

Jukka Sihvonen

## TOWARD PRACTICES OF THE SACRED - Pasolini and the touch of reality

In relation to film semiotics of the past two decades Pasolini's ideas about "the language of reality", "the free indirect discourse", "the audiovisual technique" and the spectator as "another producer" sound today perhaps more relevant than ever before. One of the few writers who understood this is Gilles Deleuze. In his monumental double (Cinema 1 & 2) he not only explains Pasolini's theorization about the free indirect discourse or Pasolini's position in terms of cinema and thought. Deleuze actually establishes a great deal of his basic conceptualization concerning the relationships between film, cinema and reality on Pasolini's ideas. In this respect Deleuze not only reads and interprets Pasolini but also recreates and follows him.

Thus, it is no surprise that Deleuze finds Antonin Artaud as a predecessor in the same tradition of thinking together with Pasolini. This concerns the expressed high hopes both of them presented in relation to cinema in their own era. But it also concerns the disappointments; Artaud's distaste in relation to sound (or talking) cinema and Pasolini's disgust in relation to consumerist mass culture. The basis of this hatred (so chillingly represented in Pasolini's last film, *Salò*) was in the counteracting desire Pasolini had towards reality. This passionate relationship to reality was sacred for Pasolini. His realism referred to possibilities to reach and touch the reality by cinematographic means whereas cultural forces largely opposed this kind of realism.

(Pages 3-9)

Translation by author.

Ville Pokkinen

## IN THE BODY OF SAINT THERESA. Notes on the Sacred with St. Paolo

Pasolini's theory of realism focused strongly on the concept of action. Cinema is both poetry of action and reality written. This implies that something/somebody is already speaking with reality. This Reality Speaker could be named as an expressed life force, which actualizes

in reality as actions. By translating this speech into a film, the filmmaker participates in the creation of reality, producing new actions. The two communicate when their actions (as signs) meet, creating an audiovisual event.

This communication takes place without any possible intermediary, stretching over the present and bringing the two creators close to one another, thereby forming a fold, which - as an audiovisual event - is like a body that is possessed in religious ecstasy. The force that possesses it is sacred life force. This possession gives birth to a new action, which rises as a local difference from the large body of reality. This body multiplies through these differences. Reality is sacred when these conditions prevail, fascist forces, however, constantly try to control and privatize them.

Metaphorically this body could be seen as the body of Saint Theresa after to the statue by Baroque sculptor Bernini). The creation of an audiovisual event is always a new fold in the garments of St. Theresa.

(Pages 10-21)

Translation by author.

Antti Pönni

## RELIGION, MODERNISM, OR SOMETHING ELSE? - Bresson, style and otherness

Robert Bresson's films, and especially their peculiar style have often been seen as producing a kind of impression of "otherness". The ways of explaining Bresson's films and this effect of alterity they produce can be divided in two loose models or "paradigms": one "religious", the other "modernist". The former sees Bresson predominantly as a "religious" filmmaker and takes *The Diary of a Country Priest* as an exemplary of "bressonian" film. The latter in its turn sees Bresson mainly as a "modernist" whose most representative film is *Pickpocket*.

The proponents of the former view include among others André Bazin and Amedée Ayfre in France and later Paul Schrader in the United States. These writers see Bresson's films as representing an alterity "behind" the image. This alterity or meaning can best be described in religious terms (as "soul", as "transcendent"). The proponents of the latter view, including Jukka Sihvonen, Lindley Hanlon and most notably David Bordwell, criticize these attempts and emphasize the "otherness" of Bresson's style as such, without reference to any

meaning elsewhere.

Following a notion derived from Emmanuel Levinas, I in turn would like to direct attention to something which can be called "metaphysical desire" or "desire of meaning" of the spectator, also noticed (in a critical fashion) by Bordwell. I agree with Bordwell, when he points out that Bresson's style "triggers a search of a meaning" and also when he thinks that all determined meanings (like Schrader's "transcendent") will in the last analysis be arbitrary and thus deniable. I disagree with him, however, when he on this basis denies the spectators desire of meaning altogether.

My thesis is that Bresson's films can be seen as producing a kind of "question", a form that constantly leads the spectator to search for an "answer" or "meaning" which, however, is never reached but remains "elsewhere", and in this sense, absolutely other. On the other hand, this "questionary" form creates a relationship with the spectator and the film which, precisely because of not giving an "answer", keeps the film alive. (Pages 25-35).

Translation by author.

Veijo Hietala

## THE RETURN OF THE GRAND NARRATIVES - Indiana Jones and the Archeology of Religions

Despite - or perhaps because of - the immense commercial success of the Indiana Jones films, few critics have paid them any serious attention. Their value as high class entertainment has been acknowledged, but otherwise they have apparently been regarded as typical formula stories without any higher aspirations. This attitude seems a bit surprising considering that the whole trilogy, after all, deals with both Western and Eastern religions and, thus, basic mythical narratives of respective cultures. The present paper aims at taking Indiana Jones "seriously" by subjecting the religious content of the films under myth-critical analysis.

The first film of the trilogy, *The Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), represented Indiana as a new Moses whose task was to take the Ark of the Covenant back to the new Promised Land, i. e. the USA: the Ark was, of course, found in Egypt, and the troops of the Pharaoh were replaced by the Nazis, similarly persecuting the Jews. And as the final analogy, the Nazis were destroyed by God's intervention in the narrative climax just as the persecutors in the Bible.

However, considering the trilogy as

a whole, Indiana appears more like a Christ figure who proceeds from the Old Covenant (The Raiders) through the "pagan" fires of hell (*Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* [sic], 1984) to the New Covenant (*Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, 1989) and redemption. In the last film Indiana is simultaneously demythologized and remythologized: he is deprived of his hero's "uniform", hat, leather jacket and whip, and even his "heroic" name Indiana, by revealing their haphazard origin in a flashback. In the final scene he loses the material symbol of Christianity, the Holy Grail, but finds instead Christ inside him by demonstrating his faith. The Father and the Son are finally unified, and the Son submits himself totally under the Father's will. (Pages 36-46).

Translated by author.

Arto Haaraala

**SUTURE AND ENJOY! Formations of the spectator-subject's desire under the constraints of music video's star-pulsation**

The purpose of this formal psychoanalytic approach to music video is to examine the radical nature of this discursive form which tends to elude all classifications. By defining the ever-present, all-pervading possibility of transgressive, code-breaking thrust in music video, principle of its discursive *entropy*, the imaginary (impossible) object of music video becomes posited. Tendency towards this imaginary limit is hindered by the lowest common denominators of music video by its definition: the coherence offered by the music itself, and the necessities of the visibility of its star.

The insistence of star representations in the variedly heterogeneous visual discourse privileges these moments of star's emergence as the anthropomorphic anchoring point (which signify the wholeness of the acoustic-visual star-signifier, confirmed by direct address at the spectator). As the iekian Master Signifier, holder of the place of music video's constitutive lack, the star also is the guarantee of signification. Meaning is invested on the only sufficiently offered signifier, signifier of the star.

The interplay of meaning and pleasure in the structure is a fluctuating double movement between suture and enjoyment. Suture, pull towards identification in meaning; enjoyment, on the other hand, visual discourse smeared by *objet petit a* in which the

subject is enjoyably lost in non-meaning. Enjoyment is the space opened for the spectator by delayed but still guaranteed meaning (even if imaginary); in reverse, the extraction of this "little a of enjoyment" from the discursive field by investing it in the star's gaze returns the possibility of signification.

This enforcing of signification on the empty signifier is the paradox of suturing function, of the star. Music video, a discourse between two impossibilities - unlimited free play of signifiers and the empty signifier of the star - folds back on itself generating meaning for the star-signifier; therefore music video can be seen as a *star apparatus*, generating stardom out of abyssal nothingness.

Following along the principles of cinematic suture as duplicating representation, it is possible to distinguish a second suture beyond the suturing of the spectator-subject, still witnessed by it from a distance guaranteed by emission of the *objet petit a*: suture of the star. The necessary pull towards the meaning of the star by the spectator creates as its reverse movement its inevitable aphanisis, sliding of the rejected symbolic under the signifier as its negation. The unconscious of the star, the generative edge between the star-signifier and its symbolic, is constituted in it. It is this unconscious where the suturing spectator-subject, in the separation caused by her/his fantasy, meets the amorphous signifying matter of the star-signifier and situates it as the signified for the star; thus the signifier emerges as a sign of full authority: star-sign, complete with star-substance. (Pages 47-58)

Translated by author.

Minna Kalpio

**ANNIE LENNOX. Androgyny, pop and MTV**

The star image of Annie Lennox, the lead singer of Eurythmics, can be characterized by 'structured polysemy', the concept coined by Richard Dyer. The concept implies that a star image may contain various meanings, which are organized and processed by different media texts emphasizing some of them and excluding others. One of the central features in

Annie's star image is androgyny which is conspicuous in both fanzines and music videos. The present paper discusses the various determinants contributing to the androgyny of Annie's star image, and the elements

in the research material endorsing it; why and how is Annie androgynous and what kind of meanings can it have in culture?

To put it simply, androgyny implies the fusion of characteristics, usually connected with masculinity and femininity, in the same person or, on the other hand, the lack of them so that an impression of sexlessness and asexuality is suggested. Annie's androgyny is commensurate with a larger interest in gender transgression, which is also seen in e.g. David Bowie's, Divine's and Grace Jones' star images.

Annie Lennox deliberately began developing her androgyny when foreseeing there potential for commercial success and fun. The media had already characterized her as masculine from which the androgynous image easily followed. Eurythmics consisted only of two steady members, i.e. Annie and Dave Stewart, whose equal companionship further corroborated Annie's image as a strong, masculine woman.

The star image is constructed by the star's visible public image, speculations on her/his real self and dialogue between these. The cues hinting Annie's androgynous private self consist, for instance, of interviews in which Annie says she enjoys cross-dressing and videos in which her men's suit, hiding her female figure, is not motivated by narrative. I choose to call this side of Annie's star image *tabula rasa*, which resembles Roland Barthes' hypothesis of the star's face being a mask, or surface, on which society writes its assumptions. The mask is not the same as the real face, although these two may easily be confused. In music videos this impression is enhanced by the frequent close-ups and the common first person narration.

The performative side of Annie's star image consists of role characters played by her in various narrative music videos. These characters are both male and female, and in her performance Annie often exaggerates and parodies gender roles to the extent that her own self/*tabula rasa* self appears to be somewhere between genders. This implies the idea of androgyny as the third sex. According to fanzine interviews Annie deliberately emphasizes performance in her cross-dressing and androgyny in order to stress difference between her real self and sexual minorities. Through her roles she, however, allows the negotiation of such aspects of sexuality as transvestism, considered problematic in culture.

(Pages 59-59).

Translated by Veijo Hietala