a lighting device which enables the spectators to watch the murder of Alan without seeing it; what they see, on the wall of the student's attic, is the shadow of Cesare stabbing that of Alan. Such devices developed into a specialty of the German studios ... this emphasis upon light can be traced to an experiment Max Reinhardt made on the stage shortly before Caligari. In his mise-en-scène of Sorge's prewar drama The Beggar (Der Bettler) - one of the earliest and most vigorous manifestations of expressionism - he substituted for normal settings imaginary ones created by means of lighting effects."[170)]

And this shot in *M* with the murderer's shadow can be seen as an expression of what *M* owes to Expressionism and the Caligari tradition, although, in fact, in *M* there are not many strong shadowshots of this kind. The tune that the murderer is whistling (Grieg's '*In the Hall of the Mountain King*') is a clue and leitmotif throughout the whole story, as Lotte Eisner has noted:

> "The murderer's whistling is both a motif and a psychological quirk. It is resumed when he perceives a new victim in front of the window with the knives. We first see the murderer still munching his apple calmly, as he looks at his reflection in the window (the scene provides a parallel to the moment in his room when he grimaces at himself before his mirror). Suddenly he stares mesmerised into the pane, as the little girl's figure appears in the frame of the knives. Now he follows the child, whistling the Grieg theme tunelessly."[171)]

The home-sequences with Frau Beckmann render a feeling of a long morning, and there is much strongly-felt realism in these shots. Lang shows us the mother's preparations in a few shots so, in a way, it is a question of dynamic storytelling. One peculiarity of cinema is that a film can show the feeling of four hours in a four-second shot.

In the shot with the children coming from school we have again a very architectural design: it is a low-angle shot and the children are quite small; there is a blank wall which gives the feeling of space; later on there are more staircase shots in this film.

The staircase continues the formulations that exist in the first shots with the women on those balconies. The children look down, so the woman is downstairs, and the woman looks up, so the children must be upstairs. This is good continuity, through which the spectator knows the positions of the characters in the shot. Lang cuts into the next shot just before the door of Elsie's mother is completely closed. One cinematic strategy is to cut just before the action ends, so that next image can appear a bit stronger.

A careful chiaroscuro-lighting[172)] controls the shot in which the murderer is buying a balloon for Elsie. It is happening in a different part of the town from the school's concrete surroundings. In here there is more joy, even exaggerated joy, and that is partly due to the lighting. The camera shows the man who sells balloons, which are already some-

how metaphorically strangled, a bit longer when the murderer and Elsie leave the scene. This is for the spectator to remember the man, because he has got an essential part later in the film when the beggars try to catch the murderer. It is Lang's way to give little hints and clues to the spectator.

One of the oddities in filmic strategy is that it is fairly simple to show a character being somewhere, but a bit more difficult to show that someone is not there. First one needs a bit of a story, so the public can guess that the person is there, and then one can show that he or she is not there. That is how we can work out that Frau Beckmann is bothered when Elsie does not come home from school at the usual time. It is a very powerful shot, which has a kind of philosophy: it tells us about a labyrinth, absence, about hopeless emptiness, and so on. In the shot with the mother one can notice the careful lighting around the mother, which makes the shot more dramatic. Next they show us the closing of the door. In the shot in which the mother is calling Elsie's name, there is an interesting series of absence pictures, and it is hard to define whether it is an antirealistic combination of sound and space or a narrational ellipse.

In his way Lang is showing us a series of places where Elsie is not. Next we see Elsie's balloon rolling in another place, which is an effective sign of absence. This is a kind of prologue, the first part of the first act. In the second part of the first act there is an extension of the theme, which until now has been very personal, but next Lang shifts the interest towards the crowds, because the news is spreading fast.

Then come the shots of the murderer writing a letter to the press. The character of the murderer gains more sympathy in the course of the events, because the attitudes toward the main characters are shifting and changing. The beginning is very clear (one must catch the murderer), but the end is more complex, varied and nuanced. In the shot in which the murderer is writing we can sense a strong feeling of loneliness: the murderer is writing a letter to the press; accordingly, there exists that theme of loneliness through the crowd. *M* has a lot of flowing, slightly musical sounds, and the way in which the mother calls Elsie is somewhat like a musical fairyland call and the way the murderer whistles his tune has also a bit of a lonely sound that goes with him. Throughout this film the murderer's character is connected with things to eat and drink, and in his character there is childish indulgence and many subliminal references to the murderer's activities.

In the next shot of the crowd, the camera is tracking slightly backwards shifting the emphasis from the document (the poster on the wall) to the crowd. Then comes another little circle in a shot where the men are sitting at a table; even in the previous shot the crowd are moaning and wondering whether what they see is real, and now this sort of disagreement starts exploding; we are talking about a secondary chaos,

the story going on through a clear visual architecture in shots. *M* has not much individual psychology, it is concerned more with social psychology, a sense of group against group. The smoke that keeps blowing across the screen in many Fritz Lang's films has a kind of visual turbulence usually in the form of cigars and pipes; it is a way of causing mental tension in visual terms.

The next shot with a man towards the camera is like a shot from Pudovkin's *Mother* (1926), because in Pudovkin's film there is a great deal of into-camera and head-on-acting. It is quite a segmented, little scene. The previous shot is like the first phase of a master-shot establishing the general lines of the scene and showing the positions of the people inside the scene; after a little bit of that Lang cuts to one of the close-ups. Then comes a little primitive but inventive 1920s-type of social psychology, in which, within the group, you have contrasted types: one is a sort of impulsive, animal-kind of character, who is quick to physical violence, and the other character opposite him is a more intellectual type. You have again this feeling of some hierarchy, contestation of power. One thing that happens again and again in *M*, and also in this scene, is this slight cruelness, the people are not very kind to each other. In *M* every segment of society is alert: amongst the rich people there are fights in cafés and amongst the poor people there is a sort of suspicion bursting out in unjustified paranoia.

In the crowd scenes there is this contrast of angles: low-angles and high-angles are frequently contrasted; the crowd suddenly takes the form of another little circle, the ripples go wider and wider, the trouble is spreading and once again the police make a beneficial intervention. In the scene where the young man is holding a book for a signature from the older man, there is a kind of hierarchy too, a taste of upper social power: The police have to do a lot of work with documents and files, when, incidentally, in the next scene the voice of a man on the telephone is explaining all the things they have been doing. So once again the image and the voice are completely separate units; it happens a few times in *M* that the voice and the image go different ways.

However, as we can see in the next few shots, the police are not completely confined to their documents, they do go out interviewing people and working on the field. In a way, Lang is saying in *M* that life has become more difficult for the police and the state and that is why the police and the state seem weak. But they are still the best law and order that this world has, so the film wants the spectator to wish the police to succeed, even though it seems hopeless. As we can see, the police have to be patient with their own superiors, and in *M* everybody seems to panic except the police. In the shots with police activity, there is a great deal of variety in viewpoints: There is a strong high-angle shot and then comes the next shot that describes the same action but much more low-down, and as the shot ends the group of people come right over the

screen. Then comes the shift from the country to town, and while the police efforts are impressive, they are also pathetic, because they are trying everything, while they get nothing definitive. There are new actions developing, but the spectator does not quite know what they will be because there is no voice-over to tell him about them. The operations are rather enigmatic and spectacular with more of those high-angle shots. Then comes another kind of shot with a staircase, heavy arches and tables, a feeling of real underworld. Next after that there is excitement caused by everybody rushing; it is done by having people rush in opposite directions, struggling against each other; once again we have the crowd in a bit of panic. Shots of panicking crowds are quite common in German films of the twenties.

Then comes Lohman, the police commissioner, a character that appeared already in Lang's *Mabuse*-films. In *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* (1932-33) he was the man who hunted down the mastermind who was causing the inflation. In *M* he is also a sort of rough and ready lawman, not very scrupulous, because he plays some nasty tricks on the bad guys. Part of the excitement in these scenes comes from the fact that the spectator probably wonders what difference that new man is going to make. The presentation of him builds up a kind of suspense, because until now the police have been rather vague and then comes Lohman with a more efficient approach. At the same time as the film is telling us something about the methods of Lohman's operations, we also see him disturbing the underworld and catching them for various wrongs. This is what is going to provoke act two, in which the underworld organises itself to catch the murderer. The film is really rattling through a world of different kinds of underworld types and underworld environments, and later on all these different types and characters become clichés or stereotypes. There is a strong feeling of a certain kind of cross section with lots of different people, different kind of craftsmen: one is forging banknotes, another stealing watches, and yet another is skilled with cards. So it is not exactly criminal aristocracy, but criminal, manual labour and technics; and the underworld is quickly producing many types and as formidable an assortment of skills as the rest of society.

In his film Lang is slowly discovering more and more wealth of influence in the underworld. Even the pictures on the wall behind the crooks have got to be stolen artefacts, because, once Lang puts these different activities of crooks together, they convert the picture into a stolen picture. There is an interesting element of contrasts in the crowds because, as the crowds of normal people are getting more and more untidy, the crowds of the underworld are getting more tidy and hierarchical. One of the crooks (the Nazi-type) becomes the equivalent of inspector Lohman, Lohman being the strong man of the police and he the strong man of the underworld (played by Gustaf Gründgens, who later in real life becomes the leader of the Nazi state theater). The way

this man behaves later on is very much like Nazi behavior. The room in this scene with the crooks is like a bourgeois interior; there we have a little cross section of social groups who are associated with Nazism, a little social analysis of those who are put around the table, everybody smoking away expressionist smokes. The black gloves are already a symbol of Nazism and the bowler-hat is a kind of emblem of petty-bourgeoisie. There is also a skilled workman's toolcase, and we notice this case later in the film again, so it is for the spectator to connect the case with the guy who is sitting behind it. The cut comes just before the leader of the underworld completes his gesture: it is a strong movement with the hand, which the spectator can fairly well guess, so Lang does not want to show it; he just gives an elliptical hint to the viewers. Gestures like that are very interesting, because they have maximum strength; yet they are very, very short, which reveals a kind of mixture of brutality and control because, if you make that gesture, it is completely unnatural.

Then comes the cut from one board meeting to another with almost the same gestures and almost the same graphic part of the screen, and Lang goes into intercutting between the two organizations. In a way this cut is the beginning of the second act; this sequence begins by revealing equality between these two groups. It quite often occurs that in the first shot of a scene you do not really know which scene you are in, which is an interesting kind of confusion of power. The wealthy citizens have their four lamps up in the air, and the crooks have their circle of lamps up in the air. It is almost as if the two sets of people were talking to each other in the same room, a bit like Elsie's mother's voice being in all sorts of different places. There is almost like a little orchestration of hand movements through this scene and, as Lohman does not move, it makes him very strong. There is a certain point of interest: previously we saw Lohman dealing with the people from the lower class and here he is behaving with the upper-class characters in another way. Lohman does not seem quite as natural in this environment as he was in the other one.

In the shot with the crooks there is an implication that lighting is coming from the lamp, but as you can see, the real light is coming from everywhere around the crooks. The cuts between the different groups are not only cutting the movement, but cutting the same movement from different angles. That is why the shots match so well, they are almost going two-by-two.

The underworld is getting organized, while the citizens are still in diffusion and getting more and more scattered as the sequences go on. There are some peculiarities, for example in the scene where somebody is making a long speech, and Lang does not show the speaker at all. The spectator wants to know who the speaker is, but he is not exposed. And then there are shadows as if the murderer was in the shadow. There is also a bit of mystery, because it takes a couple of minutes to learn what the plan really is and how it is going to work.

In the scene with the price list of foods there is a reminder of the depression and inflation, prices going up every day, a little allusion to the social monetary chaos. Then the camera goes one store up in the architectural and social structure and the view is very organized, bureaucratic, which at first glance looks like a labour exchange; but as soon as the camera tracks the man in the corner, the picture is getting clearer. The physiques of the characters are peculiar with all those semi-dwarf shrunken creatures. The shot of the beggar includes a corny point associated with the plot, because he is very sensitive to music, which refers to the point later on that he is going to recognize the tune which the murderer is whistling. The big glass in front of the beggar and the balloons all over him hint to the childish nature of the murderer and the beggar as well. The danger theme with the children continues in the next brief flashes.

Lohman is drowned in bureaucracy, but he also gets some hints about the murderer. The sympathy towards the police is increasing, due to the actual showing of their working methods. The crooks can go crashing anywhere, and the police are almost stopped by a deaf woman in a doorway. Then comes another of the film's circles in the shot where a policeman is investigating the murderer's apartment, and then a parallel action-cut to the murderer munching an apple with all those juicy, bright fruits around him. The intercutting between inside and outside continues, and there is a feeling of gradual working towards the next possible murder. It is really a suspense construction about whether the police are going to find the clue and having found it, if they will catch him before he kills another girl. Later we find out that the criminals reach him before the police, which is an interesting moral point because the criminals have then actually saved a life.

Lang does not use background music in *M* and the periods of silence are felt strongly. The things that are moving in the window also refer to expressionistic inheritance, and in the scenes in which the murderer is seeking another victim we start to feel a sort of horrified pity for the murderer. In the shot where the murderer is in the café the hedge in front of him looks like a jungle and he is the animal, so nervous and out of control, confined inside the jungle, but ready and willing to jump away from there. In the scene there is a powerful pressure on insanity: one can see hardly anything of him, but he makes some kind of movements a few times during the shot.

In the shot with Lohman thinking, there are some little hints, sort of mental efforts of the mind, whether he can put two and two together and solve the riddle. Then comes a shot with the beggar and with that some spotty, chiaroscuro-visuals, a bit messy but effective.

The sign of the letter M in the shot refers to hope; the knife that the girl ironically gives to the murderer refers to danger. At that point there is a strong element of moral conflict or moral reversal, in which the

spectator wants the criminals to follow that sign and save the girl's life, but at the same time he does not want Lohman to catch the murderer. So, as usual in suspense, it is not good vs. evil, or hope vs. fear, it is hope against hope. Good structures of suspense are always paradoxical. One could easily take the script of *M* and by putting different phases on the characters, one could make the police look like bumbling villains and the gangsters look like the saviours of decency without changing a word of the script; even in the trial-scene the words can be made to read differently.

The street-scenes in *M* are quite limited in their perspectives. Lang often shows only a bit of the street, and there are not many over-shoulder shots which might give a fairly good idea of the length of the street or of the view in general. Lang wants to keep the spectator in a state of tightness, anxiety and suspense by providing those narrowed views.

The building where the criminals chase the murderer is a kind of kafkanesque labyrinth and the frightened murderer is like a trapped mouse in a corner, where he knows of no escape, and the sounds of him rubbing the door with a nail add a special aural and tensioned element into the created suspense of that sequence. There is also a shot with a circle of light that has a reminiscence of Expressionism.

In the trial-sequence there is a strong, shifting tension between the jury of the criminals and the murderer, whom they drag and push into the shadowy basement. There is a strong point-of-view shot at the beginning of that sequence when the murderer enters and looks at the silent, powerfully stagnatic jury. The murderer is just frantically saying that it is a mistake when a hand enters and the camera tracks down showing the blind beggar, who has a balloon in his hands, and the camera shifts down into an upward position and shows both the balloon and the murderer. Lang shifts views between the murderer and the jury's headman Schraenker; there is a strong light coming from the left when the murderer is in the frame, and more upwardly from the right when Schraenker is in the frame. When Schraenker shows the picture of poor Elsie and another girl, the murderer panics and starts to run towards the door. There is a powerful close-up taken from above with the murderer in it, and a lot of shifts between objective and subjective angles. Now the position of the murderer is weakening every moment; Lang's camera moves a bit further up showing the murderer in a trapped and hopeless situation. Elements of Russian montage and image design appear frequently when Lang shows the crowd activities, and a strong dreyerlike (compare *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, 1926) pan wipes the faces of the crooks, which are static and serious when Schraenker talks about their jail sentences. Peter Lorre's hypnotic acting gets into more expressionistic areas when the murderer starts talking about his inability to control his inner forces. Lorre makes his gestures in a slower and lonelier

manner, and the shot with him talking continues for quite a while. Now the light comes heavily from the right side of the screen, and then comes the shift to a semi-close-up of the murderer: the feeling of time inside the shot is extensified when camera moves from the murderer to the crooks and back. When the murderer talks about children and women, Lang picks up women from the audience; before that the main close-ups were taken of men. The atmosphere intensifies between comical laughter and strong judgments, and the crowd's feelings are getting more and more intense when the final stage is approaching. The heavy close-ups taken from the criminals make an atmosphere of continued menace with a heavy visual energy blurring from them.

Noël Burch thinks that "*M* was entirely structured around a rigorous organization of the film's formal articulations, starting with sequences in which each shot is temporally and spatially autonomous, with time ellipses and changes in location playing the obviously predominant role, then gradually and systematically evolving toward the increasing use of the continuity cut, finally culminating in the famous trial sequence, in which temporal and spatial continuity are strictly preserved for some ten minutes."[173)]

Raymond Durgnat has stated:

> "The very triviality of the objects helps to diffuse and deepen the atmosphere (it also helps to explain why Lang's atmosphere can so effectively survive a 'nonsense' story). His early films make a great deal of architectural masses, but in his later films the emphasis is not on masses so much as on space. The style of *M* is a splendid example. His images are often built on broad, rectangular shapes (arches, windows, shadows) laid at fairly shallow angles to each other (sharpening at climaxes). Shadows underscore important forms with a brooding, heavy immobility, creating a kind of generalised menace, something in the air. And Lang has always known how to position his figures in light and space so that, however immobile or innocuous they seem, a kind of visual energy, often malignant, radiates from them."[174)]

*M* is structured around visual rhythms, emotions, moods, and atmospheres. The rhythms of actual movements and cuts create a tempo for the film. In watching *M* the spectator notices these different rhythms and scans tentatively at them. It is the essence of the visual order that these scannings mix response and form with decisions which are independent of the form. The mind ceases to notice the formal structure of the images and treats them as a kind of visual transparency to the ideas. The succession of images in space corresponds to that of ideas in time. What happens on a screen is like a clue to a whole accosiation of ideas that come with it.

Processing the visuality: the fatalistic opening of *M*.

Elsie and the haunting shadow in *M*.

Peter Lorre as the murderer in *M*.

The murderer in a kafkanesque labyrinth in *M*.

Gustaf Gründgens as Schraenker in *M.*

The jury of criminals in *M*.

# 3 PERCEPTUALISM. SIGNS, SYMBOLS AND CONCEPTS

## 3.1 Meanings and Textures in Visual Perception

Ann-Sargent Wooster defines:

> "Human beings are highly visual, and it was not until the first crude graphic display screens were introduced in the late 1960s that computers began to change our relationship to information and forge a new kind of space. Computers are largely based on the structure of the way the human brain processes information. It is one thing to understand that human memory is organized in lists and lists of lists crossreferenced by associations between them, and it is another thing to see that system on a screen modeled not on pencils and printing presses but on how a human mind processes information."[175)]

Within this world (real and unreal), the spectator can freely rearrange that information and impose new structures. Seeing ideas as visual objects changes your view of the world because "when everything is visible: the display becomes the reality."[176)]

Visual perception is not passive recording of the stimulus material, but an active concern of the mind, and reading a picture is a sequence of mental processes exactly like reading some other reality. And because the sense of sight operates selectively, the perception of different shapes consists of the application of form categories, which one might call visual concepts.

Visual perception is an experience of totality because cinema is a procession of images, and images are basic units of veridical perception. Dudley Andrew thinks that cinema is above all things a representation of

visual life itself because it mimics the continual work of seeing by means of its own work.[177] Further on Andrew thinks that an image is any visual unit that sustains itself as a unit because cinema can pose questions about seeing, permitting us to reflect on the process as we undergo it.[178]

Andrew defines:

> "It can play with the relation of stimuli to visual fields (as in the experimental films of J.J. Murphy and Paul Sharits); it can play with the relation of perceptual fields to solidified images (as in Michael Snow's work; and it can insist upon or interrogate the cultural form of stable images (Bruce Conner and Kenneth Anger come to mind here)."[179]

As Raymond Durgnat has pointed out, the theory of visual perception as coordination, assumption and estimation, was gradually developed by gestalt psychologists and their successors from about 1920, and was taken from perceptual and cognitive psychology into art theory through the 1950s. The most notable developers in that process were Rudolf Arnheim, E.H. Gombrich, György Kepes and Anton Ehrenzweig.[180] For example for Arnheim "every element of a work of art is indispensable for the one purpose of pointing out the theme, which embodies the nature of existence for the artist."[181] In this sense Arnheim finds symbolism even in works that, at first sight, seem to be little more than arrangements of fairly neutral objects.

The meaning of a perceived event changes the pattern of possibilities for future action, and according to Donald MacKay meaning is

> "The selective function on the range of the recipient's states of conditional readiness for goaldirected activity; so the meaning of a message to you is its selective function on the range of your states of conditional readiness."[182]

Defined in this way, meaning is clearly a relationship between the message and the recipient rather than a unique property of the message alone.[183] And MacKay continues to suggest that states of readiness are for organism's large numbers of conditional probabilities. Asking a question is a means of changing the conditional probabilities of the questioner's states of readiness.[184]

David Bordwell has made differentiations between four kinds of meanings: *referential, expilicit, impilicit* and *repressed* or *symptomatic* meanings.[185] In searching for referential meanings the perceiver may construct a concrete "world", in constructing the film's worlds, the spectator draws not only on knowledge of filmic and extrafilmic conventions but also on conceptions of causality, space, and time, and on concrete items of information. In explicit meanings the perceiver may move up to a level of abstraction and assign a conceptual meaning or "point" to the fabula and diegesis she constructs. In implicit meanings the perceiver

may also construct covert, symbolic or implicit meanings, units of which are commonly called "themes", or problems, issues, questions and so on. The perceiver may also construct repressed or symptomatic meanings which are like disguises, they may be treated as the consequence of the artist's obsessions.[186]

R.L. Gregory writes in *The Intelligent Eye:*

> "Perception is not a matter of sensory information giving perception and guiding behaviour directly, but rather that the perceptual system is a 'look up' system; in which sensory information is used to build gradually, and to select from, an internal repertoire of 'perceptual hypotheses'."[187]

The size of a retinal projection varies with the distance of the physical stimulus object from the observer. That is how the distance dimension distorts the perception. An object which is actually maintaining its size may be seen by the eye as if changing it during the movement. So there are these perceptual modifications which operate and vary depending on the object's location relative to the observer. When the image of an object changes, the observer must know whether the change is due to the object itself or to the context or to both; otherwise he understands neither the object nor its surroundings. The observational object must then be abstracted from its context, and this can be done in different ways: one is perhaps the way of performing an abstraction because the observer may want to peel off the context in order to see the object as it is, in complete isolation; the other way is to observe all the changes it undergoes and induces because of its place and function in its setting.[188]

For a stationary eye and a stationary observer, the image of an object at any point in space is simply projected to some point on the retina and thence to the cortex. Given the position of the point in the retinal image, it is not difficult to understand how we manage to perceive the object's direction in space. The viewer's body is in almost constant motion in the world, his or her head is in motion with respect to his or her trunk, and his or her eyes are in motion in his or her head. Julian Hochberg thinks that moving observers need two kinds of eye movements to look at moving (or stationary) objects in a three-dimensional world:

> "*Compensatory movements*, smoothly and precisely executed, permit the eye to remain fixed on some point while the body moves. In addition, we have skilled *pursuit movements* that swing the eyes smoothly to keep them fixed on moving objects, and the adaptive mechanisms of *accommodation* and *convergence* that bring any object to which we are attending into clear focus and central location on the retina. In addition to these saccadic eye movements bring the fovea from one point in the visual field to another, in rapid jumps that take only about 1/20 of a second to execute."[189]

That is why the normal vision would be impossible without the cooper-

ation of these muscular actions, and according to Hochberg the viewer's perceptual system must in some fashion "make allowances" for the eye movements they produce before it can assign spatial meaning to any stimulation of the retina.[190]

So the perception of movement depends upon a certain physical condition. The movement must attain a certain velocity before it is perceived as movement. The contrast between a moving object and stationary background makes the movement clearer and more obvious. The perception of movement is not produced primarily by the movements of the images of objects across the retina, because the eyes are also moving to and fro in the head, and thus images of stationary objects are constantly moving across the retina.

We need the kind of eye movements that Hochberg mentioned above to keep everything in balance. That is why M.D. Vernon asks: "Why is it that our surroundings appear stationary although their images are always moving on the retina?"[191] It has been hypothesized that sensations to the brain from the muscles which rotate the eyeballs change continuously as the eyes move, and that these changing sensations offset and compensate for the changing retinal impressions. Another explanation is that the changing retinal impressions are compensated for, in some way by an awareness of the motor impulses proceeding from the brain to the eye muscles, which cause them to move the eyeballs.

Vernon closes:

> "Whatever the explanation, it seems that we are able to differentiate between movements of the retinal images caused by movements of the eyes, and movements within the retinal image caused by movements of objects in relation to their surroundings, which appear stationary."[192]

There is a complicated inter-relationship between the perception of the movement of the surroundings and the movement of the body, which is displayed in what is known as 'parallactic movement'. For example, as we move forwards in a car along the road, the retinal image of the landscape in front of us expands, flows around on either side of us, and then contracts and becomes sucked in behind us.[193] This effect is not usually very noticeable in ordinary daylight when the whole visual surroundings are perceived as rigid and stable while we ourselves move. But it may be apparent in driving at night when the surroundings are not clearly perceived. And if we look at objects on either side of us, we may see them moving rapidly in the direction opposite to that in which we are moving; but the farther away they are the slower the movement, and the horizon is stationary. In fact, the retinal image of the landscape is continuosly distorted or deformed as we move, but we are not consciously aware of this deformation; instead we perceive it in terms of our own movement across the landscape. This is something that film can also pick up in relation to perspective and visual thinking.

Vernon describes:

> "Thus a rough generalization may be made that the total amount which can be attended to at any one moment is constant. If attention is concentrated on a small part of the field, little will be perceived in other parts; if attention is diffused over a larger area, no one part will be very clearly and accurately perceived."[194]

Perhaps the most popular and best known classification is into the synthetic and analytic methods of perceiving.[195] As the names indicate, the observer who adopts the synthetic method tends to see the perceptual field as an integrated whole, whereas the observer who adopts the analytic method breaks up the field into its constituent parts or details, studying each one separately and perhaps overlooking the effect of the whole.[196] In the synthetic method visual illusions appear more compulsively; apparent movement and causality are readily seen; size, shape, and colour constancy are high. The analytic method is more appropriate when small details must be attended to and certain qualities isolated from the whole, for instance, in judging the brightness or colour of a surface independently of its other qualities, or those of the remainder of the field. Furthermore, it must be utilized in making judgements of perspective size.[197]

Hochberg thinks that the explanation of why the inconsistencies of pictured space can go unnoticed may in part be that the inconsistent regions of the picture are not normally compared to each other directly, and any object is usually examined by a succession of multiple glimpses, and the various regions that are looked at each fall in turn on the same place in the eye.[198] That is why the separate parts of the figure all have to be brought at different times to the central part of the retina, the *fovea*, if they are to be seen in full clarity of detail.

According to the gestaltpsychologist way of perception the meaning of the stimulus is to function as an interface between two kinds of texts, the one being the object itself and the second being the spectator's mind, which alone contains the meaning that it associates with the text's otherwise empty signifiers. So the picture is merely forms, signifying nothing, but awaiting a mind to contribute to the connection between signifiers and signifieds.[199] That is why the meaning in cinema's visual perception is constructed in the mind, because the emphasis on the active and constructive operations of the mind will in gestaltpsychological thinking go far beyond the notion of "the production of meaning" by a "text".[200] In spite of retinal variations and environmental influences, the mind's image of the object is constant, because conception transforms perceptual forms. It is a question of the constancy of vision, as J. M. Wilding puts it: "The maintenance of a stable world despite changes in the view due to our movements is called position constancy."[201]

If visual perception only seems to have a truly astronomical

"spelling" and "vocabulary", it is because it has neither. It remembers, not so much specific forms, as processes of construction. Durgnat thinks that "in real visual perception, we have taught ourselves to see that a table is rectangular even though, as we walk around it, its images on our retina can only be a constantly changing series of quadrilaterals.[202] That is why it is obvious why "elasticity" is the essence of visual perception and structuration, even at the expense of confusion. Visual elasticity resembles analogy in that it may be very precise or very rough. So much so that it can only work in an intimate alliance with other principles.[203]

And if a single image is rich in its complications, then the multiplicities agreeing with it are based on the points of our attention through perception. As our gaze and, independently of it, our thoughts move over an image, they discover a variety of centration points.[204] The image and its associations may tempt, tease and lure or provoke us although the artist might have anticipated the maneuvers of our attention, but the pictorial reading of an image or the pictorial appreviation of an image gives us further encouragement to look for the graphics. This gives us a new way of looking through the configuration of pictorial elements in an image, because the eye rarely fixes on a certain point for very long. The essence of the process is more like some kind of patrolling over an image.[205]

Noël Burch sees that "our contention that all the elements in any given film image are perceived as equal in importance runs counter to a fondly cherished notion of nineteenth-century art critics later embraced by a number of twentieth-century photographers: the belief that the eye explores a framed image according to a fixed itinerary, focusing first on a supposed 'center of compositional focus' (generally determined by the time-honored 'golden rectangle'), then traveling through the composition along a path supposedly determined by the disposition of its dominant lines."[206]

Burch thinks that this kind of conception is outdated because the modern eye sees things differently.[207] There are elements in a film image that call attention to themselves more strongly than others, but at the same time the spectator is also aware of the compositional whole because looking is a mental process. That is why the artist cannot direct our attention as closely as certain traditional analyses, based on compositional level, are firmly to be believed in, but, as Durgnat has pointed out, "powerful structures can exist without a one-way, linear order".[208] One often sees things as a whole and after that one goes into details, which become centration points, but at the same time one looks at the relations, which also become centration points. For example, when looking at a map, to find out a distance between two places, one is not looking at a point, but instead, at a distance between two points; so while talking about centration points, we are also talking about zones, lines, distances and fuzzy circles. When one sees a triangle, one can see it as a shape, as

an outline, and one can look either at the three lines or one can look at the three angles; so it is a question of the extreme flexibility of the centration points, which constantly overlap with each other. In looking at a triangle, one can center on the top apex, and then another apex and another apex; next one can center on the space between the lines, and one can think of the three lines as one shape; then one can think of each line on its own, each angle on its own. One has actually found already over ten centration points without moving one's eyes because they are really tension points, some of which are as big as the whole triangle, some of which are as small as a given angle. While our visual attention is moving across an image, its major configurations and relationships keep recurring and reorganizing. Our visual attention moves across an image as if we were redirecting a more or less real scene, at least to the extent that an image can be a real object and a depiction of something.

When talking about the varieties of visual coherence, Leo Braudy has suggested[209] that a representational art always re-creates the world around us as a new form of visual organization. And movies, because they exist in time, expand the shaping possibilities available to painting and sculpture. And since their methods are in part so subliminal, movies can constitute a generally available method of creating visual coherence, the effect of which we can see around us every day in paintings, photographs, comic strips, sculpture, life-style, and even the "scenes" our eyes pick up when we walk down the street, across a field, or into a room.[210]

Durgnat has stated that

> "The main structural similarity between the eye and the camera is that both have lenses, and that isn't very significant, since everything in their perspective systems is entirely different. The camera captures on film a superficial and momentary impression of a scene, with an allover evenness which is as unanalytical as it is impartial, and with a fixity which renders it incapable of interrogation, correction and re-vision. In comparison, human vision, or rather human attention, entails the operations of the *mind's eye*; that is to say, it works like a rough-and-ready but versatile and self-correcting computer, which can summate and integrate a variety of glances, and for which 'I see' means 'I understand' since it functions by feedback between *seeing* and *knowing*, between seeing-as and *interrogation*."[211]

The visual world around us is rarely at rest; and if it is then we are not, because our eyes move so that the image on the retina is constantly unstable. And when objects do pass us, they change their form constantly; even the most static objects are in a visual movement when we approach them or move our heads. When we are moving through visual spaces, the exact definitions are usually less important than some kind of rough perception and spatial location.

> "In visual and pictorial perception there's a powerful element of analogue approximation:'It looks roughly like one, so it propably is one.' For analogy is *elastic* (just as similarity is a matter of degree) and *selective* (it operates even when limited to certain aspects."[212]

In Bruce Baillie's *Castro Street* (1966) visual structures are carefully organized around the formal patterns of the film. It brings out an audiovisual tapestry, where the heavily layered style of superimposition is connected with a style of superimposed contiguity. Every image becomes a pictorial thread intertwined with others in the fabric of an overall pattern.[213]

Lucy Fischer defines:

> "In this manner *Castro Street* creates for the spectator an experience which transcends the nature of its literal subject. As we watch graceful figures of train cars float by, and listen to the dampened sounds of engine-whistle screams, what we apprehend is not a picture of the industrial décor. Rather what we experience is something more vague and ethereal; it is a sense of profound and dynamic resolution."[214]

Baillie's editing style is different from the montage tradition because Baillie works toward the nullification of oppositions not towards the intensification of them. Hyperbolic superimpositions create a uniform texture of densely enmeshed imagery. *Castro Street* works on the level of formal interactions between sound, movement and colour. Baillie plants images in the neighbouring segments of the frame through superimposition or through the technique of matting.[215]

> "But it is not purely the technique of matting that creates the sense of image resolution; it is also Baillie's means of rhythmically choreographing the images in succession. What one notices in analyzing *Castro Street* is the 'transactions' that take place between shots. As one matte fades out, another, perhaps, fades in. Thus one set of imagery is continually exchanged for another in intricate patterns of balanced and symmetrical progression."[216]

Through the technique of the interchange of imagery, shots are joined not only by their compression within the boundaries of the frame but by the kinetics of the editing process. *Castro Street* begins with Baillie's name handwritten across the screen. The center of the frame then opens up in muted colour to reveal what appears to be a camera lens. The frame contracts once more and closes. A slit of light becomes visible in the lower portion of the frame. The light pattern shifts and one realizes that what one has seen seems to be light reflected off a glass surface, through which one vaguely perceives the outline of smoke. The glass is then pulled away and bares the image of industrial smokestacks. Two matted areas fade in. Each one records a slightly different view of a landscape as seen from the window of a moving vehicle. Consequently, a faint diagonal wipe takes away the large-scale image of the smokestacks but the twin mattes remain. Another portion of the frame unfolds to display a

more defined image of industrial chimneys. This matted area travels upward in the frame, while simultaneously the two earlier corner mattes fade out. Eventually, a diagonally composed negative image of a high tension wire fades in and inhabits the frame with a circular matte containing the image of a smokestack.

Baillie shows how abstract compositions, pure lines and forms, become orchestrations of photographic images which are treated as graphic elements inside a complex montage design. In *Castro Street* the tonalities are opposed through the technique of superimposition. That is why one of the layers of imagery will be recorded in colour while the other will be shot in black and white. This disparity is heightened by the fact that the black-and-white layer has been realized in high-contrast negative. Blue, yellow and red are the primary colours. Baillie has tinted his film in archetypal tones: black (the absence of colour), white (the presence of all colours) and the primary colours (which are parents to all the rest). This formalism brings out some theoretical speculations.

Lucy Fischer thinks:

> "First of all, it seems telling that in utilizing black-and-white Baillie saw fit to invert their values through negative printing. In so doing, the comfortable opposition of the absence or presence of colour is turned on its head and disarmed. Moreover, at times during the film Baillie chooses to dissect white light through prismatic lenses, thereby revealing the presence of variegated spectral hues in its apparently monochrome band. Finally, the selection of primary colours adds further complexities to the tonal structure. For although primary colours in 'montage collision' create all other cromatic hues, theirs is essentially a seamless union."[217]

Another formal conflict which Baillie creates in *Castro Street* is the directional opposition of movement. When images share the frame one often realize that they embody movement in opposing screen directions. In general, Baillie works to resolve rather than heighten the sense of polarity of movement. It relates to Rudolf Arnheim's speculations in *Film As Art*:

> "Since there are no bodily sensations to indicate whether the camera was at rest or in motion, and if in motion at what speed or in what direction, the camera's position is, for want of other evidence, presumed to be fixed. Hence if something moves in the picture this motion is at first seen as a movement of the camera gliding past a stationary object. In the extreme case this leads to the direction of motion being reversed."[218]

In painting or sculpture, the artist often endeavors to abstract a movement or action in a timeless image. Such a static image crystallizes the nature of a more complex event in one arresting pattern, but it also suppresses the action and reduces the variety of phases and appearances to a single representative of them all.

Arnheim, again, expresses his conception in *Visual Thinking*:

> "If, on the other hand, we slice up a cone, keeping the sections parallel or changing their orientation as we go, the highspots of circle, ellipse, etc., may be hardly noticed when we pass through them. The smooth transitions gloss over qualitative changes. Assume that the sectioning plane approaches the cone parallel to the cone's axis: the section presents itself as a hyperbolic curve, which grows and becomes more pointed gradually until it transforms itself into two straight lines meeting at an angle. The hyperbola and the angle, although parts of a continuous sequence, differ qualitatively. Similarly, if the sectioning plane is lowered upon the cone perpendicularly, the sections will start with a point, which expands into a circle, growing without changing shape. The situation is different if the plane changes angle and performs a tilt. Now the circular section begins to stretch, it becomes an ellipse, getting longer and longer, until it opens at one of its sides when the plane has come to lie parallel to one of the cone's contours, and emerges as a parabola. Again, circle, ellipse, parabola, although phases of a continuous sequence, are separate, qualitatively different figures."[219)]

When an object moves, one often sees more than simple displacement. The object is perceived as being acted upon by forces. In fact, it is the presence of these perceptual forces that gives expression to the motion. In *Castro Street* objects move from right to left but more often than not, examination reveals them to be stationary objects photographed by a camera moving from left to right. Baillie creates confusions between the traditional antipathies of stasis and motion. Consequently, repeated experiences with different physical objects produce new traces, which do not simply re-enforce the existing ones but subject them to unending modification. For example, our image of a particular object or person is the quintessence of many aspects and situations which might sharpen or alter it. Traces resembling each other will make contact and strengthen or weaken or replace each other. In a way, the spectator is in a storehouse of visual signs and concepts, some clear and simple, some elusive and intangible, covering the whole of object or recalling some fragments related to it.

In a way, cinema has a skill of redoubling the effect of light's motion because film images are actually moving, and a single image in a film never stands still, just as light never does, and just as the eye never does. The moving eye is the other half of moving light. And as Anne Hollander has suggested:

> "The fixed gaze is the property of death; the living eye is in motion, always ranging for food. Again modes of art using human experience for their subject that both engage the scanning eye and suggest its analogy to the inner life can rely on a raw emotional pull. In movies the camera itself is the seeking gaze, demanding enlightenment, and its choices can demonstrate its superior insight: good cinematography and editing give the effect of satisfying the eye's immediate prior longings at every instant. Ideally, the camera unerringly finds what the bodily eye and the mind's eye are both unconsciously lusting for or perhaps dreading."[220)]

Our visual system has been built up so that local space is heavily controlled by subjective perspective. This was true even before pictorial perspective's development, which includes a reference to the fact that perspective's pictorial development is a rational, objective thing, and does not involve subjectivism. It is also a question of a point-of-view, which marked visual perception even longer before it appeared in images. In visual perception perspective is necessary because we cannot deal with the object's forms, places, and where they are heading for, without the help of perspective.[221]

## 3.2 Pictures, Symbols and Signs

Raymond Durgnat has suggested that the term "syntax" coming from linguistics, which deals only with distinct and prespecified forms, normally implies the bringing together of distinct units, but pictorial form envolves extension and continuity and from this angle pictures are nothing but syntax, the only pure syntax there is.[222] For example, a line is not really one distinct unit after another, it is a unit by being an extension of the same thing: a line is not a syntax of points. The form of each and every object is adjusted by its viewpoint, and by their relationship with one another, so that depending on the point-of-view each perspective of a shape is different. This is one of the basic differences between visual perception and language because, for example, the shape of a verb does not change, but the shape of a table changes depending on the viewpoint:

> "For example, a basic rule, not only of pictorial but also of visual perception is: If two objects seem to overlap, then the completed one is in front of the other."[223]

Rudolf Arnheim has demonstrated that images can serve as pictures or as symbols; they can also be used as mere signs.[224] The three terms (picture, symbol, sign) do not stand for a kind of images, they describe three functions of the images. A certain image may be used for each of these functions, and will often serve more than one at a time. An image serves merely as a *sign* to the extent which it stands for a particular content without reflecting its characteristics visually. To the extent to which images are signs they can serve only as indirect media, for they operate as mere references to the things for which they stand, not analogically, and therefore not for thought in their own right. However, numerals and verbal languages are true signs. Images are *pictures* to the extent to which they portray things located at a lower level of abstractness than they are themselves. They do their work by grasping

and rendering some relevant qualities (shape, color, movement) of the objects or activities they depict. An image is concrete in itself, but it is abstract as to what it is a picture of. In the visual arts people often mean abstract to mean nonrepresentational of anything that one can recognize, but even representation is abstract in the sense that it only picks up some aspects of the thing it refers to. A photograph is semiabstract in the sense that it partly disregards the object; it reproduces some aspects of the object, but not others, for example, shading but not depth, and in a photograph one often loses the contour of things.

Abstractness is a means by which the picture interprets what it portrays. A picture is a statement about visual qualities, and such a statement can be complete at any level of abstractness. Only when the picture is incomplete (ambiguous or inaccurate) with regard to the abstract qualities, is the observer called upon to make his own decisions about the features of what he sees. An image acts as a *symbol* to the extent to which it portrays things which are at higher level of abstractness than is the symbol itself. A symbol gives a particular shape to types of things or constellations of forces. As symbols, fairly realistic images have the advantage of giving flesh and blood to the structural skeletons of ideas.[225)]

As R. L. Gregory puts it:

> "The most striking - and a unique - feature of Mind is the acceptance and use of things as symbols standing for other things."[226)]

Trevor Whittock thinks that "for the symbol to be successful the vehicle must be rich in figurative connotations."[227)]

Symbols allow events to represent other events, possibilities and abstractions, which do not exist as objects of sense exist, though some may be hidden in deep structures of reality. We categorize the world into separate objects in perception, and we describe the world as being made up of separate objects by the words in language. It is an interesting question how far perceptual and verbal classifications into objects are the same.

> "They are certainly similar, but there seem to be hardly enough names for the objects into which the world is divided perceptually. During perceptual learning - such as when learning to see biological cells with a microscope - new objects appear from initially random or meaningless patterns. When given names, such as 'nucleus' and 'mitochondrion', the student sees these patterns as objects. What is seen and accepted as objects also depends upon whether they are regarded as functional units. A hand, or an arm, or the pages of a book are functional units, though they are complex structures. In microscopy the criteria for what is a functional unit may be highly theory-laden, and so may change as theoretical descriptions change."[228)]

Arnheim has stated:

> "The human mind can be forced to produce replicas of things, but it is not naturally geared to it. Since perception is concerned with the grasping of significant form, the mind finds it hard to produce images devoid of that formal virtue."[229]

Memory retains or exaggerates significant things, and easily forgets the rest. E. H. Gombrich thinks:

> "... we generally do take in the mask before we notice the face. The mask here tands for the crude distinctions, the deviations from the norm which mark a person off from others. Any such deviation which attracts our attention may serve us as a tab of recognition and promises to save the effort of further scrutiny. For it is not really the perception of likeness for which we are originally programmed, but the noticing on unlikeness, the departure from the norm which stands out and sticks in the mind."[230]

For example, caricatures, in the sense of pictures that capture the "essence" of some represented object, are recognizable for people quicker than photographs.[231] A caricature is surprisingly faithful to how the mind remembers things, and Hochberg thinks that various objects with which we are familiar have *canonical forms* (i.e., shapes that are close to the ways in which those objects are encoded in our mind's eye).[232] Also, in addition to the *visual* features of the represented object, there are *nonvisual* features that might be encoded; thus the caricature might, in fact, not only be as informative as is the accurate drawing: it might even be more directly informative for the task that the subject is to perform.[233]

Hochberg writes:

> "Nevertheless, the way in which the physiognomy and expression of Mickey Mouse is encoded and stored *must be identical in some fashion* to the way in which those of a mouse - and a human - are stored. inasmuch as it is very likely that these similarities are not merely the result having been taught to apply the same verbal names to both sets of patterns (i.e., both to the features of caricatures and to the features of the objects that they represent), what we learn about caricature will help us understand how faces themselves are perceived."[234]

Symbolic interpretations that make one concrete object stand for another equally concrete one are almost always arbitrary. We cannot really tell whether a certain association was or is in the conscious or unconscious mind of the artist or beholder unless we obtain direct information, which needs analysis. The work of art itself does not offer the information, except in the case of symbols standardized by convention, or in those few individual instances in which the overt content of the work appears strange and unjustified, unless it is considered as a representation of different objects of similar appearance.

When Eisenstein wrote about montage within the shot, he was pointing out that the screen constitutes an organized pictorial composi-

tion, in principle like a Renaissance painting.[235] Durgnat has remarked that "we would demur with very many details in Eisenstein's analysis, but this does not affect the correctness of the principle."[236] When Eisenstein spoke of the conception of the organic, he was outlining that the organic spiral finds its internal law in the golden section, which marks a caesurapoint and divides the set into two great parts which may be opposed, but which are unequal. (In *Battleship Potemkin* this is the moment of sorrow where a transition is made from the ship to the town, and where the moment is reversed). But it is also each twist of the spiral, or segment, which divides up in its turn into two unequal opposing parts. And there are many kinds of opposition: quantitative (one-many, one man - many men, a single shot - a salvo, one ship - a fleet), qualitative (sea-land), intensive (dark-light), dynamic (movement upwards and downwards, from left to right and vice versa). So in Eisenstein's thinking the montage of opposition takes the place of parallel montage.[237]

André Bazin emphasized deep focus in seeing the image as a graphic structure, although he thought that Orson Welles and William Wyler did not direct the spectator's gaze, which was an unfortunate mistranslation according to Durgnat,[238] who continues that "it was a first step on the same slippery slope down which the primitive Bolsheviks had rushed in the 1920s, when they, too, restricted manipulation to montage, removed it from mise-en-scène, and reduced the shot to an unarticulated, inarticulate unit - merely 'raw material' with which film-editing could have its will".[239] Lev Kuleshov and in certain moments also Bazin were overlooking the complex structure of an image, and later on "critics went to contrast the metteur-en-scène with the auteur and stressed camera movements but overlooked the richness of the pro-filmic operations, of the mise-en-scène, which the shot exists to show, often from the angle which *showing* requires".[240]

A shot in a film is a series of images, a series of frames, but it is also a serial image, a new kind of pictorial entity, and even if there are no camera movements in a shot, on the level of the image there are many kinds of movements, which allow the shot to be covered. A movement (objectional or camera movement) does not undermine the image, but develops it. What the graphic qualities lose in the sense of economy, they will regain through tempo, rhytmics, choreography and orchestration.[241]

## 3.3 Orchestration and Points of Visual Organization

The concept of *orchestration* is interesting in relation to the creation of cinematic sentences. Stefan Scharff has suggested that "the cinematic

chain is a rigorous movement, merciless in its push and pull ... it is the function of orchestration to keep this movement under control, tying together a film's various elements and distributing them properly".[242] It is intended to achieve some kind of organic harmony and continuity, which is to emerge from the inner sources of the medium itself. "Orchestration is the guardian of the overall harmonies in a cinematic continuum."[243]

Beyond orchestration Scharff has isolated eight basic models of filmic structure:[244]

1) *Separation*, which means the fragmentation of a scene into single images in alternation - A, B, A, B, A, B etc. Scharff thinks that separation is a particularly strong element in cinema, and, as is the case with all elements, it has a number of rules of performance: the scene usually, but not always, starts with a full exposition, wherein all participants are seen in one frame, together; the ensuing single images should not be of the same size, in order to create the sense of perspective; characters in the single images are in visible eye contact with each other.[245] "In a well-constructed separation scene the images seen one at a time give the unmistakable impression of being in more intimate contact with each other than would be the case in a more 'realistic' arrangement, with the participants all the time in one frame."[246]

2) *Parallel Action*, which means that there are two or more narrative lines running simultaneously and presented by alternation between scenes. It is an ideal vehicle for chases, rescues and crime dramas and a method for breaking a naturalistic linearity.

3) *Slow Disclosure*, which means the gradual introduction of pictorial information within a single shot or several. As a method it can be applied to one scene or to a whole narrative; basically it is a way of avoiding a simplistic and over-expository flow of information.

4) *Familiar Image*, which is a stabilizing anchor image periodically reintroduced without variations. It may also be a minor figure in the drama. Occasionally it is the onlooker through whose line of vision we see the action or part of it.

5) *Moving Camera*, which is used in scenes without cuts. It is an element that is diametrically opposite to fragmentation. It carries a completely different rhythm and energy; it is prone to stylization and often takes liberties with reality; it introduces a new kind of dramatics by exploring and penetrating the cinematic space.

6) *Multi-angularity*, which is a series of shots of contrasting angles and compositions (including reverse and mirror images). It is the most common structure in cinema, responsible for the creation of the illusion of three-dimensionality on the flat screen.

7) *Master Shot Discipline*, which refers to the more traditional, Hollywood film structure, less frequent in contemporary cinema.

8) *Orchestration*, which is the arrangement of the various other elements of structure throughout the film. It has to attend to the arrangement, distribution, and modality over the larger geography of the narrative.

This is some kind of basic scheme, which allows variations and subdivisions, but although there is some overlapping and combining between these elements, they also gain their strength through their speciality. These are the basic cinesthetic elements, and their very source lies in a significant form, which conveys narrative information with weight, and as Scharff puts it,

> "At the juncture of well-chosen shots with such forms, something mysterious happens, which resembles a chemical reaction. Images fit together so magnificently that they ascend to a higher level of visual meaning."[247)]

The first task of *orchestration* is to present, during the film's first scenes, some kind of basic iconography of the work, to lead the spectator into the film's "way of speaking", into the cinesthetic method of the film.[248)]

When talking about the next function of orchestration, which is to control the overall graphic order of things, Scharff takes one aspect, which he calls *directional thrust*.[249)] The concept refers to the distribution of significant movements troughout the film. A film might have one directional thrust before the climax is reached near its middle and then take another direction.[250)] One trend which one can notice amongst the works of filmic masterminds is the opposite leanings of general movements and stationary compositions. Through this method one controls the internal graphic tension of the film. Scharff notices that in great Westerns, the general movement and action have a left to right tendency, while the compositions of significant stills (medium shots and close-ups) are right-handed, as if facing the general movement.[251)] Dreyer, for example, has a left-handed tendency for both movements and stable shots, while Hitchcock, Eisenstein, and Bresson are linked with the playing of opposites. The moving and stationary shots do not necessarily, however, follow each other immediately because the graphic bombardments occur throughout the whole film and work cumulatively.

The next function of orchestration that Scharff points out is linked with the tying together of units of action (scenes).[252)] Those significant movements or forms, which create directional thrusts in a film, cause transitions from one situation to another. So orchestration's one function is to determine how this will be done by creating transitional shots, or optical effects (fades, dissolves etc.), or using soundtrack, or music, sounds, or combining these.

When shots are changing and transitions occur, orchestration relates to creative editing because, as the chain of scenes is formed, it brings out new ideas from the material, which were not in the original script. And if one remembers that cinematic syntax has creative forces

since it invents "sentences" which have not been used before, the need to create new transitions is obvious. And after the filmic material has been piled up together according to some sense of continuity, all the additions, changes, and adjustments are necessary for the cinesthetic impact to be strong enough.

Scharff points out that orchestration plays an important part in the formulation of a master plan.[253] In this sense, its functions are related to those of editing because, in a way, the writing of a script also starts the editing process: it deals with the thinking through images and an image is always a mixture of various elements with many things happening simultaneously. But for Scharff it seems that orchestration is some kind of superstructure, which refers to the elements of the cinema and has to do with the quality of the film.

Consequently, structures are not simply forms, they also generate content (the form in a text entails content in the spectator's mind), and it is a mixture of images that creates the synthesis; thus the cinematic experience has this feeling of several processes operating together, and visual forms converge with the factors of meaning to create tensions. Cinema functions on many perceptual levels simultaneously through its own specific structures.

One view according to the principles of visual organization deals with Eisenstein's thinking when he speaks of conflicts, graphic conflicts, conflicts of planes, conflicts of volumes and spatial conflicts. According to Durgnat,[254] he deals with nothing esoteric, but with the same principles of visual organization which were regularly used by Hollywood editors and anticipated in the mise-en-scène of Hollywood directors. Partly that kind of one-dimensional ideas are due to thinking that for example Eisenstein's concept of intellectual montage is reduced to some iconographic, non-graphic and plastic juxtaposition. Quite like Eisenstein, many Hollywood directors also utilized graphic and plastic qualities between images, and the relations were based on the structures of a single image by forming a view where there were two or more configurations inside one image.

So Durgnat thinks:

> "Hence dynamic editing doesn't just begin and end a shot. By contrasting shots it *intensifies* the pictorial dynamism of each... from Griffith onwards, editing has played the closest attention to graphic structures, operating first *within* images and also *between* images - and finally *across* inter-vening images."[255]

Therefore it is clear that a pictorial analysis of a film cannot stop on the level of a single shot or an image because every image and every shot works pictorially together with many other shots and images. Cinema is also an art of movement, and movement in a film is concrete, unreal movement in depicted space. It is also graphic movement in real space,

and there are tensions between both of them.

In Durgnat's opinion one would be reduced to a very specialized prose if one tried to describe a film shot with a visual precision with which it presents itself as it is, and with no importations.[256]

He also maintains that the visual and verbal functional equivalence depends on very different semantic contents because, before a deep focus, many shots correspond, not to a sentence, but to a paragraph of description:

> "Landscapes rich in detail, the panoramic battle scenes in *The Birth of a Nation*, fixed-focus shots with two-plane action, physiognomies in Bresson and Dreyer".[257]

This is just one way to show how many problems the linguistic analogies in film produce because film shots have no equivalents in other media, and the structures of film are functions of our knowledge of the world, of how things operate in the world, so we can learn what the consequences that follow are, and what our expectations are. As Durgnat points out further on:

> "While films compromise between film form and knowledge of the world, these compromises permit an infinite variety of forms, corresponding not to syntactic, prescriptive rules, but to alternative utterances."[258]

# 4 DREAMING VISUALLY

## 4.1 Film as Dream: the Mental Imagery of Images

In visual thinking there is an unlimited number of possibilities, so every pictorial form of it is just a simplified outcrop. The richness of filmic meanings relates to the extent in which the series of edited images follow our thoughts in relation to the world. This was, for example, how Surrealists emphasized cinema in relation to our mental imagery and the associations provoked by it. A surrealistic film works with the illusionism of the image of a film itself (although one must remember that the image is concrete in itself and abstract in relation to other things); it concentrates on the fictive unity of human subject created by the image. Thus a surrealistic film is a visual art form attending to both the subject and the relations of the image, and also a very sophisticated attempt to fight against the identification process connected with that relationship.[259)]

In the first surrealistic manifesto André Breton relates that it was a visual hallucination of a man cut in two by a window that inspired his subsequent exploration of the relation between unconscious thought and poetic production.[260)] Linda Williams notes that this kind of exploration resulted in Breton's and Soupault's experiments in automatic writing and the ultimate development of the notion of the surreal, which was a reformulation of Pierre Reverdy's idea of the poetic image.[261)]

Reverdy wrote as early as 1918:

> "The image is a pure creation of the mind. it is not born from a comparison but from a juxtaposition of two or less distant realities. The more distant and true the relationship between the two realities, the stronger

> the image will be - the more emotional power and poetic reality it will have. The emotion thus provoked is poetically pure because it is born outside of all imitation, all evocation, all comparison."[262]

Poetry and the visual arts were connected through Surrealism stronger than ever, because Surrealists believed in the force of visual images. What Surrealists ached for of the cinema was the impossible, the unexpected, dreams, surprises, which efface the baseness in souls and rush them enthusiastically to the barricades and into adventures, into mysteries and miracles.

Surrealism is the most extreme form of mental imagery. Jean Goudal expressed the Surrealists' enthusiasm and hope for film to become the ideal means for the realization of surreality and the marvellous in 1925 as follows:

> "The cinema ... constitutes a conscious hallucination, and utilizes this fusion of dream and consciousness which Surrealism would like to see realized in the literary domain. ...Not only does the application of Surrealist ideas to the cinema avoid the objection with which you can charge literary Surrealism, but that surreality presents a domain actually indicated to cinema by its very technique .... It is time cinéastes saw clearly what profits they may gain in opening up their art to the unexplored regions of the dream.... They should lose no time in imbuing their productions with the three essential characteristics of the dream: the *visual*, the *illogical*, the *pervasive*."[263]

So we can think like J.H. Matthews that the ideal film for a Surrealist is like a storehouse of visual images upon which his imagination will satisfy the marvelous.[264] Robert Desnos, Antonin Artaud and Jean Goudal emphasize that the model of dream is an essential part of the surrealist discourse on film. Artaud and Goudal point out the structural and formal resemblance between film and dream; their theory of Surrealist cinema is based on the exploitation of film's ability to imitate the special language of dream.[265] Still, one must be careful in comparing film and dream because this kind of thinking foreshortens the complexity of mental processes. For example, Chris Marker's *Letter from Siberia* (1957) is very interesting in its symbolic thinking: the voice-over in that film transforms the images, puts metaphors onto the images and changes the meanings of the images. And another example:

> "In Chris Marker's documentary, or rather essay, *Le Mystère Koumiko*, the voice of a Korean girl in Japan expresses her uncertainty about her cultural and personal identity. As she speaks, we see the view from a monorail of its track curving away ahead across a flat, bleak shore. This view is diegetic insofar as we easily assume that she happens to be on it while she speaks, or thinks aloud, or has recently been on it. But we don't have to assume that the commentary synchronizes with the shot, and even if lip-synch were noticeable, the scene's importance remains symbolic, or rather (since symbols may have specified meanings) metaphorical. Narra-

> tive is subordinated to metaphor, and the real structure, the structure of the discourse, is in many respects identical to that of a nondiegetic metaphor. We even have a sense, not so much of arbitrariness, or willfulnesses of a digression, which has another meaning, which decenters the lanscape from circumstantial detail and even from 'circumstantial-detail-functioning-as-appropriate-mood' to 'this is the wasteland in her head', 'this is inside her head'."[266]

So, we can think that a metaphor is an example of a process which is not logical and not dream, and that is why cuts in a film can work like moods, hint to similarities between entirely different things. It is not dreamlike, and it is not logical thinking because most thinking is in between the two, and logic is something one arrives at, not the way one thinks.

Desnos points out the importance of surrealist cinema on the development of the wish-fulfilling content on *amour fou*. He thinks that a film, like a dream, should reverse our expectations of the real world by presenting the accomplishment of our most secret desires for passion, adventure and even murder. In his opinion the identification of a spectator with a character is intentionally disturbed through the introduction of formal similarities. The spectator's belief in the previous reality of place, time and character is quite literally obliterated by the mysterious and all-engulfing round shapes that first arise out of and finally take over the narrative.[267]

Desnos believed in the eroticism of the screen as almost narcotic subjugation of the mind:

> "One of the most admirable factors of the cinema and one of the causes of hate felt for it by imbeciles is its eroticism. These men and women, luminous in the dark, perform actions which are stirring to the point of sensuality. To imagine it, their flesh becomes more concrete than that of the living, and while they undergo on the screen the most irrevocable fate, in the mind of the sensitive spectator they take part in a different kind of miraculous adventure. Among cerebral narcotics the cinema is becoming the most powerful: the double scenario follows its course in an atmosphere superior to that of opium, while, partaking of two themes, acts and deeds flash abruptly as dazzling points of contact."[268]

Desnos made his scripts in the mid-twenties, and perhaps it is not an incident that only a few years later Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali, in *Un Chien Andalou* (1928), made up similar breaks between time and place, with round, formal analogies between the moon and the eye of the woman. Buñuel and Dali broke the spectator's identification with character through analogy, in which the clouds "cut" the round moon and a razor cuts the eye. One can think that ordinary poetry and painting are full of that kind of metaphorical thinking, and in a sense it has nothing to do with dream at all, it is more like linking ideas together, which brings us back to associations. All the processes which Freud attributed

to the unconscious mind are actually carried on in poetry by the conscious mind.

According to surrealist logic an emotionally touching, strong film experience goes straight into the deepest and more primitive levels of our personality. So it is natural that the activation of these levels is possible only through means which correspond with the often manysided, obviously irrational language of those levels. When surrealists talk about dreams and dreaming, they are referring to their own ambitious thoughts in bringing those aspects forth, because dreaming is a way of creating a chance for delicate stimulus (although one can have delicate stimulus without a dream), through which one can change human reality.[269] We can have delicate stimulus like in Eisenstein's *Strike* (1924), where there is a scene in which a capitalist accidentally drops a slice of lemon on his shiny shoe, so there are two high-key things (a lemon and a shiny shoe). This kind of scene is not dreamlike, not actually, but it is what one might call a delicate stimulus.[270]

Steven Kovács thinks:

> "Accordingly, the thrust of Surrealist film projects was not in the direction of technical experimentation. Whenever we notice a cinematic trick, it has a specific function in terms of the themes of the film. Buñuel went as far as to eliminate consciously all technical bravura in his work. Rather, they attempted to evoke the unique properties of the cinema the way they understood them to be. As did many of their contemporaries, they also noted the immadiacy of this new medium. They sought to create in their spectators the most powerful kinds of feelings, which for them were always linked to specific sensations. They did this in part by attempting to convey the world of senses and emotions in all their richness in visual terms. Thus, vertigo, speed, dreams, accidents, anger, erotic desire, itching, pain, music and noise were all suggested in their various film scenarios. Often the visual translation fails to render the strength of the sensation they sought. Occasionally they reach the heights of poetry, as in the evocation of physical and psychological terror with the slashing of the eyeball which opens *Un Chien Andalou*, or in the creation of a desire for a mysterious woman in *L'Etoile de mer*."[271]

In a film as in a dream, the narrative elements are beyond the elements of space and time. When someone is watching a film in a darkened place, there is this feeling of an isolated dreamer. The film seems "real" on the level of the mind, as dreams do. The model for dreaming gives a possibility to throw oneself back to the past, to childhood, or to some other dimension. This forms a complex psychic process, the fictional world called "the dream screen".[272]

Vlada Petric expresses Andrei Tarkovsky's dream screen as follows:

> "In *The Mirror*, a dreamlike impact is achieved by tracking shots that follow Masha's friend Lisa running through the long corridor (happily relieved from the fear of misspelling Stalin's name in the newspaper

> galleys Masha was correcting); as she contentedly jumps while running, the motion is slightly decelerated, which creates an illusion of her body floating in the air. The surreal effect occurs at the right place (in the thematic/narrative sense) - rhythmically synchronized with the heroine's feeling of elation - thereby parallelling the mood of recollection that prevails."[273]

In a poem William Wordsworth describes that the growth into adulthood robs us of our ability to maintain a sense of oneness with our perceptions.[274] According to Wordsworth our "birth" is "a sleep and forgetting" - an entrance into a world that will deprive us of the integrative vision we have as infants and as children. Our experience of film permits us to return to the state of perceptual unity between consciousness and dreams. "The sleep" in our experience of film makes it possible, and "the forgetting" is connected with the fact that, although we feel the sense of unity, we have difficulties in remembering various events and details in the narrative. The longer we are away from film, the more confused our memories of it become.[275]

There are similar difficulties in returning dreams into mind. The worlds in films and dreams are expansions of our being, and when they disappear from our mind's eye, we do not only lose the actuality of events and characters, but we also lose the pictorial space in which those characters are performing. And when we try to return them into our minds, we notice that we are returning them into a space that does not exist any more.[276]

## 4.2 Freud & Jung on Dreams

Sigmund Freud thinks that a dream is ultimately an infantile wish that emerges during sleep, not just a wish, but also the repression of the wish with the mind trying to keep thought unconscious.[277] It contains features like condensation (the merging of people and places), displacement, the shifting of psychic attention from important to apparently irrelevant or minor details. It also contains secondary revision, the means by which connections and structure are built into the disjointed memories of the dream, and considerations of representability, by which the abstract materials of the dream are given the form of pictorial presentation.[278] The final dream that we remember presents only its manifest content to us. And when a dream is analysed, the task is to find the latent content, by exploring all the associations that the analyst has in regarding dream and daily life. The elements of dream are seen to be overdetermined; many features are products of a number of influences and memories. And dreams are, as Freud sees it, "the royal road leading back into the

unconscious".[279)]

Ernest Jones thinks:

> "He (Freud) makes the momentous distinction between two fundamentally different mental processes, which he called primary (unconscious) and secondary (conscious) respectively. He notes that the primary processes dominates dream life, and he explains this by the relative quiescence in the activity of the ego (which at other times inhibits the primary process) and the almost total immobility; if the cathexis of the ego were reduced to nothing, then sleep would be dreamless. He also states that the hallucinatory character of dreams, which is accepted by the dream consciousness so that the dreamer believes in what is happening, is a 'regression' back to the processes of perception which he relates to the motor block in the usual direction of discharge."[280)]

Freud was concerned with why dreams are often apparently nonsensical, if they are indeed windows to the deep nature of man. This led him to distinguish between the 'manifest' and the 'latent' content of dreams. The principal task of a dream interpretation by the analyst is to discern the latent content, which is the deep meaning, from the manifest content, which is the often trivial-looking experienced contents of the dream. Freud asks whether we can explain why "a thought, and as a rule a thought of something wished, as objectified in the dream, is represented as a scene, or, as it seems to us, is experienced."[281)] Freud thinks that in dreams the thought is transformed into visual images and speech of an immediate situation and that the only way in which we can describe what happens in hallucinatory dreams is by saying that the excitation moves in a retrogressive direction. Instead of being transmitted towards the motor end of the apparatus it moves towards the sensory end and finally reaches the perceptual system. If we describe as 'progressive' the direction taken by physical processes during waking life, then we may speak of dreams as having a 'regressive' character.[282)]

The physiological state of sleep may produce the changes of excitation supposed to produce regression, but Freud points out that regression also occurs in waking patients suffering hallucinations as in hysteria. They are also regressions - that is thoughts that undergo this transformation into images - but the only thoughts that undergo this transformation are those which are intimately linked with memories that have been supressed or have remained unconscious. Freud emphasizes the importance of infant experience and fantasies in dreams, concluding that in dreams we may retrace our own experience and even the experience of the human race:

> "Dreaming is on the whole an example of regression to the dreamer's earliest condition, a revival of his childhood, of the instinctual impulses which dominated it and of the methods of expression which were then available to him. Behind this childhood of the individual we are promised a picture of a phylogenetic childhood - a picture of the development of

> the human race, of which the individual's development is in fact an abbreviated recapitulation influenced by the chance circumstances of life "[283]

In the *Introductory Lectures*, Freud expresses his committed view that dreams are symbolic accounts of unconscious mental activity having deep significance, and Freud thinks that symbolism is perhaps the most remarkable chapter of the theory of dreams because symbols are stable translations; they realize to some extent the ideal of the ancient as well as the popular interpretation of dreams.[284]

Carl G. Jung has responded to Freud's themes by saying that a dream is a compensatory activity on the part of the individual rather than a disguised wish. Dreams emerge from the buried psychic life of the dreamer as well as of the human race and display in their content archetypal elements common to all cultures.[285]

Jung writes:

> "My views about the 'archaic remnants', which I call 'archetypes' or 'primordial images', have been criticised by people who lack a sufficient knowledge of psychology of dreams and of mythology. The term 'archetype' is often misunderstood as meaning certain definite mythological images or motifs. But these are nothing more than conscious representations; it would be absurd to assume that such variable representations could be inherited. Here I must clarify my relation between instincts and archetype: what we properly call instincts are psychological urges, and are perceived by the senses. But at the same time, they also manifest themselves in fantasies and often reveal their presence only by symbolic images. These manifestations are what I call archetypes. They are without known origin; and they reproduce themselves in any time or in any part of the world - even where transmission by direct descent or 'cross fertilisation' through migration must be ruled out."[286]

To suggest that dreams can be interpreted implies that they have meaning which must be discovered by learning how to interpret or read them. They have to be interpreted because they are apparently nonsensical. Freud admits that dreams can be distorted, and also that dream symbols can be taken as positive or negative, and what is represented should be interpreted as the opposite of how it appears. Dreams are also truncated and have important bits missing; they may have been missing in the dream or the waking memory in recall may have been faulty - losing essential items or filling gaps with features that never were in the dream.

It seems entirely possible that something like meaning filters through these processes, and it also turns out to be true that the mind is still active and very likely highly active in sleep and that the world of senses is not entirely cut off but may be interpreted. Dreaming confirms the notion that brain activity is spontaneous and normally controlled by sensory signals. Dreams thus give us a window, a strange and perhaps distorting window into the dynamics of the mind.[287]

## 4.3 Flexibilities

In film one can show a dream in many ways, for example by using voice-over narration, through fades, dissolves, optical shifts or just showing first a sleeper and then the dream. No matter what form the dream takes in a film, the spectator understands it as a psychic projection of the mind presented on a screen. And at the moment when the dream starts, we are entering into a new phenomenological relationship between the screen and a dreaming mind presented on that screen.[288)]

Bruce Kawin thinks that film and dream are, above all, visual hallucinations when the subject is in a physically passive state in a darkened environment. But one can say that films are not visual hallucinations, and we are not in a darkened environment, for example, when we are watching television. Dreams are called films which the dreamer develops and watches in a theater of brains, and films are called dreams developed by the artists.[289)] Although the dreamer is more active than the filmgoer, the dreamer is not usually aware of the dream when it is processing; in consequence (on the level of the consciousness) both the dreamer and the filmgoer feel quite passive observers taking part in a fictive, pseudoautonomic world of images.

One must not forget the difference between dreams and daydreams: daydreams are escapist, but they are not repressed - people indulge daydreams quite deliberately. So, everything Freud says about dreams does not apply to daydreams, because they are nonrepressed, they are not forbidden. The ego which is watching a dream is also different from the ego which is watching a film because the eye which is watching is different in both cases. One difference between film and dream is that one knows that a film is a socially approved production, so the interpretative relationship with it is quite different from a connection between it and dream.

On a conventional level dream sequences in films are often separated quite clearly from the the rest of the film world. But these signs are not necessarily needed, as can be seen in many Luis Buñuel's films. The attention attracts itself to the subjectivity of the characters; sometimes the same imagery can be seen as an outside performance of a character or a world, sometimes as a dream of the character, and sometimes as a dream of some other character.

According to Durgnat:

> "Contradictions occur not only in dreams, but in thinking generally (we juggle alternative hypotheses, break mental set, etc.). Our daily, waking stream-of-consciousness has less, rather than more, narrative or rational coherence than the dreams we remember."[290)]

The passing of filmic experience deals with the contradiction of realistic impressions and the vanishing of the experience: the reality of the screen is so genuine that it closes us in, and when we dive into it, at the same time we also close ourselves out of it. Two self-evident worlds meet briefly, and then rush to their different ways. Nevertheless, the so-called Kuleshov experiment demonstrates that no more filmic reality than the spectator's reality are self-evident. Every film in itself is meaningless, like every novel and poem; the connections between symbols, the elements of thoughts, are mixed in the spectator's mind. At that point the film and the spectator are linked together, the spectator is passionately connected with the images of the film, laughing, crying, using the film as a reference to his everyday life. The birth of meaning, with all its routines, is not necessarily language bound or logic, conscious or unconscious, archetypal or dreamlike, culturally oriented or private, but flexible, responsive and assertive.

## 4.4 Magical Illusions: Notes on *Un Chien Andalou*

Film with its unending flow of images is an ideal medium for surrealism. J.H. Matthews has pointed out[291] that Surrealists were interested in movies as spectators, members of the audience. Personal interpretation of what was happening on the screen was necessary to the experience and was part of the creative act from which new insights into life were obtained. Thus films were judged by them, not according to style, skill or form, but by how greatly they stimulated the imagination into new ways of seeing. The basic form of cinema itself holds great attraction for Surrealists because of its ability graphically to exhibit the products of the unconscious, a chance and spontaneity in the form of dreams and hallucinations. And because film can distort and manipulate time and space, it can create magical illusions.[292]

A film can be considered surrealistic if it adheres to three tenets: revolution, awakening to surreality (an extension of reality), automatism, free association of ideas arising from the subconscious, and if it has a new evaluation of Breton's "marvelous", wonderous discoveries.[293]

The filmic medium often employs surrealistic thinking of style. For example, in editing the juxtaposition of shots through powerful montage gives endless possibilities. Time can be used psychologically by lengthening or contracting it; locations can be altered instantaneously and one can jump back and forth in time. Surrealism can mix together fiction and documentary, the unreal and the real; it can play with the feelings of the audience, and create a super reality.[294]

Parker Tyler writes:

> "The metaphor, the automatic image of the Surrealists, the phenomena of dreams or trance - this trio of elements make neither subjects for 'scientific' inquiry nor yet 'abnormal' fantasies for morbid exploitation by irresponsible persons, They signify cardinal points in the Experimental film creed. As true for every genuine artist, they are part of, or a technique for expressing, normal human experience, a working of the imagination projecting itself honestly in terms of a given medium. Reality is subjective as well as objective and, in an important sense, fiction as well as fact. In the determined, if not always fair, opposition of documentarists to Experimentalism, we find nothing but the rejection of imagination as a significant form of experience in its own right. Among the greatest works of drama, poetry, and painting, nature and 'normal' reality are indeed usually present but sometimes, notably in symbolic forms of all kinds. The imagination uses facts only as starting points, as elements of composition, for a total form *expressing* it if not always *identical with* a complete human experience."[295]

In Luis Buñuel's (1900-1983) case it is a question of understanding mental associations, of gliding into the world into which he dived very instinctively, by understanding the filmic possibilities of depicting human consciousness. This is one of the aspects that might explain the odd moving of *Un Chien Andalou*, which is some kind of unattainable dream image, because the movement into something is continuing, and at the same time many things are vanishing into somewhere. One essential factor in that film is the playfulness of things, which makes the feelings deeper and more forceful. There are also these contradictions and ironies, a way of seeing the world through images that are manysided in their meanings. The social associations and the extent to which *Un Chien Andalou* has a complete meaning have a great deal to do with surface details, visual textures and classical film form, because it is not a secret, symbolical, esoteric film, but a very open and sensitive kind of film.

There are some traditions behind the film's imagery: right through the twenties the Americans were developing a fast, smooth continuity style, which the Europeans learned from them. The French avant-garde tradition committed a very free use of every kind of optical distortion and fast montages. The Russian montage was more staccato and discontinuous than the American style or the French style. The American style of storytelling also had its effects behind the styles. In *Un Chien Andalou* we can find all those traditions, because the film combines and synthesizes them in its form.

> "Thus *Chien* combines in one text the Dadaist structures of *Entr'acte* (Clair and Picabia, 1924), Maya Deren's impossibilist dream-cuts, Eisenstein's creamseparator sequence, classical Hollywood syntax, and jump-cuts."[296]

At the beginning of that film we are in a world of fairytales, of innocence, and the film is constructed around a series of surprises, which is a structure that the Americans have invented - a model that emphasizes the story as a series of surprises which have to make sense when going from surprise to surprise, from discourse to discourse. But very soon comes the clash that moves us away from innocence. The image of the hands, a razor and a watch, can be seen as some kind of microcosm of the whole film, because the hands reoccur later on, and the watch is also in the last scene of the film. It points out the graphic structure of the film: the hands are cut off, the window makes a diagonal line, the camera is looking from up, and the whole-set up is modern, futuristic in a way. But the next shot (with Buñuel) is more flat and even; there are shadows in an atmosphere of night, of dream, of passion. The segmentation between these shots is strong; it could have been done in one shot, but this strong segmentation refers to Russian montage, in which the tension is created by separation. There is also a bit of romantic association, a kind of registeration of the rhythm of breathing. If we follow Eisenstein's terminology, we can say that the second shot is dominant in reference to the first shot. Then comes the movement with the razor, which makes a directorial decision, creating a tension between the razor and the window. It is a balanced pictorial shot, with the man on the left, the curtains, and the feeling of moonlight. Nobody else is there, and there is a lot of patience in Buñuel's figure. There are these two flat surfaces, the balcony and the wall. The man (Buñuel) comes through the balcony door, which causes a big visual event, his going from one visual space to another. Another possibility is to end up like in Buñuel's *El Angel Exterminador* (1962), where they cannot leave the space.

According to classical stylization, when one enters a new space, some kind of adjustment must be made to it in the previous shot, like in the shot with the man where the moonlight is making an adjustment to the next shot. Every spectator watching *Un Chien Andalou* associates the shot with the man who cuts the girl's eye, although there are some contradictions (for example the watch is missing); the continuity of the action, however, is so strong that the sequence seems very consistent. So the mind is mixing up all the ingredients, which makes it hard to remember all the details. In the film the pulse is created by different rhythms: there is the sharp rhythm of editing, the rhythm of happenings, and also the rhythm of the spectator's understanding. The purpose of the dreamlike qualities and romanticism in these early scenes is to create a kind of sensitive feeling before the brutal explosion, a moment of horror, into which the spectator is also lowered. Later in the film there are more precise timings than in the beginning, where there is that fable reference. A kind of odd thing in the filmic form is the fact how quickly the brain catches the information, which makes it possible for the spectator to move from one shot to another. So, Buñuel's strategy changes, but the

spectator adapts to it. It relates to how Bertrand Russell describes causal lines:

> "A 'causal line', as I wish to define the term, is a temporal series of events so related that given some of them, something can be inferred about the others whatever may be happening elsewhere."[297]

Paul Sandro thinks that the classical cinema induces a condition of precocious mastery through its ordering processes, which is important if we think of the eye-slitting sequence and its effects:

> "For the trick of crosscutting amounts to a betrayal of cinema's collaboration with the subject. The title "Once upon a Time" and the balcony scene, a cliché of mise-en-scène, establish a fictional space; and the gaze of the male figure, Buñuel, orients the viewing subject, soliciting psychic investment in the moon/cloud shots as an escape, a disavowal of the razor's threat."[298]

The effect of the eye-slitting sequence returns indirectly in the disruption of temporal and spatial relations, as well as in the repetition of actions among the film's segments and in the proliferation of graphic patterns that echo the forms of the beginning.[299]

As Durgnat writes:

> "Nonetheless: the indications of one continuous action-space are so strong, and the 'dis-structural' detail so inconspicuous relative to the re-emphasized razor-edge, that even after analysis, the continuity obstinately proposes, as strongly as action across cuts establishes anything, one continuous action by one continuous man, with the moon *en face* .... but only close viewing reveals how carefully Buñuel constructed the filmic equivalent of flowing prose which fragments into anti-sense before your very eyes. All but lost, therefore, was its violent 'disrupture' of meaning."[300]

One noticeable thing in this film is the variety of angles, especially in the scene in which the man is riding a bicycle, because Buñuel uses almost all sides of the canvas to show one continuous movement. There is a mixture of different styles, clothes and worlds: a man with feminine intuitions, clownlike clothes, and the long shadows in buildings, which make these images visually strong. Very clearly the centre of interest lies in the cyclist. If we have a cut with strong movements between the different images, then the eye does not have to wander and look for new centres of interest, because the movement softens the clash between the images, so the eye does not hesitate to move from one point to another. When the cyclist is in the mid-shot, the camera tracks backwards along with him, and we get a different kind of mood. The thing that he has on his head resembles a kind of nun's hat, and another association that we get refers to an angel with wings. On his neck there is a striped box hanging; this box has more significance later on. The striped box is a Surrealist

object, which appears as a kind of motif in the film. Stephen Kovács thinks that it is vital to the life forces of man, and the woman considers it as such in her ritual placement of his belongings on the bed to bring him back to life.[301)]

Later, the police place the severed hand in the same box to give it to the androgyne, and when the man's double appears at night, he strips the man of his outfit and throws it all out with the box. At the end of the film, when the couple walks along the beach, the box is broken along with the clothes washed ashore. The meaning of the box is diffused, because similar kinds of visualities appear on the man's tie, and it has repetitions with the black and white keys of the piano and with the teeth of the donkeys.

Kovács thinks:

> "The striped box serves as an irrational focus of attention, without acquiring any specific meaning. As such, it resembles very closely the function of the starfish in Man Ray's *L'Étoile de mer* and seashell in Germaine Dulac's *The Seashell and the Clergyman.*"[302)]

In Man Ray's film the starfish was associated with the central problem of the union of the man and woman, but its unexpected appearances as well as its depiction as both symbol and object were essential. In Dulac's film the seashell has links to the alchemy of the clergyman, but it also works as a protective plate for the woman in the film, and in all three films Surrealist objects of this kind appear in the opening and closing scenes.

The fades in *Un Chien Andalou* are made in the camera, not with optical printers, and there are also these overlapping cross-fades, which are longer than usual images. (A possible reference to Josef von Sternberg's Marlene Dietrich films and also to George Stevens's *A Place in the Sun*).

Then comes the cyclist's visual angle, with swift changes between subjective and objective perspectives, which hints to a later Buñuel film *Le Phantome de la Liberté* (1974) and its Episode 3: The Nurse.[303)] In that episode the nurse is going to visit her father and she is driving a small car along a stormy forest road, where she encounters a group of military men in tanks, incongruously hunting foxes. At that moment Buñuel's camera changes the angle of vision, and later makes these shifts between different perspectives.

In moving into another perspective, related to this scene, Raymond Durgnat has suggested[304)] that the exchange between the nurse and the military men in the forest has no direct or overt connection with any previously stated issues in the film, and the matter ends there, except that when the nurse subsequently arrives at an inn, the camera notices (she does not) a stuffed fox in a glass case.

And Durgnat continues:

> "To be sure, the "fox" theme does reappear in the film; we consider the fox as a special example of a wider class ot theme "animal". Earlier a character has dreamed of unexpected animals, including a kiwi, stalking through his bedroom, and the film ends with animals in the zoo, including an ostrich, menaced in some way by a riot. But nothing in the film clearly instructs or encourages us to link the fox with other animals, so as to make a thematic issue out of animals generally, or some subclass to them - for example, four-legged mammals, or animals other than humans (to include the kiwi and the ostrich), or animals (including humans). Certainly all these classifications exist in the film (as in the general culture or set of cultures of which it is a part). But the choice of any such set as significant to this film is entirely optional."[305)]

So, in a way, in Buñuel's films animals appear as bipeds, they link with his "obsession" or "fetish" concerning feet and crutches - including the artificial leg of the beautiful heroine in his film *Tristana* (1970). To this set we can, according to Durgnat,[306)] attach bicycles (present in *Le Phantome de la Liberté*, and so prominent in *Un Chien Andalou*, since the bicycle emphasizes feet through pedals, and doubles their rotation by its double wheels). "In the structure of Buñuel's imagery, the ostrich is first cousin to the bicycle. And very precisely, the rider of the bicycle has pieces of cloth like wings on his shoulder. Because an angel is also a kind of bird", Durgnat continues.[307)] These other Buñuel-examples are not so much dreamlike films as *Un Chien Andalou* is; they are more like fantasy films, but it is surprising that these different kind of films are using the same kind of symbolism.

In the pictorial sense Buñuel, with his use of subjective views in *Un Chien Andalou*, refers to the skism between avantgardism and old professionalism in films in general, because avant-gardists favour subjective shots with their strong identification. But the problem lies in the fact that in using subjective shots, there lies a danger because these shots do not give enough information about the environment; so it is possible to float into an empty space, where the mood and sense of the space around people is, in a way, unclear and unbalanced. That is why traditional professionalists in cinema are more skeptical in using subjective shots; they feel that the imagery could be more varied by using a lot of facial images and the like.

The cut from the striped box into the view inside a room where the woman is sitting in a chair relates to the possibility (a psychoanalytical one) that the next happening could be inside the box (a transition between time and place), and the curtains behind the woman make a similar shape with the keyhole of the box. Because the syntax of cinema is so rudimentary - it just shows a complete scene or positions - one can not really tell, for example, whether a cut from the striped box to the woman is a cut to another part of the city at the same time or different time; or one can not tell if this is happening inside the box or inside his mind. The shadows in the woman's room are strong and

heavy, continuing the earlier theme of shadows in the film. The box has diagonal stripes and the room has square and art-déco shapes because the room is a design. When the cyclist crosses over the screen it works like a figment across her mental screen. When the book falls from the woman's hands it shows a picture of Vermeer's the *Lace-Maker*, which has hair like the white whists on the cyclist's head, and a needle going through the canvas is like a razor going through the eye.

Paul Sandro thinks:

> "Not only is the woman's gaze held in a specular relation to the painting (in the fiction of representational adequacy, a fiction of plenitude), the painting itself represents a woman gazing at the lace she is creating. Both images present a narcissistic situation. The lacemaker's expression is calm, as if fulfilled by the work absorbing her attention. So too is the expression of the woman in the film until her attention is interrupted by the arrival of the cyclist."[308)]

As Kristin Thompson has suggested, the spatio-temporal problems innate in the construction of the multiple-shot film helped to guide the film-makers' formulation of a classical narrative model.[309)] The continuity rules that filmmakers devised were not natural outgrowths of cutting, but means of taming and unifying it. In short, classical narration tailored every detail to the spectator's attention; the Americans spent a whole period from 1900 to 1912 learning how to get characters across the room very quickly; the Europeans, like Buñuel, learned this skill from them. So now Buñuel cuts continuity between the cyclist's movements and the woman's movements across the room. The woman has electrified movements, which brings out the more general Buñuel-theme of characters waiting nervously for something to happen. A lot of *Un Chien Andalou* is built around the choreography of movement and cuts between them.

The central male-female relationship in *Un Chien Andalou* is one of the main powers behind the film's structure. The man (Pierre Batcheff) appears in three states in the course of the film: as 'himself', as his 'double' and as a cyclist. The relationship between the man and the woman (Simonne Mareuil) centres on the woman's resistance to the man's ministrations and attempted seduction. The central sexual process of the narrative is played out indirectly by a series of obscure gifts and visions such as the delivery of the striped box, the woman's mourning over the cyclist's disembodied costume, the couple's vision of a subsidiary character through gazing at the hand filled with ants, the hero's burden of corks, melons, priests and pianos drawn towards the heroine and he himself subsiding into fantastic physical competition, the hero erasing his own mouth and replacing it with magically transferred hair from the armpit of the heroine, and culminating in the shock of the couple's unexplicated burial in an insect-infested desert landscape.

The sequence where the woman sees the man (as cyclist) coming

along the street has a strong diagonal-movement-line and segmentation between the shots. The continuity lies in the same directional actions between the cyclist and the woman rushing across the room. The woman's attitude to the cyclist's actions also makes a strong continuity between the shots. Buñuel even condenses time in showing the actions of the woman going through the room and coming downstairs to meet the man. With elliptic editing one can only show the beginning of an action and rely on the spectator's ability to work out the rest.

In the shot where the woman is arranging the cyclist's clothes there are visual similarities with the opening shot of the hands and the razor because here, too, the woman's hands are cut off and she is making similar kind of gestures with her hand as the man (Buñuel) did at the beginning of the film. The filmic form, however, is somewhat different because in the latter shot it includes a withdrawal of the camera. In terms of the story there are no definite reasons for the woman to walk around the room, but then, a great deal of the film's structure is not so much narrative as it is description of how characters do things and insofar as a shot is a scene, it is a description and construction of physical chronotopography.[310)]

Diagonal lines cover the bed in the woman's room, and later on she will sit down on a chair which is diagonal to the picture frame. Buñuel uses diagonal underlinings by putting the central interests of an image into the foreground of the screen. When in *Un Chien Andalou* we have a scene were the characters are talking to each other, Buñuel uses a two-way dominant line system where the usual dominant lines go between their straight eye levels and if they look down, another one goes between those lines.

Buñuel uses match shots as part of the structure in *Un Chien Andalou*.[311)] Masks are also used frequently, but in a slightly different way, because usually, when a mask opens in a film, it opens on scenery and not on action, but in the scene where the androgyne is surrounded by a crowd the mask opens and everything is already moving.

The first shot with the androgyne is taken straight from the above. This emphasizes the anonymity of the character and of the crowd and brings out the idea of the 'cinematographic angle'of which Barry Salt writes:

> "The concept of the 'cinematographic angle' (which I owe to Jean Mitry), denotes those types of compositions and framings which did not and could not occur in the still photography of this period and earlier. Marked departures from a horizontal lens axis tend to produce images that are only rendered comprehensible and acceptable in films because the activities in them are already understood from the previous moments of the narrative and the actors in it, and for this reason they were almost entirely avoided in the still photography of the period. It appears from the examples he quotes that Mitry believes that such composition only began to appear in films around 1914, but in fact numerous films show that it

> was some years before this such features had begun to appear regularly. Obviously extreme high- and low-angle shots come into this category..."[312]

Buñuel uses extreme high-angle to bring us gradually down into the action with a sense of policemen pushing people away. Buñuel thinks in terms of shots as separate statements, where shot (1) is a woman on the street with a stick pointing to a dismembered hand and being surrounded by a crowd. Shot (2) tells that the policemen are pushing people back and the woman (the androgyne) is becoming more isolated. Shot (3) is a description of the woman: what she looks like, what her subjective processes are, what the style of the person is. It is a semantic point how much film and its associations actually make sense, (How much a spectator recognizes things like the style of a person), and it does not need a rigid narrative structure to show things, because film is a physical medium which expresses also abstract, poetic ideas. Buñuel shifts between static scenes and action scenes to create the atmosphere; in a film one does not have much time to explain in words, one works with quick physical atmospheres.

Linda Williams has observed metaphors inside the structure:

> "The androgyne herself is a dominantly feminine version of the contradictory gender traits of the dominantly masculine cyclist. Her feminine skirt is countered by short hair, angular body, and tailored jacket, just as the cyclist's suit and tie are countered by feminine frills. The cyclist and androgyne are also linked by their mutual possession of the diagonally striped box, which in one instance contains a necktie and in another becomes the receptable for the severed hand."[313]

The depiction of the androgyne is so clear that one recognizes her social status, due to which the policemen act politely towards her. Buñuel creates an atmosphere which has echoes to both German and French films of the late twenties.[314] Since in film one has not much time to explain things in words, one has to work with very quick physical atmospheres and new relations between people and objects. Buñuel also increases the lighting steadily in the scene with the androgyne, the man and the woman in the balcony window. By using visual contrasts Buñuel marks the climaxes and cuts between subjective shots. Buñuel uses two-shots, which tell about the transaction, and connects that with the androgyne's private reactions, so her subjectivity is emphasized with the shifting camera. Music is taking a kind of different rhythm, pushing images; so the people and their emotions are carried with the music as well.

The atmosphere is created by variations: the woman's emotions, the sense of the policemen, the sense of the crowd, the variety of moods and happenings all work towards the general feeling of the scene. The crowd magically disappears in a few seconds, and Buñuel shifts emphasizes between the man and the woman in the balcony window. The woman seems more anxious than the man, but the emotions vary grad-

ually, so that the scene consists of not only one emotion which keeps repeating but instead, it is a development of different attitudes.

When the car is approaching the androgyne Buñuel uses subjective shots on both sides. There is a difference in the description of her amidst the open space and the next shot where the action is not in the center of the screen because the center of the screen is wide open and the androgyne, hit by the car, is down right near the corner of the screen.

The issue of the film form is to control the spectator's eye movements across the screen roughly synchronizing with the music. First we have seen the crowd being dispersed by the police and a few scenes later the crowd begins to come together again in a different way. So the street, which is partly the arena of these slicing movements of bicycles and cars, also contains these crowd-blocking tight movements.

There are various trends to analyze a film by treating the scene as a basic unit, a grammatical unit in a film. Now, one of the problems with this scene is that it consists of happenings in the street and those in the upstairs room, which mark another scene. Traditionally they are different scenes and separate spaces, but the use of subjective shots links them together and creates continuity and overlapping between them.

When the chase begins in the upstairs room, the relationship between the man and the woman changes. Suddenly the man is full of energy, Buñuel making visual changes, slight underlinings during the chase. Buñuel seems to think that mystery creates curiosity, and when one shows the reactions first, one gives the event its meaning. The playfulness of *Un Chien Andalou* is also working in this scene, because the man is chasing the woman around the room but the music is an Argentinian tango, so the emphasis turns everything into a parody of the tango.

The camera is moving with them with a kinesthetic pressure on movement, which adds the tension of the scene. It brings a release of energy into the situation with the man and the woman flying across the room in all directions, and Buñuel using contrasting movements across the same space. This is a sequence that has more muscular camera movements in it than any other sequence in the film; it is a stylistic decision to make the camera follow first her and then come back to him. The sequence has three kinds of movement:

1) The tango danced across the room (tight & social),
2) static matching together of the man and the woman,
3) and running around the room with the man and the woman.

The woman's arm movements are very strong when she is taking the tennis racket, which has squares like her dress and the chairs before. The man shifts between different approaches to her and there is a kind of silent conversation between them. The woman goes into heavy mental acting and also the masking in this shot is very strong. Then comes the woman's point-of-view shot: we see her reaction before we see what she

sees (piano, priests, donkey with a bleeding eye). In the long shot everything is converging into that corner. The foreground of the shot is dark because it is out of focus. The music is completely ironical because he is pulling that long, heavy trail of difficult things.

That situation brings out some problems of description. The problem for Buñuel is how to get a general feeling of the whole lot of new things and how to pick them up in a fairly plain manner, because all the things in the shot compete with each other.[315] The scene with the hand caught up by the door brings out the question whether it is one or two scenes? It is happening in two separate rooms, his hand is in one room and the rest of his body is in another room, and the action is going between the rooms; so, it is surprisingly difficult to decide what constitutes a scene in a film.[316]

The woman's expressions change the continuity between the actions, and by noticing the directions of her glances we change our attentions. Then a completely new character appears, and is characterized entirely by his back (in fact, we hardly see his face throughout the whole film). The shift to a shot with the cocktail shaker is a rendition of a sound of a doorbell. In the iconography of the 1920s a doorbell is something modern, emancipated, and slightly naughty, like the tennis racket before. It is actually a complicated, irrational image of arms coming out of walls. Buñuel swings the spectator's mental space in connection with the looks. Things are beginning to double because the actions in the room are repeating the earlier actions, and the man in the bed is going to start splitting into other characters.

Buñuel uses the same kind of moonlight effect on the curtains as at the beginning of the film and the lighting changes. In the middle of the shot with the two men Buñuel changes the speed into a slow motion and the subtitle splits the time in the middle of the same action. All this action is continuous although the subtitle tells the spectator that it is two scenes sixteen years apart. It is all played against the same pulse of the music. Buñuel uses a special filter in the camera and creates this dreamy atmosphere with the opaque mask round the edge. So, the close up of the man has a different visual texture from the other man. It also brings out the changes in the character of the man because, when he first entered, he was hardy and athletic and now he has changed into a dreamy soulful figure.

The man starts falling in the room and completes his falling in the park. Again a crowd comes together, but in a completely different way from before, this time just along the bottom of the screen. When the people are carrying the dead body, the movement is slower than before and Buñuel uses Christian symbolism. Visually the action is diminuendo with the people walking away from the screen. The closer views of the moth and the skull bring in more round shapes like the match shots in previous scenes. This whole scene combines the action part of the story

with symbolic digressions dealing with the armpit hair and sea urchin. The woman comes through the door and, as she turns around, the wind catches her and the spectator realizes that she is outside; so, she goes straight from indoors through the door to the wind on the beach, which is another of the irrational spaces in the film.

Much in *Un Chien Andalou* is body movement and Buñuel shifts roles inside the scenes, as in the scene on the beach with the man and the woman. The man makes definite body motions and at first he is reluctant and then as he changes his mind and embraces her, he does it in a strong, slightly operatic manner. It looks like a happy end, but the spectator's feeling begins to change when he sees that rocky beach stretching away into nowhere, and as the man and the woman go over the rocky stones with a tango music in the background, it is like a tango in a desert when they are making those awkward dance steps over the stones. The subtitle ("In the Spring") brings out another surprise.

Paul Sandro writes:

> "The final shot performs an aesthetic violence; the lovers have been framed, fixed finally as flowers in a static tableau. They have left the fetish objects of their story behind them only to become fetish objects themselves. For now that the lovers are stripped of what little autonomy they still had as characters, their aesthetic function is acknowledged explicitly. They have in fact been objects of our desire all along, existing only for our pleasure. And now, for a moment, we are held reciprocally in an image of their subjugation. Yet finally, like the fetish objects left behind on the beach, the lovers must in turn be left behind as the residue of our story whose time has ended."[317]

Durgnat has noted:

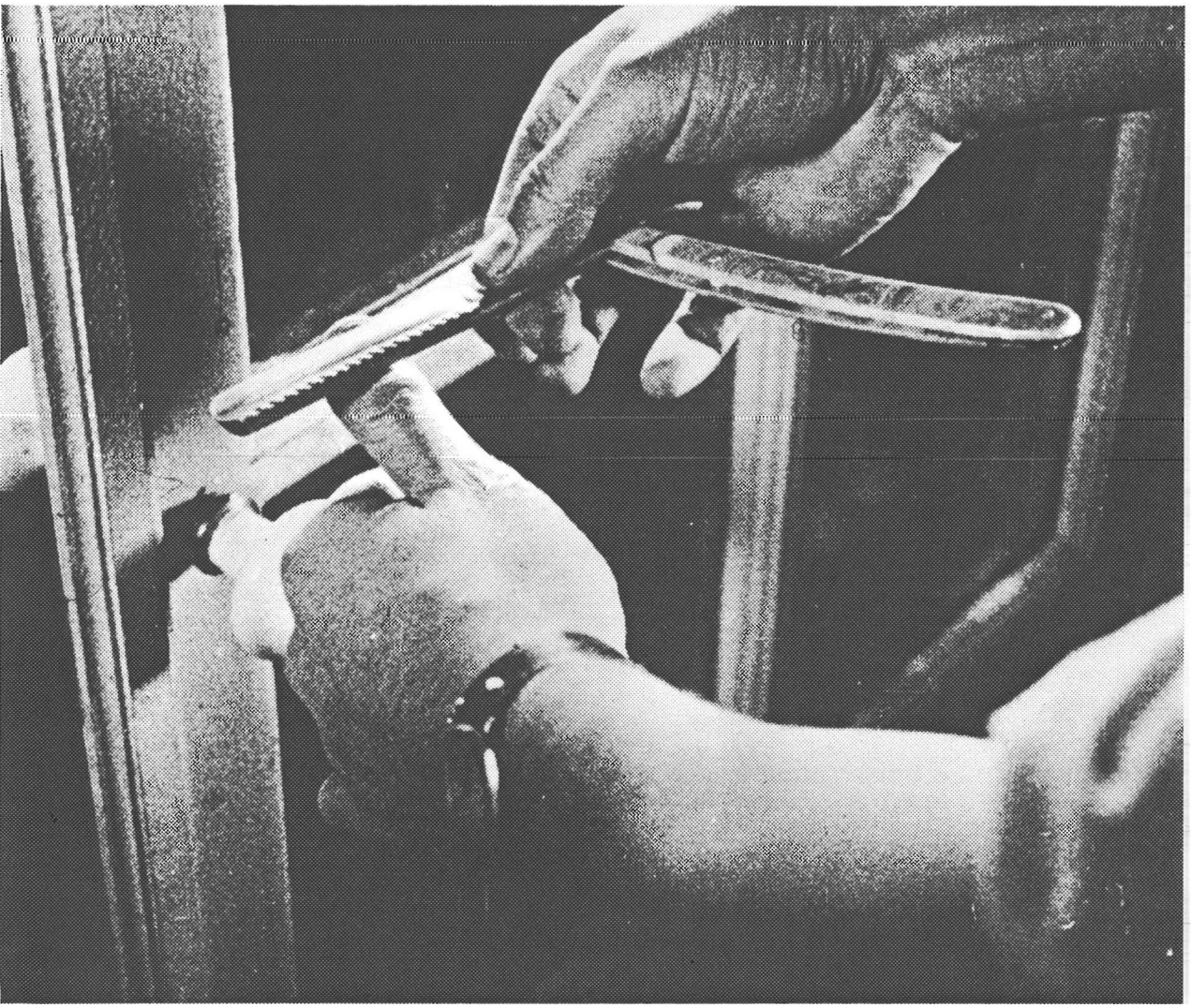
> "Buñuel's interest in processes and connections drives his films with a rapidity that is once surgical, stoic and dynamic. Because the unconscious knows nothing of conventional ideas of beauty, these convulsive moments are often ugly or grotesque or scandalous. One might speak of convulsive or visionary moments, rather than of beauty. The shocks are in no sense an assault on the spectator's detachment and lucidity, though they may be an assault on his complacency or his sentimentality. If the inexplicable abounds in Buñuel's work, it is so that his moral arguments are constantly related to the inner world of desires and feelings, related in a way which asserts their irrational existence as categorical imperatives of man's nature."[318]

In *Un Chien Andalou* Buñuel explores and uses conscious irrationality, to facilitate finer and deeper meanings. The bewilderment results from that how flexibly and routinelike the spectator's thinking recognizes the film's contradictions and symbolic impossibilities.

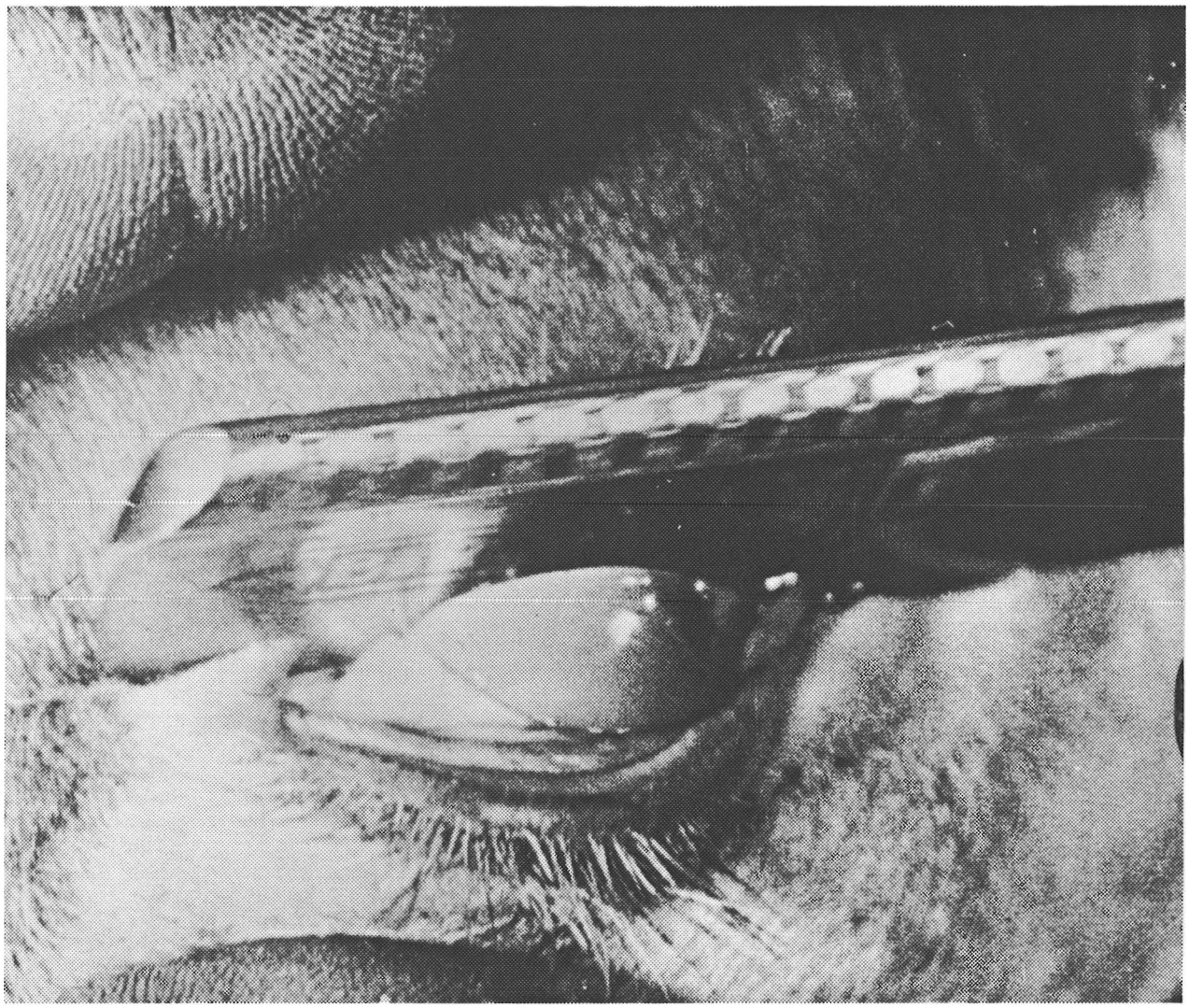
> "*Chien's* discombobulation and fantanglement of different structures (body-space, scene-space, graphic space, film-space, narrative consequeniality, etc.) depends on thought being neither tightly coherent nor inco-

> herent, but capable of now foregrounding, now relegating, contradictions and continuities. It belongs with the work of Magritte and Escher; with the visual and logical paradoxes discussed in Patrick Hughes and Georges Brecht's *Visual Circles and Infinity* (1975); with types 6 and 7 of William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930); and a London infants' rhyme is right out of Buñuel's repertoire. 'One fine day in the middle of the night/Two dead men got up to fight/One blind man to see fair play/One dumb man to shout hooray/One dead donkey passing by/Kicked the blind man in the eye'."[319]

In *Un Chien Andalou* many shots are quite simple as such, but the spectator's eye, or the attention shifts in the eye-mind-operator, centre upon some things and peripheralise others. That is why the spectator does not pay enough attention to the paradoxes between spaces in *Un Chien Andalou*. The spectator's attention shifts from detail to detail, or from a detail to the overall configuration. The spectator relates the given information to the whole and does not think spatially. Thinking takes time during which the spectator blanks out the surrounding visual details, and the centre of attention is like a metaphor for the whole perceptional process of watching *Un Chien Andalou*.



Microcosmic meanings in *Un Chien Andalou*.



The brutal explosion in *Un Chien Andalou*.

The androgyne and the severed hand in *Un Chien Andalou*.

Sexual underlinings in *Un Chien Andalou*.

Continuing the desire in *Un Chien Andalou*.

The moment of mental, physical, and visual passion in *Un Chien Andalou*.

Animals appear as obsession in *Un Chien Andalou.*

The lovers, fixed as flowers, in *Un Chien Andalou's* static tableau.

## 4.5 Dreamlike Personalities: a Film by Maya Deren

Maya Deren (1917-1961) made her first film *Meshes of the Afternoon* together with Alexander Hamid in 1943. Hamid and Deren had met through Katherine Dunham, and they were married, so filmmaking was a kind of continuity in their togetherness, Hamid being already known as a director, photographer and editor.[320)]

*Meshes of the Afternoon* is a 14-minute phantasy, which was made in two weeks and it was shot with 16 mm equipment in the home of Deren and Hamid in Hollywood.[321)] The exceptional quality and power of this film is based on strong symbolics, sudden, surprising and shocking transitions, graphical, architectonic compositions, a dreamlike atmosphere and the sensual, split characters, performed by Maya Deren, who wander in their own spacelike spheres.

The structure of the film is spiral and based on repetition with different variations of the initial ideas. In the first shot of the film a long, thin hand reaches down from the top of the screen and puts a flower on the road. A young woman, played by Maya Deren, walks along the road, picks up the flower and catches a glimpse of the back of a figure turning round the bend ahead of her. The woman goes to the door of a nearby house, knocks and tries the locked door, then takes out her key, which falls and bounces in slow motion down the stairs. She follows, grasps the key and tries it to the door. The door opens (with the camera already inside), and her dark shadow is reflected in the room, while the camera is panning across the floor and the walls. The panning ends in a dolly up to the dining-room table; in the middle of it there is a cup and a loaf of bread, with a knife in it - but when the camera tracks down to a close-up of them, the knife pops out. The camera rolls over to the left and shows the stairs, where there is a telephone lying with the receiver off.

The woman's shadow climbs the stairs, and the camera moves across to show the view subjectively. Then follows a view of the upper bedroom, where the wind is blowing up a curtain. In a subjective shot, the woman's hand comes across from the right side of the screen and turns off an unattended record player. Next there is a swift, left-turning transition with the woman returning to the lower room, and the camera tracks down to a close-up of a chair, on which the woman is seated. She puts the flower of the first shot onto her arms, and starts caressing herself. Then follows a shot of her eye, which slowly closes, and an intercut of a view from the window, and they are both clouded over, and the dream is ready to start. These are the basic movements in that film, and they are varied in different ways later on.

From the window in front of the easy chair, we can see the initial setting of the film, the road. The view is now restricted with a strong, cylinderlike thing, and a backwards-tracking camera movement. In the

middle we can see a black figure, like a nun, with a mirror for a face, walking in the same direction as the woman had in the beginning. The figure has the initial flower in her hand. The woman, performed by Maya Deren, (again in a shadow) starts following the black figure, even runs after, but cannot catch the figure. The woman gives up and once more climbs the stairs to the house (now we see her face for the first time). She enters without a key, looks around the room, noticing the knife now on the stairs where the telephone had been. She climbs up in slow motion: the close-ups of the feet are changing into a high-angle, and suddenly the woman moves through a black gauze curtain into the bedroom, where the wind is moving her hair.

The woman sees the phone receiver on the bed, pulls off the bed cover, again revealing the knife, and sees the distorted image of her face reflected on its blade. She quickly pulls back the cover, replaces the receiver on the telephone, and glides backwards through the veil down the stairs, as the camera does a somersault to dislocate her motions in space.

The woman dashes through an arch downstairs, where the camera pans subjectively into a view of herself sleeping in an easy chair. Now the second Maya Deren goes and turns off the phonograph next to her own sleeping figure. After that the second figure goes to the window, from which she sees the black figure chased by the same woman, which is now the third version of herself. After this the woman looking through the window presses her hand softly against the window and looks out, with wonder.

This is the best known single image of Maya Deren. Deren's uncanny likeness in the photograph to the venus of Botticelli's *Primavera* has been remarked.[322] This image has become Maya Deren's symbol, sign, and it seems that Deren also wanted it that way, because she always used this image to publicize her screenings and film business.[323] Anais Nin said in the mid-forties:[324]

> "Maya, the gypsy, the Ukrainian gypsy, with wild frizzy hair, like a halo around her face. Sasha Hammid placed her face behind glass and in that softened image she appeared like a Botticelli."

P. Adams Sitney has compared that Deren-image to another image taken from Luis Buñuel's and Salvador Dali's *Un Chien Andalou* with Pierre Batcheff looking through a window.[325]

According to Sitney one contrast between these images is clear. It tells about the difference between the American avant-garde "trance film"[326] and its surrealistic precursors. In *Meshes of the Afternoon* the heroine undertakes an interior quest. She encounters objects and sights as if they were capable of revealing the erotic mystery of her own self. In another way, the surrealistic cinema depends on the power through

which it can evoke mad voyeurism and imitate the discontinuity, horror and irrationality of the subconscious.

P. Adams Sitney sees[327] that Batcheff, leering out of the window, is an icon with repressed sexual energy, and Deren, with her hands ligthly pressed against the window pane, embodies a reflective experience, which is heavily marked in the film by the consistent use of mirrors.

The story of *Meshes of the Afternoon* continues: As the woman is looking through the window, the black figure disappears behind the bend of the road. The third woman turns in frustration towards the stairs of the house. Then follows a close-up of the woman's face, her mouth opens and she takes a key from her mouth. The key is shown in a close-up in her hand. In the next shot, the third woman enters the house, while the wind is blowing her hair. The camera pans subjectively to the right and sees the black figure inside the house, now climbing up the stairs, with the initial flower in her hand.

The woman follows while the camera is moving from left to right and back. She presses her face against the wall of the stairs while the climbing is getting more and more difficult. Upstairs the black figure puts the flower on the bed and disappears through stop-motion photography. After fast and static-edited images the woman moves in the stairs up and down, until returning downstairs. Through the window we can see the same pursuit and its frustrations. The key comes out of the woman's mouth, but this time it turns immediately into a knife in her hand. The woman enters with the knife, goes into the room, where there are two Maya Derens seated at the dining room table. The third woman joins them, puts the knife on the table, and the knife turns into a key.

The first woman feels her own neck, reaches for the key and holds it in her palm for a moment. The second does the same. The third reaches out her hand without feeling her neck; her palm is black. The key turns into the knife when she holds it. The two other women raise their hands to their faces, and the woman sleeping in the chair makes a slight movement. In the next shot we see the woman wearing goggles; she rises and holds the knife aggressively. We see her feet step on the beach sand, mud, grass, pavement and rug in five different shots.

This sight was described by Maya Deren in a letter to James Card in the year 1955 as follows:

> "...*Meshes* was the point of departure. There is a very, very short sequence in that film - right after the three images of the girl sit around the table and draw the key until it comes up knife - when the girl with the knife rises from the table to go towards the self which is sleeping in the chair. As the girl with the knife rises, there is a close-up of her foot as she begins striding. The first step in sand (with the suggestion of sea behind), the second stride (cut in) is in grass, third is on pavement and the fourth is on the rug, and then the camera cuts up to her head with the hand with the knife descending towards the sleeping girl. What I meant when I

> planned that four stride sequence was that you have to come a long way - from the very beginning of time - to kill yourself, like the first life emerging from the primeval waters. Those four strides, in my intention, span all time. Now, I don't think it gets all that across - it's a real big idea if you start thinking about it, and it happens so quickly that all you get is a suggestion of a strange kind of distance traversed ... which is all right, and as much as the film requires there. But the important thing for me is that, as I used to sit there and watch the film when it was projected for friends in those early days, that one short sequence always rang a bell or buzzed a buzzer in my head. It was like a crack letting the light of another world gleam through. I kept saying to myself, 'The walls of this room are solid except right there. That leads to something. There's a door there leading to something. I've got to get it open because through there I can go someplace instead of leaving here by the same way that I came in.' And so I did, prying at it until my fingers were bleeding..."[328)]

The story of the film continues. Just as the woman is about to stab her sleeping self, the sleeper's eyes open to see a man (performed by Alexander Hamid), who is waking her. The man, with the initial flower in his hand, picks up the woman, goes to the stairs, puts the receiver of the phone in its proper place. The woman follows the man, with a sudden glance at the table, where everything is in order. The man and the woman go upstairs. The man puts the flower on the bed, looks at himself in a shaving mirror, and the woman sets herself lying besides the flower. The man sits next to the woman and caresses her. We see a close-up of the woman's mouth and another of her eye. The flower suddenly becomes the knife, the woman grasps it and stabs him in the face, which turns out to be a mirror. The glass breaks and falls, not on to the floor, but on a beach. The tide approaches and touches it. Then follows a view of a man walking on the pavement; the man enters the house, picks up a flower, opens the door with a key, goes in and sees the disordered room and a woman, torn up by pieces of glass, in an easy chair. That is the final image of the film.

In its dramatic powerfulness *Meshes of the Afternoon* represents the pure sights of an avant-garde film. In her first film Maya Deren was able to join together a kind of Eisensteinian montage thinking and a kind of Cocteauish (why not also Buñuel and Dali) dream world into a complicated palette.

For Eisenstein the dialectical conflicts between frames and the movements, the cumulative synthesis of organic and rational form that was growing from the relationship between them, were essential.[329)] Dialectics can be seen to justify the theory of movement and framing in cinema; Eisenstein also broadened his dialectics by saying that it also covers the principle of composition - for example "the conflict of volumes was due to come through the internal contrasts of a frame.[330)]

In Deren's film the question is of how, through human movement, the intensive, inner life of the film's characters are broadened.

That is why the film has levels which go far beyond the charac-

ters and their activities, into synecdochic presentation with perspective and other variations.

According to Trevor Whittock, a synecdoche involves compression through deletion; the figurative meanings generated by it derive from the 'illogicality' of the deletion made; our view of the whole is conditioned by the value we place on the associated part.[331)]

> "Synecdoche, however, is nearly always received: There is not quite the scope for contextual synecdoches that there is for contextual metonymies. Any film abounds in synecdoches, but they are overtonal rather than marked. To obtain a marked synecdoche the incongruity of the part selected must be great; alternatively, special emphasis has to be provided through the means of presentation."[332)]

In Eisenstein's "tonal montage" the movement is considered to exist in an extended sense; the concept of the movement grasps in all the influences, and the montage is based on the natural, emotional sound, one that controls the general sound of the part. In Deren's framing of the image, the outside, potential field of the image is absorbed in. The unseen meanings behind the expressive feelings are brought along through the whole body and fertilized so that they also create meanings.

One noticeable thing, different from dreamlike qualities, in this film is how these movements create a kind of cinematic choreography, which is connected with the means that a filmmaker can use. Expressive stylization and the dancelike choregraphic sights are joined together with intuitive delicateness.

In her later films *A Study in Choreography for the Camera* (1945) and *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1945-46) Deren communicates sights by which the choreography in film is not considered only by the dancer's individual movements and their planning, but also by those models through which a dancer and its movements relate as a homogenous unit with the space around them. When a film camera is brought into the recording of a dance, the filmmaker trusts in the mobility of it. This is due to the the fact that the more successfully a choreographer has planned his or her sights the more easily these wellplanned models are in danger to be destroyed because of the restlessness of the camera, since the camera has the ability to get wings under it and jump suddenly from a long-shot to a close-up and so on.

One aim that Maya Deren had was to free the camera from theatrical traditions and especially from spatial limitations.

As she said in planning *Meshes of the Afternoon*:

> "These unique capacities of the camera, and many, many others - including slow-motion which, through the agony of its analysis, transforms a casual incident into a moving experience; or the inter-cut of long-shot and close-up, playing the intimate emotion against the objective perspective; all of these abilities almost dictate, it seems to me, not only a unique art

> form but a whole philosophy of camera aesthetics; and it is my intention to realize this form to the best of my ability by the use of those camera capacities of which I am already aware, by the search for more of them, and by their integration into an organic unity."[333]

Accordingly, it is natural that in Deren's films theoretical speculations concentrate largely around the formal questions related to cinema. The characters in her films live in a world which is not controlled by material or geographical boundaries; instead, they move in a totally fictive universe, and just as in our dreams (e.g. when a person is first in one place and then in another, without travelling between them) they speak to us through their own spatial choreography. In Deren's films the scene of a performer is a purely abstract, formal area, which makes new relationships between the performer and the space possible because it is a stylized world.

Deren wrote about *Meshes of the Afternoon* as follows:

> "This film is concerned with the interior experience of an individual. It does not record an event which could be witnessed by other persons. Rather, it reproduces the way in which the subconscious of an individual will develop, interpret and elaborate an apparently simple and casual incident into a critical emotional experience."[334]

Further on:

> "... The very first sequence of the film concerns the incident, but the girl falls asleep and the dream consists of the manipulation of the elements of the incident. Everything which happens in the dream has its basis in a suggestion in the first sequence - the knife, the key, the repetition of stairs, the figure disappearing around the curve of the road. Part of the achievement of the film consists in the manner in which cinematic techniques are employed to give a malevolent vitality to inanimate objects..."[335]

Although *Meshes of the Afternoon* resembles a dream experience, Maya Deren warns against a psychoanalytical reading of the film:

> "The intent of this first film, as of the subsequent films, is to create a mythological experience. When it was made, however, there was no anticipation of the general audience and no experience of how the dominant cultural tendency toward personalized psychological interpretation could impede the understanding of the film."[336]

The symbolics of the film have certain straightforward dimensions:

| THE KEY | THE TELEPHONE | THE KNIFE |
|---|---|---|
| I | I | I |
| I | I | I |
| CONTROL | COMMUNICATION | VIOLENCE |

The spatial outline of the film is fluid, rounded and not linear as in her next film *At Land* (1944). In that film there is a sequence, photographed on a beach sand, where the camera is stopped for a while, which gives a character in the picture a chance to move over before the actual shooting continues (although it seems to be like a continuous movement). This gives the idea that a character who is framed in the picture is getting smaller during the advancing, and that brings with it an emotional effect. It is a happening that cannot be taken away from its cinematic factors. The same can be said about techniques where one can relate two distant places by the continuing movement of a character, or about a sequence in *Meshes of the Afternoon* where the woman runs past the times. This interest in time and space is not purely technical because the vision angle will ramify emotionally. The main element that Deren tries to reflect in her film is the individual's sudden dislocation in a hurried and proportional world, and his or her inability to gain a constant and ordered relationship with the elements of that world.

The shadow image of Maya Deren, at the beginning of the film, marks a kind of signature, expressionistic usage; it is presented as projection in the projected text with the wall behind the figure acting as a kind of screen. The shadow sign is "a pure mirror-stage signifier in a realm of potentially infinite semiosis placing semantic value in suspension."[337] *Meshes* plays with the meanings it refuses to assign, which Julian Wolfreys has definite views about:

> "The shadow is the only shadow of a woman virtue of the fact that the viewing subject is constructed by the Hollywood context of other filmic codes to re-cognize - re-vision, bring back to the mind's I - a certain absent specularity (how can specularity be constituted in absence, when it is specially a signifying system for the promotion of the illusion of presence?). What the projection should remind us of is *its own construct as projection*."[338]

The scenes with the multiple imaging of Maya Deren in *Meshes of the afternoon* are interesting because they act as a performance of modernist fragmentation and pluralization of subjectivity, identity and the denial of unitary consciousness. As Wolfreys describes:

> "In *Meshes* the multiple female figure is not the classical objectification of women, but belongs instead to what is potentially a feminist poetics - and politics - of refusal. And that refusal is bound up with the refusal to present the illusion of presence (presence for someone) or to construct, in the words of Jonathan Dollimore, a 'telos of harmonic integration'."[339]

In her theoretical writings[340] Maya Deren takes the indexical relationship between reality and the photographic image for granted.[341] She sees that a film is based on photographic realism in the way that Siegfried Kracauer also pointed out in his time.[342] Deren analyzes the

film camera's functions as "discovery" and "invention".[343] The former refers to visions of space and time beyond the capabilities of the human eye, including telescopic or microscopic cinematography on one hand and slow motion, freeze-frame or time lapse photography on the other. Among these methods she continually admits her predilection for slow motion. As an instrument of "invention", the camera records imaginative constructs in reality and reconstructs them through the illusions of editing. She believes in the principle of recognition rather than graphic composition:[344]

> "In a photograph, then, we begin by recognizing a reality, and our attention knowledges and attitudes are brought into play; only then does the aspect become meaningful in reference to it. The abstract shadow shape in a night scene is not understood at all until revealed and identified as a person; the bright red shape on a pale ground which might, in an abstract, graphic context, communicate a sense of gaiety, conveys something altogether different when recognized as a wound. As we watch a film, the continuous act of recognition in which we are involved is like a strip of memory unrolling beneath the images of the film itself, to form the invisible underlayer of an implicit double exposure."

Maya Deren writes of the camera's "indiscriminate" or "absolute fidelity," and the presentation by the camera of the "innocent arrogance of an objective fact."[345]

Vlada Petric has noted similarities between Deren and Tarkovski:

> "Decelerated motion is the emotional core of Tarkovsky's dream imagery, which in climactic moments accomplishes what Maya Deren terms the 'vertical penetration/examination' of the filmed subject, making the viewers aware of the *passage of time* and its *rhytmic pressures*."[346]

Further on Petric believes that to experience all this, one should search *beyond* the shot's narrative meaning, since it is beneath the image's representational aspect where numerous layers of ineffable transcendental signification can be found.[347] For example, Tarkovsky's films *The Mirror* (1975) and *Stalker* (1980) transcend the Freudian signification of dream images, in that they do not so much function as latent symbols as they contribute to a subliminal experience of the dream world.[348]

Gregory Taylor thinks that *Meshes of the Afternoon* serves as an excellent example of the interplay between epistemology and ontology within modernist cinematic texts.[349]

Taylor defines:

> "The film's symbolic content, established through the repetition of key visual motifs such as knives and keys, suggests the freeing of latent psychic content and thus an account of textual material through appeal to epistemology. However, *Meshes'* bold collapsing of various levels of reality it its famous final shot of the female protagonist lying dead in a chair, covered in seaweed, finally thrusts ontological imbalance to the fore,

> severely challenging epistemological certainty by collapsing the text's various levels of reality."[350]

Further on Taylor points out that Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* (1947) also ends by questioning the opposition between "waking" reality and "dream" reality necessary for our understanding of the rest of the film.[351] Raymond Durgnat thinks that in a variety of ways Anger's aesthetic recalls Eisenstein's:

> "The intensive use of montage in the strict intellectual sense, as also of details, which, whether within or without the immediate scenic context, are organized into symbolic digressions (like Kerensky's statuettes in *October*)."[352]

Directors like Anger and Eisenstein (perhaps Deren also) respond to *mystic regalis*, while their styles involve a curious compound of abstruseness and over-emphasis. For example, Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (1963) is primarily a structure of ideas and only secondarily a narrative.[353]

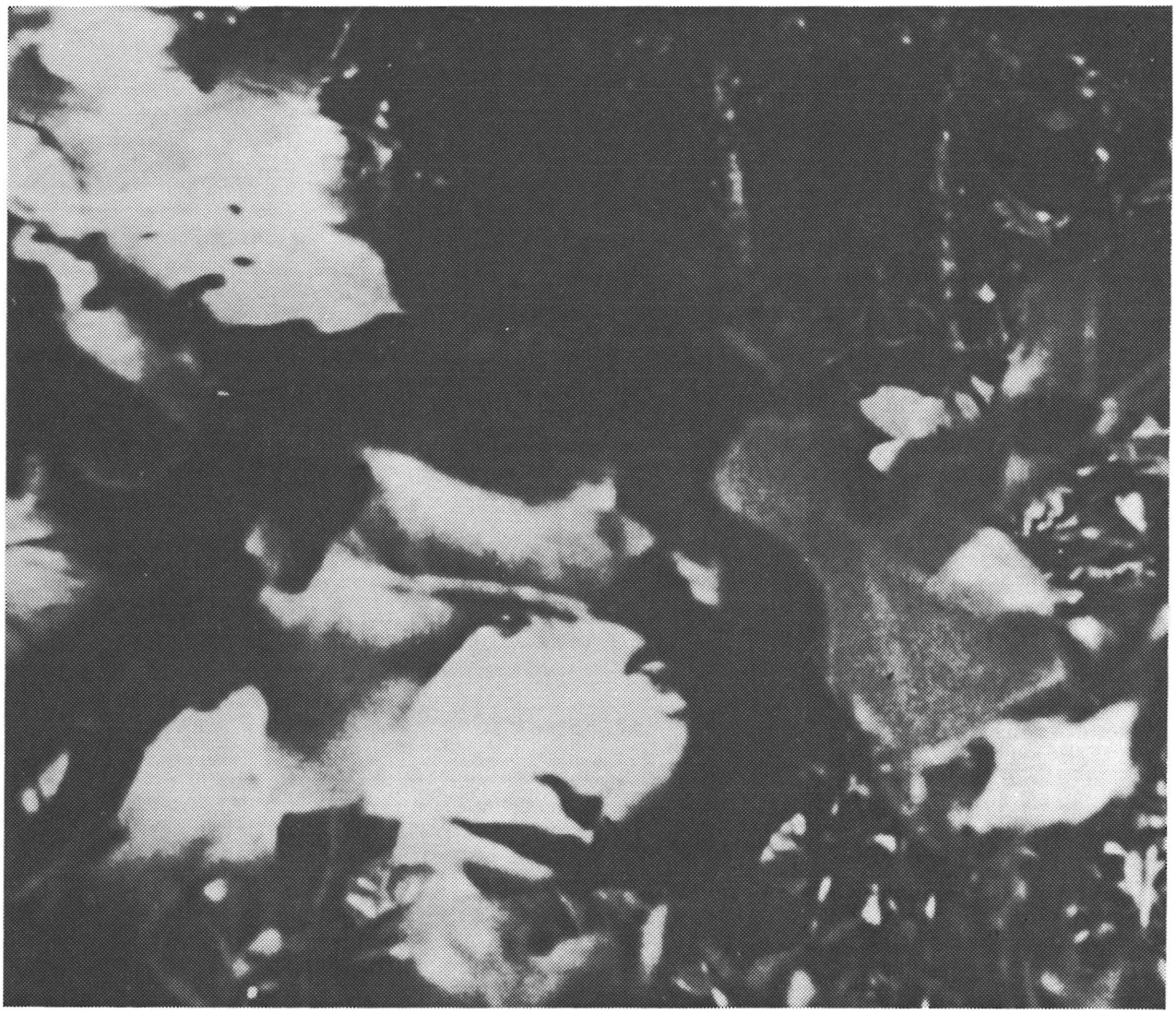
What Deren does not take into account is the fact that *camera is always positioned by someone*.[354] *Meshes of the afternoon* foregrounds process and upsets stabilities between subject position and classic text, between Hollywood- and avant-garde thinking. Meshes works in a cultural intersection:

> "The front on which the dialectic is fought can be mapped out as a space between ideology (Hollywood) and textuality (the avant-garde). Textuality seeks constantly to arrest violently and displace the dominant modes of cinematic signification."[355]

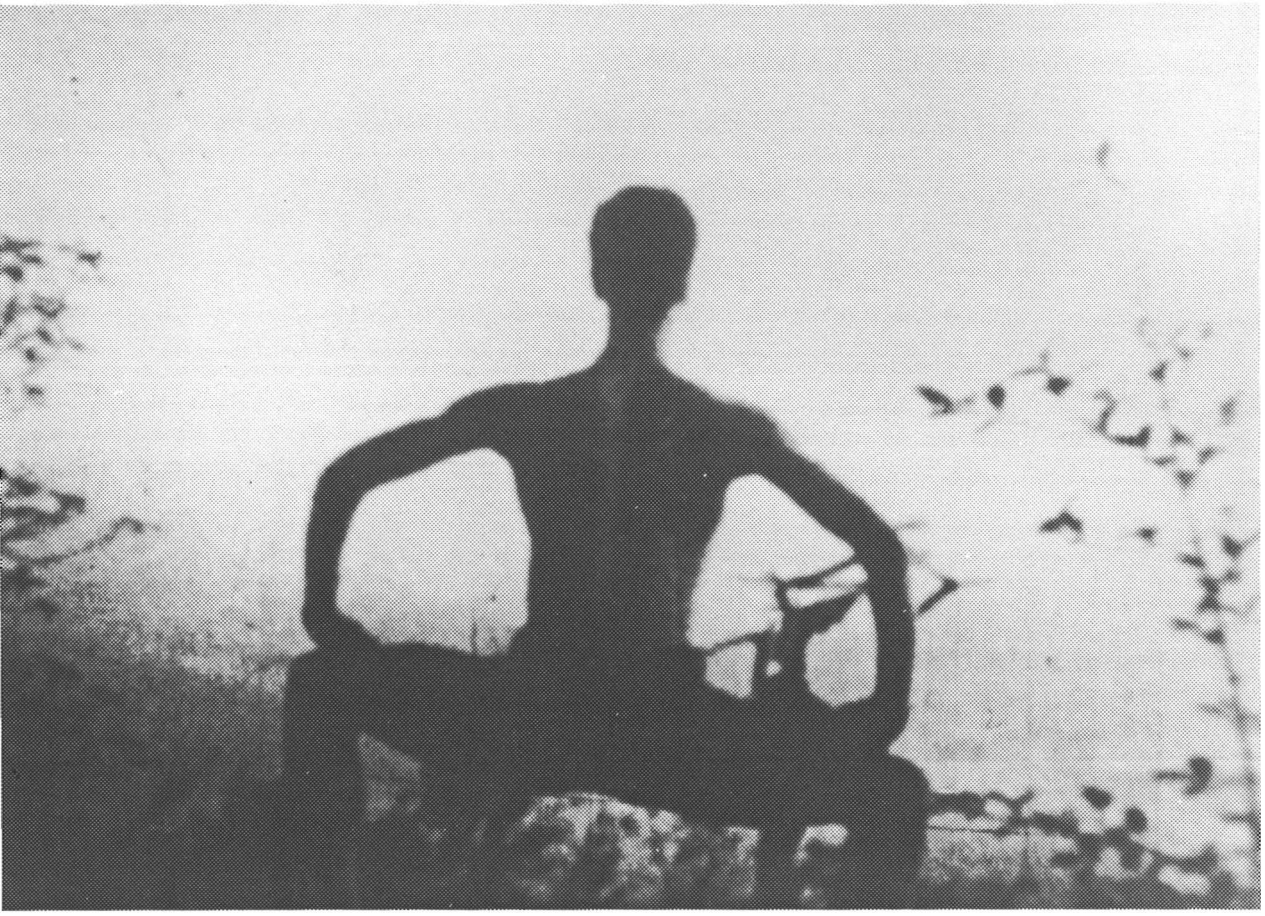
In *Meshes* process and construction are reflexively foregrounded, as the footsteps in the film show as one example. Meshes works with time, with the multiplicity of times; it also shows how an avant-garde text can use certain codes (for example the code of repetition) differently from that of the mainstream cinema because in *Meshes* it works against subject unity.

Maya Deren is an example of a person who could join together film making and theoretical thinking, although there are "marked dissimilarities" between written and filmic texts, as Wolfreys has pointed out.[356] A certain paradoxality is involved in the fact that at the beginning of her career Deren was totally in opposition to the reproduction of reality; later on (after the years spent in Haiti), Deren ends up in recording reality. She was a prophet in her time, and her originality was meaningful in many ways.

Maya Deren in *Meshes of the Afternoon*.



Maya Deren in *At Land.*



*A Study in Choreography for the Camera.*

## 4.6 Hollywood Daydreams: Some Sequences by Busby Berkeley

My next examples for analyzing filmic sequences are taken from some sequences created by Busby Berkeley in Hollywood-musicals during the thirties. According to Rick Altman, among the early practitioners of the musical, Busby Berkeley alone understood the extent to which the audio dissolve liberates the picture plane of all diegetic responsibilities. By placing the camera directly above his performers, Berkeley was able to destroy perspective and thus concentrate on the picture plane.[357)]

### 4.6.1 Monocular visions

There are many reasons why these sequences are interesting: First of all, the semantic operations are relaxed; they are not logical or poetic, and they do not form archetypal dimensions. These sequences are meant to be watched by large audiences, and they were planned to arouse the interest of many kinds of spectators, from sophisticated audiences to uneducated people. These Berkeley-sequences also consist of non-narrative episodes, which include narrative elements, but are clearly subordinated to the stylistic thinking of these sequences, and that is why they are useful in regarding cinema also as something other than a narrative medium. The relationship between the Berkeley-sequences and films around them raises some questions related to the relevance and the structures which appear inside the sequences.

The selective role of the camera is very important to Berkeley.[358)] He was not a theorist; instead, he found everything by doing and planning. He used a term called monocular vision[359)], which meant this selectiveness done by the film camera. All the sequences are so called "production numbers"[360)]

Jerome Delamater has stated:

> "In many respects Busby Berkeley seems the consummate surrealist of the American screen. The numbers which Berkeley did for his many films seem manifestations of his own inner fantasies more than signs of the inner feelings of the characters in the films. Working as they most often do with their own diegesis, separate from and only tangentially related to the diegesis of the rest of the film, the numbers provide Berkeley with the opportunity to express himself in a manner which gives a stylistic and thematic unity to the films - regardless of who directed the regular narrative elements - and assuredly make him seem the auteur. Strictly speaking, Berkeley was probably unaware of the Surrealist movement per se, but that does not negate the surrealistic qualities which imbue his films and provide them with that unity and consistency which can only be inferred but, indeed, are evident throughout his entire career. Other

> writers have occasionally called Berkeley's numbers surrealistic, but little serious analysis of that catchall term has been applied to his work. Yet it seems that the most fruitful and comprehensive analysis of his material can be achieved working with the assumption that he was an unwitting surrealist, for it explains the nature of his dance creations, their relationship to the totality of the films and the relationship of his contribution to the development of cinematic dance in a way that no other approach can."[361)]

In talking about Busby Berkeley I think there are also other than surrealist features in his work. One can talk about social-history changes, new relations between men and women, glorifying the body instead of being ashamed of it.

*42nd Street* (1933) was Berkeley's first film in which he analytically thinks through this kind of variation in shots. This leads to a general theoretical approach to cinema,[362)] according to which it is very hard to understand a film if you think about it as a reproduction of reality. Once you cut a scene into shots, you are not dealing anymore with the reproduction of reality, but instead, you are giving statements about it. Berkeley planned and directed all his sequences in a film, but many times all the other sequences (outside the dance numbers) were written and directed by someone else. The relationships between the whole and the parts of the film are then especially interesting because, in a way, this kind of model escapes the assumption that a film should have some kind of organising mind.[363)] In a Hollywood-film it was possible that some dance numbers were developed entirely loose from that filmic frame to which they were later adjusted.

Durgnat has noticed that the contrasts between production numbers and films around them are so sharp that spectators, far from associating them, disassociate them into separate entities,[364)] and that is one reason why, inside film-culture, Busby Berkeley is defined as an individual filmmaker, an auteur of his own world.

And Durgnat continues:

> "For excellent reasons, high culture normally tries to maximise an artwork's semantic yield, but sometimes it might be useful to reinforce certain uncertainties in aesthetic theories. There are uncertainties as to when two ideas so mesh as to constitute a structure or theme, when their affinity remains merely incidental, when it makes an echo but generates no further ideas of much substance or consequence, when the similarities in a metaphor stop. There are uncertainties as to how far unity proposes a structural intentionality of some sort. For Eisentein's theory of montage might seem to strengthen the opposite view, that the fact of juxtaposition within an artwork is sufficient to turn any two spots, local events, into a structure provided even the slightest, vaguest or most general affinity between them exists. If montage exists between shots, as Eisenstein assumed, it must also exist between sequences or indeed ideas."[365)]

The above reveals one way how Berkeley pushes his ideas forward. Once camera movement and subject movement were restored to the sound films, filmmakers continued to use many of the stylistic characteristics that were already developed during the silent days of cinema. Diegetic sound provided a powerful addition to the system of continuity editing, because then it was possible to use sound overlaps, and in this way establish spaces outside the frame and create temporal continuity.[366]

Hollywood-film also borrowed a lot from Broadway musicals, by sticking to theatrical stagings, but Busby Berkeley offered no solutions because he did not waste time on broadening his stage numbers from theatrical circles to space-time continuities, which cinema could offer. And the spectator was expected to notice these transfusions and also enjoy them. In Berkeley's production numbers, virtuosity was one major emphasis, just as in earlier montage sequences and dream sequences.

Durgnat has stated that in a sense these sequences are upsurges of pure film and avant-garde aesthetics, because the interest lies in a special sense of popular avant-garde; they show the ability of traditional methods to do what the avant-gardes do coming from a different direction.[367] In these numbers virtuosity grows into formalism, kinetic speed, and the movement's serial segmentation narrows into a kind of cubist futurism, and the splitting of ideas from their normal phenomenal envelope has affinities with constructivism.[368] Even when the symbols are sentimental, like hearts and violins, there is this open spirit, this modern, optimistic way of looking, a kind of lyrical formalism.

Jerome Delamater has observed the link between Surrealism and experimental dance films of the 1920s, like Fernand Léger's *Ballet Mécanique* and Rene Clair's *Entr'acte*.[369] According to Delamater, Berkeley's work also includes most of the major forces implicit in surrealism, though it lacks the force and power which was behind the Surrealist movement.[370] On the other hand, the controlling factors in Berkeley's work, i.e. fantasy, irrationality and eroticism, are equally important to Surrealists.

> "More specifically, major elements of surrealism also evident in Berkeley's films are the idolization of female eroticism; the concretization of dream experience and its corollary, the absurdity and illogicality of reality; the relativity of time and space; the mechanization of life and the freedom of imagination."[371]

It can be maintained that Delamater with this statement thinks too narrowly because the Berkeley-numbers are not only "the idolization of female eroticism"; they also tell about female self-confidence and the celebrations of the American dream.

### 4.6.2 *42nd Street*

The production numbers of *42nd Street* (1932) are: "You're Getting to Be a Habit with Me", "Shuffle off to Buffalo", "I'm Young and Healthy" and "42nd Street". Their context deals with a show première being rehearsed during the Depression. The last three numbers come in succession with very brief interludes and suggest some kind of thematic unity. The first number is set apart from the others because it occurs during the rehearsals before the dramatic climax, and there is no spectacular aspect in it, although it has stylistic similarities with the others.

The Depression had its effects on filmmaking, as John Baxter has noted: "At Warner Brothers ... films were made for and about the working class. Their musicals, born of the depression, combined stories of hard-working chorus girls and ambitious young tenors with opulent production numbers. ... Lighting was low key. ...Cutting corners became an art. Stars were contracted at low salaries. ... Directors worked at an incredible rate, producing as many as five features per year. The basic film at Warners ... was a melodrama ... which ran for 70 minutes. Pace was more than Warner's trademark - it was a necessity."[372)]

Thomas Schatz has made similar observations: "But the Depression, coming after Harry Warner's heavy spending for sound conversion, theater acquisition, and studio expansion, forced the Warners to adopt a more conservative, cost-efficient strategy. Low-budget production was stepped up and budgets for A-class features were reduced. Harry declared a moratorium on musicals, which not only were costly but had glutted the market in the early talkie era."[373)]

Despite Harry Warner's edict against the musical-genre, musicals were made. On August 15, 1932, the Warners closed a deal with novelist Bradford Ropes for the movie rights to his as-yet-unpublished novel *42nd Street*, the story of an obsessive stage director who mounts a Depression-era musical despite heavy odds and his own declining health.[374)] According to Schatz, the decision to bring in Busby Berkeley was as significant as the decision to try a Warner-style musical in the first place. Berkeley was a stylist in his own right, with a distinctive approach to musical production that became as important a defining characteristic of Warners's backstage musicals as the established house style.[375)]

The story was not that exciting because the dialogue was full of lines that became clichés so quickly that the so-called sophisticates would line up simply for a chance to laugh when Warner Baxter as the musical show director told his ingénue understudy Ruby Keeler, "You're going out a youngster. But you got to come back a star."[376)]

The first Berkeley-number in *42nd Street* is the simplest of them all, with the musical's star (Bebe Daniels) singing: 'You're Getting to Be a Habit with Me'. The staging is not just formalistic, because of the chorus

boys' active participation, which includes tapping and rhythmic punching. Finally a sprightly old man, dressed in tatters, appears, and the woman dances away with him. The musical star is older than one of the chorus girls (Ruby Keeler), who later becomes the star of the film. The lyrics suggest a certain maturity. The older woman deliberately teases the show's rich and fat backer (Guy Kibbee), and hides her feelings towards her real love, a less successful vaudeville artist (George Brent). The woman's deception is worth while, because through that she can procure backing for the the whole company. But she also shows her jealousy, when her boyfriend has a date with Peggy (Ruby Keeler). She gets angry and drunk and breaks her ankle. One might think that she is jealous of Peggy, who gets her part in the show, but instead she wishes her every success and is satisfied with herself. Meanwhile the show's backer concentrates his attention on "Anytime Annie" (Ginger Rogers) and Peggy starts dating with the show's male lead Brad (Dick Powell).

This number has some kind of relevance to the whole plot of the film, because in here a woman is monopolizing both men and celebrity, which she finally agrees to share.[377] She has to make a decision between two men, one being rich but unattractive, and the other being poor but attractive. The choice that she makes is a moral issue.

Jerome Delamater thinks that the most evident surrealistic aspect in Berkeley's work is his use of the female form as an object.[378] The erotic element in Berkeley's sequences deals with his choice of scantily--clad chorus girls in most of the routines. Sometimes Berkeley pushes the idea into a realm of voyeurism and sexual symbolism.[379]

Patricia Mellencamp has drawn her conclusions about the Berkeley-routines. According to her, cinema is an institution that relays and constructs objects of desire.[380] That is why the representation of the erotic promenaded female body - the figure of exploitation and the source of pleasure - the denial and containment of that dangerous and unacceptable eroticism by death, marriage, or German expressionist lighting is both a paradox and an obsession of classic film. And Mellencamp continues: "In fact the Berkeley sequences are spectacles of the glories of capitalist technique and hence visual demonstrations of the narrative."[381]

But in a way Berkeley does deal with genetic and formal similarities, with some knowledge of the general plot; and as Durgnat has observed, the gold-digger was already a phenomenon of the 20s, linking the flapper with the movement of women to the cities, and the early 30s mark an abundance of gold-digger films.[382] In the so-called 'confession' films of the 30s sympathetic women become gold-diggers, prostitutes or fallen women of a kind. The gold-digger films treat female rapacity cynically or comically, while the confession films treat it differently, respectably or tragically. Both seem to paraphrase the despairs of Depression.[383] At the same time, there is a strong feeling of

female emancipation and the whole film is more oriented towards hard work than easy fun, because the characters in the story are taking risks all the time.

In the next Berkeley-number, 'Shuffle Off To Buffalo', Ruby Keeler's Peggy Sawyer gets her chance. Buffalo was a popular honeymoon resort, and what we see is the honeymoon couple going there in their Pullman car. In the middle of the journey, the car splits in two and stretches across the stage. The honeymoon couple has to communicate with all kinds of knowledgeable smiles coming from young ladies. They are interrupted by the black Pullman porter, and the young ladies croon and smile with sarcastic singing and friendly mockery. Finally everyone retires to their berths, and their shoes are left out to be polished. When Peggy places hers out, her arm is caught by the groom and it disappears behind the curtains. The porter collects the shoes and starts polishing them - the sound of the brush mixes with the swoosh of the steam train.

In a way this is a song of innocence, with the chorus parts representing experience, the more saturnine norms of society and divine prescience. It is like the chorus in a Greek tragedy.[384)] Of course the link between the chorus girls singing and a Greek tragedy is somewhat tenuous, and most of the commenting they make through their singing deals with a sort of moral commentary on issues around the honeymoon couple's journey.

There are also contrasts: the number has been gradually built up towards sexual intimacy, and then it slides down towards the lonely porter. The fascinating ladies' world turns into the world of a snoring black man, so we are moving from one kind of content into another one. There are also several dimensions incorporating with the honeymoon couple which bring out contrasts. The couple represents young, middle-class innocence, and it would have been possible for the film to run through these points of interest with a structural logic including no major opposites. But the tones are changing, because the porter is the opposite in relation to the couple's innocence and the chorus girls' awareness.

The opposition may seem vague because Berkeley has planned the sequence with certain ruptures. It is a question of tonal rupture when a joyful atmosphere gets melancholic with partly comical dissonances.[385)] It has been predicted even in the sequence in which Bebe Daniels is dancing off stage with the old man, and it gets a new recapitulation in the final climaxes.

As I have even earlier observed, Berkeley's use of camera is based on selectivity, working through details. And all those details can be structured. The ticket-collector is an intermediate between white passengers and the black porter.[386)] The sudden, strange and realistic details are chosen to change the tone, to irritate new surprises. It is not a question of pure realism, or photophenomenal realism, but everyday

eloquent reality, evocated by surprises.

Durgnat has pointed out that literary theory quickly attributes resonance and profundity to archetypal or deep symbols, but correspondingly underestimates such very ostensible recall of everyday experiences as might be superficial, but nonetheless recall vast areas of experience and associated thoughts.[387] Isolated within this stylised continuity, they become, not symbols but emblems.[388] And they can be in that sense, outside art, just referring to some realistic situations.

"I'm Young and Healthy" -number gives more assured and confident continuation with youth. Now it is Dick Powell singing in a white tuxedo with smooth exuberance. The sexual structure of this number is a mirror-image of "You're Getting to Be a Habit with Me" -number. The lyrics point out to one woman, and everything begins as a serenade sung to one lady, but soon there are a lot of them. So, in a way, there is also the theme of onlookers, who frequently misinterpret what the main characters are doing.[389] The girl to whom Dick Powell addresses his serenade is not Ruby Keeler, but a blond with a sensual face, who wears a peroxide white fox-fur wrapped around her arms. The misty kiss between Dick Powell and the lady brings out a formal surprise, the appearance of a line of girls similarly dressed. The change of lighting is scheduled with the kiss and the girls' appearance. Their bodies have soft and creamy, pasteurised immaculacy.[390] The choreography has very little to do with dance, it is more like a sort of rhythmical movement, running into a certain spot.

The contrast between intimacy and plurality, kissing and the chorus line, transforms the scene into a series of formal surprises. At the same time it gives possibilities to the spectator, who can waver between different alternatives, and it is not a question of simple dualities. In one shot Powell is singing and the girls are gliding in front of him: he addresses each in turn, and each of them reacts in a different way, and finally the first girl reappears and closes the scene. The camera diagrams and patterns use the Berkeley-top-shot[391] in a manner which reflects the cubist experiments in the twenties, which pushes the feeling of abstraction further.

With the title number "42nd Street" we move from a merry and healthy world into the middle of a seamy underworld. In the beginning Ruby Keeler is dancing on the roof of a taxi (which, however, is not revealed until later on). She smiles with a middleclass sweetness, invites everybody to join with the reality where 'the underworld meets the elite'. It is a question of streetlife glorification, where there are hints to Depression. In a way this sequence is pure fantasy, but still it has features of time, features of reality, because in this reality the apple venders can throw a blanket over their goods and grab golfbags. This delirious zone makes everybody move, including the police horses and a wooden Indian in front of a tobacco store, in a rhythmic stride between dancing

and walking. Through Berkeley's stylized abstraction we approach the synthetic tensions included in these scenes.

There are, however, some disturbing details in this sequence. In the window of a beauty parlour a male is taking care of a smiling client's cheeks, and the camera moves laterally to a door, where a welldressed man extends his arm to a female midget, and they go together hand by hand. They pass a nurse who is taking a baby (doll) out of a pram; she smiles and spanks the baby to the tempo of the music.

Berkeley broadens the viewpoints; he can start with an image from the frontpage of a paper, and then move to a deeper view with graphical qualities.

In one part of the scene a group of welldressed young ladies are entering a house, probably a speak-easy, with an Italian-looking bouncer in front of it. He lifts his hat in the tempo. The rhythmics are juxtaposed with the camera's strong and handy swifts, which combine the other spatially disparate elements. During the Prohibition law 'the elité really met the underworld' because gangsters were handling the delivering of boose. So, when people could not drink publicly, they drank privately, especially in speak-easies.

Then suddenly the situation bursts into violence, when the camera tracks upwards into a room where a young woman is escaping from the hands of a brutal man. The man looks like a heavy physical type, an Irish-looking gangster with curly hair. The woman slips past the man, straight out of the window, which is a surprise; one theme in this scene is the surprises connected with the activities of the people. Somehow it is a question of mixing different stories in brief flashes: first we see cheerful women going into a building, then we see moments of violence occurring in the same building.

When the woman jumps out of the window, we hear shots, but the dance continues, so it is a justification of the violence which is part of the activities in the street. When the woman jumps, the camera follows her so that it really shows her jumping. The woman falls into the arms of a man, and they dance a passionate tango, without losing a beat. But, when this 'underworld pastorale'[392] is in real swing, the gangster comes and stabs the woman with a knife.

Still, the scene does not relax or change its style, and the camera pans upwards to a window where Dick Powell is holding a glass, and behind him we can see an elderly Italian barman, mixing cocktails with rhythmic gestures. Thinking of the Depression, we could say that either the scene is celebrating the end of the Prohibition or the disregard of law-and-order among average people.[393] At the beginning of that number Ruby Keeler was dancing alone on top of a taxi, and now we have the theme expanded while a group of girls burst into the street. It is a variation between intimacy and spectacle, including shot-variation and the direction of movements. It is also a kind of Berkeleyan semi-abstrac-

tion, a thematic enlargening, composed of surprises. When the group of girls split up and disappear, they are followed by a group of chorusboys, carrying some cut-out shapes. After several ranks filling the screen, they turn, and the shapes become a skyscraper with a perspectively improbable horizon. We are moving towards a bigger surprise, and the director does not want us to realize it too early. Instead, he wants us gradually to take an interest in it, and then this *orchestration* takes place, and it leads us to a final revelation. The significant part of directing a scene deals with how you are directing the spectator's attention to the different parts of the same shot, and in a way this scene deals with the interior montage inside an image.

Rudolf Arnheim writes about this item as follows:

> "In the perception of shape lie the beginnings of concept formation. Whereas the optical image projected upon the retina is a mechanically complete recording of its physical counterpart, the corresponding visual percept is not. The perception of a shape is the grasping of structural features found in, or imposed upon, the stimulus material... Perception consists in fitting the stimulus material with templates of relatively simple shape, which I call visual concepts or visual categories. The simplicity of these visual concepts is relative, in that a complex stimulus pattern viewed by refined vision may produce a rather intricate shape, which is the simplest attainable under the circumstances. What matters is that an object at which someone is looking can be said to be truly perceived only to the extent to which it is fitted to some organized shape. In addition, there generally is an amount of visual noise, accompanying and modifying the perceived shape with more or less vaque detail and nuances, but this contributes little to visual comprehension."[394)]

After a moment of immobility, there is another revelation, a perspective of a street, and then the cut-outs disappear, the camera moves and shows us the side of a skyscraper. The camera climbs along the facade of the skyscraper, and as it reaches the top of it, Dick Powell and Ruby Keeler are there waiting and smiling. This is a crazy perspective, a futuristic, modernistic Metropolis-variation. Powell and Keeler kiss each other, then wink at us and pull down a curtain with a sign 'Asbestos', a hint to the fireproof material of the theatre curtains.

By creating self-contained worlds, which were separate from the films, Berkeley was able to expand the limits of time and space. The backstage musical proved that its numbers were limited to the stage, that the viewpoints presented by the camera were possibly those of the spectators, performers, stage hands and so on; they usually belonged to somebody who was in some way part of the film world. But in cinematic thinking the camera can become a "performer"[395)] with a lot of activity in shaping the viewpoints. Time and space are limitless for Berkeley, as Rick Altman has stated:

> "When we reach the climax of a Berkeley production number, however, we have entirely abandoned the representational mode. *Everything - even the image - is now subordinated to the music track.* Even when we can identify the elements of Berkeley's patterns as women, our attention is drawn away from the image's referential nature by shots which organize hundreds of hats, legs, feet, arms, or torsos into a single pattern. In the flower patterns typical of his thirties extravaganzas *(Gold Diggers of 1933, Footlight Parade, Dames, Wonder Bar),* the simultaneous movement of the dancers produces a kaleidoscopic effect in which the overall configuration always obliterates individual referential aspects. It is as if the screen were transformed into an electronivcally generated visual accompaniment to the music."[396]

In *42nd Street* the last three numbers constitute a kind of suite of episodes, outlining the evolution from innocence to experience, with some amoralistic moments, until the final synthesis is reached. All the four numbers form a new kind of development; they go quite loosely from one experience back to another.

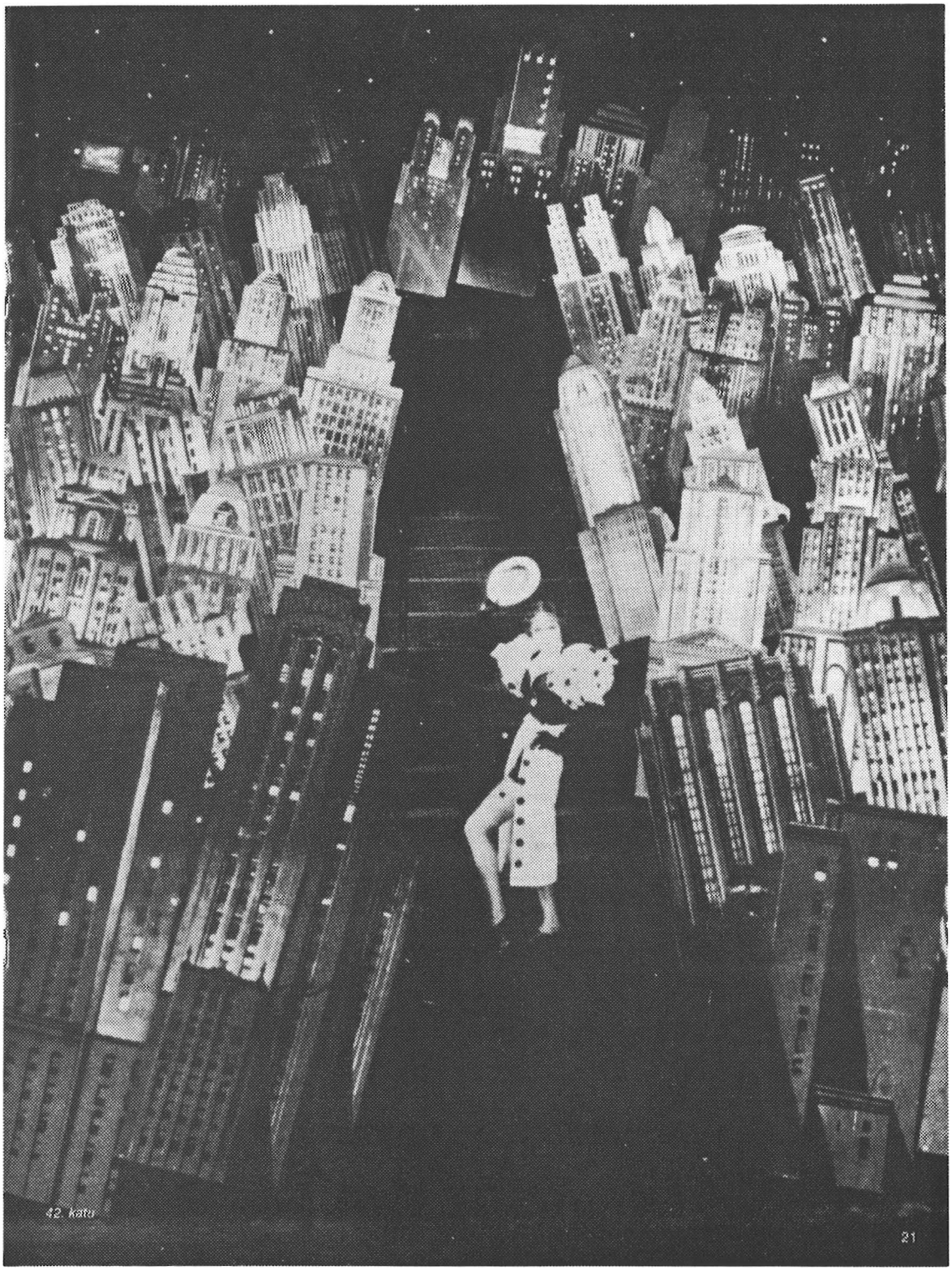
A Hollywood craftsman knows enough to be able to invent little surprises, or whatever they started with, and because these surprises must function, they make variations and transformations from the original idea and produce structures around it. Durgnat has noticed that this kind of thinking is connected with Eisenstein's primitive idea of montage, 'the montage of attractions', where 'attractions' mean musichall or circus attractions, and where the acts follow one another with a showlike contrasts and variety.[397] This is a way of seeing a film as a circus program, and this idea fits with many organic unities, the more sophisticated thematic structures seem to be woven around changes.

Berkeley's different kind of formations can be seen in his manner of using time and space in his narratives. In some numbers he concentrates more on the visual possibilities to expand the space around the performers and to create numbers with abstract patterns and formations. In some other numbers Berkeley creates another time within the film's world, which brings in more surrealistic qualities, elements of nonrationality and illogicality.

A good example is "Lullaby of Broadway" from *Gold Diggers of 1935.* It begins with a black frame, singer Wini Shaw's head appearing very small in the distance as the camera, on a specially-built monorail, dollies slowly into a large closeup. Her head turns upside down and becomes an image of Manhattan, the setting for the number's diegesis. This is followed by a 'city-symphony' of Manhattan waking up, the surreal quality emphasized by tilting the camera at certain moments in the montage. Wini Shaw, The Broadway Babe, arrives home from her all-night revels and sleeps during the day - presented by the turning hands of a clock - only to wake up for another night in town.

She and Dick Powell attend a nightclub performance being the only members in the audience. Here is the only genuine dancing num-

ber, based on variations of the title-song, including a couple doing a Spanish dance and lots of male and female dancers performing a musically unaccompanied tap dance. The elaborate routines are shot from every possible angle: front, back, top, side and bottom and in longshots and closeups. Present, too, is the Berkeley motif of dancers doing action in succession as a line of girls, one after the other, fall back into their partners' arms and, reversing the process, the guys throw them back again into an upright position. Powell and Shaw, observers throughout most of the number, participate briefly in the dancing, but Shaw, running inexplicably from the action after its climax, falls to her death from the heights of the building. The circularity of the number is completed as the sequence returns to her apartment with the awakening New York montage - accompanied by a softly-sung reprise of the song itself. It concludes with the reverse of the opening shot: Wini Shaw's head becomes smaller and smaller as the camera dollies back and the screen fades to black. In this sequence Berkeley is using connotative hints with a formal deliberateness to a whole nexus of ideas about Manhattan sophistication and glamour. This kind of morbid elements added a flavor to the shooting and stabbing of *42nd Street*, and they can be found elsewhere too.[398)]




Montage collision in *42nd Street* (a publicity still).

On stage in *42nd Street*.

### 4.6.3 *Dames*

*Dames* (1933) includes three production numbers: "The Girl At The Ironing Board", "I Only Have Eyes for You" and "Dames". The themes of those production numbers are quite different compared to the *42nd Street* -numbers. Now we are moving in the world of sights and looks. "I Only Have Eyes for You" takes place on a theater stage. Dick Powell and Ruby Keeler are walking in a traffic-jam, which, however, vanishes mysteriously. In the underground every advertisement presents the face of his beloved. Again Berkeley experiments, with a kind of cubist phantasm, the time and space dimensions developing fully paradoxally. The lyrics of "Dames" urge to tell the truth about beautiful women while Dick Powell is performing the part of a theatre agent, who interviews beautiful girls and gives them all jobs immediately. Of course one thing to be remembered in this connection is the time of Depression. The women are looking after themselves, having baths, sitting at their dressing tables, sleeping in their double beds and so on. The rooms consist of identical furniture, arranged according to a certain formal line. The sequence also features some huge alarmclock faces.

The surrealist, illogical dreamworld[399] is present in these images. In the diegesis of this scene the camera follows the different actions of the women in the manner of Berkeley's shifting surprises. At one point a ball is covering the screen, and the mosaic of girls are dancing on a flat plane to a kind of erotic and surrealist rhythm.

The Berkeley-pattern and his characteristic style revolves in alternation between eye-level shots and top shots, between dominance of diegetic material and independent musical material, between the screen as a window (the object plane) and the screen as a frame (the picture plane).[400] From flat planes the images move forward through the interior of a kaleidoscope with sides as mirrored lines of girls, and then the screen freezes into a still photo, which is broken by Dick Powell's suddenly appearing smiling face.

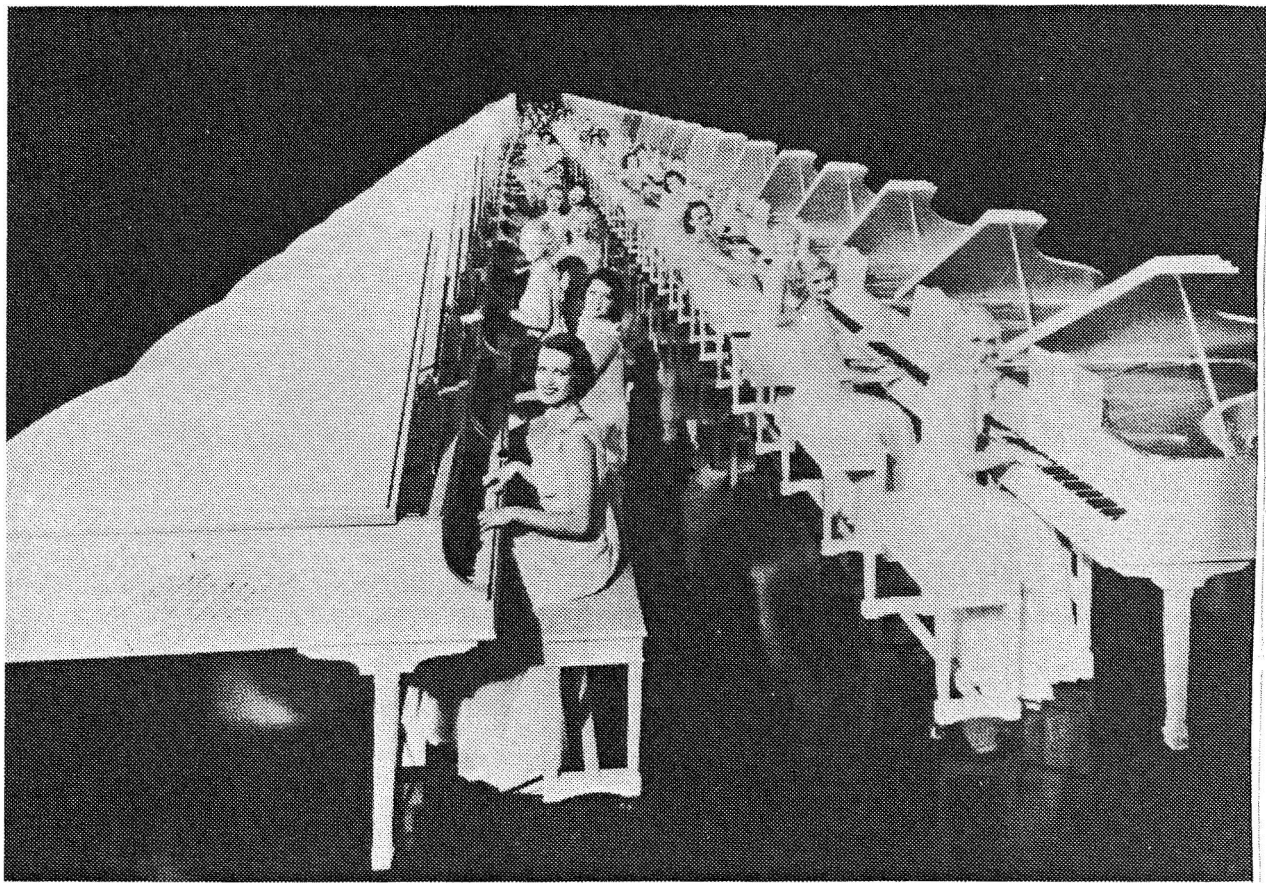
"The Girl at the Ironing Board" features Joan Blondell moving in the backyard of her oldtime laundry amongst men's clothes and communicating with them. This number includes comical vaudeville realism, intimacy and a touch of closeness, which is very different from the rest of the numbers. There is also a kind of proletarian overtone when Blondell's lonely spinster contrasts with the modern couple in "I Only Have Eyes for You". It is also a question of a "city pastorale"[401] and the spaces connected with that. The space of "The Girl at the Ironing Board" is very limited, but with "I Only Have Eyes for You" the space is much more enlarged: what begins with a camera under a car, and then it changes into a theatre box-office counter. Next we move on to the streets with Powell and Keeler and go down to the subway with them. Suddenly the spaces break, and we are in a limitless black space, which changes

into a kind of garden, a technocratic, constructive, three-dimensional wonderland with surprises followed by each other, until we move back to realism through the windows of a subway train.

"Dames"-number includes multilevel climaxes with difficulties in the verbal synopsis. It moves from street sets to broken level effects, camera effects, and eteric cubo-futuristic multiperspectives, as we move through different views in the planes and the space of the screen. We move inside and outside into all possible directions, so that the serial focuses of situations are constantly overspread. The screen rectangularity and kineticity are precisely perceived and strongly developed.

The theme consists of a bunch of ideas, as well as of an intersection of ideas.[402)] Many things have some kind of meaning or an association with many other things, and aleatory procedures often create juxtapositions like meaningful connections. It is reasonable to assume that the real themes involve multiple affinities, and in *Dames* the autonomity of the production numbers is clearly loose from the cinematic structure around them. Berkeley operates more with elliptical than thematic structures. The local surprises have more value than the more subtle themes. In a cinematic text there are always more meanings than it is useful or appropriate to work out. In normal reading we tend to notice the formal characteristics if we think intuitively that they have meanings for us, and we pass over them if we do not.[403)] For example, a most simple scene may contain a vast number of possible configurations of the elements within it, and our mind passes most of them, and stops for those which often seem to be the most obvious ones. This kind of preliminary selectivity makes correlations between form and content, a principle obscured by the meanings. One feels that a cinematic text is rich in meanings, and one might think that everything we notice has a meaning; so we end up with a kind of genetic determinism.

Ruby Keeler's face in the dream number from *Dames*.



The piano number from *Golddiggers of 1935.*

### 4.6.4 Revelations

According to David Bordwell:

> "Meaning-making is a psychological and social activity fundamentally akin to other cognitive processes. The perceiver is not a passive receiver of data but an active mobilizer of structures and processes (either 'hard-wired' or learned) which enable her to search for information relevant to task and data at hand. In watching a film, the perceiver identifies certain cues which prompt her to execute many inferential activities - ranging from the mandatory and very fast activity of perceiving apparent motion, through the more 'cognitively penetrable' process of constructing, say, links between scenes, to the still more open process of ascribing abstract meanings to the film."[404]

For example, many of Carl Th. Dreyer's principal characters become surrogates for the director in this process of meaning making. The central figure of Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932), David Gray, is the most obvious example of a character whose own tentative, laborious processes of searching out meanings and adjusting relationships mirror the filmmaker's.[405] *Vampyr* may seem irrational and surreal while non-diegetic inserts are breaking up the action, and one does not know whether this is to do with reality or with dream. However, the succession of images in this film is far from pure spontaneity or randomness. Dreyer's film has its logic related to structure and style.

Raymond Carney defines:

> "In this respect, *Vampyr* is a textbook lesson in the process of meaning making for the newcomer to Dreyer's work. Dreyer deliberately presents the world of the film so that virtually nothing is known, or can be known, with any degree of certainty, about the 'true' or 'correct' relationship of the principal characters. Everything must be worked out. All the meanings must be made. The camera work (never was the second word in that compound construction more appropriate to the description of the style of a film) enacts the work of knowing that Dreyer's style always figures."[406]

For Carney, Dreyer's style is more than an artistic matter: "It is a statement about the purpose and value of possible relationships to experience and expression."[407] Paul Schrader expresses his conception in the following quotation:

> "Both the subject matter (vampires, afterlife) and the techniques (chiaroscuro, exaggerated gesture, nonrealistic sets, rampant fantasy sequences) of *Vampyr* exhibit a confident appreciation of the strengths of expressionism and a calculated use of its methods. David Gray, the 'protagonist' of *Vampyr*, is not a Kammerspiel actor whose interior feelings have to be 'pushed out.' His feelings are already externalized: he wears them quite literally on his sleeve, or his staircase, or his coffin. His style is not one of nuance, but of exaggeration; he is not an individual personality, but the

> fluid, human component of a distorted, expressionist universe. Gray's vampire world is rife with familiar expressionist visual fetishes: an obsession with darkened staircases, arching doorways, and vanishing corridors."[408]

Every cinematic text should be, as it is, full of clues, which allow us to deconstruct the assumptions, gaps, disconnections and points of breakdown. But the notions against it are clearly shown in cinematic texts that are based on streams of consciousness, dreams or free associations. The riddles and gaps connected with them, offer us a chance with so many explanations that the confidence is lost. Of course we can think that every gap in a cinematic text can be explained by some code. But if every cinematic text is characterized by an interaction of many kinds of structures (which break down each other), then it is not possible to resolve fully and clearly which structure is responsible for a certain gap in a cinematic text.

Rudolf Arnheim thinks that the human mind can be forced to produce replicas of things, but it is not naturally geared to it, since perception is concerned with the grasping of significant form. The mind finds it hard to produce images devoid of that formal virtue.[409] And as symbols, fairly realistic images have the advantage of giving flesh and blood to the structural skeletons of ideas. "They convey a sense of lifelike presence, which is often desirable. But they may be inefficient otherwise because the objects they represent are, after all, only part-time symbols."[410]

We might get further with Berkeley-patterns by following graphic or plastic forms and relating them with symbolism. Durgnat has pointed out that we have to renounce immediate metaphorical meanings along literary chains in order to do so.[411] This is because all study of meanings involves the renunciation of meanings. And talking about plastic or graphic forms leads us to talk about rhythms inside and between images. The semantic structures of Berkeley-patterns are very kinesthetic and psychosomatic substantially, and structurally different from the kind of meaning which purely verbal semantics can deal with.

According to their formal originality the sequences created by Busby Berkeley demand autonomic, auteuristic interpretation, although they are special climaxes inside other films. The auteuristic approach has its dangers because a special cinematic text is so vague that it is easy to look for wider views, treat the director as an auteur.[412] That is why it is worth while to notice the aspect according to which the ultimate determinant of content can be less the artist himself, than studio policy, the production unit, the target audience, culture generally or subcultures specifically, or market, etc. This kind of thinking easily develops easily into a certain kind of identification-auteurism, when we are desperately trying to look continuity between films and leave out the differences. This leads to a situation where every film is torn apart from its identity.

With Berkeley-patterns it is useful to see the contradictions and complementary balances inside his sequences since a certain sequence might look very different from another one. Through this kind of thinking a part cannot be a cross-section of the whole, and that is why Berkeley-sequences have their own, separate existence, loose from each other because every text exists in a pluralistic context.

Lucy Fischer has pointed out that Berkeley's production numbers involve an implicit theme of film as a voyeuristic spectacle.[413] Fischer thinks that although Berkeley is handling the camera voyeuristically, he nevertheless hides the presence of it. Although the mirrors are clearly depicting the imagery of the numbers (the women's "mirror" in "I Only Have Eyes for You", the mirrors of the dressing tables in "Dames"), they are often wrong surfaces, which refuse to reflect the image of the camera, or the man behind it.[414] When Fischer is talking about "the image of the woman" in that context, she says that the Berkeley-numbers are based on a purely imaginative universe, which turns Berkeley's groups of women into stereotypes. This is significant in Berkeley's mise-en-scène, through which women lose their identities in a much deeper sense than just through the similarity of their physical appearances. Fischer thinks that their identities are rather perfectly consumerized in this abstract spectacle.[415]

The arguments related to voyeurism are specifically problematic in connection with cinema, which depends on looking. To underline Berkeley's sequences as a voyeurism leaves out many psychosocial processes. Part of Berkeley's voyeurism comes from the extent through which the world surrounding women closes out the male lead. Berkeley balances this with a free withdrawal to straight address: he lets the women, not men, look straight at the spectator, and by doing so renews the intimacy of things and gives the spectator a chance to take part in the action. It is an opposite of alienating things, because the look restores sympathy, and we understand that point of view, which is part of the whole social outlook.

When Berkeley reveals the machinery of illusions, he points out that by reflecting straight to it is not the same as the alienation or demystification of happenings. It is something else: more like a promising spectacle, a show, which increases the media's own virtuosity, uniting it with a kind of cinematic attraction montage. It also shows the film's capability as a tool to fly away Berkeley's women to different places. It is cinematic fantasy, a blend of modernistic fusions.

Berkeley also gives possibilities for high culture's abstract and constructive tendencies to approach the populist level. It is a theme of transformations from individuality to more collective ideas, and not a revelation of the camera or the man behind it. While cinematic virtuosity is a positive delight, the director and his camera usually are much less present to the film's target audience than to that cinematic subculture,

whose "mental notebook"[416] treats the director as an auteuristic persona with camera movements and voyeurism. What we see on the screen is felt actively, not passively. It is a question of how much the performers are controlling the screen instead of feeling like being under surveillance. This explains to which degree, let us say, Ruby Keeler dancing in *42nd Street* is actively in our consciousness. One idea related to Berkeley's women is that they actually hardly dance at all, they are more like moving. It is a phenomenon which emphasizes their role as visual decorations. In a Berkeley world the architecture is controlling the movements, the rhythmic pulse is related to common facts. Although many of the Berkeley numbers require active and brisk movements, it is a common fact that Berkeley did not require anything more from his dancers than what they were capable of.[417] If, for example, "I'm Young and Healthy" in *42nd Street* offers a series of surprising, swift effects of brisk movements, it happens largely for architectural reasons, Berkeley's style of editing, which handily shortens time and makes the number more round than edgy.

David Bordwell points out that,

> "To interpret a film is to ascribe implicit or symptomatic meanings to it. The critic aims to present a novel and plausible interpretation. The task is accomplished by assigning one or more semantic fields to the film. Such fields are distinguished by substantive features (reflexivity or 'active/ passive') and by internal structures, clusters, oppositions, proportional series, graded series or hierarchies. Operating with broad assumptions and hypotheses (for example the unity hypothesis), the critic maps semantic fields which she judges pertinent onto cues identified in the film. The identification of cues, and the judgment of pertinent, depend upon conventional knowledge-structures, or schemata, and inductive inferential procedures, or heuristics. The critic deploys category schemata (genres or periods, for example), personification schemata (such as director, narrator, or camera), and schemata for overall textual structure (the concentric-circle schema for synchronic relations, the trajectory schema for diachronic progression). The heuristics that translate these schemata into action allow the critic to show the film enacting the pertinent semantic values. The critic must also present the interpretation by means of standard rhetorical forms - ethical, pathetic, and pseudological proofs, familiar patterns of organization, and stylistic maneuvers."[418]

So, interpreting a film sets up many traps: Bordwell underestimates the flexibility of connotations, Durgnat thinks that interpretation of a film confirms the belief in the flexibility of connotations and the substance of meanings. A critical reading cannot be an automation, as Durgnat says,[419] because the objects that we call "texts" are just tiny fragments of a larger text that no mind can fully read. This is a text of the meanings and interactions produced and developed by social history. "Theory is not, of course, wholly a matter of propositional knowledge; it too is a practice, with its own procedures of reasoning and rhetoric."[420] Stronger hypotheses are usually preferred in relation to weaker ones,

more complete explanations to partials, and so on. Still erroneous explanations might open the workings of a mind, bring out new dimensions, which we have not thought of. So, with Berkeley we function in a flux of ideas, in a criss-cross of semantic operations. Following Durgnat's notion we can finally say that "close reading doesn't eliminate ambiguities; often, indeed, it reveals or multiplies them."[421)]

# 5 POST-THINKING

On the level of abstraction, the cinematic image is merely *space* presented over *time*. The space/time -abstraction is structured into cinematic mimesis by technique, which is a product of technology. So technique makes space and time significant in film. The style of the film is a relation, a pattern of techniques that produces meanings. The techniques of the image include those of space (mise-en-scène) and those of time (editing). Mise-en-scène applies to all the visual elements of the shot, and it exists both in a single frame and in the succession of frames.

The final effectiveness of a single film depends on many things. When one tries to achieve a rhythmic totality in a film, one does not have to separate form (techniques) and content (story) from each other, since all the artistic elements of film have been mixed so totally that a single deletion would evidently harm the whole.

Stephen Dwoskin's films provoke theoretical reflection because of their meld of lyricism and minimalism, realism and formalism. Dwoskin's synthesis of formalism and realism subverts, in advance, the concretist structuralism of, for example, Malcolm LeGrice and Peter Gidal. For it is self-reflexive by virtue of contributing to a complex semantic phenomenon, an experience of film and the world outside film.[422)] Dwoskin's films are visually interesting, intensely graphic; they enter into a strange symbiosis with performance.

Raymond Durgnat expresses his conception in the following quotation:

> "That sense of a live, changing presence which film movement brings and which links film, not simply with 'reality' but equally firmly, with theatre. It is in controlling a performance factor, the quality of behaviour, that Dwoskin runs into the problems of his second phase, problems shared with many painters during that widespread 1960's move towards theatri-

> cal forms (happenings, performances). Though the aesthetic theory of 'happenings' is often underestimated now, the reaction against it is at least understandable, given frequent confusion of reality with authenticity, which went with a careless anti-formalism, and was surely the equal and opposite extreme to the empty systematics of the 1970s."[423]

Dwoskin's films are profoundly physical and realistic in celebrating the richness of face and flesh. They belong to the category of "pure film" due to the contemplativeness of their nature. For example in *Alone* (1963) a silent girl lies on a bed smoking, brooding, and intermittently stirring, during successive shots, all of which are taken from one direction, from the foot of the bed. Meanwhile, one hears on the soundtrack the tolling of one musical chord which establishes its artificial pulse in counterpoint to the elasticity of ones normal time-processing. The aesthetic minimalism intensifies the girl's heavy body language, Dwoskin's sad harsh graphics, and the montage kinetic as the strong composition of each shot clicks against its predessor.[424] In *Chinese Checkers* (1964) two girls in a bare room begin playing a board game but drift into a duel of glances (triumphant, coquettish, sidelong). Eventually, their faces are transformed by face-paint like expressionist masks, and the film ends as they embrace.

Durgnat, again, defines:

> "In the first phase, the camera cuts between reverse p.o.v.'s (that is, it alternates each girl's eye view of the other looking back at her, and directly into camera). Beginning theorists often expect subjective shots to give us a powerful identification with the person through whose eye we see the world. But the effect is normally the reverse. By occupying a character's space we exclude him from the screen, which effaces her and concentrates our attention on what we continue to see - the *other* face, its hesitations, enigmas and moods. There is an eerie and oppressive alternation between physiognomies shown so strongly that we are torn between awe of it and intimacy with it."[425]

In a film like that faces become sensitive landscapes and masks and the hermetic close-ups inaugurate an essay on the phenomenology of the face of the other.[426] Dwoskin's ideas follow the visual tradition of silent films during the expressionist era. There is a minimum of exaggerated melodramatic gestures and a maximum of imagery and gesture conveying character, in a way, distinct from stage acting and more akin to the subliminal intuition about other persons one induces from their characteristic gestures. Dwoskin's films rely little on dialogue and far more on disconcerting images and discordant sound tracks. It is a cinema of sensations, strictly isolated in order to discover the attitudes that lead to certain situations, to discover the hidden rituals behind human behaviour.

Durgnat thinks that traditional film theorists contrast the picture stage of theatre, which is static and unrealistic, with photorealism, which

is mobile and illusionistic.[427] It is a false comparison because theatre does not need scenic space, it needs only performer presence. Its center is on actors' faces, bodies and voices, all properties of the flesh and blood, which gives their characters physical presence, a feeling of constancy. In film, the human presence is illusory, merely part of a succession of pictures which so contain and flatten it that the camera must take over to provide a new picture for each dramatic point. The human presence is canned, abstracted, pixilated and dreamed. It is not social. As Durgnat defines - *Film is pictorial performing art.*[428]

> "'Master', I said, 'I find their meaning hard.' And he replied, as one who knew the truth. 'Here all misgivings must be put aside and every craven impulse must be stilled. We've come now to the place I told you of in which you'll see that miserable brood who've lost the benefit of intellect.' When, looking in good spirits, he had laid his hand on mine and I was reassured led me in, towards the mysteries."[429]

One way of describing a mental content, inner life, is to interpret objective realism through subjectivity, to glide into a world of associations and instinctions. A filmmaker can achieve stylistic unity through many ways. One way is to simplify things, turn an idea into a symbol, and give space to abstraction.

When the filmic sequences are joined with the overall cinematic structure, the necessity of abstraction can be achieved, and so a filmmaker can step over the fence of naturalism in his/her media. The mind gives a possibility of changing the sights of the eye into visions. The process works in two ways: On one hand, a filmmaker builds up the images in harmony with his/her visions by rejecting the reality that has inpired him/her, and on the other hand, in the reality that he/she has reconstructed there must be something that an audience can recognize and believe in.

When we are watching moving images, the continuous process of perception and recognition is like a strip of memory unrolling beneath the images itself in order to form the invisible underlayer of an implicit double exposure.

Watching moving images includes, of course, some kind of involvement into the world of a work of art. This involvement often includes a kind of meditative aspect, which is the aesthetic purpose of the vibration awakened by the work of art. A spectator is allowed to some degree of intervention in the form which he/she will contemplate.

This kind of viewing activity may also be directed towards notions (which includes a process), where, as a rule of thumb, lies the eagerness to follow the work of art to those paths where it is willing to lead its spectator, by triggering off processes in our minds.[430]

Those processes are of the kind which we, at least partially, recognize as emotions, ideas, feelings, atmospheres and the like, as a con-

tent of the work of art in question. And the more strenuously we follow that path the more liberated, the more involved with the artwork we are. The mind is looking out, observing, understanding, appreciating a new experience, and bending into a new form, space, which has the possibility of opening new channels.

Neoformalist thinking jettisons a communications model of art which includes a sender, a medium and a receiver.[431] Through neoformalism art is a realm separate from all other types of cultural artefacts, because it presents a unique set of perceptual requirements.[432] Therefore, with films we are in a nonpractical, playful type of interaction, because films renew our perceptions and other mental processes, and they have no immediate implications for us. Watching a film with moving images is a process, an experience, totally separate from our everyday beings. And by renewing our thoughts and perceptions, it works as a kind of process, a mental exercise for our minds, emphasizing the viewing activity.

Films achieve these effects through defamiliarizing the usual perceptions of our ordinary lives, ideologies, other works of art, taking material from these sources and transforming them. "The transformation takes place through their placement in a new context and their participation in unaccustomed formal patterns."[433]

An artist communicates some experiences, visions, to other people through a work of art. She may think that she is creating something which she thinks might fascinate and stimulate other people's minds. By doing so, she may use her own experience, but if she wants to express herself to her audience rather than to herself, she may suppress her personal feelings, thinking that they would jeopardize her artistic aims. An artist may feel that she is a communicator between herself and the spectator's mind, by making, through her work, the spectator more aware of her unconscious or repressed emotions.

> *And mine shall.*
> *Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling*
> *Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,*
> *One of their kind, that relish all as sharply*
> *Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?*
> *Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick*
> *Yet with my noble reason, 'gainst my fury*
> *Do I take part: the rarer action is*
> *In virtue than in vengeance: they being penitent,*
> *The sole drift of my purpose doth extend*
> *Not a frown further.*[434]

A creative process includes an idea which is clear enough on the level of the mind, and which can later be visualized. It can turn into a flux of sounds and images, and enter the continuous changing jungle of rhythmics, a network which tries to catch the original idea, to put it into

some form. This kind of process can also direct itself to other dimensions, kick off the original idea and direct itself towards views which lead to other territories. So, the relationship between the final product and the original idea can be totally different.

One often makes a distinction between the literary content and the visual forms, but there are no similarly acceptable, critical approaches to the structures of cinematic images as there are for example in painting.[435] In cinema the most convincing approaches are based on the idea of seeing films (either narrative or non-narrative ones) as a set of ideas, recombinations, repetitions, transformations and metamorphoses: it is always a question of adapting ideas. And the relations of cinematic images are twofold: the image is a concrete thing in itself, but it has abstract relations to other things. The pictorial sign is iconic in one respect and arbitrary in every other. So, we are in a world of associations, connotations and concomitants. The artist produces features into her work which reflect the topics, that appeal to her. In that sense, originality is a more or less problematic issue. There are, of course, examples in both directions, and it is clear that an artist has to be original in some way, to produce meaningful works of art.

Film art provides an example of a romantic art situation, where the spectator sits confronting images as in dreams.

As Robert Desnos wrote in 1923:

> "I should like a film director to take a fancy to this idea. In the morning after a nightmare, let him note exactly all he remembers and let him reconstruct it with exact care. It would no longer be a matter of logic, of classic construction, or of flattering the incomprehension of the public, but of things seen, of a higher reality, since it opens a new domain to poetry and to dreaming."[436]

The filmic pleasure is based on the idea that one links oneself with the visions of the moving images and, at the same time, one is free to adjust to personal feelings.

Between the art situation and the media that it carries, there is the concept of form to be considered. A form does not have to be a shape or a structure, like the actual physical existence of the work of art itself, devoid of any meaning. In film the form means the patterns of light and sound on the screen, which the spectator perceives, analyzes and makes conclusions as to the form, and in that way becomes conscious of it. A spectator might feel unified with it, melt into a part of the form. The content of a work of art might be felt as a total summary of its awakened stimuli, ideas, emotions and mental processes.

Another aspect lies in the idea that the content of a work of art happens as a kind of unconscious synthesis which the spectator becomes aware of. In cinema the screen is *over there somewhere*, but the content is still *here* in my head. The content, then, is a combination of reactions,

emotions and ideas produced by the form.[437]

Ludwig Wittgenstein thinks:

> "I suddenly see the solution of a puzzle-picture. Before, there were branches there; now a human shape. My visual impression has changed and now I recognize that it has not only shape and colour but also quite particular 'organization'. - My visual impression has changed; - what was it like before and what is it like now? - If I represent it by means of an exact copy - and isn't that a good representation of it? - no change is shewn."[438]

Film resonates in our minds on many levels. At least it puzzles, gives something new to think about, changes our normal patterns of thought. Film is also recreation, an interplay of perceptions, mind, and emotions in a situation where all the elements have been mixed in a spontaneous and free way. And from a psychoanalytical stand-point, one can say that cinema gives a rare chance to mix together highly sophisticated and primitive ingredients. Film is also about learning, moving into a world of experiences, created by some other person. A film has its strong ritualistic elements as in the case of Maya Deren (*Ritual in Transfigured Time*, 1945-46). For example: If in some party shooting all the long discussions were cut out, there would be left only the constant patterns of smiling, a model of social anxiety and claustrofobia, as the people try to reach some other person in the same room, considering movements, friendly huggings and slidings a way from something boring towards something interesting.

Maureen Turim looks at the perceptual and philosophical impacts of video, thinking as follows:

> "The temporalization of space in video is accomplished by both video switching and editing; each process bears a strong relationship to cross-cutting in film, though since switching can 'edit' in 'real time' (simultaneous to the occurrence of events being represented), there is an extra dimension to montage in video. Similarly, embedding images within images, each with its own discrete temporality, through keying or digitalization is different from photo or filmic montage; the electronics of video heighten the fluidity of temporal and spatial representations beyond the edited mixture by creating the mixture as ongoing process."[439]

One can agree with her that photography and film serve as a kind of cultural premonition of video, and maybe video art makes accessible the properties of earlier avant-garde experiments and uses them in a new way, redefining visual and auditory thinking.

As Sean Cubitt defines:

> "Video succeeds when it is heteroclite, when it moves by contradiction, from document to generation, from medium to material, from simple grapheme to complex lexicon and back. Video has already added to Metz's five codes of cinema (writing, speech, sound, music and image)

> with image-grabbing, treated images, multiple-perspective images, the interfacing of cel and stop-frame animation with computer technology, tapes based in photocopying technologies or ultrasound scanning.... Video's strength is its ability to cut across the interstices, to play upon the contradictions, of the regimes of looking and hearing that structure the dominant audio-visual world."[440]

One of the central issues in the 1980s has been the crisis in representation, a collapse of previous authorities. The subject of art is now in a locus of many kinds of relationships. For example, in British video art the lack of single, dominant style or orthodox, critical position (which characterised the pluralism of the 1980s) has allowed crossovers between previously autonomous cultural practices. It has also marked a kind of return to the image, a challenge to the linguistic dominance of the seventies. Tamara Krikorian has said:

> "My own interest in video, and indeed in television, stems from a formalist position, a formal analysis/decoding/deconstruction of the medium, but ... it is not possible to consider television without taking into account its structure, not just in terms of technology but also in terms of politics. This led me to realise that the reference points in working with any medium must come not only from the medium itself, following the approach of 'pure art', but from relationships between types of work, painting and sculpture and video etc. The reference must also come from the artist's own experience as a mediator between what has gone before and the raw material and the ideal, constantly restating and confronting the spectator with a discussion between the old and the new."[441]

The presence of time entered modern art several ways. Firstly, through the perceptual dynamic of Cubism, where illusion and reality were placed side by side, and then in the kinetic dynamism of Futurism, where the movement of the subject was crystalised through space and, in the 1920s, through the experiments in light and movement of kinetic art. Nowadays, all these elements are mixed in video art and in time-based installations. One can think that the roots of these postmodernist approaches are also in the Surrealism of the 1920s, which embraced many of the same issues: inter-textuality, the importance of the unconscious, the psychoanalytic dimension of the avant-garde thinking, neo-Romanticism, and many kinds of eclectic and primitive activities.

Chrissie Iles has suggested that the time-based art sets up a dialectic between interior space (the narcissistic drive towards projection) and the exterior physical presence of the object.[442] and further on she thinks:

> "The breakdown of a single viewpoint achieved by this simultaneity of spaces produces a transition backwards and forwards across multiple realities and time 'zones' which fundamentally questions our perception of linear and narrative 'truth'."[443]

Through moving images the Expressionists, Futurists, Surrealists and many others are constantly searching their own rhapsodies of passion, desire, mechanization, or spontaneity or libido. For example, Dadaists had an anti-mimetic concept of realism; they preferred material literalism to metaphoric constructions of the materials of art while at the same time undercutting the traditional equation of skill, effort or inspiration with art, value, status and morality. As Wieland Herzfelde has noted:

> "Dada is the reaction to all these attempts at disavowing the factual, which has been the driving force of impressionists, expressionists, cubits and even futurists (in that they refused to capitulate to film); however, the Dadaist doesn't try to compete with the camera, or to breathe soul into it (as did the impressionists) by giving the worst lens - the human eye - priority, or (like the expressionists) turn the apparatus round and simply depict the world inside their own bosom."[444]

For example, the Surrealists exposed what other filmmakers tried to hide: the underlying structure of the fetish and its role in the creation of desire. Linda Williams thinks that when the cinema *is* a fetish, when it only manipulates the desires of its audience, it cannot reveal its fetish structure as well.[445]

Williams describes:

> "But when the cinema ruptures the identification between spectator and image, the fetish function of the institution crumbles as well. This crumbling is replaced by a new awareness of the fetish in the mind of the spectator. Thus Surrealist film's imitation of the discourse of the unconscious once again has the paradoxical effect of making the spectator more conscious of the processes that produce desire."[446]

Cinema offers one way to edit, organize and evaluate our experiences and visions, and one can say, as Raymond Durgnat has suggested:

> "Maybe the aesthetic situation is, in essence, a model, a series of spiritual exercises for the delicate and difficult task of relating to one's own experience, and to that of others, in a fluid, complex, plural, artificial society."[447]

What my filmic examples (especially with Maya Deren, Luis Buñuel, Fritz Lang and Busby Berkeley) show is that the film itself is a magnificent *machine of illusions* with a repertoire of devices, all of which it deploys to gain its aims. In a film, even the most simple idea is a complex interacting with others, and it can move in many directions. This is made possible through the selectivity of the camera, and a film can unify many visual styles and approaches.

My approach emphasizes film as a visual mental process. Therefore, the producing of meanings is an active, complicated metamorphose that operates through the mind. Visual perception involves skilled, sequential and purposive behavior. Furthermore, it is a view to a situ-

ation in which the message of the work of art is not solely emphasized, since the whole viewing situation is part of the entire process under constant interplay between different sections.

P.N. Johnson-Laird reaches out to the future and thinks that cognitive science is already affecting the world we live in. Its most immediate applications are to the development of intelligent software and humane technology. The computational view of the mind may affect the way in which we think about what it is to be a human being.[448] As Johnson-Laird describes:

> "Cognitive computation raises many philosophical problems. It suggests an alternative to the traditional philosophies of mind: mental processes are the computations of the brain. This thesis is incompatible with the Dualist philosophy that holds mind and matter to be independent domains. It is also incompatible with both Materialism and Idealism - the traditional attempts to abandon one domain or the other. It implies that certain organizations of matter enable processes to occur that represent events elsewhere in the world... The concept of interacting with a dynamic representation of an individual's intellect and personality is sufficiently novel to be disturbing. It raises moral, metaphysical and scientific issues of its own."[449]

As Henri Poincaré has said:

> "There is a hierarchy of facts. Some are without any positive bearing, and teach us nothing but themselves. The scientist who ascertains the learns nothing but facts, and becomes no better able to foresee new facts. Such facts, it seems, occur but once, and are not destined to be repeated.
>
> There are, on the other hand, facts that give large return, each of which teaches us a new law. And since he is obliged to make a selection, it is to these latter facts that the scientist must devote himself."[450]

Raymond Durgnat thinks that art is freest, and most rewarding, when it takes on several functions, can slip from one to the other, even at the price of internal contradiction.[451] It is these functions which form the strongest link between new and traditional medias. A definition of art must take into consideration that objects of art come into being in relational complexes. The meanings and values that make up the informed substance of an art object have status in being independently of their being terms in relational complexes. An art object is a symbolic structure embodying immanent values and meanings. The means and values funded in the object are presented in as well as through symbolism, and not merely by means of signs and representation.

Vision is a skill which involves our experience, other senses and perceptual apparatus. It gives new information about our environment because all human perceptual activity requires learning. Artistic vision demands continual attention through a lifetime of refinement, but object recognition in pictures is a skill once learned and never forgotten. One might be disoriented at first, in front of visual imagery, but quite soon

one learns to transform the visual sensations into floating percepts. One can watch images and use them as an extension of one's being. Most visions are also unconscious applications of various skills of vision. Cinema takes place in our minds, in our visual life, permits us to go on from this point. Cinema fascinates us because it is real and unreal. It exists between those two extremes. It is an interplay between the real and the image, between realism and abstraction.

# NOTES

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24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Durgnat, *Durgnat on Film*, p. 22.

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28 Raymond Durgnat's lecture, University of Jyväskylä 10.4.1988.

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310 A reference to footnote 45.

311 A match shot occurs when a filmmaker lines up two or more shots so that they make roughly similar compositions.

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315 In description the order is arbitrary, so the question of order in description is interesting in relation to literary style and also in relation to cinematographic style.

316 Quite a lot of the film is undercranked. Buñuel deliberatley undercranked the camera's recording speed into about 20 frames per second to get a certain speed with the movements of the people, which brings out a slightly ridiculous effect.

317 Sandro, *Diversions of Pleasure*, p. 50.

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359 Ibid.

360 See Altman, Rick, *The American Film Musical*, pp. 27, 61.

361 See Delamater, Jerome, "Busby Berkeley: An American Surrealist", *Wide Angle*, Vol.1.,No.1.(2nd Edition), 1974.

362 I have referred to this general idea also earlier in the introduction part of this study.

363 This assumption came into the film culture sometimes in mid-sixties according to Raymond Durgnat. (A statement made during the lecture at the University of Jyväskylä, 9.6.1987.)

364 Raymond Durgnat's lecture, University of Jyväskylä, 9.6.1987.

365 Ibid.

366 See about dimensions of sound in the cinema, for example in Bordwell & Thompson, *Film Art; An Introduction* (3rd ed.), pp. 247-273.

367 Raymond Durgnat's lecture, University of Jyväskylä, 9.6.1987.

368 Ibid.

369 Delamater, Jerome, "Busby Berkeley: An American Surrealist", *Wide Angle*, vol.1., n:o 1 (2nd ed.), 1974, pp. 24-25.

370 Ibid.

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372 Baxter, John, *Hollywood in the Thirties*, A.S. Barnes & co, New York, 1968, pp. 50-51.

373 See Schatz, Thomas, *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1988, p. 136.

374 Ibid., p. 148.

375 Ibid., p. 149

376 See also Freedland, Michael, *The Warner Brothers*, Harrap, London, 1985, pp. 67-70.

377 A notion made by Raymond Durgnat, during his lecture at the University of Jyväskylä, 10.6.1987.

378 See Delamater, Jerome, "Busby Berkeley: An American Surrealist", *Wide Angle*, vol.1., n:o 1., (2nd ed.), 1974, p. 25.

379 Ibid., p. 26.

380 Mellencamp, Patricia, "The Sexual Economics of Gold Diggers of 1933", *Close Viewings: An Anthology of New Film Criticism*, Peter Lehman (Ed.), The Florida State University, Tallahassee, 1990, p. 182.

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382 Raymond Durgnat's lecture, University of Jyväskylä, 10.6.1987.

383 Ibid.

384 A notion made by Raymond Durgnat during his lecturing at the University of Jyväskylä, 10.6.1987.

385 Ibid.

386 Ibid.

387 Durgnat, Raymond, University of Jyväskylä, 11.6.1987.

388 Ibid.

389 This is a point reflected for example in Nathan Leites and Martha Wolfenstein's book *Movies: A Psychological Study*, 1950.

390 A notion made by Raymond Durgnat during his lecturing at the University of Jyväskylä, 10.6.1987.

391 A special kind of shot, taken directly from above of the performers.

392 A notion made by Raymond Durgnat during his lecture at the University of Jyväskylä, 11.6.1987.

393 Ibid.

394 Arnheim, Rudolf, *Visual Thinking*, p. 27.

395 A notion used by Jerome Delamater in his article "Busby Berkeley; An American Surrealist", *Wide Angle*, Vol. 1., n:o 1 (2nd ed.), 1974, p. 27.

396 See Altman, Rick, *The American Film Musical*, p. 71.

397 Raymond Durgnat's lecture at the University of Jyväskylä, 11.6.1987.

398 For example in *Wonder Bar*.

399 A notion emphasized by Jerome Delamater.

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401 A notion made by Raymond Durgnat during his lecture at the University of Jyväskylä, 11.6.1987.

402 Ibid.

403 Ibid.

404 See Bordwell, David, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*, p. 3.

405 Carney, Raymond, *Speaking the Language of Desire: The Films of Carl Dreyer*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, p. 56.

406 Ibid., pp. 57-58.

407 Ibid., p. 63.

408 Schrader, Paul, *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer*, Da Capo Press, Inc., New York, 1988, p. 117.

409 Arnheim, Rudolf, *Visual Thinking*, p. 140.

410 Ibid.

411 A lecture held at the University of Jyväskylä by Raymond Durgnat, 12.6. 1987.

412 See about auteur-theory for example in Peter Wollens, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, pp. 74-115.

413 Fischer, Lucy, "The Image of Women as Image: The Optical Politics of Dames", *Film Quarterly*, Fall 1976, p. 9.

414 Ibid. p. 10.

415 Ibid. p. 5.

416 A notion made by Raymond Durgnat during his lecture at the University of Jyväskylä, 10.6. 1990.

417 See for example Danny Peary writing about *42nd Street* in his book *Cult Movies*, pp. 102-106.

418 Bordwell, David, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*, pp. 249-250.

419 A notion made by Raymond Durgnat during his lecture at the University of Jyväskylä, 10.6. 1990.

420 Bordwell, David, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*, p. 250.

421 Durgnat, Raymond, "Theory of Theory - and Buñuel The Joker", *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 44, n:o 1, Fall 1990, p. 35.

422 These remarks are related to Raymond Durgnat's article "The Long March of Stephen Dwoskin", *Studio International*, Summer 1983.

423 Ibid.

424 Ibid. See, Durgnat, Raymond, "A Skeleton Key For Stephen Dwoskin: Outline For A Text Not Written", *Monthly Film Bulletin*, November, 1982.

425 Ibid.

426 Ibid.

427 Durgnat, Raymond, "Elegance versus vehemence", *Sight and Sound*, January 1992, p. 24.

428 Ibid.

429 "Canto III", in *A TV DANTE*, directed by Tom Phillips and Peter Greenaway based on Dante's trilogy *The Divine Comedy* (La Divida Commedia), Channel Four Television 1989.

430 See Durgnat, "The Fantastic Voyage", *Symposium Humanities, A Journal for the Humanities as Community Resource*, Florida Atlantic University 1972, pp. 33-75.

431 See Thompson, Kristin, *Breaking the Glass Armor: Neoformalist Film Analysis*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey 1988, p. 7.

432 Ibid., p. 8.

433 Ibid., p. 11.

434 *Prospero's Books*, a film of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* by Peter Greenaway, screenplay published by Chatto & Windus, London 1991, pp. 150-151.

435 See for example Hollander, Anne, *Moving Pictures*, pp. 13-25.

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437 For example, David Bordwell states: "Significantly, most of the basic concepts for understanding the resources of the film medium have not issued from contemporary interpretive projects. Arnheim, Kuleshov, Eisenstein, Bazin, Burch, and others defined the parameters of film style and structure with which all the critics still work. Perhaps most interpreters believe that form and style are now well understood. This is a useful fiction to keep 'readings' rolling along. Film interpretation charges its debts to the account of classical aesthetics, but it pays very little back. In sum, contemporary interpretation-centered criticism tends to be conservative and coarse-grained. It tends to play down film form and style. It leans to an unacknowledged degree upon received aesthetic categories without producing new ones." Bordwell, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*, p. 261.

438 Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Philosophical Investigations*, (G.E.M. Anscombe ed.), Oxford 1953, p. 196.

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# YHTEENVETO

Tutkimuksessa käsitellään elokuvan muotoon ja merkityksiin liittyvien kognitiivisten, tyylillisten ja semanttisten elementtien muotoutumista. Elokuva ja sen kokeminen ymmärretään ilmiönä, jonka merkitykset pohjautuvat havainnolliseen, emotionaaliseen ja intellektuaaliseen aktiviteettiin.

Tutkimuksen mukaan elokuvan maailma voidaan käsittää mikrokosmoksena, jolla on oma järjestyksensä ja logiikkansa, maailmana, jonka katsomisprosessiin liittyvät erilaiset assosiaatiot ja konnotaatiot. Tutkimuksessa puhutaan elokuvallisesta semantiikasta, millä ymmärretään elokuvallisten merkitysten tutkimista keskittymällä erityisesti liikkuvien kuvien, kuvien peräkkäisyyden, montaasiyhdistelmien ja kameraefektien merkitysten tutkimiseen.

Tutkimuksen mukaan elokuvan otos on enemmän deskriptiivinen kuin narratiivinen yksikkö, sillä elokuvan narratiiviset rakenteet nähdään tutkimuksessa elokuvan deskriptiivisten rakenteiden alalajina. Elokuva on performanssin omainen taidemuoto kuten esim. teatteri, mutta elokuva on myös piktoriaalista, kuvallista taidetta ja piktoriaaliset merkit ovat ikonisia yhdessä ja satunnaisia toisessa suhteessa. Elokuvan kuva on konkreettinen itsessään, mutta abstrakti suhteessa kaikkeen muuhun. Kuva voi toimia myös symbolina esittäessään asioita, jotka liikkuvat abstraktion korkeammalla tasolla.

Elokuvassa montaasi on ajattelua kuvien kautta, sillä elokuva on ainoa taidemuoto, jossa kuvat ovat peräkkäin samassa tilassa. Vaikka elokuva on montaasia kuvien välillä, on elokuvan kuva erilaisten elementtien kompilaatio. Elokuvan kompleksisuus ei pohjaudu siihen, että kuvien välinen leikkaus korvaisi kuvan sisäistä leikkausta, vaan siihen, että ollaan tekemisissä molempien asioiden kanssa yhtä aikaa. Elokuvassa kontrolloidaan katsojan silmien liikkeitä, ja mikä vielä tärkeämpää,

katsojan ajatuksia suhteessa yhteen kuvaan, joka sitten vastakkaistuu toisen kuvan kanssa. Elokuva on myös liikkeen taidetta, joten kyseessä ei ole pelkästään montaasi kuvien välillä tai niiden sisällä, vaan myös visio siitä, miten liike suhteutuu katseen linjoihin, miten se muuntaa ja ohjaa niitä. Elokuvan katsoja ei näe elokuvan kompositiota abstraktina graafisena struktuurina, sillä kompositio on ryhmitetty katsojan kiinnostuksen kohteiden mukaan. Usein kiinnostuksen kohde on toiminnan edellä, koska katsoja haluaa nähdä mitä tulee tapahtumaan. Kun katsojan katse liikkuu kohtauksen (ja kuvan) yllä, niin se kattaa monenlaisia kiinnostuksen kohteita, muuntaa jännitteitä yhdestä asiasta toiseen. Siksi voidaan puhua jännitteiden kohteista katseen sisällä.

Elokuvalle on ominaista selektiivisyys, valintojen kautta muotoutuvat näkökulmat. Lyhinkin dokumenttielokuva sisältää paljon valintoja, organisointia, fiktion näkökulmaa. Elokuvallisen strategian muotoutumiseen liittyy ajatus, jonka mukaisesti elokuvan rakenne kätkee sisäänsä vähitellen paljastuvia asioita. Elokuvan otokset laajentuvat korostusten sarjaksi kameran selektiivisen ja manipulatiivisen roolin kautta. Siksi elokuvaa ei voida ymmärtää pelkästään todellisuuden taltioijana, koska heti kun kohtaus on leikattu otoksiksi, ei työskennellä enää todellisuuden tallentamisen kautta, vaan viitataan erilaisten visioiden lävitse tuohon todellisuuteen.

Elokuvallinen syntaksi on itsessään luova voima, koska sen kautta mahdollistuu elokuvallisten visioiden luonti. Orkestraation käsite on tärkeä tekijä tässä prosessissa. Orkestraation tehtävänä on sitoa yhteen elokuvan eri elementit suhteessa elokuvalliseen jatkuvuuteen. Orkestraation kautta mahdollistuu elokuvan perusikonografia, elokuvan tapa puhutella katsojaansa. Orkestraatioon liittyvät elokuvalliset sysäykset, merkityksellisten liikkeiden ohjailu läpi elokuvan rakenteen. Sen kautta mahdollistuu elokuvan graafisen jännitteen kontrollointi. Orkestraatio on ylärakenne, joka viittaa elokuvan elementteihin ja elokuvan kvaliteettiin.

Havaintopsykologisen käsityksen mukaisesti ärsykkeiden merkitykset muotoutuvat kahdenlaisten tekstien välille. Toinen niistä liittyy objektiin itseensä ja toinen katsonnalliseen mieleen, joka yhdistää ja assosioi merkityksiä tekstin signifikaattien kanssa. Elokuvan visuaalisen havainnoinnin merkitykset rakentuvat mielessä. Elokuvan visuaalisia systeemejä on analysoitu yllättävän vähän. Voidaksemme ymmärtää miten elokuvan visuaaliset tasot ja kvaliteetit toimivat, tarvitsemme aiemmista literaalisista lähestymistavoista poikkeavia teoreettisia ja kriittisiä lähtökohtia.

Tutkimuksen mukaan elokuvan visuaalisten tasojen havainnointi on tutkivaa ja tunnustelevaa luonteeltaan. Katsojan fenomenologinen kiinnostus muuntuu yksityiskohtien kautta, detaljeista kokonaisuuksien hahmotuksiin ja takaisin. Muutokset tässä suhteessa liittyvät siihen, miten saatu informaatio suhteutetaan kokonaisuuteen ja elokuvan katsojalleen ilmoittamaan tilaan. Elokuvan visuaalisten tasojen havainnoinnissa

huomioiden suunnat ja keskukset muuntuvat. Visuaalinen tietoisuus ei ole tässä mielessä yksioikoista, vaan välitöntä muuntumaa yhdestä huomiopisteestä toiseen, samalla kun näiden huomiopisteiden välinen tila on visuaalisella tasolla hetkellisesti häviävää luonteeltaan. Tämä vastaa leikkauksen kautta syntyvää tilan muuntumisen ideaa elokuvassa.

Tutkimuksessa hahmotetaan elokuvallisia rakenteita erilaisten analyysiesimerkkien kautta.

Fritz Langin elokuva *M - kaupunki etsii murhaajaa* (1931) on esimerkki elokuvallisesta rakenteesta, jossa yhdistyvät monet erilaiset tendenssit, dynaaminen tarina-ajattelu, montaasi-ideat, ja piktoriaalinen, arkkitehtooninen kuva-ajattelu.

Luis Buñuelin ja Salvador Dalin surrealistinen klassikko *Andalusialainen koira* (1928) edustaa näkökulmaa, jossa on kyse elokuvasta visuaalisena, mentaalisena prosessina. Unikuvaston keskeisyys on tunnusomaista tälle elokuvalle, joka liikkuu vastakkaisuuksien ja ironian kautta kohden henkilökohtaisia ja sosiaalisia merkityksiä. Visuaaliset tekstuurit muodostavat elokuvan sensitiivisyyden, minkä kautta Buñuel ja Dali kykenevät yhdistämään monia elokuvallisia traditioita uutta luovaan synteesiin. *Andalusialaisen koiran* kinematograafisuus tapahtuu ajallisten ja tilallisten variaatioiden kautta. Buñuel ja Dali hyödyntävät tietoista irrationaalisuutta saavuttaakseen hienotasoisempia ja syvempiä merkityksiä visioillaan.

Maya Derenin elokuva *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) edustaa amerikkalaista avantgardismia. Sen muoto on spiraalimainen pohjautuen ideoiden variaatioille ja toistolle. Elokuvan päähenkilö suorittaa sisäisen etsinnän kommunikoiden erilaisten objektien kanssa. Derenin visioissa kyse on synekdokisesta esittämisestä, tasoista, joilla laajennetaan kuvaston visuaalista tonaliteettia. Derenin elokuva on esimerkki elokuvallisen rakenteen modernistisesta fragmentaatiosta, identiteetin ja subjektiivisuuden pluralisoitumisesta ja yhdenlaisen tietoisuuden tason kieltämisestä.

Busby Berkeleyn eri elokuviin visioimat "tuotantonumerot" edustavat tyylillistä ajattelua, jossa on kyse näihin jaksoihin ja niitä ympäröiviin elokuviin liittyvistä relevanssin ja struktuurin suhteista. Berkeleyn populaari avantgardismi luottaa formalismin, kineettisen nopeuden ja liikkeen sarjallisen segmentaation kautta avautuvaan kubistisia ja futuristisia sävyjä hahmottavaan virtuoositeettiin. Formaalisen originaalisuutensa vuoksi Berkeleyn luomat sekvenssit vaativat auteuristista tulkintaa, sillä Berkeley operoi enemmän elliptisten kuin temaattisten rakenteiden kautta.

Bruce Baillien *Castro Street* (1966) on ennen kaikkea hyperbolisten päällekkäiskuvien elokuva, joka luo tiheän tekstuurimaisen muodon ympärilleen. Baillien visuaalisessa kuvastossa on sisäistä vaihtuvuutta, rytmistä koreografiaa, kineettistä montaasia ja liikkeen suunnallista vastakkaisuutta. Baillien luomassa orkestraatiossa jokaisesta kuvasta tulee piktoriaalinen johtolanka suhteessa toisiin kuviin ja värienkäytön tonali-

teetissa on montaasinomaista kompleksisuutta.

Tutkimuksen mukaan merkitysten muotoutuminen elokuvallisten rakenteiden kautta on psykologinen ja kognitiivinen prosessi, jossa elokuvan katsoja on rakenteiden ja prosessien aktiivinen mobilisoija. Elokuvan tulkinta vahvistaa uskoa konnotaatioiden fleksibiliteettiin ja merkitysten substanssiin. Mentaalista sisältöä voidaan tulkita subjektiivisuuden kautta liukumalla assosiaatioiden ja vaistojen maailmaan. Tyylillinen yhtenäisyys on mahdollista saavuttaa muuntamalla idea symboliksi ja antamalla tilaa abstraktioille. Elokuvien tulkinnassa havaintoon ja tunnistamiseen liittyvä prosessointi on kuin muistojen kuvanauha elokuvan kuvien takana muodostamassa kommunikatiivista kaksoisvalotusta. Elokuvalliset rakenteet muotoutuvat ideoista, uusista kombinaatioista, toistoista, transformaatioista ja metamorfooseista, joiden kautta elokuvan kuvien piktoriaaliset merkit saavat ikonisia ja symbolisia merkityksiä osakseen.

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# TERMINOLOGY

## A

**absolute film** An abstract film that is nonrepresentational, using form and design to produce its effect and often describable as visual music.

**abstract film** A film that uses mass, line, and color to create shifting and changing patterns. Also, loosely, any nonrepresentational film. Abstraction emphasizes form over content. In an abstract film which employs recognizable objects, the images are used not to suggest their usual meanings but for effects which are created by the film's editing, visual techniques, sound qualities, and rhythmic design, i.e., form. Many contemporary animated films where colors and shapes are the principal interest of the artist can alsobe described as abstract in quality.

**accelerated montage** A sequence edited into progressively shorter shots to create a mood of tension and excitement.

**actual sound** A sound whose source is an object or a person in the scene.

**adaptation** The movement to the screen of a story, novel, play, or other work suitable, treated so as to be realizable through the motion picture medium.

**aerial shot** A shot taken from a crane, plane or helicopter.

**affective theory** Theory that deals with the effect of a work of art rather than its creation.

**alienation effect** Essential to Brecht's theory of theater; keeps both audience and actors intellectually separate from the action of the drama. It provides intellectual distance.

**ambiguous time** Time on the screen that is either inadvertently or intentionally unclear. Dissolves, fades, and other transitional devices are not precise in their indication of the extent of the passage of time. Often used in montage sequences to create mood and atmosphere.

**angle** The positioning of a motion-picture camera so as to view a given scene. A camera may be placed straight on to a scene; or it may be placed at a side angle, high angle or low angle. Many of the early cinematographers failed to recognize the aesthetic values of camera angles. The tendency was to place the camera in a single straight-on, wide angle view of a scene. This was particularly true for filming of action on sets. Early sets tended to be theatrical and flat and, therefore, were limited in the dimensionality that would have allowed angle shooting. To "angle" the camera in the early years of filmmaking meant to risk overshooting the flat theatrical settings. The angle of a shot is regarded to have both compositional and psychological values. It also aids in diminishing the "flatness" or two-dimensionality of a scene by placing scenic elements into an oblique relationship to one another. By so doing, the angle provides a varied perspective of the scene.

**angle of view** The angle subtended by the lens.

**animation** Methods by which inanimate objects are made to move on the screen, giving the appearance of life. Pixilation is the term used to describe the frame-by-frame animation of objects and human beings as distinguished from the animation of hand-drawn images.

**anticlimax** A concluding moment in a motion picture's dramatic development which fails to satisfy audience expectations. In mystery and detective films an anticlimax may be an intentional plotting device to place the viewer off guard.

**archetype** A literary term, inspired by psychologist Carl Jung, which refers to that element in film, drama, myth, literature, or religion which evokes in the viewer or reader a strong sense of primitive experience. Any image or arrangement of images which activates such primordial responses to literary and dramatic subject matter is referred to as the archetype. Archetypal criticism is the study of those patterns and images in mythic, literary, and dramatic expression which, through repetition, can be recognized as elements which produce an awareness of the common, universal conditions of human existence. John Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939), for example, can be studied for its archetypal structure as a mythic journey through "the heart of darkness" to light, with the experience bringing to the vehicle's occupants spiritual cleansing and new knowledge of the conditions for survival through human interaction. The mythic, revealing journey as a dramatic framework is as old as storytelling itself, and its use by Ford in *Stagecoach* or Francis Ford Coppola in *Apocalypse. Now* (1979) becomes archetypal.

**art** Originally the word was used to refer to any kind of skill, but gradually took on more specific meanings having to do with aesthetic activity. It now refers generally to those endeavors that are not strictly useful, including the practical arts of design, environ mental arts such as architecture, pictorial arts (painting, sculpture, drawing), dramatic arts, narrative arts, and musical arts.

**art film** In the mid-fifties a distinction grew between the art film - often of foreign origin - with distinct aesthetic pretentions, and the commercial film of the Hollywood tradition. Now the dichotomy has largely died out.

**attraction** Eisenstein's theory of film analyzes the image as a series or collection of attractions, each in dialectical relationship with the others. Attractions were thus basic elements of film form, and the theory of attractions was a precursor to modern semiotic theory.

**auteur theory** A theory that says there is a person primarily responsible for the entire style and treatment of the content of the film. Generally used in reference to a director with a recognizable style and thematic preoccupation. The theory also covers other production personnel (writers, performers, cinematographers, editors) who are seen as the major force behind a given film. More particularly, film auteurs function within the boundaries of studio production systems and are distinguishable from film artists, who have nearly total control over all aspects of production. The auteur theory was first discussed by Francois Truffaut in an article, "Une certaine tendance du cinéma francais," written in 1954 for the French film magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Andrew Sarris, an American critic for *The Village Voice*, is given credit for bringing Truffaut's ideas on auteur criticism to the United States.

**avant-garde** A movement toward innovation in the arts in the 1920s, encompassing such approaches as cubism, surrealism and dadaism, and including experimentation in filmmaking. Avant-garde is often applied in contemporary criticism to any film which employs new, original techniques and experimental approaches in expressing ideas on film. The first avant-garde filmmakers produced two general types of films: those which employed techniques commonly associated with the *Dada* and *surrealist* movements in literature and art, and those which were non-narrative and *abstract* in quality. The impetus behind the first film avant-garde movement grew out of a revolt against cinema realism. The filmmakers embraced surrealism because of its "belief in the higher reality of certain hitherto neglected forms of association, in the omnipotence of the dream, in the disinterested play of thought," as stated by surrealism's spokesman, André Breton. The surrealist movement also provided film-

makers with opportunities for the parody of painting, sex, psychology, contemporary politics, and the motion picture itself. The surrealists seized upon and photographed a variety of material phenomena and arranged these "word pictures" in disparate, illogical ways to effect subjective, dreamlike meanings. They did not want their images to have a mimetic life, but a spiritual life - to become images sprung free from material existence. Man Ray's films *Emak Bakia* (1927) and *L'Etoile de Mer* (1928) and Luis Buñuel's and Salvador Dali's *Un Chien Andalou* (1928) are representative of these surrealist impulses. Surrealism by no means dominated the film avant-garde, either in practice or in theory. Within the movement there was a group of filmmakers who were advocates of *cinéma pur*, "pure cinema": artists who wanted to return the medium to its elemental origins.

One of them was René Clair, who wrote in 1927: "Let us return to the birth of cinema: 'The cinematograph', says the dictionary, 'is a machine designed to project animated pictures on a screen.' The Art that comes from such an instrument must be an art of vision and movement. The cinema purists - Clair, Viking Eggeling, Fernand Léger, Hans Richter, among others - were interested in the rhythm, movement and cadence of objects and images within a film - the building of an internal energy through which vision and movement would become both the form and the meaning of the film. The film titles of the cinema purists suggest the musical-like emphasis on animated pictures: *Rhytmus 21, Le Ballet Mécanique, Symphony Diagonale, The March of the Machines, Berlin: The Symphony of a City*. The pure-cinema interests were not limited to rhytmical abstractions alone, but also manifested themselves in the fiction film: in Jean Renoir's adaptation from 1926 of Emile Zola's *Nana*, a film where the original plot is incidental and Renoir abstractly treats Zola's story; in Carl Th. Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928), where the ordered use of extreme close-ups produces a spiritual response to the face; and in Jean Cocteau's *Blood of a Poet* (1930), a film made up almost entirely of visual transformations which take place in the mind of the poet.

## B

**background music** Nonindigenous music that accompanies a film, usually on the sound track. The amount of background music varies according to the filmmaker's intentions, often appearing in screen melodramas, for example, and less noticeably in the works of realist directors.

**backlighting** The main source of light is behind the subject, silhouetting it, and directed toward the camera.

**balance** "Compositional balance" refers to the harmonious arrangement of elements in an artistic frame. Balance in a motion-picture frame depends on a variety of visual elements: placement of objects and figures, light, color, line, and movement. The aesthetic purpose of frame balance or imbalance is to direct attention and to evoke psychological responses from images appropriate to the dramatic tone of the film story.

**blocking** The arrangement of characters and objects within a film frame. Blocking is a significant element in photographic *composition* and dramatic expression. Blocking may be used to project a sense of depth into the screen. The blocking of an object or character at the edge of the frame in the immediate foreground and the placement of additional characters or objects in midground and background create a sense of compositional depth within the film frame. In most instances of character blocking, where objective *points of view* are desired, the characters do not openly acknowledge the presence of the camera and are blocked in ways to make the viewer less aware that the camera has recorded the action. When shots are angled slightly, even in *close-ups,* the camera's presence is less noticeable because characters do not appear to be looking directly into the lens. For both aesthetic and objective recording purposes, actions are blocked so that close-up shots of actors are usually taken in three-quarter profile. When a character does actually look directly into the camera lens, as if to "present" himself or herself or to "address" the camera, a form of *presentational blocking* occurs. While neither objective nor subjective photography as such, presentational blocking brings the character and the viewer into a dynamic relationship.

**bridging shot** A shot used to cover a jump in time or place or other discontinuity.

## C

**caesura** Principally a literary term denoting a rhythmical pause and break in a line of verse. The caesura is used in poetry to diversify rhythmical progress, and thereby enrich accentual verse. The term first gained significance in motion-picture art because of the editing experiments of Sergei Eisenstein. In applying his concept of *montage* as the "collision of shots," Eisenstein often included caesuras - rhythmical breaks - in his films.

**camera angle** The physical relationship between camera and subject. If the camera is low, tilted up toward the subject, the result is a low-angle shot. If the camera is high, tilted down toward the subject, the result is a

high-angle shot. If the camera is tilted neither up nor down, the result is a normal-angle shot. If the camera is not tilted but is placed at the eye-level of a person standing or seated, the angle is called an eye-level shot. If the camera is tilted off its horizontal and vertical axes, the result is a tilt angle or dutch-tilt angle.

**camera movement** Any motion of a camera during a shot, such as panning, tilting, dollying, craning, rolling, or wobbling. Camera movement, in addition to following action and changing image composition, can be used to suggest a *subjective* point of view by having the moving camera assume character eye or body movements, as in Robert Montgomery's *The Lady in the Lake* (1946), or in Delmer Daves' *Dark Passage* (1947).

**characters** The fictional people within a narrative film, not to be confused with the actors who play them.

**chiaroscuro** The technique of using light and shade in pictorial representation, or the arrangement of light and dark elements.

**cinematic** A critical term expressing an awareness of that which is peculiar and unique to the film medium. "Cinematic" generally encompasses the full range of techniques available in cinema. When applied to a specific film, the term is used to indicate that the filmmaker has employed the editing and visual devices, themes, or structural approaches which are especially appropriate to the medium. "Cinematic" can also be defined historically by examining the innovations of early film artists who sought to break the new medium away from the artistic traditions of the legimate theater. These innovations - peculiar to the film medium - included the use of camera angles, realistic décor in dramatic setting, mobile camera, naturalistic acting, optical techniques (dissolves, fades, superimpositions, irises), and especially the advantages of cinema editing which allowed (1) variety in the scope of shots, (2) rhythmical control of dramatic action, and (3) the ability to move freely in time and space through editing. "Cinematic" has also been used to describe certain kinds of story material which seem especially suited to the film medium. The chase, for example, is regarded as a narrative element which is peculiarly cinematic. The term has also been used in literary criticism to describe fictional methods which suggest certain affinities with the cinema. Likenesses have been drawn between film techniques and the fictional methods of such writers as James Joyce, Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, John Dos Passos, William Faulkner, Gustave Flaubert, and many others. Primarily the cinematic analogy has been used because of these authors' temporal (time) arrangement of their material.

**cinematic time and space** A term which indicates the relationship of time and space in cinema. In a theatrical experience space remains static and constant. On the other hand, space in the cinema can be altered because the camera serves as a selective intermediary in the screen experience. Individual shots within a film are capable of breaking up the rigid space-time continuum of the real-world experience. Cinematic space is intimately woven with the unique temporal (time) possibilities of the cinema.

**cine-structuralism** The application of semiotics to cinema in an essentially sociological or ethnographic way.

**close-up** A shot in which the image of the subject or its most important part fills most of the frame. A close-up shot of a person usually includes the head and part of the shoulders. The close-up has been recognized as a device for (1) directing audience attention, (2) establishing identification with and immediacy for screen characters, (3) isolating detail in a scene, (4) creating visual variety in film scenes, and (5) providing dramatic emphasis. Emotions, feelings, and nuances can be suggested by the close-up merely magnifying and isolating an individual in an intensely dramatic moment. Similarly, the close-up view of an object - e.g., a hand or a gun - bestows and conveys dramatic significance which might be lost in longer scenic shots. The duration or length of time that a close-up remains on the screen also has importance as dramatic material. By sustaining close-up shots of a character's face, it is possible for the filmmaker to suggest thoughts and feelings. The French critic André Bazin observed that if an object or person is left on the screen long enough it will begin to lay bare its own reality. This unique perceptual possibility that exists through the close-up is a source of expressive power for the filmmaker as in Carl Th. Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928).

**code** the rules or forms that can be observed to allow a message to be understood, to signify. Codes are the rules operating on the means of expression (and, thus, are distinct from the means of expression). For example, Christian Metz treated cinema and cinematic text as fields of signification in which a heterogeneity of codes, some specific to the cinema and others not, interacted with one another in ways that were specific, systematic and determinate at certain specified levels of cinematic discourse (individual films, particular genres) and hence at certain specified levels of analysis. Among specifically cinematic codes he distinguished codes of editing and framing, of lighting, of colour versus black and white, of the articulation of sound and movement, of composition, and so on. Non-cinematic codes included costume, gesture, dialogue, characterisation and facial expression. A further distinction was made between cinematic codes and cinematic sub-codes, where the former

organise elements potentially or actually common to all films, say lighting, and the latter refer to specific choices made within a particular code, say, that of low-key in preference to high-key lighting. Codes, therefore, do not conflict, whereas sub-codes do, it being a matter of one choice rather than another. Different codes and their sub-codes are in syntagmatic relation of combination; sub-codes from the same code are in a paradigmatic relation of substitution. For example, Umberto Eco contended that, far from inhabiting a domain below the level of codic organisation, images owe their very existence to the workings of cultural codes, of which no fewer than ten are potentially operative in the communication of the image: codes of perception, codes of transmission, codes of recognition, tonal codes, iconic codes, iconographic codes, codes of taste and sensibility, rhetorical codes, stylistic codes and codes of the unconscious.

**composition** The distribution, balance, and general relationship of masses and degrees of light and shade, line and color within a picture area. The impact of these elements in a film shot depends upon certain psychological and learned facets of visual perception. Lighter objects attract the eye more readily than darker objects; therefore, light can be used as a means of achieving compositional emphasis. Mass, volume, and movement also have importance for emphasis in frame composition. A single figure separated from a crowd will usually stand out as significant. Similarly, a moving actor will draw attention away from static figures. Because of the kinetic nature of the cinema, composition is rarely static, and, hence, emphasis and psychological impact through composition are constantly in a state of flux. A straight-on view of a scene in which actors and objects have been harmoniously arranged so as to fill with equal "weight" all areas of the screen frame is said to be *formally balanced*. In a deathbed scene, formal composition can be achieved by photographing the scene from a straight-on view taken at the foot of the bed. The placement of a nurse on onse side of the bed and a doctor on the other side adds further formality to the scene which would have been lost if both the nurse and the doctor had been placed ("weighted") on the same side of the bed, or if a sharp side angle had been chosen for the camera's positioning. The "balanced" arrangement of characters and objects and the straight-on photography causes the scene to appear "at rest." Whereas formal composition connotes harmony and an at-rest feeling in a scene, a slanted, or *Dutch angle*, shot produces a sense of unrest.

**connotation** The suggestive or associative sense of an expression (word, image, sign) that extends beyond its strict literal definition.

**contextual criticism** A form of criticism that sees film in relation to the context in which it was created and in which it is shown.

**continuity** The appearance in a fiction film of an autonomous, temporal flow of events. Standard Hollywood editing practices to hide the fact that film scenes are built up out of shots which are normally filmed out of sequence. In a more specific meaning "continuity" refers to the matching of individual scenic elements from shot to shot so that details and actions, filmed at different times, will edit together without error. This process is called *continuity editing.*

**contrast** Used to refer to both the quality of the lighting of a scene and a characteristic of the filmstock. High-contrast lighting shows a stark difference between blacks and whites; low-contrast (or soft-contrast) lighting mainly emphasizes the midrange of grays.

**convention** A recurrent unit of activity, dialogue or cinematic technique that is used in films and is familiar to audiences, for example, the shoot out in a western, the editing of a chase scene etc. Voice-over narration was a convention common in film-noir-style detective films of the 1940s. In a more general sense, the liberal use of music to underscore the actions of screen melodramas is a longstanding convention. Each film type, ranging from minimal cinema to the epic feature film, has its own set of established conventions.

**criticism** The interpretation and evaluation of film; the study and elucidation of film form and content. Many approaches to film criticism can be taken. Films may be grouped for study according to director (as in auteur criticism), by genre (the western, gangster, melodrama etc.), by studio (Warner Brothers, MGM, Paramount etc.), by subject matter (social themes), by technical evaluation (quality of cinematography), by time period (the studio years), or by nationality (French, Italian, Japanese etc.), and lend themselves to new and differing insights in each instance. Films may also be analyzed for their cultural significance, how they serve as a mirror of or commentary upon a given society. This kind of critical approach is called structuralism, a method of evaluating what films reveal about broad cultural patterns of human behavior. Subjective film criticism judges films by their aesthetic and emotional qualities. In all cases criticism strives to enrich and deepen the film experience by increasing understanding of what happens in cinema and how its effects are brought across in a cinematic way.

**cross-cut** A cut from one line of action to another. It may be used for the purpose of presenting simultaneously occurring events, or for thematic construction. Alain Resnais' antiwar film *Night and Fog* (1955)

achieves its impact in part by presenting newsreel footage of concentration camps crosscut with travelogueliike footage of the deserted camps as they appeared ten years after the war

**cubism** An art movement, beginning about 1910, in which people and objects were broken down into their geometric components.

**cut** 1) The instantaneous change from one shot to another. 2) A command used to stop operation of the camera, action, and sound recording equipment. 3) To sever or splice film in the editing process. Also to eliminate a shot, sequence, or some sound from a film. Loosely, to edit a film. A cut has both utilitarian and aesthetic value in film editing. By cutting on action in a scene it is possible to employ a variety of different types of shots (long shots, medium shots, close-ups) without disrupting the action. Most films are made up of standard cuts of this type. The use of cuts as transitions, rather than the use of dissolves, fades and wipes, can affect the pace of the film. The cut transition is the most direct and immediate editing device for introducing new screen information.

## D

**dada** A literary/art movement founded in Zurich, Switzerland in 1916. The descriptive term "Dada" had no logical meaning; the expressed aim of the school was to negate tha traditional relationship between calculation and creativity in the arts by approaching expression in a more playful, aleatory manner. The Dadaists borrowed from other movements of the time such as cubism, paper collage, and the displaying of industrially made objects ("ready-mades") as works of art. The school was significant because of its influence on progressive artists throughout the world, and it was a stepping-stone to Surrealism, which developed in the avant-garde of the 1920s. Like Surrealism, it promoted incongruity, illogic, and shock. The connection between Dada and Constructivism was very close in Zürich and Berlin. While participating in the "great negative work of destruction", many Dadaists sought, at the same time, for an elementary art that could serve as a building block for a new culture. Hans Richter's and Viking Eggeling's kinetic experiments attempted to produce nothing less than a universal, elemental pictorial language, a grammar and syntax of contrasting relationships between geometric forms. Their endeavor was thus closely related to Moholy-Nagy's and Klee's investigations of form at the Bauhaus. Marcel Duchamp's experiments with optics and movement, which he began with his *Nude Descending a Staircase*, can also be considered as an extension of the static nature of painting. From 1920 to 1926, he collaborated with Man Ray on experiments that gave two-dimensional geometric designs on plates or disks

the illusion of three-dimensionality through rotary movement. Among these were *Rotary Glass Plates(Precision Optics)* (1920), *Rotary Demisphere (Precision Optics)* (1925), and experiments in stereoscopic cinema. Duchamp's film *Anémic cinéma*, which he produced with the help of Man Ray and Marc Allegret in 1926, can thus be seen as an exploration of visual and verbal multi-dimensionality. Duchamp's radical questioning of the certainty and stability of optical vision and language, which serve as the social, "scientific" guarantors of truth, is very central to Dada's critique of cultural myths of "fact" and "reality." Man Ray's first film, ironically titled *Retour à la raison* (1923), is not an extension of painting, but a kinetic extension of his photographic compositions. This film, five minutes long, was put together in one night for Tristan Tzara's Soirée du Coeur à barbe, the last Dada manifestation in Paris, where it was shown together with Richter's *Rhytmus 21*. It expresses trough its anarchic arrangement of sequences and strips of Rayographs Tzara's Dada spirit of spontaneity and chance, which were Dadaists' strategies to disrupt logic and rational order. Dada-related films have several characteristics in common: they disrupt the viewers' expectations of a conventional narrative, their belief in film as presenting reality, and their desire to identify with characters in the film. Dada films are radically non-narrative, non-psychological; they are highly self-referential by constantly pointing to the film apparatus as an illusion-producing machine.

**decor** The furnishing and decorations used in a motion picture action field, especially set furnishing and decorations.

**deep-focus** A technique favored by Realists, in which objects very near the camera as well as those far away are in focus at the same time. The director includes all essential action and important character relationships in the deep-focus frame. Deep-focus, long-take direction, such as that devised by Gregg Toland for Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941) was partly the inspiration of André Bazin's theories of mise-en-scène analysis.

**denotation** The strict literal definition of an expression (word, image, sign) as opposed to its connotation.

**depth of field** The range of distances from the camera at which the subject is acceptably sharp. A lens which provides great depth of field may have an object within few inches of the camera in sharp critical focus as well as objects or figures hundreds of feet away also in critical focus.

**detail shot** Usually more magnified than a close-up. A shot of a hand, eye, mouth, or a subject of similar detail.

**diachronic** In linquistic theory, a phenomenon is diachronic when it consists of or depends upon a change in its state, usually across time.

**dialectics** The system of thought that focuses on contradictions between opposing concepts; in the Marxian sense of the term, historical change occurs through the opposition of conflicting forces and ideas. A dialectical film is a film which, through its methodology, attempts to present ideas for the purposes of intellectual investigation. Sergei Eisenstein created a dialectical approach in his films through an editing process known as "montage of conflict" or "montage of collision." In his films Eisenstein employed a variety of differing types of shots which, edited together, created new meanings.

**dialogue** Lip-synchronous speech in film with the speaker usually, but not always, visible. It may also be presented voice-over.

**diegesis** The denotative material of film narrative, including, according to Metz, not only the narration itself, but also the fictional space and time dimensions implied by the narrative.

**director** The individual who interprets the script in terms of performances and cinematic technique, and who supervises all phases of the work involved in achieving a coherent, unified film presentation.

**disorientation cut** Two pieces of film edited together for their disorienting or dislocating effect on the viewer. The cut is made to confuse the viewer as to content, space, or time.

**dissolve** The superimposition of a fade out over a fade in.

**documentary** A nonfiction film. It uses images of life as its raw material and may be of many different types with many different purposes. The World Union of Documentary has defined the documentary film genre in this manner: By the documentary film is meant all methods of recording on celluloid any aspect of reality either by factual shooting or by sincere and justifiable construction (reenactment), so as to appeal either to reason or emotion for the purpose of stimulating the desire for, and widening of, human knowledge and understanding, and of thruthfully posing problems and their solutions in the spheres of economics, culture and human relations.

**dominant** The controlling code or attraction in an image or montage.

**dramatization** The acting out and the realization of that acting out in images on the screen of a fictional or factual event. Narration tells us what happened, dramatization shows it to us as it happens.

**dream mode** A term sometimes used to describe films or parts of films whose stories and techniques suggest the workings of the mind, resembling either dreams or situations which are derived from the imagination. Films operating in the dream mode are often labeled because of their lack of continuity and the illogical, unconnected manner in which images come and go on the screen. Important critics such as Hugo Munsterberg and Susanne Langer have used the concept of dream mode as a distinguishing characteristic of film medium. Langer maintains that films are like dreams, moving rapidly through space and constantly changing the images for the viewer as in dream.

## E

**editing** Similar term to cutting. The process of assembling, arranging, and trimming film, both picture and sound, to the best advantage for the purpose at hand.

**effects** Depending on context, either sound effects, optical effects, or special effects.

**epic** A film that stresses spectacle and large casts, often with a historical or biblical plot.

**establishing shot** Usually, a long shot that shows the location of the ensuing action, but may be a close-up or even a medium shot which has some sign or other clue that identifies the location.

**experimental film** An independent, noncommercial film that is the product of the personal vision of the filmmaker. Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) was a subjective self-study that mixes dream and reality in an ambiguous manner. Deren's work stimulated numerous filmmakers to create highly personal self-projections on celluloid, including Curtis Harrington's *Fragments of Seeking* (1946) and Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* (1947). The term *expanded cinema* was coined by critic Gene Youngblood in reference to multimedia experiments, often including live performance.

**expressionism** Fantasy and distortion in sets, editing, lighting, and costumes used as a means of expressing the inner feelings of both filmmaker and characters. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* ( 1919) and *Von*

*Morgens bis Mitternachts* (1920) are good examples of films which employ expressionistic devices. The mise-en-scène of *Dr. Caligari* underscores in a psychological rather than realistic manner the film's story, which occurs in the mind of an inmate in a mental hospital. The use of stylized settings, costumes and special effects also lend an expressionistic quality to Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971).

**extended image** Composition within the film frame that draws the viewer's eye and consciousness beyond the frame itself and suggests the completion of the image outside the camera field; for example, an image of half a face in the frame will provoke the viewer to complete the image mentally, and so to extend the face beyond what is shown in the actual image.

**extreme close-up** See **detail shot.**

**extreme long shot** A shot that shows considerable distance. Generally used only in reference to outdoor shots.

## F

**fade** An optical or a sound effect in which the screen or sound track gradually changes from black to an image or silence to sound (fade-in) or the reverse (fade-out).

**film** 1) A strip of flexible, transparent base material, usually cellulose triacetate, having various coatings such as photographic emulsions and iron oxide, and usually perforated. 2) To photograph a motion picture. 3) The cinema in general. 4) A movie, a motion picture.

**film artist** Generally, a filmmaker who has as much control over the idea, production, realization, and final form of a released film as it is possible, given the collaborative nature of the commercial medium. Unlike the film auteur, who faces many studio-determined obstacles in realizing his or her personal vision on the screen, the film artist often works independently and with hand-chosen collaborators.

**film criticism** The analysis and evaluation of films, usually in relation to theoretical principles including both aesthetics and philosophy.

**filmic space** A phrase not in wide use, which refers to the power of the film medium that makes possible the combination of shots of widely separated origins into a single framework of fictional space.

**film movement** The films and filmmakers who constitute a cinema (usually national) at a given period of historical time. Most often, social and political factors cause a film movement, bringing together artists who have common aesthetic and political goals and who recognize themselves as a group.

**film noir** Originally a French term, now in common usage, to indicate a film with a gritty, urban setting that deals mainly with dark or violent passions in a downbeat way. Especially common in American cinema during the late forties and early fifties.

**film speed** 1) The general term used to indicate a film emulsion's sensitivity to light; the higher (or faster) the film speed the better it is able to record an image with low illumination. 2) The rate of speed at which the film progresses through the camera and the projector, measured in frames per second or feet or meters per minute.

**film theory** General principles that explain the nature and capabilities of film. The ongoing discourse that attempts to uncover such principles.

**flashback** A shot or sequence (sometimes quite long) showing action that occurred before the film's present time.

**flash-forward** A shot or sequence that shows future action or action which will be seen later in the film.

**focal length** The distance from the lens to the film plane when the lens is focused at infinity. A lens with a long focal length is a telephoto, a short focal length, a wide angle.

**focus** 1) The sharpness or definition of the image. 2) To adjust the sharpness and clarity of the image by adjusting the lens or light source so as to create sharp or soft focus or to change focus.

**formalism** 1) Concern with form over content. 2) The theory that meaning exists primarily in the form or language of a discourse rather than in the content or subject. 3) The Russian movement of the twenties that developed these ideas. The practices and theoretical writings of Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Kuleshov in cinema and Vsevolod Meyerhold in theater were based on formalist concepts.

**forms, open and closed** Closed forms suggest that the limits of the frame are the limits of artistic reality, while open forms suggest that reality continues outside the frame.

**frame** 1) Any single image on the film. 2) The size and the shape of the image on the film, or on the screen when projected. 3) The compositional unit of film design.

**freeze frame** A freeze shot which is achieved by printing a single frame many times in succession to give the illusion of a still photograph when projected.

**futurism** An art movement around the time of World War I, emphasizing speed and dynamism in its forms as a response to modern life in the machine age. It began in Italy in the eraly 1900s. Futurist painter A. G. Bragaglia produced a film, *Perfido Incanto*, in 1906 which posed actors before futurist settings.

## G

**genre** A film type, such as western or science fiction film, which usually has conventional plot structure and characters; loosely a formula film.

**German Expressionism** A film movement in Germany from 1919 through the 1920s, peaking about 1925. Following earlier expressionist movements in fine arts and literature, filmmakers used decor, lighting, and cinematic technique to express interior states of being and feeling rather than to record an objective reality.

## H

**hand-held** A shot with a camera by a camera operator. Also, the somewhat wobbly image on the screen, which results from such shooting.

**high key** A type of lighting arrangement in which the key light is very bright.

## I

**icon** An object, landscape, or performer who accrues a symbolic as well as particular meaning and conveys that meaning through recurrent presence in a group or genre of films.

**image** Both an optical pattern and a mental experience. 1) A single specific picture. 2) Generally, the visuals of film or media as opposed to sound. 3) A visual trope. 4) By extension, often a nonvisual trope; hence,

we speak of aural, poetic, or musical "images". Cinematic images most often are in a constant state of kinetic motion unlike the image within a still photograph or painting, and come to the viewer through light reflection. These physical characteristics of motion and reflected light give the film image unusual powers of expression that are both artistically and psychologically effective.

**impressionism** A style of artistic expression in which the creator seeks to suggest emotions, scenic mood, and sensory impressions through a fleeting but vivid use of detail that is more subjective than objective in intent. Impressionism as a stylistic theory was first applied to the work of the nineteenth-century painters such as Degas, Monet, and Renoir. These artists were particularly interested in the visual effects of objects and light in a painting rather than in the realistic representation of a scene. The movement extended into literary circles and theater design and eventually had significant impact on French silent filmmakers, including Louis Delluc, Germaine Dulac, Jean Epstein, Abel Gance, Marcel L'Herbier, and Jean Renoir. In impressionism the director's eye is made obvious to the viewer as it explores real settings and locations for subjective effect. It is this latter fact, the creation of subjectivity from genuine settings, which separates impressionism from expressionism. Expressionism employs intentional artificiality and obvious distortion of the real world to project mood and a sense of inner experiences.

**intellectual montage** An assembly of shots through editing that results in conveying an abstract or intellectual concept. A group of people being menaced and beaten by mounted police next to a shot of cattle being slaughtered in an Eisenstein film provides an example, provoking an idea.

**intercutting** Insertion into a series of related shots of other shots for contrast or other effect.

**invisible editing** A cut made during the movement of a performer, achieved either by overlapping the action, or by using two cameras and then matching the action during editing. Such cuts make shifts of camera position less noticeable. Conventional Hollywood narrative structure. Invisible editing can play an important role in a director's realization of film style. The naturalistic quality, for example, of G.W.Pabst's *The Love of Jeanne Ney* (1927) is sustained by skillful, matched cutting for dramatic emphasis. Editing for a change of angle or to present a longer or closer view of a scene is performed only on a character's movement. Pabst is able to place emphasis exactly where it is desired without disrupting viewer concentration, and, thus, retains the film's naturalistic style.

**iris** A circular masking device, so called because of its resemblance to the iris of the human eye. In the early development of the cinema iris served as a transitional device as well as a means of altering the shape of screen images and of isolating dramatic material. D.W. Griffith frequently employed a partial iris shot for the purpose of dramatic framing e.g., the close-up photograph of Lillian Gish in *The Birth of a Nation* as the Little Colonel pauses in the cotton fields. Griffith's framing through the iris added a subjective quality to the insert of the photograph. In Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919), an iris shot narrows in on the young storyteller's face to increase audience awareness of his anguished state.

## J

**jump cut** An instantaneous advance in the action within a shot or between two shots due to the removal of a portion of film, to poor pictorial continuity, or to remind intentionally the viewer that editing is taking place. In Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* (1959) extensive time sequences were compressed into a few moments by selecting the peaks of a conversation or action and by discarding the boring parts. The effect of this jump-cutting was similar to that of comic-strip panels where information is conveyed in a sequence of single-frame images rather than in fully played-out scenes. In Truffaut's *Small Change* (1976) the jump-cut technique is effectively used in the eating scene at the hairdresser's home. The young boy's voracious appetite is suggested humorously by using jump-cuts as the ample meal is served.

**juxtaposition** A term refers to the expressive arrangement in film of any number of cinematic elements: visual and aural images within a shot; the editorial arrangement, through montage, of individual shots; time elements; and various color, sound and musical elements as they come in contact with one another. A juxtaposition of past and present occurs in *The Godfather Part Two* (1974) as the stories of both Michael and his father, set some fifty years apart, are told in the same film. Within Ingmar Bergman's *Cries and Whispers* (1972) the pure, white costumes of the actors are juxtaposed against the deep, passionate red of the set decoration. Bob Fosse's *All That Jazz* (1979) juxtaposes the somber realities of the principal character's illness with the theatrical world of dance.

## K

**key light** The light source that creates the main, brightest light falling on a subject.

L

**language, language system** Unwieldy English equivalents of the French terms *langage* and *langue*, respectively. Cinema is called language, because it is a means of communication, but it is not a language system because it doesn't follow the rules of written or spoken language. Ferdinand de Saussure asked how language works, and the essence of the explanation he gave was that meaning exists only within a system. In contrast to the naive view that language acquires its meaning by reference to a world of things anterior to, or independent of, signification, Saussure argued that meaning derives solely from the system within which particular utterances are articulated. The system, known as *langue*, and actual or potential utterances, *parole*, may be compared to the rule system of chess and to the set of moves that may be actually or potentially played. *Langue* defines both what are permissible or impermissible utterances and what their significance is. In explicating the functioning of language as a system de Saussure distinguished between the signifier and the signified, which together comprise the linguistic sign. The signifier is the actual sound (or if written, the appearance) of the word; the signified is the concept or meaning attached to it. The essential point is, as de Saussure put it, "in language there are only differences." This so-called 'diacritical' theory of meaning was to prove the single most influental idea operative within film semiotics. Another approach was taken by C.S. Peirce. The Peircean sign points in two directions: on the one hand towards the person to whom it is addressed and in whose mind it creates an idea or secondary sign, called the interpretant, and on the other towards that which it stands for, called the object. A sign thus mediates between the object and the interpretant. Peirce writes: "My language is the sum total of myself; for the man is the thought." Peirce's ideas have been taken into film culture by Peter Wollen, Kaja Silverman, Gilles Deleuze and Teresa de Lauretis. Jacques Lacan's thinking on language had two aspects which were crucial for film theory. The first of these was a Nietzschean conception of language as constitutive: 'the world of words... creates the world of things', 'things only signify within the symbolic order','nothing makes sense until you put a sign on it.' According to Nietzsche, language coerces us into thinking in particular ways through categories that remain largely unconscious. Language, as he famously expressed it, secretes a mythology. By substituting 'ideology' for 'mythology' one gets exactly what film theorists took up from Lacan's reading of de Saussure; that film is a language appearing to render the real transparently but actually secreting an ideology. The task therefore was to create a new language. The second aspect was Lacan's conception of meaning as produced in the exchange between the subject and a set of signifiers. Here Lacan modified de Saussure's idea of the linguistic sign by giving primacy to the signifier and by introducing a

bar between the signifier and the signified, implying that there is a continual sliding of signifieds under signifiers as these enter into new relationships. Christian Metz thought that cinema is a language without a *langue*, where *langue* is understood in a de Saussurean sense as 'a system of signs intended for intercommunication.' The concept of *langue* was inapplicable to cinema for three basic reasons: firstly cinema is not available for inter-communication; next the filmic image is quite unlike the de Saussurean sign, and, moreover, as well as resemblance there is a material link between the image and its object, making it index as well as icon, and therefore motivated. The cinema duplicated rather than articulated reality. And the third reason was that it lacks the double articulation that, according to André Martinet and other linguisticians, is the hallmark of natural language. If cinema is not *langue*, it is nonetheless language, at least 'to the extent that it orders signifying elements within ordered arrangements different from those of spoken idioms - and to the extent that these elements are not traced on the perceptual configuration of reality itself (which does not tell stories), thinks Metz. Cinema transforms the world into discourse, and is not therefore simple duplication. But the semiotics of cinema cannot work at the level of the image, since each image is unique, novel and analogous to reality, with its meaning produced not by its place within a system but by what it duplicates, think Robert Lapsley and Michael Westlake.

**long shot** A shot that shows all or most of a fairly large subject (for example, a person) and usually much of the surroundings. It also conveys the basic relationships of characters to their environment and as a result can be used to reveal narrative and thematic information. In *The Joyless Street* (1925) G.W. Pabst employs wide-angle long shots to convey the impoverishment of an old professor living in bleak isolation within his nearly barren quarters. In John Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939) extreme long shots help to emphasize the vulnerability of the small stagecoach as it makes its way across the open plains of Monument Valley.

**long take** A single shot (or take, or run of the camera) that lasts for a relatively lengthy period of time before it is juxtaposed with another shot. It reveals information within an unbroken context of space and time, and through camera and subject movement rather than through editing.

**low key** 1) Pictures in which the majority of tones lie toward the darker end of the scale. 2) In lighting, a generally low level of illumination of subject, with relatively short-scale tonal rendition.

## M

**master shot** A long shot or moving shot that includes all of the action in a particular sequence, with the camera fairly distant. After it is made, if only one camera is being used, medium shots and close-ups are made of the repeated action and are inserted into the master shot during editing. This process, common during the studio years and in filming for television, provides numerous options for the editor in placing dramatic emphasis.

**medium shot** A shot that shows part of a person or object. Medium shots isolate the subject from the environment to a greater extent than long shots do.

**melodrama** In Aristotle's terms, a work of literature or film that treats serious subject matter (often life and death situations), but is distinct from tragedy because the ending is always happily resolved with the protagonist overcoming all obstacles to achieve his or her desired goal. In those cases where the protagonist does not fully have the audience's sympathy (that is, the socially unacceptable ambitious female of the 1940s or the gangster hero of the 1930s), the happy ending for society, not for the protagonist, may be somewhat ambiguous. Also used as a term for women's pictures, that is, the family melodrama.

**metaphor** A term describing the use of imagery by which an analogy can be drawn between one object and an abstract idea so that the two are imaginatively linked. The initial idea is reinforced by its association with a concrete object. Metaphorical associations are possible in cinema through the montage of attraction. As W.C. Fields in *The Dentist* (1932) applies his drill to a patient's mouth, an insert cut is made to a construction worker's pneumatic gun tearing at the side of a steel beam. A satirical metaphor is effected. Metaphors in cinema may be of a more extended type than that used in *The Dentist*. In *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) the battleship serves as a metaphor for the entire Russian state under the Czarist regime. Art by its very nature is, as Coleridge called it, *esemplastic* - that is metaphorical. The principal forms by which metaphors are generated are:(1) explicit comparison (epiphor), (2) identity asserted, (3) identity implied by substitution, (4) juxtaposition (diaphor), (5) metonymy (associated idea substituted), (6) synecdoche (part replaces whole), (7) objective correlative, (8) distortion (hyperbole, caricature), (9) rule disruption, (10) chiming (parallelism).

**mimesis** The Greek word for "imitation", a term important to the definition of realism.

**minimal cinema** A type of experimental film that attempts to reduce film to its basic properties (its recording of actuality in continuous space and time) with minimal intervention by the filmmaker. Long-take photography is often the principal method of minimal cinema, as in Andy Warhol's *Sleep* (1963-64), *Eat* (1963), and *Empire* (1964).

**mise-en-scène** 1) A term generally used to describe those elements of the film image placed before the camera and in relation to it, rather than to the process of editing that occurs after the interaction between the camera and the subject. 2) Also, the images in which context and relationships are revealed in units that preserve continuous space and time.

**montage** 1) Simply editing. 2) Eisenstein's idea that adjacent shots should relate to each other in such a way that A and B combine to produce another meaning, C, which is not actually recorded in the film. 3) "Dynamic Cutting": a highly stylized form of editing, often with the purpose of providing a lot of information in a short period of time.

**motif** An object or sound that becomes linked to a film's narrative in a meaningful way so that it becomes symbolically identified with a character or action.

**multiple image** Having several images, not superimposed, within the frame.

**myth** A type of story, usually of unknown origin and containing supernatural elements, which has been handed down through a country's literary heritage. The myth's supernatural emphases spring from the need to examine end explain, dramatically and philosophically, deeply complex areas of human concern or thought: life, death, religion, the gods, creation, etc. Popular Greek and Roman myths have frequently been employed by modern playwrights and filmmakers in explaining personal views of life. Jean Cocteau, for example, appropriated the Orpheus myth as a dramatic framework for his cinema, which investigates the complex existence and nature of the "poet" (artist), e.g., *Orphée* (1924), *Blood of a Poet* (1930), *Orpheus* (1950), and *The Testament of Orpheus* (1959).

## N

**narration** Spoken description or analysis of action. Noël Carroll thinks that narration is a form of representation insofar as a narrative describes, and in that sense represents, a sequence of events. And, of course, film, in its most salient use in our culture, is narrative. 'Classic realism' gen-

erally involves at least the use of narration in co-ordination with what are thought of as visual codes of verisimilitude. Typically, a narrative film confronts its audience with a flow of images or views which are often fragmentary as well as spatially discontinuous. Shots are compounded with shots taken from different camera positions. These views are built up into actions and events, scenes and sequences which, in turn, are worked into whole stories. The question of cinematic narration is the question of the small-scale narrative coherence of films; the question of the ways in which events, scenes, and sequences are constructed from shots and alternating views. Verbal language plays an obvious role in this process. But though one would not dare to say that the role of dialogue, intertitles, and commentary in cinematic narration requires no theoretical investigation, an account of the visual elements in cinematic narration seems perhaps more pressing since it is easy, at least speculatively, to imagine that the shifting views of typical films could result in confusion rather than coherence.

**narrative** Story; the linear, chronological structure of a story.

**naturalism** A theory of literature and film which supposes a scientific determinism such that the actions of a character are predetermined by biological, sociological, economic, or psychological laws. Often wrongly used as synonymous to realism. The naturalistic school was greatly influenced in the 1870s by the French novelist-playwright Emile Zola with his *tranche de vie* ("slice of life") approach to stage expression. A pessimistic, tragic view of everyday life dominated Zola's work and that of his follower André Antoine, at the Théâtre Libre. In cinema, naturalistic intentions have appeared in the films of Louis Delluc (*Fièvre*, 1921), Erich von Stroheim (*Greed*, 1924), G.W. Pabst (*The Joyless Street*, 1925), Jean Renoir (*Toni*, 1934) and in Italian neorealist films.

**nonfiction film** Any film that does not use an invented plot or characters.

## O

**objective camera** Camera coverage that places the audience in the position of an observer of the action.

**off-screen space** Space that is out of the camera field, but is implied by the film through the movement of the camera and subject movement into and out of the field of vision.

**overlap sound** A cut in which the cut in the soundtrack is not synchronous with the cut in the image.

**over-the-shoulder shot** A shot commonly used in dialogue scenes in which the speaker is seen from the perspective of a person standing just behind and a little to one side of the listener so that parts of the head and shoulder of the listener are in the frame as well as the head of the speaker.

## P

**pace** The rhythm of a film. It refers to both the internal movement of characters and objects within the film shot, and to the rhythm of the film that is supplied by editing.

**pan** A movement of the camera from left to right or right to left along a horizontal plane. Unlike the tracking shot, in which the camera moves with the subject, the pan is shot from a stationary point.

**paradigm** In semiology, a unit of potential, as opposed to actual, relationship. The paradigm describes "what elements or statements go with what"; the syntagma, "what follow what".

**parallel action** A device of narrative in which two scenes are observed in parallel by cross-cutting. Also called parallel montage.

**persistence of vision** The physiological phenomenon that makes cinema and television possible. An image is retained on the retina of the eye for a short period after it is seen so that, if another image takes its place soon enough, the illusion of motion can be created.

**photography** Literally "light-writing". Any system of recording images, especially those which use chemical technology. Although cinematography is a more precise term for motion picture photography the more general term, photography, is often used synonymously: one speaks of photographing a motion picture rather than "cinematographing" it.

**poetic film** Non-narrative film, often experimental. Jonas Mekas's phrase to distinguish New American Cinema from the general run of commercial, narrative fiction film.

**point-of-view shot (POV)** A shot made from a camera position close to the line of sight of a performer who is to be watching the action shown in the POV. An objective POV is one where the camera appears to be an

uninvolved recorder of action. A subjective POV, on the other hand, puts the camera into action as though the camera lens had become the eyes or the mind's eye of one of the characters.

**process shot** A shot made of action in front of a rear projection screen having on it a still or moving image for the background.

**prop** Any physical item used in a play or film: chairs, tables, eyeglasses, books, pens, programs.

**pull-back shot** A tracking shot or zoom that moves back from the subject to reveal the context of the scene.

## R

**reaction shot** Any shot, usually a cutaway, in which an actor reacts to action that has just occurred.

**realism** The use of scripts, staging, costuming, and camera coverage that renders action as if it were real, not fantasy. Attending to the conventions of realism, that is, the promotion of ordinary human figures in lifelike situations concerned with everyday problems maintaining a high degree of plausibility.

**reverse motion, reverse action** Action that goes backward on the screen, achieved by shooting with the camera upside down, then turning the processed film end-over-end, or by shooting with the camera rightside up and action reversed, or by reverse printing in an optical printer.

## S

**saccade** The flick movement of the eye from one position to another that occurs not only when reading words but also when reading images and real scenes.

**scene** A dramatic unit composed of a single shot or several. A scene usually takes place in a continuous time period, in the same setting, and involves the same characters.

**screen** 1) The surface on which a film or television image is projected. 2) A method of printing in which ink is forced through a fabric screen to make the desired impression, the blank areas having been covered with an opaque material to prevent the ink from coming through. 3) A glass

plate etched with crossed lines used to make halftone patterns. 4) (verb) To project a film for a limited audience.

**screenplay** The script of a film or television show, usually but not necessarily including rough descriptions of camera movements as well as dialogue.

**semiology, semiotics** Theory of criticism pioneered by Roland Barthes in literature and Christian Metz, Umberto Eco and Peter Wollen in film. It uses the theories of modern linguistics, especially Ferdinand de Saussure's concept of signification, as a model for the description of the operation of various cultural languages, such as film, television, kinesics (body language), and written and spoken languages.

**separation** Fragmentation of a scene into single images in alternation - A, B, A, B, A, B, etc.

**sequence** A dramatic unit composed of several scenes, all linked together by their emotional and narrative momentum. A sequence can span time and space as long as its dramatic elements and structure are unified.

**shot** 1) A single run of the camera. 2) A piece of film resulting from such a run. Systematically joined together in the process of editing, shots are synthesized into sequences, and the sequences in turn are joined to form the film as a whole.

**shot analysis** A careful and thorough recording of separate shots that constitute an entire film or specific sequences. The analysis describes the visual images, camera movement, duration, sound and transitions from shot to shot. Sometimes such an analysis is drawn as if it were a storyboard.

**sign** 1) In semiology the basic unit of signification composed of the signifier (which carries the meaning) and the signified (which is the concept or thing signified. 2) Rudolf Arnheim's term for an image serving merely as a sign to the extent to which it stands for a particular content without reflecting its characteristics visually.

**slow motion** Action that takes place on the screen at a rate less rapid than the rate of the real action which took place before the camera. This occurs when the camera is operated at a frame repetition rate greater than standard, but the projection frame repetition rate is maintained at standard or below.

**soft focus** An effect in which the sharpness of an image is reduced by the use of an optical device, usually a soft-focus lens, diffusion disk, or open-weave cloth over the lens.

**split screen** The division of the film frame into two or more separate non-overlapping images, done either in the camera or in an optical printer.

**structuralism** The study of how human institutions and art forms are structured on basic notions of conflict and opposition (for example, light and dark, good and evil) and how those structures are repetitive and archetypal. The principles of structuralism were in part inspired by the work of anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who studied the oral rituals and the mythology of certain South American Indians and by doing so isolated previously invisible patterns within these forms of communication. These polarized patterns, according to Lévi-Strauss, revealed how certain perceptions of the Indian tribes came to exist.

**subjective camera** A situation in which the audience involvement with a scene is intensified through identification with the camera point-of-view. In some dramatic films, the camera has taken the place of an actor, with other actors looking directly at the lens.

**surrealism** 1) A movement in painting and film during the 1920s, best represented in film by the work of Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali. 2) A film style reminiscent of that movement, either fantastic or psychologically distortive.

**symbol** 1) A sign (Peirce) that demands neither resemblance to its object nor any existential bond with it, but operates by pure convention. 2) More generally, something that represents something else by resemblance, association or convention.

**synecdoche** In rhetoric, a common figure of speech in which a part signifies the whole (or the whole a part), hence a "motor" is understood to be an "automobile". Generally a metaphorical device basic to cinematographic language.

**syntagma** A unit of actual rather than potential relationship. Syntagmatic relationships exist between the present elements of a shot or a statement in film. The syntagma describes what follows what, rather than what goes with what.

## T

**take** A shot. Also a term used to indicate the number of times a given shot has been made.

**theme** The story subject matter from which the general value or idea forming the intellectual background for a film is evolved.

**tone** The mood or the atmosphere of a film (for example, ironic, comic, nostalgic, romantic) created as the sum of the film's cinematic techniques.

**tracking shot** A shot made while the camera and its entire support are moving.

**tragedy** A work of literature or drama that focuses on the downfall of an admirable character whose defeat (physical or moral) is usually brought about through a flaw in an otherwise noble nature.

**two-shot** A shot of two people. Likewise, three-shot.

**typage** Eisenstein's theory of casting, which eschews professional actors in favor of "types" or representative characters.

## U

**underground cinema** A term often used synonymously with independent film, avant-garde film and experimental film.

**universal time** Time created through imagery (often edited in a montage sequence) that abstracts its subject matter from a specific temporal or spatial context. The actions perceived could occur, therefore, anywhere and at any time, and the experiences on the screen are universalized.

## V

**verism** General realism in art, literature and film.

**viewpoint** The apparent distance and angle from which the camera views and records the subject. Not to be confused with point-of-view shots or subjective camera shots.

**voice-over** 1) A sound and picture relationship in which a narrator's voice accompanies picture action. 2) Any off-screen voice. 3) A narration job.

## W

**wide-angle lens** A short lens able to capture a broad field of action.

**wipe** An optical effect in which an image appears to "wipe off" the preceding image.

## Z

**zoom** A lens with effective focal length continuously variable within a limited range. Changing the focal length of such a lens as a shot progresses simulates the effect of movement of the camera toward or away from the subject.

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