

Martti Lahti

“GOSH, WHAT’S THE WORLD COMING TO NEXT!” - the Sonic Spectacle and Early Sound Cinema

“My Friends: No story ever written for the screen is as dramatic as the story of the screen itself.” This was the opening sentence of the first public presentation of the Vitaphone system at the Warners’ Theatre in New York August 6, 1926.¹ The address by the president of MPPDA, Will H. Hays, marked the moment of return (or was it a return?) to the apparatus. His remarks suggested that cinematic experience is in some fundamental ways defined by what Stephen Heath has called “machine interest,” in which the most immediate fascination is with technology. Parallel to the experience of early cinema, “what is promoted and sold” by Will H. Hays and Vitaphone “is the experience of the machine, the apparatus.”²

What was sold, though, was a very specific notion and experience of cinema in which sound is accompanied by the image, and not vice versa. As the Vitaphone shorts were to illustrate, the presentation of the Vitaphone System was defined primarily by the presence of sound. If during the first moments of cinema public attention was directed at the image and wonder of movement, the source of attention and stupefaction was now the “frenzy of the audible.” However, one shouldn’t overemphasize the importance of this moment by labelling it a break or a beginning of a totally new period in cinema

history. As Will Hays himself reminds us elsewhere:

The rapid and amazing adaptation of sound to motion picture entertainment since the fall of 1926 has led to the entirely erroneous belief that talking pictures are something new under the sun, when, as a matter of fact, the development of sound was certainly corollary with, and some say, was even the forerunner of the moving picture.³

Nevertheless, what made the moment specific was the fact that it marked the beginning of sound cinema in its commercial form. It also brought with it an emphasis on recorded sound as a source of cinematic pleasure, which movies themselves explicitly endorsed and depicted as a site of spectacle.

Mary Ann Doane has suggested that one of the ideological aims of sound editing and mixing is to conceal and repress any signals that might reveal the existence of the cinematic apparatus.⁴ However, the role of sound during the period which is often referred to as the “transitional period” implying a sense of break or transformation of one type of cinema to another, suggests that there was also a lineage that emphasized and displayed the cinematic apparatus. It also has a closer affinity than often

thought to the mode of cinema that Tom Gunning has called “the cinema of attractions.” Indeed, early sound movies based their pleasures on the presence of spectacle and visibility/audibility of a machine, a fact too often neglected in studies of classical narrative cinema. Contrary to an argument made, for example, by Peter Wollen according to which “[t]he transition to sound has to be seen in terms of the way in which the role of the spectator changes, changes from being a spectator watching the action to being the role of ‘invisible guest’,”⁵ I will emphasize the notion of the auditor-spectator as a “visible guest.”

“Visibility” of sound as a source of spectatorial pleasure suggests that the understanding of spectacle should be complemented with sound, hence the notion of the “sonic spectacle.” Models of cinematic experience and cinematic spectatorship are dominated by assumptions privileging the regime of the visible at the expense of sound. Accordingly, theories of spectacle - the word itself emphasizing the importance of visible - has been reduced to the visible with the result that sound has become invisible, or rather, inaudible. How would theories of spectacle change, if one incorporated sound into them? Would it change the way we understand the relationship between the spectacle and the viewer-listener? If we take into account the spectacular elements of sound, does it change the way we understand classical narrative cinema and its relation to early cinema?

The Sounds with Images: Vitaphone Shorts

The tendency to construct sound as the basis of the spectacle was exemplified already by the Vitaphone shorts, which downplay visuality to a striking degree. The characters are positioned frontally, there are few cuts, the camera seldom moves. These strategies betray Vitaphone Shorts’ debt to vaudeville and concert halls, and reveal the fact that as much as images with sound Vitaphone Shorts were sounds-with-images. As contemporary accounts demonstrate, Vitaphone Shorts were regularly linked to recording technology and seen as one form of recorded music:

The Vitaphone has come and has amazed Broadway. [—] Hays’ speech was followed by the overture from “Tannhauser” by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra of 115 men. Here the public get the first glimpse of the

possibilities of Vitaphone as a medium of musical expression.⁶

Variety had argued earlier that Vitaphone “is not a ‘talking movie’ as is the DeForest Phonofilm. It is a synchronization of music on a separate record, independent of any film production.”⁷ In a similar fashion, copyright questions linked Vitaphone to the recording industry, as exemplified by a short news story in *Variety*: “Copyright infringement, similar to any other phonograph recording, will figure in this novel action, the first of its kind involving ‘talking movies’.”⁸

Furthermore, as has been often suggested,⁹ even Warner Bros. regarded their technology more as a means of providing musical accompaniment for their feature films and thus replacing expensive orchestras, or as a way of recording variety and other stage acts, and not principally as “talking pictures.” It should be remembered, though, that there had been numerous attempts to make “talking pictures” before Vitaphone Shorts, which were acknowledged and reported by both trade journals and such magazines as *Variety*. Thus there existed a discursive space for talking pictures in which Vitaphone Shorts were embedded, regardless of the fact that discourses also affiliated the film industry with the recording industry. For example *Photoplay Magazine* conceptualized Vitaphone Shorts primarily as recorded music, but also acknowledged the possibility of talking pictures:

[The Vitaphone system] will bring famous singers and orchestras to the smallest theaters. [—] Perhaps, back in their minds, these experts believe that the Vitaphone eventually will make possible a genuine talking picture. However, no definite plans have been made along this line.¹⁰

The Vitaphone Shorts were hybrid products that brought together elements from vaudeville, concert halls, the recording industry, public address systems, and movies. The Vitaphone Shorts in turn affected the mode of address of these preceding forms as well, and, as Charles Wolfe has suggested changed the conditions of filmic spectatorship by requiring “of the spectator a new perceptual orientation.”¹¹ This was necessitated by the presence of sound as the basis of listener-viewers’ pleasures. It is the sound that leaves behind the flat world of the screen and addresses the audience. The sphere of the visual is merely “a pretext for the ‘stage effects’, the ‘tricks,’”¹² of the sound. Dialogue between sound

and image in sound films puts audiences, as suggested by Amy Lawrence, "in a double space - as both viewers and listeners - with our position as listeners having been previously constructed for us somewhere outside cinema."¹³

By creating an impression that an actor or a character is addressing the spectator, sound in the Vitaphone Shorts merges three different spaces: the pre-filmic space, diegetic space, and the space of the theater. This impression is in some important ways based on the presence of a recognizable opera or vaudeville star. At the moment of introduction of the Vitaphone System, there existed a discourse that tended to "obscure the function of the sound apparatus [phonograph] while promoting direct and unmediated access to the star,"¹⁴ that lent its mode of address to the Vitaphone Shorts. In this model, the star's presence as a voice takes priority over the machine and also over the diegetic, imaginary world of an image, and thus creates the specific cinematic experience of absence and presence - in this case what is present in the theatrical space is a voice (although as a recording) and what is absent is a body. Further more, these movies thus addressed the audience without any need of a mediating story.

Here there seems to be interesting affinities to a mode of cinema that Tom Gunning has called "a cinema of attractions." In his influential article "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde."¹⁵ Tom Gunning traces the functions of spectacle for audiences' pleasures in early cinema and introduces his term "a cinema of attractions." A cinema of attractions is based less on telling stories than on "presenting a series of views to an audience, fascinating because of their illusory power [—] and exoticism."¹⁶ Gunning summarizes the elements of the cinema of attraction in the following way:

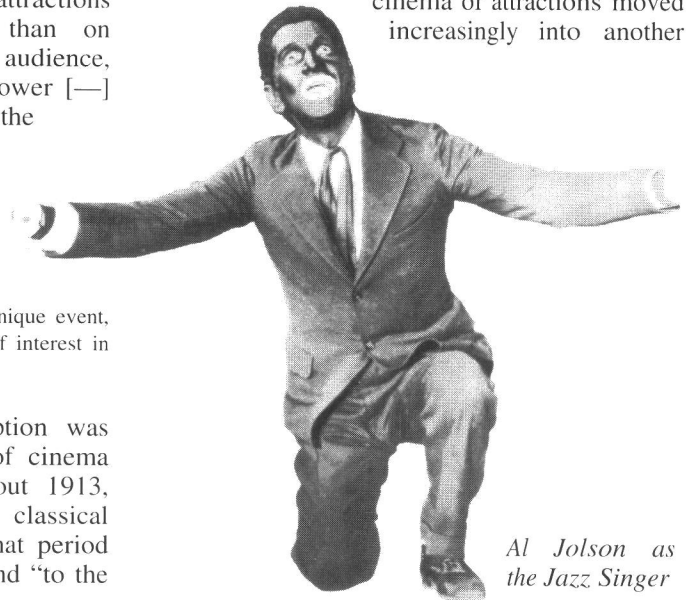
[T]he cinema of attractions directly solicits spectator attention, inciting visual curiosity, and supplying pleasure through an exciting spectacle - a unique event, whether fictional or documentary, that is of interest in itself.¹⁷

According to Gunning this conception was dominant until the "narrativization" of cinema during the period from 1907 to about 1913, which marked the transition to the classical narrative system. In his view, from that period onwards cinematic signifiers were bound "to the

narration of stories and the creation of a self-enclosed diegetic universe."¹⁸ However, Gunning suggests, the cinema of attractions didn't totally disappear with the development of the classical narrative system. Instead it moved into certain avant-garde practices and also continued its existence as a component of narrative cinema, most visible in genres such as musicals that emphasize spectacle.

Gunning's concept is mainly based on the presence of visible attraction. One could argue that this is due to the fact that he is dealing with early cinema, but that does not exhaust his argument. Interestingly, Gunning mentions as examples of the cinema of attractions the early showmen exhibitors, who supplied "a series of off-screen supplements, such as sound effects and spoken commentary." He goes on to argue that perhaps "the most extreme" example of the cinema of attractions is Hale's Tours, in which "the theatre itself was arranged as a train car with a conductor who took tickets, and sound effects simulating the click-clack of wheels and hiss of air brakes."¹⁹ In both cases the experience of spectacle is directly related to the presence of audible attractions. It is not only the shocking visual tricks, their energy, that "moves outward towards an acknowledged spectator,"²⁰ but also the shocking, surprising, and curious sounds.

It may be that the cinema of attractions didn't "go underground" as soon, or for as long a period, as Gunning implies.²¹ Rather it may be the case that with the coming of early sound experiments the cinema of attractions moved increasingly into another



Al Jolson as the Jazz Singer

medium, the sound track, at least for a period before it was naturalized and conventionalized. In this light it is interesting to note that some of the early commentators on Grandeur widescreen films attributed much of their effect to the sound. The *New York Times* writer Mordaunt Hall, referring to the first public presentation of Grandeur Films, pointed out that this wasn't the first time widescreen films had been shown, but what made this presentation different from others was sound: "It is, however, the first time that such pictures have been shown with sound, and this fact means a great difference."²² Further emphasizing the idea of sonic spectacle, the commentator described these "special audible features" as "sound scenes." This supports the notion that early sound films were themselves cinematic attractions, in similar way to the early years of silent cinema. It was the seductive power of machines producing sounds that brought audiences to see them.

In a parallel way, describing the making of *Hallelujah*, The *New York Times* wrote that, "[t]rick shots and effect scenes he [King Vidor] declared taboo unless the mechanics were subjugated to the story."²³ Comments of this kind tell not only about attempts to repress spectacular elements, but also about the existence of a discourse of spectacle. Apparently *Hallelujah* is defined against and differentiated from movies in which trick shots and effect scenes are not subjugated to the story. In similar way, *Popular Science Monthly* featured an article entitled "Talking Movies Astound Auditors,"²⁴ spotlighting the role of sound as a source of pleasure and as a site of spectacle.

The machine interest was further supported by the public's fascination with the actual workings of sound cinema. Different magazines and newspapers ran several articles explaining the principles of new invention. This discourse, that draws attention to the machinery behind the illusion, expanded from such technology-oriented magazines as *Popular Science Monthly*²⁵ to more fandom, appearance, and star-oriented magazines such as *Photoplay Magazine*.²⁶ The regularity and longevity of this discourse surrounding and penetrating actual films supports the idea that the classical narrative cinema is fueled not only by narrative but also spectacular pleasures. The characteristics of this discourse and of sound as an attraction in itself was also captured by the industry in such ads as Western Electric's "What Makes the Picture Talk?" in *The Saturday Evening Post* in July 13, 1929²⁷. According to

this ad "your enjoyment of a Sound Picture depends largely on the quality of apparatus used," again highlighting the ability of the technology to produce pleasure and the idea of (sound) technology as an attraction in itself - as a spectacle.

Pleasures of Excess

The example of the Vitaphone Shorts draws attention to the tendency of cinema histories to explain the coming of sound in terms of greater realism added to the image, which then is used to explain the pleasures derived from cinema. For example, Peter Wollen has argued that there was "a displacement" or trade-off in which some sources of pleasure were lost and replaced with others. The new sonic pleasures Wollen sees mainly in terms of realism:

When sound came in, there was a kind of trade-off: some things available with silent film went - location shooting, for instance, which is in itself a kind of guarantee of realism; other things now became possible, such as dialogue, which is only another kind of guarantee of realism.²⁸

This argument, familiar from the writings of André Bazin and Jean-Louis Comolli among others, reduces the complexities of cinema as a pleasure-producing machine to a single, homogeneous, and ahistorical model. As Alan Williams has pointed out, "[t]he problem of any such view of film history is that sound cinema seems to have little appeal for spectators - beyond its curiosity value - for more than twenty five years after it became technologically practical."²⁹ Williams is referring here to the fact that the first successful public demonstration of synchronized sound processes took place at the Paris Exposition Internationale in 1900. Instead of greater realism sound cinema satisfied a notably less mythical demand. As Williams argues, "what the triumph of Warner Bros.' Vitaphone finally accomplished was to complete a process begun long before: the progressive mechanization of the cinematographic spectacle."³⁰

Furthermore, the kind of argument Wollen subscribes to is unable to address a possibility of pleasures of sonic spectacle. Sound brought with it not only new and different reality codes, but also new kinds of spectacle and pleasure, as the example of the Vitaphone Shorts testifies. Wollen's argument is typical of some branches of film scholarship that understand cinematic

pleasures as being in their nature rather unchanging. Running through these arguments is the unacknowledged hypothesis that what changes is cinematic products but what remains unchanged is the psychic organization of spectators by the cinematic institution.³² Contrary to this kind of view Thomas Elsaesser - in my mind correctly - asks .

[I]f the pleasure remains the same, what need is there for a history? What in the cinema is historical, in the sense of being subject to change, capable of being altered or affected by events, liable to mutations and shifts? Is pleasure historical, or 'only' the spectators and the sites of production that bind them to consumption.³³

The approach criticized by Elsaesser characterizes a lot of writing on classical Hollywood cinema. In *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, in a section revealingly titled "An Excessively Obvious Cinema," David Bordwell introduces his notion of "functional equivalents," according to which in the classical Hollywood paradigm "[b]asic principles govern not only the elements in the paradigm but also the way in which the elements may function."³⁴ This hypothesis allows him to collapse 40 years of cinema into one rather homogenous system, producing by implication the same kind of pleasures throughout those years. Kristin Thompson, in the same book, subscribes to this idea, and argues that "an innovation had to be adaptable to the existing guidelines and stylistic construction before it could enter the system."³⁵ The problem with this kind of approach is that from the start it excludes the possibility of heterogeneity within classical narrative cinema. Instead, it assumes that all subsequent movies mainly follow the model established by silent cinema during the formulation of the classical style from 1909-1928. Thus it cannot address what Rick Altman has called the "fundamental scandal of sound film," the fact "that sound and image are different phenomena, recorded by different methods, printed many frames apart on the film, and reproduced by an illusionistic technology."³⁶ Instead it makes invisible all the questions of sound's contribution to the style of classical narrative cinema, because for the most part that system existed before the commercial launch of sound cinema. Thus questions of Hollywood style are seen mainly in terms of the visible. Approaches of this kind cannot deal with the possibility of sonic spectacle, because they have difficulties addressing sound in the first place and because they define classical

Hollywood cinema chiefly in terms of narrative, excluding excessive spectacular elements:

We would find that the Hollywood cinema sees itself as bound by rules that set stringent limits on individual innovation; that telling a story is the basic formal concern [—]; that unity is a basic attribute of film form; that the Hollywood film purports to be 'realistic' [—]; that Hollywood film strives to conceal its artifice through techniques of continuity and 'invisible' storytelling.³⁷

One of the potential sources of neglect of spectacular elements from theories of classical Hollywood cinema may be a proclivity to treat narrative and spectacle as antithetical and exclusive. David Bordwell's theory of narration and the way he deals with "excess" is symptomatic of this approach. In his *Narration in the Fiction Film* Bordwell limits the object of his study solely to the process of narration, which he defines as "the process whereby the film's syuzhet and style interact in the course of cuing and channelling the spectator's construction of the fabula."³⁸ He excludes from the scope of his study elements of excess, "whatever its suggestiveness as a critical concept."³⁹ What motivates Bordwell's decision is an idea that excess cannot be assigned to narration. Following Kristin Thompson's definition in her Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible: A Neoformalist Analysis*, Bordwell suggests that excessive elements are narratively and aesthetically unjustified elements "which may stand out perceptually but which do not fit either narrative or stylistic patterns."⁴⁰

Indeed, excess tends to escape narrative control (and by implication even the control of narrative analysis, as well). Excess, Kristin Thompson suggests, consists of elements that work against the narrative and the unity of work: "Excess is not only counternarrative, it is also counterunity."⁴¹ In her view, excess takes the form of disturbing and peculiar elements that may cause in a spectator "a perceptual shock dependent entirely upon the physicality of the images."⁴² The idea of excess jarring the flow of narrative and inducing a kind of "perceptual shock" links excess both to Gunning's term "attraction" and to elements of spectacle. For example, in Laura Mulvey's famous formulation, the presence of spectacle (in the form of a female body) "tends to work against the development of a story line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation."⁴³ The resemblance between these three terms (attraction, excess, spectacle) emphasizes how closely they are related, and accordingly I have used them



King Vidor, *Hallelujah*

rather interchangeably.

Kristin Thompson draws our attention to a problem following from the exclusion of excess - and by implication to the exclusion of spectacle, of which excess is a part. As she points out “[p]resumably the only way excess can fail to affect meaning is if the viewer does not notice it.”⁴⁴ However, to be able to do his kind of narrative analysis, Bordwell excludes from his investigation elements that might complicate his approach. He does not address the possibility that “excessive” elements might affect the spectator’s activity and a way s/he understands and constructs a story of a film and relates it to its plot. Contrary to the model that Bordwell subscribes to, I would suggest that to understand how audiences receive movies and construct narrative meanings and to understand how classical Hollywood cinema works as narrative, a critic should investigate the dialectic between narrative and excessive elements, because as Stephen Heath has suggested, “narrative never exhausts the image.”⁴⁵ - or the sound.

Instead of seeing spectacle and narrative as exclusive elements, we might try to understand how they interact in the classical narrative system, in which they more or less depend on and presuppose each other. As Rick Altman has pointed out, the presence of such excessive elements as “[u]nmotivated events, rhythmic montage, highlighted parallelism, overlong spectacles” should admonish us of “the existence of a competing logic, a second voice.”⁴⁶ Altman

calls for a more dynamic understanding of the classical narrative system, which is based on multiple logics at work in a text and textual dialogue between melodramatic (spectacular) elements and classical narrative causality. Evoking Roland Barthes’s approach to classical narrative, Altman argues for the multiplicity of a text in which “there is no single component capable of dominating a text from beginning to end in the same fashion.” He writes:

Even the notion of linearity, so important to descriptions of classical narrative, must be seen not simply as linearity, but as vectorized tabularity, as constantly retaining the sense of the relationship between the line and the other points on the matrix within which that line momentarily appears.⁴⁷

The idea of “vectorized tabularity” is especially suitable to characterize the relationship of sound and image in early sound movies and the idea of sonic spectacle. As a contemporary commentator remarked,

And now [—] we have not only the motion picture at which to look, but the music to hear; not only players to see but their voices now come to our ears. This new sound picture should be neither of the stage nor of the screen, but quite a different manner of expression, although one somewhere between them.⁴⁸

This remark points to the idea that whereas the image is confined to the screen, sound leaves that space behind - “voices now come to our ears” - and addresses audiences in a different way, typical to the representational mode of the sonic spectacle which I traced in the Vitaphone shorts. It reminds us that “spectacular power cannot be reduced to an optical model but is inseparable from a larger organization of perceptual consumption. [—] [T]he introduction of sync sound transformed the nature of attention that is demanded by a viewer.”⁴⁹ Indeed, such early sound movies as *Vitaphone Shorts*, *Old San Francisco* (1927), *The First Auto* (1927), and *The Jazz Singer* (1927) are characterized by the “spectacularization of narrative” or the

“narrativization of spectacle”, that is by the process that stages spectacle as narrative. This is especially evident in the sound tracks of these movies.

These three films ask us to see the relation of spectacle and narrative elements as one of intertwining. This, in turn, suggests that spectacle and narrative shouldn't be approach through a kind of binary logic that I have been following here, which see them as opposing elements within classical narrative cinema. Instead, it might be more fruitful to emphasis their simultaneity and inseparability

Melodrama of Sound

The narratives and styles of early sound feature films, *Old San Francisco* (premiere June 21, 1927), *The First Auto* (June 27, 1927), and *The Jazz Singer* (October 6, 1927), are illuminating examples of sound as spectacle. All of these movies are characterized by a melodramatic structure and its link to sound. In each of these movies such technological issues as the transition to sound movies is thematized on the narrative level as a melodramatic story about generational differences, as a difference between an old and new world. It is hardly surprising that all of them solve their contradictions in the favor of the new world and, by implication, the new technology.

The battle takes its most extreme form in *Old San Francisco*, in which film makers need a spectacular earthquake to destroy a representative of the old world, old San Francisco. *Old San Francisco* saturates the opposition between old and new with ideologies addressing ethnic identity. The film is structured around oppositions between a set of ethnic and national categories. As Rick Altman has argued, “the plot of *Old San Francisco* calls on spectators to recognize differences of class and national origin only to erase them in its spectacular finale [of visual and sonic spectacle]. Sound is thus there in the service of tried-and-true American melting-pot values.”⁵⁰ The film's prolonged final earthquake sequence also underlines the link between sound and spectacle. The sequence not only includes striking visual effects of collapsing buildings and destruction, done in color, but it also concentrates most of the non-visual effects into this one sequence. Indeed, instead of providing a realistic impression, “the complex synchronized earthquake sounds constitute a moment out of time, a privileged zone of

technological superiority over natural cataclysm.”⁵¹

The Jazz Singer resembles *Old San Francisco* in displacing anxiety caused by the coming of new technology onto a generational conflict and linking it to the question of ethnic identity. A father in the film, an orthodox Jewish cantor Rabinowitz - himself a descendant of a long line of cantors - yearns for his son Jakie to succeed him. But Jakie is more interested in pursuing a theatrical career, which causes the father to disown his son. Ten years later, on the eve of his Broadway career Jakie - now Jack Robin - learns his father is ill and cannot sing the *Kol Nidre* (it is also the eve of Yom Kippur). His mother persuades him to give up his career and sing in the synagogue. Jakie agrees and consequently is forgiven. The father can now die in peace. Jakie resumes his Broadway career, and wins the love of Mary, whom he has met before.

In this case, although we do get to hear singing in Hebrew three times, sound is associated through Jakie/Jack with the modern world and silence with traditional, restricting values, that do not belong to the modern world. The intertitle characterizing Cantor Rabinowitz makes this rather explicit: “Cantor Rabinowitz [—] stubbornly held to the ancient traditions of his race.” This opposition is evident also in the famous scene where Cantor Rabinowitz shouts “Stop!”, cutting the sound off and leaving the audience with (disturbing?) silence. That scene, which is one of the turning points of the movie, links sound to the spectacular values of melodrama as well. This scene brings together all the melodramatic strings of the movie: the mother-son relationship, the oedipal relationship between the father and son, the opposition between old traditions and new entertainment. Furthermore, the scene resolves the conflict between old ethnic identity (of the father) and new modern identity (of the son) by renunciation of the former in favor of the world of entertainment (and interestingly the world of hybrid identity where the white masquerade as the black). And although Jakie does agree to sing the *Kol Nidre* in the end, that only resolves his relation with the father without really associating him with traditional, non-entertaining values. Rather, this solution only serves to eliminate his father from the story and thus make space for the final display of “modern” values (of entertainment) represented by the Mammy song of the final scene.

The Failure and Success of the New Technology

In *The First Auto* the melodramatic story revolves around the conflict between a father Hank Armstrong (Russell Simpson) and a son Bob (Charles Emmett Mack). Hank is an old-fashioned man who loves horses and resents the latest invention, "horseless carriages." Bob, in contrast is greatly interested in them, and after his father has disowned him due to their disagreement over automobiles, Bob leaves the city and ends up in automobile racing. Later Bob returns to his hometown to take part in its first auto race. Meanwhile Hank tinkers with a racing car so that it will explode, not knowing Bob will drive it. The car bursts into flames in the middle of the race, but Bob is not seriously hurt. Nevertheless, the accident cures Hank of his hatred of automobiles, Hank and Bob are reconciled, and Bob and his love Rose can get married. In several key moments of *The First Auto* sound is linked to highly emotional and melodramatic scenes or to such comical scenes as a montage sequence resembling early facial expression films. This takes place in a story that in interesting ways draws parallels between autos and sound as new technologies.

One scene of *The First Auto*, in which a magic lantern is used to demonstrate the development and the advantages of a horseless carriage to the town people, reveals the ways in which the movie deals with new technology. Patrons attending the show start to laugh when technology, the magic lantern, fails and shows images upside down. Following that failure we see rather grotesque close-ups of laughing faces. The close-ups coincide with sound effects, linking images which Lisa Cartwright has called "spectacles of corporeality"⁵² with sonic spectacle. Tom Gunning sees the facial expression films, Cartwright's "spectacles of corporeality," as examples of a cinema of attractions. Compared to classical narrative cinema these films are fueled with "a more primal fascination with the act of display", that is with "the thrill of display rather than the construction of a story."⁵³ Lisa Cartwright, however, criticizes Gunning for confusing "the immediacy of the act portrayed [—] with the production of perceptual immediacy 'in' the viewer." Instead she suggests that films of this kind afford more distanced spectatorial position than Gunning would allow, one "not unlike the spectator of the scientific film motion study, the

scientist who takes pleasure in observing often aberrant and repulsive physiological processes."⁵⁴

In my view, their approaches don't seem as antithetic as Cartwright implies. Rather, I would underline the point that pleasures of spectacle are often characterized by the immediate simultaneity of repulsion and attraction, and that pleasures of "scientific observation" maybe closer to Gunning's position than Cartwright would concede. What I am suggesting is that the montage sequence in *The First Auto* resembles a cinema of attractions in invoking a reaction and fascination in a spectator that hinges on a complex movement between a more distanced, observing gaze and a closer, immediate, corporeal attraction with the image and sound.

The failure of technology in this scene could be seen as a paradoxical celebration of the magic lantern's successor: sound cinema as a miraculous technology. Thus we get to witness simultaneously an anxiety caused by the failure of technology and a celebration of the wonders of technology, which for its part is used to represent the previous, failed technology.

This theme is further emphasized by the next scene in which a family headed by the father try their new horseless carriage, lose control and end up in the lake. When the family starts their automobile we hear the crowd's voices and also the sound of an engine, which is also the sound of the cinematic machine itself. Once the automobile ends up in the lake we lose both the sound of the engine and momentarily the sound of cinema, or rather we are left with only the accompanying music. It is almost like *The First Auto* acknowledges the earlier experiments with sound technology, which at the same time tries to suppress anxiety caused by those failures.

The sound in the above mentioned scene suggests that only some of the sound effects in *The First Auto* serve the narrative; most of them are there to accentuate the technological novelty. Distinctiveness of synch sounds, as well as their isolation from each other, lift them out of their narrative contexts. The effects, sudden voices breaking the silence, move towards the listeners of the film, "rather than inward towards the character-based situations essential to classical narrative."⁵⁵

The first sounds and voices the audience hears are the hoofbeats of racing horses and the crowd shouting in excitement "Hank wins!" Later the audience hears the famous "Bob!" that Hank shouts at his sleeping son. This takes place immediately after the audience has learned that

Hank's favorite horse has died. Again we hear Hank's voice saying "Bob!" after he overhears Bob accusing him of being old-fashioned and resenting cars. In this scene the audiences first hear the sudden sound "Bob", and then read the inter-title "Bob." The sound is directed towards audiences, to surprise and shock them, and the intertitle gives them narrative information, in case audiences were too amazed by the sudden voice heard and missed the actual narrative information. The confrontation between the father and the son leads to a melodramatic turning point of the film. Hank almost whips his son, their paths diverge and Bob leaves for Detroit to seek a job in the auto industry.

The fact that sound is linked to spectacular and melodramatic scenes becomes most evident in the car racing scene in which Bob's car explodes into flames. In it spectacular images compete with a spectacular sonic realm of car engines and voices of cheering crowds. First, it is one of several scenes in *The First Auto* which shows images of automobile racing, that one contemporary commentator had described as "the most spectacular sport."⁵⁶ Further, the flames of the car's engine are hand-colored to emphasize visual spectacle. The scene is also an example of the ultimate melodramatic moment of "being too late," because for a while Hank as well as the audience believes that Bob may have died in the car accident caused by Hank. In sorrow, depressed and disappointed in his horse who failed him by not bringing him in time to save Bob, Hank leaves the place of the accident and arrives at his stables, which he half-deliberately sets on fire. At that moment of the symbolic destruction of the old, a car arrives and brings good news: Bob is alive. After hesitating for a while, Hank steps into a horseless carriage. Next there is a cut to a title Hank Armstrong and Son Automobiles, after which we get to see a montage sequence of a series of spectacular cars. In the final scene Hank and his friend are with their new expensive cars watching car races. They look up to the sky and see the aeroplane and hear the engine (just as the audience does). Amazed by the wonders of technology Hank remarks, "Gosh, what's the world coming to



The first foreign sound films to be shown in Europe were American. A German advertisement for The Singing Fool

next!" (We get to read it in an intertitle but not hear him). Then we see a cut to the last intertitle "The end of the trail," a cut to a horse and the film ends.

By drawing a parallel between the coming of autos and sound as technological novelties changing the world, the film draws attention to its technology and its shocking novelty, voice. Hank's last comment emphasizes the role of the new technology and implies that more cinematic attractions based on the new technology are coming in near future.

Classical Hollywood Cinemas

It has become commonplace to conceive of a fundamental difference between early cinema and classical narrative cinema. This is partly motivated by the desire to retain the specificity of early cinema, as Tom Gunning has pointed out: "If we cease to see early films simply as failed or awkward approximation of a later style, we begin to see them as possessing a style and logic of their own."⁵⁷ This has been an important move in film studies since it has helped to disassociate early cinema from rather unpropitious connotations of childish, undeveloped, uncultivated, innocent, and lacking which the rubric "primitive cinema" carries with it. However, regardless of the importance and benefits of this move it may have fostered a tendency to describe classical cinema

as a rather homogenous institution defined against the lost heterogeneity and innocence of early cinema - a doctrine, that as Gunning reminds us, is too sentimental, simple, and ahistorical.⁵⁸ The model I have been working with here instead emphasizes the heterogeneity and multiplicity of classical narrative cinema. However, in this sense I find a concept "classical narrative cinema" slightly misleading because it assumes a single object. That is the view from which I want to disassociate myself, because as Rick Altman warns us,

It is regularly assumed that a single term (like cinema) covers a single object. If our theories are to become sufficiently sensitive to historical concerns, we must abandon that assumption, recognizing instead that historical development regularly occurs within an apparently single object, thus hiding under a single name two or more historically distinct objects.⁵⁹

Indeed, it might prove more useful and interesting to abandon the idea of classical narrative cinema as a homogenous system and as an "excessively obvious cinema." Instead, I have suggested that we should consider its potential multiplicity and various heterogenous forms, classical Hollywood cinemas, intertwining spectacular and narrative elements. For example, this would lead us to explore the possibility that instead of greater realism cinema might regularly move towards more magnificent spectacle (and again away from it after spectacle has become naturalized, conventionalized part of apparatus). In this view sound, color, widescreen, 3-D, Omnimax, and cinematic rides would all be different forms of spectacle - although different in their form - towards which cinema has moved during its history, but which later have become or will become part of a naturalized and conventionalized experience of cinema which we are accustomed to calling realism.

Films

Old San Francisco. Warner Bros. and The Vitaphone Cor. New York premiere June 21, 1927. Dir: Alan Crosland. Sp: Anthony Coldewey. Story: Darryl Francis Zanuck. Ph: Hal Mohr. Vitaphone Score: Hugo Riesenfeld. Cast: Dolores Costello (Dolores Vasques), Warner Oland (Chris Buckwell), Charles Emmett Mack (Terrence O'Shaughnessy), Josef Swickard (Don Hernandez Vasquez), John Miljan (Don Luis), Anders Randolph (Michael Brandon), Sojin (Lu

Fong), Angelo Rossitto (dwarf), Anna May Wong (chinese girl). 35mm. 8 reels, 7,961 ft.

The First Auto. Warner Bros. and The Vitaphone Cor. New York premiere June 27, 1927. Dir: Roy Del Ruth. Sp: Anthony Coldewey. Story: Daryl Francis Zanuck. Ph: David Abel. Music score: Herman Heller. Cast: Charless Emmet Mack (Bob Armstrong), Russell Simpson (Hank Armstrong), Patsy Ruth Miller (Rose Robbins), Frank Campeau (Mayor Jim Robbins), William Demarest (Dave Doo little), Paul Kruger (Steve Bentley), Barney Oldfield (Himself), Gibson Gowland (The Blacksmith), E.H. Calvert (Elmer Hays, The Inventor), Douglas Gerrard (Banker Stebbins). 35mm. 7 reels, 6,676 ft.

The Jazz Singer. Warner Bros. and The Vitaphone Cor. New York premiere October 6, 1927. Dir: Alan Crosland. Sp: Alfred A. Cohn. Ph: Hal Morh. Ed: Harold McCord. Cast: Al Jolson (Jakie Rabinovitz/Jack Robin), May McAvoy (Mary Dale), Warner Oland (Cantor Rabinowitz), Eugenie Besserer (Sara Rabinowitz), Bobby Gordon (Jakie, 13 years old), Otto Lederer (Moisha Yudelson), Cantor Josef Rosenblatt (Himself), Richard Tucker (Harry Lee), Nat Carr (Levi), William Demarest (Buster Billings), Anders Randolph (Dillings), Will Walling (doctor), Roscoe Karns (The Agent), Myrna Loy (chorus girl). 35mm. 9 reels, 8,117 ft.

Literature

"Alleges Vitaphone Used Copyrighted Songs." *Variety* 84.6 (Aug. 25, 1926): 51.

Altman, Rick. "Moving Lips: Cinema as Ventriloquism." *Cinema/Sound*. Ed. Rick Altman. Spec. issue of *Yale French Studies* 60 (1980): 67-79.

—"Toward a Theory of History of Representational Technologies." *Iris* 2.2 (1984): 111-125.

—"Thoughts on *Old San Francisco* (Warner Bros., June 1927). Unpublished manuscript. September 11, 1990.

—"Dickens, Griffith, and Film Theory Today." *Classical Hollywood Narrative: The Paradigm Wars*. Ed. Jane Gaines. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1992. 9-47.

—"Introduction: Four and a Half Film Fallacies." *Sound Theory/Sound Practice*. Ed. Rick Altman, AFI Film Readers. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. 35-45.

—"Sound Space." *Sound Theory/Sound Practice*. Ed. Rick Altman. AFI Film Readers. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. 46-64.

Bordwell, David. "The Classical Hollywood Style, 1917-60."

Bordwell, David; Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson. *The*

Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985. 1-70.

–*Narration in the Fiction Film*. London: University Paperbacks/Methuen, 1986.

“Bringing Sound to the Screen.” *Photoplay Magazine* 30.5 (Oct. 1926):42-43, 123.

Cartwright, Lisa. *Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine’s Visual Culture*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

Crary, Jonathan. “Spectacle, Attention, Counter-Memory.” *October 50* (Fall 1989). 97-107.

“Discussion.” Jean-Louis Comolli, Peter Wollen, and Douglas Gomery. *The Cinematic Apparatus*. Eds. Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980. 57-60.

Doane, Mary Ann. “Ideology and the Practice of Sound Editing and Mixing.” *The Cinematic Apparatus*. Eds. Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980. 47-56.

Elsaesser, Thomas. “Film History and Visual Pleasure: Weimar Cinema.” *Cinema Histories, Cinema Practices*. Eds. Patricia Mellencamp and Philip Rosen. The American Film Institute Monograph Series Vol. 4. Los Angeles: University Publication of America and The American Film Institute, 1984. 47-84.

Fejos, Paul. “Illusion on the Screen.” *The New York Times* May 26, 1929.

Gunning, Tom. “An Unseen Energy Swallows Space: The Space in Early Film and Its Relation to American Avant-Garde Film.” *Film Before Griffith*. Ed. John L. Fell. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983. 355- 366.

–“The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde.” *Wide Angle* 8.3-4 (Fall 1986). *Rpt. in Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*. Ed. Thomas Elsaesser with Adam Baker. London: BFI, 1990. 56-62.

–“‘Primitive’ Cinema - A Frame-Up? or The Trick’s on Us.” *Cinema Journal* 28.2 (Winter 1989): 3-12.

Hall, Mordaunt. “Grandeur Films Thrill Audience.” *The New York Times* September 18, 1929.

Hays, Will H.. See and Hear: *A Brief History of Motion Pictures and the Development of Sound*. N.p.: Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, 1929.

Heath, Stephen. “Film and System: Terms of Analysis, Part I.” *Screen* 16:1 (Spring 1975): 7-77.

“The Cinematic Apparatus: Technology as Historical and Cultural Form.” *The Cinematic Apparatus*. Eds. Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980. 1-13.

Hochheiser, Sheldon. “At&T and the Development of Sound Motion-Picture Technology.” *The Dawn of Sound*. Ed. Mary Lea Bandy. Published on the occasion of the exhibition “American MovieMakers: The Dawn of Sound” at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Oct. 19 - Dec. 4, 1989. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1989. 23-33.

Koszarski, Richard. “On the Record: Seeing and Hearing the Vitaphone.” *The Dawn of Sound*. Ed. Mary Lea Bandy. Published on the occasion of the exhibition “American MovieMakers: The Dawn of Sound” at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Oct. 19 - Dec. 4, 1989. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989. 15-21.

Lawrence, Amy. “The Pleasure of Echo: The Listener and the Voice.” *Journal of Film and Video* 40.4 (Fall 1988): 3- 14.

Mulvey, Laura. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” *Screen* 15.3 (Autumn 1975). *Rpt. in Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*. Ed. Philip Rosen. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. 198-209.

“New Ideas in the Audible Films: Director Seeks to Use Sound to Interpret Picture Action.” *The New York Times* December 15, 1929.

Reavis, L.U.. “How Shadows Talk from the Screen: Sight and Sound Are Kept in Step by Amazing Invention.” *Popular Science Monthly* Nov. 1926.

“Synchronized Picture May Substitute for Presentations.” *Variety* 82.1 (Apr. 28, 1926): 36.

“Talking Movies Astound Auditors.” *Popular Science Monthly*. August 1926.

Thompson, Kristin. *Eisenstein’s Ivan the Terrible: A Neoformalist Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

“The Formulation of the Classical Style, 1909-1938.” Bordwell, David; Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson. *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985. 155-240.

Vischer, Peter. “The Most Spectacular Sport.” *Popular Science Monthly*, May 1927: 18-.

“Vitaphone Bow Is Hailed as Marvel.” *Variety* 84.4 (August 11, 1926): 10.

Williams, Alan. “Historical and Theoretical Issues in the Coming of Recorded Sound to the Cinema.” *Sound Theory/Sound Practice*. Ed. Rick Altman. AFI Film Readers. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. 126-137.

Wolfe, Charles. “Vitaphone Shorts and *The Jazz Singer*.”

Notes:

I would like to thank Rick Altman, Clark Farmer, Ari Honka-Hallila, Anu Koivunen, and Kimmo Laine for their invaluable comments and assistance.

¹ Hays’s entire speech is reprinted in Richard Koszarski, “On the Record: Seeing and Hearing the Vitaphone,” *The Dawn of Sound*, (ed.) Mary Lea Bandy, published on the occasion of the exhibition “American MovieMakers: The Dawn of Sound” at TheMuseum of Modern Art, New York, Oct. 19 - Dec. 4, 1989 (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1989) 17.

² Stephen Heath, “The Cinematic Apparatus: Technology as

Historical and Cultural Form," *The Cinematic Apparatus*, (eds.) Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980) 1.

³ Will H. Hays, *See and Hear: A Brief History of Motion Pictures and the Development of Sound* (N.p.: Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, 1929) 38.

⁴ Mary Ann Doane, "Ideology and the Practice of Sound Editing and Mixing," *The Cinematic Apparatus*, (eds.) Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980) 55.

⁵ Peter Wollen in the "Discussion" section [following Mary Ann Doane's article "Ideology and the Practice of Sound Editing and Mixing"], *The Cinematic Apparatus* 59.

⁶ "Vitaphone Bow Is Hailed as Marvel," *Variety* 84.4 (August 11, 1926) 10. The emphasis mine.

⁷ "Synchronized Picture May Substitute for Presentations," *Variety* 82.1 (Apr. 28, 1926) 36.

⁸ "Alleges Vitaphone Used Copyrighted Songs," *Variety* 84.6 (Aug. 25, 1926) 51. Italics mine.

⁹ See for ex. Koszarski, "On the Record" 16.

¹⁰ "Bringing Sound to the Screen," *Photoplay Magazine* 30.5 (Oct. 1926) 123.

¹¹ Charles Wolfe, "Vitaphone Shorts and The Jazz Singer," *Wide Angle* 12.3 (July, 1990) 64.

¹² Georges Méliès, "Importance du scénario," Georges Sadoul, *Georges Méliès* (Paris: Seghers, 1961) 118. Quoted and translated by Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction" 57.

¹³ Amy Lawrence, "The Pleasure of Echo: The Listener and the Voice," *Journal of Film and Video* 40.4 (Fall 1988) 12.

¹⁴ Amy Lawrence, "The Pleasure of Echo" 6.

¹⁵ In *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, (ed.) Thomas Elsaesser with Adam Baker (London: BFI, 1990) 56-62.

¹⁶ Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions" 57.

¹⁷ Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions" 58.

¹⁸ Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions" 60.

¹⁹ Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions" 58.

²⁰ Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions" 59.

²¹ It is telling that Gunning mentions the musical as an example of genres emphasizing the tradition of the cinema of attractions. Apparently, the musical is dominated by sound, and not only by spectacular visual attractions.

²² Mordaunt Hall, "Grandeur Films Thrill Audience," *The New York Times* September 18, 1929.

²³ "New Ideas in the Audible Films: Director Seeks to Use Sound to Interpret Picture Action," *The New York Times* December 15, 1929.

²⁴ "Talking Movies Astound Auditors," *Popular Science Monthly* August 1926.

²⁵ See for ex. L.U. Reavis, "How Shadows Talk from the Screen: Sight and Sound Are Kept in Step by Amazing Invention," *Popular Science Monthly* Nov. 1926. The title of the article concretizes the idea of direct sonic address in a way that illuminates my understanding of the sonic spectacle.

²⁶ See above quoted article in *Photoplay Magazine* "Bringing Sound to the Screen."

²⁷ It is worth noting that this ad was also widely circulated as a theater poster, as noted by Sheldon Hochheiser in a caption in his article "At&T and the Development of Sound Motion-Picture Technology," *The Dawn of Sound* (ed.) Ed. Mary Lea Bandy. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1989) 30.

²⁸ Peter Wollen in "Discussion" 59.

²⁹ Alan Williams, "Historical and Theoretical Issues in the Coming of Recorded Sound to the Cinema," *Sound Theory/Sound Practice*, (ed.) Rick Altman, AFI Film Readers (New York and London: Routledge, 1992) 127.

³⁰ Williams, "Historical and Theoretical Issues" 128.

³¹ About changes in reality codes during the early years of sound cinema see Rick Altman, "Sound Space," *Sound Theory/Sound Practice*, (ed.) Rick Altman, AFI Film Readers (New York and London: Routledge, 1992): 46-64.

³² Rick Altman has drawn attention to the ahistoricity of the notion of the "basic apparatus," which by definition doesn't change meaning that the cinema remains "by definition throughout its history fundamentally self-identical" as well. Therefore, Altman goes on to suggest that instead of the "basic apparatus" we should speak about the "historical apparatus" which would take into account "the fundamental question of the historicity of cinema itself" and would make it possible to consider "the development of cinema technology dialectically," and not according to the "additive" model. Rick Altman, "Toward a Theory of History of Representational Technologies," *Iris* 2.2 (1984) 116, 117.

³³ Thomas Elsaesser, "Film History and Visual Pleasure: Weimar Cinema," *Cinema Histories, Cinema Practices*, (eds.) Patricia Mellencamp and Philip Rosen, The American Film Institute Monograph Series Vol. 4 (Los Angeles: University Publication of America and The American Film Institute, 1984) 51.

³⁴ David Bordwell, "The Classical Hollywood Style, 1917-60," Bordwell, David; Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985) 5.

³⁵ Kristin Thompson, "The Formulation of the Classical Style, 1909-1938," Bordwell, David; Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985) 233.

³⁶ Rick Altman, "Moving Lips: Cinema as Ventriloquism," *Cinema/Sound*, (ed.) Rick Altman, spec. issue of *Yale French Studies* 60 (1980) 79.

³⁷ Bordwell, "The Classical Hollywood Style, 1917-60" 3.

³⁸ David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (London: University Paperbacks-Methuen, 1986) 53. The emphasis Bordwell's.

³⁹ Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* 53.

⁴⁰ Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* 53.

⁴¹ Kristin Thompson, *Eisenstein's Ivan the Terrible: A Neoformalist Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) 293.

⁴² Thompson, *Ivan the Terrible* 300.

⁴³ Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*, (ed.) Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986) 203.

⁴⁴ Thompson, *Ivan the Terrible* 290.

⁴⁵ Rick Altman, "Dickens, Griffith, and Film Theory Today," *Classical Hollywood Narrative: The Paradigm Wars*, (ed.) Jane Gaines (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1992) 34. Stephen Heath, "Film and System: Terms of Analysis, Part I," *Screen* 16:1 (Spring 1975) 10. Quoted also in Thompson, *Ivan the Terrible* 288.

⁴⁶ Rick Altman, "Dickens, Griffith, and Film Theory Today," *Classical Hollywood Narrative: The Paradigm Wars*, (ed.) Jane Gaines (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1992) 34.

⁴⁷ Altman, "Dickens, Griffith, and Film Theory Today" 29.

⁴⁸ Paul Fejos, "Illusion on the Screen," *The New York Times* May 26, 1929. The emphasis mine.

⁴⁹ Jonathan Crary, "Spectacle, Attention, Counter-Memory," *October* 50 (Fall 1989) 102.

⁵⁰ Rick Altman, "Thoughts on Old San Francisco (Warner Bros., June 1927)," unpublished manuscript, September 11, 1990.

⁵¹ Altman, "Thoughts on Old San Francisco."

⁵² Lisa Cartwright, *Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine's Visual Culture* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995) 14. Cartwright refers to such early movies as *Edison Kinetoscopic Record of a Sneeze* (1894), *Female Facial Expressions* (1902), and *Photographing a Female Crook* (1904).

⁵³ Tom Gunning, "'Primitive' Cinema - A Frame-Up? or The Trick's on Us," *Cinema Journal* 28.2 (Winter 1989) 9.

⁵⁴ Cartwright, *Screening the Body* 14.

⁵⁵ Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions" 59.

⁵⁶ Peter Vischer, "The Most Spectacular Sport," *Popular Science Monthly*, May 1927: 18-.

⁵⁷ Tom Gunning, "An Unseen Energy Swallows Space: The Space in Early Film and Its Relation to American Avant-Garde Film," *Film Before Griffith*, (ed.) John L. Fell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) 355.

⁵⁸ Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions" 61.

⁵⁹ Rick Altman, "Introduction: Four and a Half Film Fallacies," *Sound Theory/Sound Practice*, (ed.) Rick Altman, AFI Film Readers (New York and London: Routledge, 1992) 36-7.

In Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson's book the tendency to conceal heterogenous elements under one term becomes evident for example in relation to comedy. In their discussion the authors constantly exclude a whole genre, the (slapstick) comedy, from their treatment of classical narrative cinema. 12.2 (July 1990): 58-78.