

Astrid Söderbergh Widding

## THE MENTAL IMAGE

Reflections on the experience of film

The essay discusses the concept of "mental image" in Sergei Eisenstein's and Gilles Deleuze's writings, that is: the distinction between representation-as-such and the images aroused by the representation in the mind of the spectator. The mental image, it is argued, provides a model of spectatorship, where the spectator's activity is emphasized. In this context, the framework for Eisenstein's theorization is widened from the often-cited Pavlov to Bergson, William James and Vygotsky. As for Deleuze, the problem of historical specificity is brought up, since he cites Hitchcock as the inventor of mental images. Nevertheless, Deleuze's thinking is seen to have important implications for theorizing the film spectator. A theory of spectatorship that takes the mental image as its point of departure may acknowledge the spectator's active role as an interpreter or an aesthetic subject. In the process of forming mental images, the aesthetic dimension of film is born from the discourse aspect. The author also argues that the mental image might be used to include other, more concrete aspects of spectatorship than the perception of image and narrative only, such as the star system and the experience of cinemagoing.

Pasi Nyysönen

## FILM AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENON: Münsterberg, Eisenstein and Cognitive Psychology

The paper discusses concepts of the film spectator grounded in empirical psychological research and theories in the history of film theory. The main focus is on Hugo Münsterberg's and Sergei Eisenstein's views on the spectator's experience which are eventually compared with the psychological hypotheses of modern cognitively oriented film studies. Münsterberg's and Eisenstein's views on the psychology of spectatorship turn out to have much in common. For both there are three major fields in the spectating experience: perception, mental processing of perceptual stimuli (i.e. "making meaning" of the film) and emotions. However, they put emphasis on different aspects. For Münsterberg, emotions occupy the most central role in the spectating experience, whereas Eisenstein regards emotions as a necessary tool in acquiring the most essential goal of the film: intellectual effect.

Both theorists' psychological assumptions of the spectator's mental activities are basically quite similar. The spectating experience becomes intelligible as associative processes, mental representations and physiological reflexes. Both emotional and cognitive processes are understood as totally physio-chemical processes. Münsterberg's materialist reduction derives from German experimental psy-

chology of the late 19th and early 20th century while Eisenstein relies on Soviet psychology of the 1920s (Ivan Pavlov and Wladimir Bekhterev). Also modern film studies emphasizes the importance of empirical psychology and the spectator's rational processes. However, the importance of emotions, as theorized by Münsterberg and Eisenstein, have been neglected for long by cognitively based film studies. In other respects there are many similarities to Münsterberg and Eisenstein and their background influences. The "cognitivists" comprehend mental processes in terms of a certain hierarchy; physical reactions and mental representations are considered central for the meaning-making of the film while, for them, psychological operations can, to a certain extent, be explained with the help of biological-materialist reductionism.

Ludvig Hertzberg

## SINCE FEELINGS ARE

On the Language of Film Experience

It is widely assumed that there is something peculiar about our emotional responses to fiction films. Purportedly, we behave paradoxically when we are moved by fictional presentations, since on the one hand we are only moved by what we know to be actual, and on the other we are fully aware that movies are fictional. Hence, the argument goes, we must either be duped into believing that what we

watch is actual, at least for the duration of the film, or we are not really moved, at least in the same way as in the case of an actual object, although we say we are. Similarly, our feeling suspense during an account we are already familiar with is thought to be incoherent. In this essay, I present some of the most persuasive views on the matter and discuss their shortcomings. In the place of the traditional attempts to solve the paradox, I propose an alternative conception of our emotional engagement with movies. By investigating the language we use when describing our experience, I argue that the paradox is a result of a conceptual confusion rather than a psychological anomaly, i.e. closely scrutinized there is no paradox.

Anu Koivunen

## A PURELY VISUAL EMOTION

On Germaine Dulac's film-philosophy

In his book on movement-image, Gilles Deleuze characterizes French cinema of the 1920s as "quantitatively" oriented in terms of montage and, thus, as "Cartesian". He even makes a case for Kantian "mathematical sublime" as an adequate description of the French school of montage. This essay asks, how Dulac's films and her film-theoretical writings relate to Deleuzian taxonomy. To begin with, Dulac is not cited as an illustrative example by Deleuze. Indeed, she is in many film histories presented as an incoherent filmmaker with many turns to diverse

"isms". Yet, it is argued, Deleuze's analysis has a certain heuristic value. Dulac does indeed underline the importance of studying movement in philosophical terms, "as a principle". Her thinking and her oeuvre are, in this sense, characterized by an analytical desire analogous to Cartesian epistemology. At the same time, Dulac's strong emphasis on emotions and feelings echoes the somewhat different Desacartes of *Passions de l'ame* (1649). Dulac is not only interested in film, cinégraphie, as movement - she is also interested in moving the spectator whose experience she compares to the astonishment of the first train film by Lumière-brothers. Thus, it is concluded, Dulac's thinking bears strong resemblance to the tradition of cinema of attractions, combining scientific interest and emotional engagement, consciousness of the media and a will to play with it.

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Jukka Sihvonon

#### KATHRYN BIGELOW'S RITORNELLOS

The central theme in Kathryn Bigelow's (b. 1951) films (*Near Dark*, 1987; *Blue Steel*, 1990; *Point Break*, 1991; *Strange Days*, 1995) is the way in which a powerful experience can generate, not only a metamorphoses but also a dependency and thereby mutate into a kind of drug. Together these films embody fascinating syntheses where "unbelievable" twists of story, flamboyant visualizations and multiplied sonic mas-

ses are manipulated in order to construct a universe for both philosophical reflection and presentation of violent acts. The focus is on the body and on the problematic of its emotional and empirical boundaries.

In this article I intend to lay out a program for studying Bigelow's films from the perspective of the rhythmic refrain, or "ritornello" as Deleuze and Guattari put it. Instead of psychoanalytic interpretations (of which the fort/da-model is here compared to that of ritornello), I concentrate on Bigelow's stylistic figures as "machinic assemblages" from the viewpoint of "the aesthetics of force." The idea is that one does not have to read her films as stories rendered into images and sounds. Rather one can listen to them as audiovisual music the rhythms of which touch the body (both on the screen and in the audience) and resonate in its sensations.

The general themes in Bigelow's films are the seductive influences of experiences, processes of change, cul-de-sacs, and the requirements of liberation from the entrancing, addictive circles. The theoretical network in this article is based on Deleuze and Guattari's work and the questions for further investigation are for example the following: How does Bigelow create aural and optic assemblages, which then transform forces that are invisible and inaudible into audible and visible figures? What kind of assemblages and forces are these? How does Bigelow test the boundaries of the visible, audible and utterable?

One of the starting points towards these questions has been the idea that in Bigelow's films space, spatial experience and its representations are of vital importance. In order to study this kind of cinematic space based on rhythmic modulations one might want to change the familiar vocabulary of voyeurisms, spectator-subjects, -positions, and identifications into conceptualizations such as assemblage, connection, territory, sensation, etc. In this view an artwork is a "machine" that produces certain effects. Bigelow's films reveal that these effects are connected to audiovisual structures of space and rhythm.

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Tarja Laine

#### TO IDENTIFY OTHER-WISE

Subjective voice and empathy in (documentary) film

The relation between film and spectator can be determined in the same way as the self - according to Sartre and Lacan - is in the world only in relation to the other. What is represented in film can be conceptualized as the "other", made object by the spectator's gaze. The self is also formed under a certain cultural gaze which makes us see ourselves in relation to the cultural image surface. Also the filmic world itself can be understood in terms of an image surface which guides the spectator to a certain way of looking. The fact that the cultural identity is always formed in relation to the other may

cause problems in efforts of representing otherness in its own terms. To avoid this the starting point should then be the presence of the other's subjective voice.

This alone, however, does not usually suffice to make the spectator understand the other's experience; in addition, the film must allow the spectator to identify with the object of representation. For this purpose we need (filmic) texts which make us "identify other-wise", thus resulting in reflexive spectatorship. The present paper discusses the possibilities of dialogic interaction and the potential capability of the film to create a dialogic state of experience for the spectator by inviting her/him to go through the other's experiences. This is made possible, for instance, through empathic identification.

Tom Joslin's video diary *Silverlake Life - A View From Here* (USA, 1993) stands as an example of a film which, besides allowing its object to speak in her/his own voice, also invites the spectator to identify other-wise. In this documentary the other's subjective voice and the aspect of emotional identification jointly contribute to the coincidence and dialogue of mutually different perspectives. At the same time the documentary questions the ideological conceptions of the self and otherness thus allowing the widening of the spectator's world view.

Petteri Värtö

#### A FEMINIST JUNCTION ON THE MASCULINE SELF-WAY

The present paper considers the birth process of feminist awareness and its importance for a male researcher's project of masculinity. The paper discusses various feminist possibilities for the development of the researcher's self through reflexive spectating experience. By surveying different possibilities of the spectator's identification the paper aims at demonstrating how the masculine self can be constructed between the new and the old. Identification is discussed by analyzing Thelma &

Louise, the popular film of the early 1990s. The focus is on the researcher's experience of identification with the two main characters of the film.

The paper considers the position of the film within the field of Hollywood genres and analyzes various redefinitions that the film suggests both inside femininity and masculinity as well as inside trait categories which determine them. The questioning of the patriarchy appears as the central theme.

The paper outlines the basis and shape of studies on masculinities describing both its origins in the aftermath of the second-wave feminism and its critical position with re-

spect to traditional (male-centered) research. Here the central coordinate of the research map implies perceiving "men's studies" beside women's studies, as a sort of (supporting) combat "unit", in struggle for the same causes.

In the article a narrative in constructed where, through the experiences of spectatorship and identification, the male protagonist's eyes are opened and he acquires awareness of his identity, background, activities and their mutual relationship. The present paper removes the awakened reflexivity to the sphere of subjective analyses grounded in personal experience and the interpretation of surrounding social reality.

The paper problematizes interpretations based on the researcher's own position, by considering it in the light of the postmodern discourse of reflexivity. The postmodern definition of reflexivity as distanced, individual reflection of one's own premises is here transformed into more extensive, collective and social reflexivity, consequently demonstrating its importance in the researcher's hermeneutic approach. The central aim here is acquiring cognitive tools for processing new experiences.

Keywords: feminism, postmodern, experience, masculinity, reflexivity.

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Hietala

## REVOLUTIONARY IMAGES - ERA OF INNOVATION IN CINEMA 1915-25 OULUSSA 11-13.12.1997

### Seminaarin sisältö

Pian elokuvan keksimisen jälkeen syntyi perinteisten taiteiden, kirjallisuuden, teatterin, maalaustaiteen ja musiikin, modernismi. Tämä ilmaisullisten keinojen vallankumous uudisti perinpohjaisesti käsityksemme siitä, mitä taide ylipäätään on. Elokuvan modernismi lähti käyntiin vasta hieman myöhemmin. Italialaiset futuristit esittivät alkusoiton I maailmansodan aikana, mutta toden teolla elokuvan keinoja alettiin uudistaa vasta sodan jälkeen: ekspressionismi Saksassa, impressionismi ja muut toinen toistaan villimmät avantgardistiset suuntaukset Ranskassa, vallankumouksen ja konstruktivismin katalysoima Neuvostoeleokuva.

Kaikki nämä suuntaukset syntyivät suursodan ja sitä seuranneiden yhteiskunnallisten myrskyjen tai niiden jälkipuinnin tuoksinnassa. Tilanne saattoi ilmetä väkevänä kantaaottavuutena kuten Neuvostoliitossa, täydellisenä vakavamielisyyden kiistämisellä ranskalaisten dadaistien tapaan tai todellisuuden burleskina vääristymisenä surrealistien töissä. Yhteistä oli myös orgaaninen suhde toisiin taiteisiin, joiden edustajat näkivät elokuvassa mahdollisuuden suuresti laajentaa omia keinovarojaan. Esimerkiksi suhde maalaustaiteeseen oli kiinteä: elokuvan kubismiksi nimetty suuntaus syntyi tarpeesta luoda kuvioiden metamorfoosi, muotojen ja värien leikki, lisätä aikaulottuvuus abstraktiin maalaustaiteeseen. Elokuvan itsensä kannalta johtajatuksena oli usein halu irrottaa perinteisen kirjallisuuden ja näyttämötaiteen tarjoamista malleista ja pyrkiä pikemminkin musiikin tai runouden tilaan.

Seminaarissa kartoitetaan näitä taiteiden välisiä suhteita sekä yhteiskunnallisia kytkentöjä elokuvataiteen ehkä kaikkien aikojen hurjimman innovaation kaudella, rinnastaen ja kontrastoiden kehitystä kolmessa elokuvataiteen suurvallassa, Ranskassa, Saksassa ja Neuvostoliitossa. Pääluennoitsijat ovat alan kansainväliset huippuasiantuntijat, professorit Richard Abel, Juri Tsivian ja Kristin Thompson.

Seminaarin yhteydessä esitetään yksi elokuva kunkin kolmen maan elokuvallisesta vallankumoukselliselta kaudelta: Marcel L'Herbierin *L'Inhumaine* (1924), Robert Wienerin *Raskolnikov* (1923) sekä Jevgeni Bauerin *Revolutionary* (1917). Näistä järjestetään esitykset myös Orionissa Helsingissä.

### Järjestäjät

Oulun elokuvakeskus, Oulun Yliopiston elokuva- ja televisiotutkimuksen oppiaine, Suomen elokuva-Arkisto