University of Southampton

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Film Studies

Complicated Views: Mainstream Cinema's Representation of Non-Cinematic Audio/Visual Technologies after Television.

DOI:

by

Eliot W. Blades

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2020

University of Southampton

Abstract

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This thesis examines a number of mainstream fiction feature films which incorporate imagery from non-cinematic moving image technologies. The period examined ranges from the era of the widespread success of television (i.e. the late 1950s) to the present day. The films featured in the study emerge from a variety of genres, countries and budget, while remaining within a "mainstream" classification, by which I mean films which generally secured a significant *theatrical* release. Across four chapters I examine films which feature the following non-cinematic moving image technologies: "sub-gauge" film; "live" video, including CCTV and television; "home" or analogue video; digital video.

Each chapter briefly outlines the origins, standard usages and aesthetic characteristics of the technology, before progressing to case studies of individual films which utilise or reference these technologies to a significant effect. Each considers the ways in which films and filmmakers utilise characteristics of "alternate" media to transform narrative delivery and development, or to comment on some of the aesthetic aspects of either the incorporated medium, or film itself. The thesis argues that such films incorporate media in ways which either remediates or transforms their products, through film, or in doing so, comments on cinema.

The technologies featured have been chosen as significant contributors to the emerging total image economy of developed societies throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. The study examines the ways in which their impact on society, culture and media industries is framed within films which feature their products and/or practices. In the final chapter this analysis is applied to the contemporary debate regarding the destabilising effect of digital image technologies on the ontology and long-term viability of cinema, by placing such debates with a longer-term context of a debate *within* film regarding the impact a variety of alternate image technologies.

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name:	Eliot Blades

Title of thesis:	**Complicated Views: Mainstream Cinema's Representation of Non-Cinematic Audio/Visual Technologies after Television.**

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. Either none of this work has been published before submission, or parts of this work have been published as: [please list references below]:

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Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank thesis supervisors Dr. Michael Hammond and Dr. Malcolm Cook for their advice, guidance and support during the research and production of this work.

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Introduction

Though one of the features of cinema as a practice and form has been stability – the fact that, for much of the first century of its existence, it has relied on a fairly fixed and standardised 35mm film format – its position of dominance as a medium for relaying moving imagery was challenged in the latter-half of the 20th century. Long before the advent of digital film technologies, the audience for cinema had been presented with alternative audio-visual entertainments, such as home movies (on small-gauge celluloid), television and domestic video formats such as VHS. This study will examine the emergence of these, and other, alternate, non-cinematic moving image media through an analysis of their appearance in, and utilisation within, the fiction feature film. As non-cinematic forms of moving image production and dissemination proliferated in developed economies, particularly following the widespread adoption of television in the post-war years, a number of feature films began to reflect their usages and impacts. As practitioners of the moving image, operating in the established and – at the time – *de facto* cultural and economic apex of audio-visual art, it should not be surprising that film-makers were moved to comment on other forms of moving image technology.

Much has been made of the challenges to many aspects of cinematic practice and distribution presented by the digital revolution of the last decade.[1] The move from celluloid or polyester substrate to digital as the material base of what many in the industry and its audience still refer to as "film", presents a challenge to one of the most fundamental aspects of cinema as a medium – the indexical trace of what is placed in front of the camera. The mimetic function of the cinema apparatus has been seen as a key component in an audience's capacity to "suspend disbelief" – seen as vital to a conception of cinema's ability, even in fiction modes, to cater to what has been referred to as our "addiction to reality".[2] What is often absent in discussions regarding the proposed revolutionary potential of digital film-making and distribution is a sense of historical perspective. The incipient obsolescence of celluloid is not the first – nor, possibly, even the most significant – transformative event in the history of the cinema. The formal properties of the cinema have been in continual flux, with innovations such as sound, colour, widescreen formats

[1] See, for example, Nicholas Rombes, *Cinema in the Digital Age* (London: Wallflower, 2009) and Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002) for a critical perspective, and Mike Figgis, *Digital Film-Making* (London: Faber & Faber, 2007) for the impact of digital on cinema practice.
[2] Brian Winston, *Media, Technology and Society* (London: Routledge, 1996), 112.

and multi-dimensional sound and image all making an appearance before the digital disruptions of the modern age. In addition, the dominant mode of cinema – the feature-length fiction film – has existed alongside other forms such as newsreels, short-form fictions, animation, and documentary.

Film-makers themselves are subject to the changes wrought by advances in technology. Since the introduction of television and other home viewing formats, critics and commentators have noted shifts in film content and style – a reduction in the prevalence of the long-take, changes in framing, etc. – which they ascribe to pressures brought to bear by the evolving distribution and reception marketplaces.[3] Digital film enthusiasts enter into debate with those still arguing for the viability and efficacy of celluloid, an argument which is increasingly becoming less and less relevant as the number of features shot on film continues to rapidly decrease.[4]

In addition to the impact the shift from celluloid to digital may have on practitioners, it continues to have an impact on distribution and reception. Works previously distributed physically on film prints and exhibited through projection in theatres are now increasingly transmitted across digital networks and viewed through home streaming services on a number of heterogeneous devices. The ability of consumers of film to edit, manipulate and produce their own video content has also been levied by advances in digital technologies, further disrupting the established hierarchies of previously inviolate image-producing institutions such as the cinema.[5] This project will place debate regarding digital transformation of cinema in historical and technical context, by first examining the ways in which film practitioners, those at the "coal-face" of film production, have responded to pre-digital changes in the image economy. It will examine the ways in which the fiction film reflected on and remediated the products and practices of sub-35mm gauge film, "live" analogue video formats such as broadcast television and CCTV, and home video. Only then will I turn to the ways in which contemporary film engages with digital video. If current claims regarding the transformative impact of digital on cinema are to be

[3] Benson-Allott argues this very convincingly regarding the work of George A. Romero - Caetlin Benson-Allott, *Killer Tapes and Shattered Screens* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 25-69.
[4] While the trend is stark (see Stephen Follows, "Film vs Digital – What is Hollywood shooting on?", accessed 04/12/2018, https://stephenfollows.com/film-vs-digital/) a number of high-profile Hollywood directors such as Christopher Nolan and Quentin Tarantino continue to release films shot on celluloid.
[5] While previous non-cinema formats such as 8mm/16mm and analogue home video facilitated non-professional production, a number of factors restricted these efforts from disrupting the primacy of Hollywood and other dominant film production centres and practices, see chapters on those formats below.

accepted as holding merit, then it seems profitable to place these claims into proper context by examining the impact on film of prior technologies of the image.

"Alternate" Media

As stated above, this study will explore films which feature non-cinematic technologies which record and replay moving imagery. It will focus on films which use these technologies in a way which is integral to the way that stories are told – that directly affect narrative, character development and the visual aesthetic of each work. I will focus on films which "give up" the film frame – either wholly or in part – to moving imagery rendered using technologies other than the standard 35mm film camera, for portions of screen time. Specifically, these are: small-gauge film formats[6] such as 8mm and 16mm, "live" video such as CCTV camera footage and broadcast television, analogue video and – finally – digital video.

These are categories broadly representative of the range of moving image technologies which have persisted across developed economies throughout the 20th and early 21st century. Each has been applied to a range of functions, from news-gathering and dissemination, to surveillance, home entertainment and video telephony. Throughout the periods of their development and exploitation, each has been part of the total image economy of developed societies, their products as ubiquitous and familiar as "going to the movies", albeit often with different utilitarian aims. It should not be surprising that film-makers interested in representing the world have felt the need to co-opt and comment on the uses of these technologies, so often part of how each of us experience it.

As is to be expected, given the seventy years of history and the immense popularity of television, there has been extensive critical coverage given to the relationship between it and the cinema. However, much of this critical attention has been concentrated on the economies of the industries associated with each medium and their perceived capacity to either threaten or support each other.[7] Even when there is an emphasis on the aesthetic impact of television on film practise the concentration tends to be on the formal innovations with which cinema, as an institution, responded to television's success.[8] This

[6] Note that, throughout this study, I am using "format" rather than "medium" for its more exact denotation of a technological instance. So, I may talk about the VHS "format", rather than just the video "medium".
[7] For example, Peter Kramer, "The Lure of the Big Picture: Film, Television and Hollywood", in John Hill & Martin McLoone, eds., *Big Picture, Small Screen* (Luton: University of Luton Press, 1996), Michele Hilmes, "Cinema in the Age of Television", in Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, ed., *The Oxford History of World Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) and Tino Balio, ed., *Hollywood in the Age of Television* (London: Routledge, 1990).
[8] For example, studies of the introduction of widescreen formats such as John Belton, *Widescreen Cinema* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

project, concerned as it is with the ways in which non-cinematic technologies are represented within feature film, will concentrate instead on the aesthetic aspects of this representation, or the way in which certain cinema works comment on the operation of television as an institution and medium of representation. In addition, the chapter in which I examine television casts the net wider to other "live video" technologies whose primary function is not always located in the same domain as commercial television: i.e. to entertain. Despite this, television marks a crucial point in the study of reflexivity in cinema studies. The emergence and widespread adoption of television was perhaps the first point in cinema history where its dominance in the field of moving-image dissemination for entertainment purposes was questioned. From this point, major film production centres such as Hollywood began to ruminate on the essence of this new media format – and it found itself unable to do so without justifying and discussing the nature of cinema itself. A modernist schema was formed which could be put to use in films which examined other media and their applications – whether this was, for example, mobile cameras and small-gauge film's use in war reportage, or the impact of CCTV surveillance on personal liberty.

As such, though some of the technologies under discussion here have origins and applications which are as old as cinema itself, films about such technologies are rare before the post-war years, when the success of television first held up a mirror to dominant commercial cinemas, such as Hollywood. Television also became the primary medium through which other technologies were disseminated to viewers, for example, the coverage of the Vietnam conflict, which used the mobility of small-gauge film technology to quickly and starkly relay the horror of war to people "back home" on the nightly news. Television also became the medium which first showcased the potential of video playback through TV graphics and "action replays" in sports broadcasts.[9]

So, the period where television threatened the dominance and economic model of cinema is where the conversation between the medium and others was joined. This study accordingly examines films from the 1960s to the present day. I will concentrate on films from the dominant Western production centres in this period – those in the United States and Europe.[10] A number of films I will examine are Hollywood productions, but a number are independent productions, or those which were part-financed or released by Hollywood studios. From the late 1950s, faced with the threat of television, diminishing domestic box-office, increased production costs and a perceived stagnation in creativity, Hollywood

[9] Roy Armes, *On Video* (London: Routledge, 1988), 85.
[10] While some national cinemas, such as 'Bollywood' had already achieved high rates of production in the period in which this study commences, the global reach of US and European cinema persisted.

majors expanded production across Europe, leading to a number of international co-productions and complicating the definition of just what was a "Hollywood" or even "American" film.[11] The success of independents such as AIP in the US drive-in and teen markets, and the burgeoning tax-shelter productions of Canada also encouraged Hollywood studios to reach into those territories throughout the 1970s.[12]

When it comes to films about formats such as home video, the "foreign" origin of the technology and its global impact, ensures that many films with significant things to say necessarily emerge from outside of Hollywood. It would, in my opinion, be remiss to study the aesthetic impact of video on cinema without making some mention of both the Japanese origin of the format and one of the prime texts in this area – Hideo Nakata's *Ringu* (1998).[13] Nakata's film secured limited theatrical release, wide domestic release on DVD and, ultimately, spawned not only a host of technologically-focused Asian horror films, but Hollywood remakes of them.[14] Similarly, it is difficult to contextualise the incorporation of small-gauge film technology in cinema, without making reference to both its application in war journalism and the impact this had on the national cinemas of southern European countries such as Italy, whose greater proximity to many of the warzones of the latter half of the 20th century ensured that much of what was seen on TV screens in the US and elsewhere was captured on film by European camera operators.[15]

As indicated above, the choice of primary texts in this study is driven primarily by the various technologies I will examine. I have chosen films which best illustrate the narrative and aesthetic impacts that the incorporation of alternate media can induce. As such, there is a level of variance between these films in terms of nationality, budget, genre and critical reception. The primary importance of each film is its contribution to my examination of the utilisation and impact of alternate media within film; however, I will also spend some time commenting on the resonance that these aspects can have on each film and its treatment of other media. Several films in this study are products of the Hollywood film industry, which reflects the dominance of Hollywood in mainstream

[11] See Howard Hughes, *Cinema Italiano* (London: IB Tauris, 2011) xi, regarding this aspect of Italian commercial cinema in the post-war years.
[12] Chris Rodley, ed., *Cronenberg on Cronenberg* (London: Faber & Faber, 1992), 68.
[13] A number of studies on home video with a US-focus have chosen to do so, analysing the American remake instead, with mixed results – the remake was produced after DVD had supplanted VHS in most homes. For example, Benson-Allott (2013), 102-131.
[14] Japanese film series inspired by *Ringu* which received Hollywood remakes included *Ju-On* (2000-2015) and *Chakushin Ari* (2003-2006).
[15] Conflicts such as Vietnam or the Zanzibar Revolution, covered extensively by Italian television and in documentaries such as *Africa Addio* (Gualtieri Jacopetti & Franco Prosperi, 1966).

cinema and is perhaps an inevitability in a project which regards budget and nationality in neutral terms. However, I will note in my coverage of films emerging from other nations and industries their greater tendency to focus on the specific material, national and cultural situations which emerge from their settings and storylines. This treatment extends to the utilisation and reference to alternate media in ways which are specific to the cultural context of setting and/or production circumstances.

Several films in this study could be argued to exist in fairly well-defined genre categories. It is not my aim to argue that the utilisation of alternate media in works of cinema is more prevalent or has a greater or more specific impact in certain film genres. It is also, conversely, not my intention to suggest that the utilisation of alternate media is a practice that is wholly genre-neutral, or that it is something which does not have the potential to provoke genre associations. Instead, in specific films which exhibit strong generic structures and themes I will examine the way that other media may strengthen, modify or undermine these elements within the film, or in the way that a film may play to an audience. This approach will also be applied to works which are notable for their budget or critical appraisal. It is largely irrelevant to this study whether a film is a blockbuster or a B movie, a smash hit or a critical dud. Where such aspects have a bearing on the film's treatment of alternate media, I will explore this; where they are not, I will concentrate instead solely on my primary focus.

With these clarifications and caveats noted, I will now proceed to outline the primary areas of study, before outlining the project's methodological approach. If a conversation was begun in the post-war years between cinema and other moving image media, what were the topics of discussion? This study will focus on two main areas where the use of non-cinematic technologies within feature film has had an impact: narrative and format specificity.

“Narrative Incorporation”

When a feature film gives up part, or the whole, of the frame to moving imagery from another medium the view is “complicated”. I’m using this term to leverage definitions which combine a sense of intricacy and fracture.[16] Depending on the degree to which the film focuses on the incorporated footage, but inevitably to some degree regardless of this, the spectatorial position is modified. The audience is drawn away from the present moment and location and either into the past, to another location, or both. Where sequences feature characters from within the framing narrative, new perspectives and insights can be communicated, enriching character motivation and depth. Events which may have been either alluded to or actually presented within the main narrative can be presented in a new light or in ways which radically alter their meaning and their relevance. In addition, the circumstances surrounding the creation of these sequences may have a narrative effect. Where explicitly referred to, they may reveal something crucial to the plot of the overall film – for example, the reasons why this footage was filmed, who shot the footage and what was their motivation for doing so, etc. Where the circumstances of creation are withheld, audiences may be encouraged to speculate, to doubt events and character motivations as presented within the overall framing narrative. Using such footage in these ways presents unique storytelling opportunities, compared to other narrative devices such as still images, letters, and voice-over and flashback sequences.

I will refer to these kinds of instances – where a film “gives up” a portion of the frame to moving imagery from another source – as “narrative incorporation” of alternate media. Across the films I have identified which feature this kind of activity, a number of different approaches can be determined. Incorporating moving imagery from non-cinematic technologies into a “film” can be done in a number of ways. I’m placing film in quotes because one of the ways in which this can be done is to simply present a piece of work which is shot using something other than standard 35mm celluloid as a feature, to be distributed and exhibited in the traditional ways that films have been – theatrically and through home distribution. What is more relevant in these cases is the economic and cultural designation of the term “feature film” than the material base and production circumstances of the work.

[16] For example, Cambridge Dictionary definition: “involving a lot of different parts, in a way that is difficult to understand” - https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/complicated - accessed 04/12/2018.

The terms used below can be applied to all cases of narrative incorporation, regardless of the actual technologies utilised. While each moving image technology has its distinct material qualities – which may be revealed by the surrounding footage to a greater or lesser extent – and its cultural and social associations for audiences, their use in overarching film footage is not determined by technology.

Framing

In cases where the image takes up the entire frame of the "film" which incorporates it, I will refer to this as "whole-frame" incorporation. I will contend that there are two ways in which feature film is shown to do this. In the first case, there is no visual evidence which hint at the involvement of celluloid in the production of the image – for example, film-grain – to any notable extent. The surrounding film "defers" the image to the incorporated technology, for the duration to which it is featured. This is most likely in cases where footage is directly edited into the body of the feature - from a video camera, for example. The film print or digital master does not "give itself away" in those scenes featuring alternate moving image technologies. In the second case, the image takes up the entire frame, but the image is coded as different from that which incorporates it. Visual material evidence from the surrounding film's technological base or from the incorporated footage are present. Glare reveals that the image is taken from a monitor, the whole-frame image is preceded by a pan into or out of the image or there is noticeable film-grain or lens-flare to reveal the incorporating technology. In this case, the film "quotes" from an alternate source, rather than "defers" to it.

In those instances where, instead of taking up the whole frame, the incorporated image is an individual element in an overall depicted mise-en-scène, I identify this as an instance of mise-en-abyme in cinema, where the imagery depicted has a potential number of narrative and self-reflexive potentials. In the terms used above to refer to the incorporation of non-cinematic moving imagery using the whole frame, use of the mise-en-abyme schema is a "quotation" rather than a "deferral". What varies in this type of narrative incorporation is the relative stress the incorporated imagery has. When the image is placed within the mise-en-scène in a prominent way in which the spectator is directed to what is displayed it is likely to be an important conveyor of narrative or other information. There are a number of ways in which this can be achieved. For example, the image is accompanied by audio which is prominent in the soundtrack, the image is a bright spot in a

darkened mise-en-scène or is the focus of a character's attention (see below). Conversely, there are cases where the image is placed within the frame in such a way that the spectator is not directed to what is displayed. Any identification of this is in some sense subjective as a single spectator may find her focus in the scene within the incorporated image – but an objective analysis of the overall narrative and character drive of the scene identifies the image as out-of-focus or decorative.

Character Interaction

The incorporated moving image may be depicted in a relationship with characters within the film frame, which has implications for the meaning of what is depicted and communicated – to character and spectator. For example, one or more characters within the frame are depicted as actively watching the image - how this is framed falls into one of the categories above. The character may be depicted within the frame watching the footage or there may be reaction shots cut into the depicted footage – or any combination of the two. The spectator's attention is directed through an in-diegesis POV through one or more character. Alternatively, one or more characters within the frame and/or scene may be exposed to the image, but they are shown to be oblivious to the information presented. The images depicted may be presenting narratively important information to a greater or lesser extent – according to the categories above – but what is communicated to the spectator is that they are privy to this in a way which has escaped the film's characters. A further case is observed where the film does not depict any in-diegesis characters who are in a position to view the footage which is incorporated, although this cannot be said not to have occurred now or in the (imagined) future. This is the case in a number of found-footage or mock-documentary features where there is no framing footage of characters talking about or viewing the imagery incorporated. However, in these cases the work – although obviously fictional – does depict a world in which this material does exist and could possibly be viewed.

Chronology

This quality of incorporated imagery is often self-evident, although often utilised in ways which result in highly complex narrative delivery in feature film. The imagery depicted can be live - the events depicted are happening contemporaneously with those in the

overarching film. In cases where the moving imagery utilises a storage format and is pre-recorded, the image presented documents a prior event – which may or may not have occurred within the nominal time-frame the overarching feature covers. A final case is where chronology cannot be determined at the narrative point where the imagery is depicted. It cannot be known – to the spectator or the film's characters – at the present moment the image is revealed, whether it depicts events which are happening contemporaneously or prior to the present moment.

It is my contention that each instance of incorporation of alternate moving imagery within a feature film can be defined by a combination of one type from each of the three categories above. There can only be one of each, as they are mutually exclusive, although a single film sequence may move between categories as it develops.

“Format Specificity”

In addition to complicating perspective, narrative, motivation and temporal flow, when a film features segments of moving imagery from other formats it necessarily does so in a way which touches on the materiality of the apparatus required to record and replay such footage, including practices associated with their use: format specificity. This information can be conveyed in a numbers of ways.

Format Markers

Film may feature alternate moving image sources in ways which present aspects of their materiality in an unmediated form. In such cases, for a variety of reasons, there is no attempt to manipulate aesthetic aspects integral to the incorporated medium. In instances where footage is captured directly from a source – for example, a film camera is pointed at a CCTV monitor or a segment of 8mm film is “blown-up” and edited into a 35mm print – the imagery which is present within the overarching film is likely to contain aesthetic elements which spectators may recognise and associate with particular technologies. I will refer to these aspects as “format markers”. These may include aspects such as low-definition and colour-bloom on domestic analogue video formats such as VHS, or low-contrast, silent, black-and-white fixed images familiar from CCTV footage. Technological improvements across the lifecycle of formats means that such features can never be definitely stated as intrinsic to all products of certain categories, but imagery from these sources have – over time – circulated in wider culture in ways which encourages such associations.[17]

Alternatively, film may present imagery from alternate moving image sources in a way which highlights or over-emphasises intrinsic material format markers. This could include, for example, extreme distortion of analogue video imagery or print degradation and “gate-float” of imagery from small-gauge film. This may be done for a number of reasons, including a desire to emphasise the likely source of incorporated imagery, but could also be attempted for ideological reasons which assert the primacy of cinema as a medium for representing “reality”. This exaggeration of source format markers can also be

[17] This caveat is noted in my placing the term in quotes.

achieved using digital techniques - imagery can be manipulated to appear to be from sources by imprinting associative format markers. This has been a feature of recent films which appear to a “retro” aesthetic by presenting sequences as if originating from low-grade VHS or old print sources. A number of common, off-the-shelf digital video software packages now feature image presets which are designed to mimic the “look” of other, usually older, moving-image media. Again, these strategies can be employed in feature films for storytelling or ideological reasons. This subtle difference between film’s exaggeration of source format markers and the outright faking of them can have different ideological or aesthetic effects within individual films employing these strategies.

Interfaces

There have always been films about film-making: films where setting, characters or portions of the plot directly depict or revolve around the film-making process. Such films can document film-making in a straightforward, realistic style or attempt to engender an element of reflexivity by, for example, breaking the fourth wall or utilising unreliable narration. Where films incorporate imagery from other moving-image media the human-machine interface is often dramatized in ways which comment on the ways we use such technologies and how this impacts on the resultant imagery.

Capture: Films dramatize the ways in which characters use image-recording technologies to capture events occurring around them and, in doing so, reveal or make statements about the efficacy of each medium in achieving these goals. This can be done in prosaic ways, such as showing the physical effort required to manipulate and move a camera, or the lighting conditions and/or apparatus required to achieve a shot. The recording process can also encompass the ways in which those behind the camera interact with the people and situations in front and, in doing so, can pose questions of ethics or complicate the implied indexicality of non-digital moving-image media.

Edit: Similarly, a film can document the editing process in ways which reveal what can be lost and gained in the move from object to product. In film, editing interferes with the concept of the camera as a device which simply mechanically records reality, by constantly switching perspective. The advances in editing technology which have developed alongside video and digital media have potential to further stress the care which should be taken in holding too closely to the association that the image has with the subject.

Replay: Given the ways in which technology can intervene between the object and the product of moving-image media in the record and edit phases, films which feature the replay of footage may accrue a number of cautionary associations in the spectator. We may have seen a scene recorded/edited and be more aware of the break between the reality of a scene and its rendering. Even when a film incorporates footage in which the spectator has no knowledge of its provenance, the deferred or mise-en-abyme presentation encourages a sceptical viewing position; we are motivated to speculate regarding the circumstances of its production.

Distribution

Mainstream cinema – despite occasional interruptions, such as the "Paramount decrees" in the United States[18] – has developed as a conglomeration of vertically-integrated international corporations, whose film-making activities extend from production, through distribution and exhibition. As home formats such as 8mm, VHS and digital streaming have developed, these corporations have eventually licensed content and increasingly dominated distribution of feature films on these formats. However, the formats also support a large number of non-cinematic practices and practitioners, such as journalists, amateur and independent film-makers, artists and hobbyists. Films which touch on these aspects of non-cinematic moving-image formats, may do so in ways which encompass the following themes.

Professional/Amateur: Cinema is an expensive business – all phases of production are costly and time-consuming. Small-gauge film, analogue and digital video have all emerged at least partially as more cost-effective means of recording, replaying and distributing moving image content. This has allowed the sphere of use to extend beyond the professional film-maker to the amateur and the enthusiast. Some formats – such as VHS – facilitated the distribution of films outside of the closed network of the Hollywood film studios. Others, such as digital video, have been adopted by professional film-makers who have bypassed the studio system to produce more personal, less commercial work.[19]

Authorised/Unauthorised: One aspect of this more economical aspect of a number of these formats is that they can occasionally be put to uses which may be regarded as

[18] Janet Wasko, *Hollywood in the Information Age* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994), 177.
[19] Such as David Lynch – *Inland Empire* (2006) and Brian de Palma – *Redacted* (2007).

politically radical, unethical or even illegal. Pornography has been a prime driver of the initial success of many audio/visual technologies and governments and legislatures have been continually exercised in attempts to regulate their use and distribution.[20] A number of films dramatize the troubling effect of "dangerous" media and the impact they can have on individuals who view them.

It is rare for a film to reference alternate media to any great extent and not engage with one of more of these topics – indeed, it's my contention that a film necessarily enters into a discussion regarding format specificity if it lends any screen time at all to another moving-image medium. The films I will examine place alternate formats front-and-centre and, as a result, are closely concerned with questions of what differentiates them from cinema, materially and ideologically – as real technologies in the real world.

[20] Video is a well-known instance, but other formats such as 8mm have also encountered legislative and industrial restrictions, see Patricia Zimmermann, *Reel Families* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995).

Research Questions and Methodology

So far, I've outlined a number of categories which can be used to identify the ways in which film sequences refer to and utilise footage from alternate forms of moving-image media. These will be used to identify the different ways in which film-makers incorporate footage from alternate media into the cinema. From categorisation, we can proceed to a deeper examination of what these figurations mean – what affect do they have on spectatorship, the audience experience of film?

This study will examine a number of primary texts which feature moments of narrative incorporation of footage from what I have defined as "alternate media". I will focus on four types of these technologies in turn, analysing the ways in which footage from each impact narrative delivery and reveal format specificities when incorporated into cinematic texts. I will utilise the classifications outlined above to identify instances of incorporation as belonging to a particular "type", depending on the activities depicted and their relative stress within the film frame. I will do this, not to establish an absolute taxonomy of these activities in film, but as an aid to identify common themes in types of incorporation across various technologies, where they are identified.[21]

The following section outlines the broad methodological approach of the project. Greater detail on the theoretical and critical approaches cited – and their relevance – follows in the form of a literature review.

Narrative Impact: I will examine the ways in which narrative incorporation of alternate media in feature film alters the ways that stories are told. As I am focusing on the extent to which the uses of technology within the cinematic frame delivers narrative information to spectators, I will turn to those areas of film theory which most directly deal with the impact on the viewer.

I will utilise modern Spectator and Apparatus theory to examine the ways in which the intervention of cameras and other apparatus into the cinema frame forces a self-reflexive stance and that each instance of incorporation of alternate image-making technology appeals to an embodied sense of spectatorship. I will examine how this impacts

[21] To this end, I will not always refer to the terms I have given each type, as outlined above. Instead I will seek to demonstrate in my examples that these characterisations are valid and broadly illustrative of cinema's incorporation of other audio/visual technologies.

traditional narrative tropes such as cinematic point-of-view, suspension of disbelief and character-spectator identification.

I will utilise Baron's concept of the "Archive Effect"[22] and Moran's notion of "waste" in the "home mode"[23] to explore the ways in which incorporated footage play with the narrative economy of a work – utilising format-specific spectatorial associations to signpost narrative information, rather than communicating through explicit exposition.

Finally, I will examine the ways in which incorporation of alternate imagery appeals to documentary conventions within fiction feature film and the associations that this brings to notions of spectator engagement and visual pleasure.

Format Specificity: For each alternate media technology I examine I will outline the format markers which viewers may typically recognise when viewing its products. I will also spend some time covering the typical uses of these technologies. I will then proceed to examine the ways in which these are represented or misrepresented/exaggerated in cinematic works which incorporate sequences from them. I will note cases where the overarching work remediates the products of incorporated technologies and identify the ideological and/or aesthetic motivations and consequences of this. I will utilise Media Archaeological theories developed by theorists such as Kittler, Parikka and Elsaesser, to examine the ways in which a film's incorporation of alternate media products may seek to "humanise" them in service of narrative and standard cinematic "realism"; conversely, I will identify cases where a film may utilise the technological automatism of media to undermine humanist discourse.[24]

I will also examine the ways in which intentional distance – the 2nd aspect of Baron's "Archive Effect" – operates in any incorporated footage. Given the dual status of incorporated footage as both fictional construct and in-diegesis "real world" evidence or product, I will examine the ways in which film-makers rely on an embodied spectator's extra textual knowledge of these media to reinforce or question the way they operate within an overarching narrative work. One aspect of this is the assumptions spectators may hold about a particular medium's standard real-world usages – for example, Zimmermann and Moran's "home mode" – and how these concepts may impact on our perception of their uses when incorporated into works of cinema.

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[22] Jaimie Baron, *The Archive Effect* (London: Routledge, 2014).
[23] James Moran, *There's no Place like Home Video* (Minneapolis: Univeristy of Minnesota Press, 2002).
[24] Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramaphone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), Erkki Huhtamo & Jussi Parikka, eds. *Media Archaeology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009) and Thomas Elsaesser, *Film History as Media Archaeology* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

Finally, I will reference Bolter and Grusin's notion of "hypermediacy" versus "immediacy", as it applies to the ways in which incorporation of alternate media in works of cinema is inflected by the standard uses of such media.[25] I will also incorporate ideas from new media theorists such as Lev Manovich and Nicholas Rombes to describe how these types of mixed-media presentations represent attempts to appeal to a modern spectator whose experience of the world is similarly complicated by a proliferation of technological media.

In addition to discussions of incorporated media's impact on narrative and format specificity, I will spend some time placing analysis of primary film texts within context: first, by considering what can be gleaned from statements made by film-makers regarding their intentions and attitudes to films and the technological basis of cinema and incorporated media; secondly, locating individual films within the wider industrial, technological and social context of the times in which they were conceived and produced.

Context i) – Authorial Intentionality: I will examine film-maker statements made in contemporaneous publications and in DVD commentaries and supplementary material which pertain to the use of alternate media within films. While I will maintain caution regarding the potential for revisionism in such statements, I will seek to validate them as far as possible by reference to the actual use of such media within the films discussed and reference to statements by other members of the production team, where possible.

I will make brief references to individual film-maker's biographies and filmographies where themes can be identified which shed additional light on the ways in which they utilise alternate media within the primary texts I wish to examine. In addition to film-maker statements in print and on commentaries I will utilise critical biographies and journal articles to flesh out these themes for discussion.

Context ii) – Social, Historical and Technological: Using the work of media historians such as Brian Winston and Leo Enticknap, I will ensure that each technology referenced is placed in context as both a historically-situated instance of a wider group of media technologies and a specific instance with associated industries and practices.[26] Doing so

[25] Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (London: MIT Press, 1999).
[26] Brian Winston, *Media Technology and Society*, and *Technologies of Seeing* (London: BFI, 1996). Leo Enticknap, *Moving Image Technology* (London: Wallflower Press, 2005).

will steer this study away from any tendency to either generalise or fall prey to technological determinism regarding usage of each medium.

Utilising trade and consumer journals I will also briefly outline the contemporaneous social and industrial responses to the technologies referenced, at the periods of their development which are referenced by my primary texts. This will ensure that any discussion of the media within the textual analysis of each film are properly grounded in the historical frame within which they were produced. For example, it is highly relevant to any discussion of David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1983), that it was produced in a period where home video was subject to a number of questions regarding its legal status and emerging industrial significance.

So, to summarise and formalise the research questions of this study, given the approach detailed above, they are as follows:

1) How does the incorporation of sequences derived from and depicting alternate moving image media alter the delivery of narrative in feature films? This encompasses the way in which story information is delivered to an audience and its impact on the depiction of character psychology and motivation.
2) To what extent is the aesthetic character of a feature film is modified by the inclusion of sequences derived from alternate media? This can include the contrast between sequences shot on film and those originating from other technologies of the moving image. There may also exist a measure of trans-media merging of different media for aesthetic effect. I will examine a number of cases where the utilisation and inclusion of alternate media transforms and modifies aspects of mainstream cinema aesthetics.
3) To what extent does the inclusion of a particular alternate media format reference or comment on wider social, cultural or political issues surrounding the technology? This commentary may engage with issues which are/were present either at the time of the film's production and release, or in the period in which the film is set. I will also examine cases where this kind of extra-textual referencing engages with issues surrounding cinema itself – i.e. cases where alternate media are utilised to comment on the commercial operation, economic dominance, or long-term viability of cinema.

Prior Work in this Area - Narrative

Traditional spectator theory as formulated by theorists including Baudry, Metz, Mulvey, etc., is focused on the overall cinema "apparatus", the spectator's place within it and the effect this position has on what is communicated and received. The traditional circumstances of film spectatorship and its attendant qualities – darkened rooms, viewer passivity, isolation, large screens and high-volume sound – are said to work in an ideological manner on individual viewers:

> No doubt the darkened room and the screen bordered with black like a letter of condolences already present privileged conditions of effectiveness – no exchange, no circulation, no communication with any outside. Projection and reflection take place in a closed space and those who remain there, whether they know it or not (but they do not), find themselves chained, captured, or captivated.[27]

This classical view of spectatorship states that the spectacular nature of the film experience overwhelms the viewer, leaving her little room for independent reflection and criticism of the world it seeks to represent. In the fiction feature film mode, the cinema aspires to "realism", effacing evidence of the mechanical nature of its construction, using tools such as continuity editing. In return for their submission, the viewer is rewarded with spectacular pleasure. In addition, Mulvey and feminist film critics who responded to her early film criticism, pointed out the gendered nature of the gaze which is constructed and fulfilled in the shot construction and narrative beats of standard Hollywood cinema.[28]

As new moving image technologies have emerged, Spectatorship or Apparatus theory has continued to evolve – sometimes in a manner which contests positions set out by the theory's originators.[29] Mulvey has reformulated some aspects of her own theories to cater for new digital technologies in the cinema and in home reception of film.[30] Similarly, more recent work has attempted to account for increasing home viewing on formats such as VHS and DVD and the effect that this has had on the way that films construct a spectator. Caitlin Benson-Allott examines a number of films from director George A. Romero to identify stylistic changes to accommodate the likely home viewing format, at

[27] Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematic Apparatus," *Film Quarterly*, V. 28, nr. 2 (1974), 44.
[28] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", orig, publ. 1975, in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 14-27.
[29] For example, the early reliance on theories derived from psychoanalysis utilised by Mulvey and Metz was criticised as ahistorical and inflexible regarding issues such as gender, race and class by later theorists such as Bordwell and Carroll (1996) – David Bordwell and Noël Carroll, *Post-Theory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996).
[30] Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second* (London: Reaktion, 2006).

the dates in which they were produced. She identifies changes in framing, narrative pacing, use of colour and the practices surrounding the assembly of "director's cuts" on home releases, to argue that film has responded to changes in viewing habits to alter the ways in which they tell stories. She incorporates Vivian Sobchack's work on the "embodied spectator" to expand standard spectator theory to adapt to the changes in the apparatus of cinema, as home viewing formats have proliferated and dominated movie distribution.[31]

Classical spectator theory posits a constructed spectator, who is placed at the centre of the work of art's project to communicate narrative, character and – some critics argue – an overall ideological position. Modern spectator theory shifts much of the burden of sense-making from the ideological apparatus of the cinema to the embodied spectator, arguing that – instead of impressing meaning onto her – it supplies the information which is used by her to construct hypotheses, based on knowledge of the world and schemas developed by experience with media and genre. Where this notion coincides with the communication of narrative is in what Bordwell refers to as the "constructivist theory of psychological activity"[32] – the set of mental operations which the viewer undergoes to make sense of the fiction feature film. Bordwell outlines how such schema and resultant hypotheses can vary according with conventions of genre and the interoperation of film style and *syuzhet* presentation. In this study, I will examine how film style is directly affected by incorporation of footage from alternate media and, as a result, the film viewer's construction of narrative is partly formed by schemas which are drawn from their extra-textual and embodied notions of the technologies referenced.

This concept of embodiment is seen as fundamental to spectatorial engagement with a film's characters and narrative by a number of critics. Metz writes about the differences between our association with film and stage performances – in the latter case, we identify with the real human being and the space he or she moves through. He argues that our identification with a stage actor is dis-associative and that "theatre can only be a freely accepted game played among accomplices"[33], which is different from the kind of acceptance of the reality of the film-world which is at the centre of concepts of suspension of disbelief in cinema. Alexandra Heller-Nicholas picks up this point in her work on "found-footage" horror films, where she argues that we engage with the patent forgery of the faux-reality at the heart of the found-footage concept as a kind of game playing:

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[31] Benson-Allott, *Killer Tapes and Shattered Screens*, p.71. Benson-Allott expands on Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
[32] David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction* Film (London: Routledge, 1985), 29.
[33] Christian Metz, *Film Language* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 9.

> These films are exciting to watch not because their events may or may not have happened, but from the formal innuendo that if they *did* occur, this is how they might look, seemingly filmed as they are on the same ubiquitous consumer-grade technology that many of us have ourselves…[34]

We suspend our disbelief – not just of the fictional events which unfold – but of the notion that the camera footage through which they are depicted is an actual item of record. The notion of camera footage as "evidence" plays with our acceptance of the notion of indexicality and touches on material associations of camera footage as journalistic truth. The presence of an in-diegesis videographer who is also an actor troubles the ontological status of the text on a double-level – as subject of the "film", and the resultant film itself. Every camera movement, judder, loss of focus and sound dropout draws the spectator closer to the notion of embodied truth – this is what things would look like if this were happening, to you, the viewer. This accentuating of the presence of the camera seems to operate in a reverse-reflexive manner – the found-footage film makes the spectator *more* aware of the apparatus to make us *less* likely to think of the film as a film, a fabrication.

This kind of accentuation of the material components involved in film production is termed "hypermediacy" by Bolter and Grusin, and is the opposite of "immediacy" of the kind which is practiced in the conventional Hollywood cinema.[35] Instead of overwhelming the spectator with an apparent adherence to the principles of realism, techniques of reflexivity which highlight the constructed nature of film narratives prompt reflection and speculation on the part of the viewer. This is an approach which does not abandon the realist project altogether - it is closer to Derrida's notion of mimesis, not as the work of art's capability to accurately depict its subject, but the overall work's capacity to induce similarity in the subject's perception of an event to an imagined embodied perception of the same.[36] This definition is an appeal to a sensory imaginary – a kind of empathetic appreciation of what is presented on screen. Laura Marks' work on the "haptic" nature of media makes the distinction between what she refers to as "appreciative" and "speculative" modes of reception – the latter is brought to the fore when the cinematic subject appeals to embodied notions of texture and materiality.[37] Heller-Nicholas refers to this when she discusses the ways in which an audience may attempt to fill in the gaps in traditional cinematic notions of scene coverage when hypermediacy places the camera (or other pieces of apparatus) between the viewer and the subject. When our vision is obscured – by

[34] Alexander Heller-Nicholas, *Found Footage Horror Films* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2014), 7.
[35] Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation*.
[36] Jacques Derrida, "Economimesis," *Diacritics* 11, no. 2 (Summer 1981): 9.
[37] Laura U. Marks, *Touch* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 10.

motion, blur, framing, flare or damage to the lens – our imagination steps in to fill-out details in a scene; similarly, sound drop-outs or audio mis-direction, intentional or otherwise, prompt the same response regarding dialogue or other audio elements.

Another possible aspect of narrative incorporation of alternate media which is capable of provoking a speculative response in the spectator is that of temporal displacement – when a piece of footage represents a scene which is not contemporaneous with the action of the incorporating narrative. Jaimie Baron has referred to the response this kind of displacement instils in audiences as the "Archive Effect". Her formulation relies on the spectator's recognition that a segment of moving imagery represents events from the past – whether it actually is, or is a fiction which aspires to do so – and that this effect is more or less pronounced by distance from the viewer's perception of the here-and-now:

> It is worth noting that this temporal disparity must be visible (or sometimes audible) and that it may occur either at the level of the pro-filmic object – a shot of an old man placed beside his younger image, an image of a street placed next to an image of the same street a century later – or at the level of the filmstrip itself – the type of film stock, the colour or lack thereof, its degree of damage or disintegration, and so on.[38]

In a work of fiction, the incorporation of footage from another medium can enhance already-present material-based embodied assumptions about historical representations in ways which support narrative economy. For example, it is not necessary for a film-maker to engage in laborious exposition regarding the provenance of footage when scratches, distortion, colour-bleed, etc. mark it as sourced from a particular medium or as "old". In addition, regardless of the actual means employed to achieve these effects (distressing film footage, digital manipulation, etc.), the spectator's experience with these markers predisposes their response to them – recognition triggers the Archive Effect and the credibility of the fiction gains resonance as a result.

Cinema can also utilise the spectator's extra-textual knowledge of the standard uses of alternate moving-image technologies to play with notions of narrative economy. We generally expect commercial feature film to tell a story in an economical manner – conventions such as the "three act structure" and shot sequence editing conspire to present story information in a conventional way in which details which are extraneous to the core plot are minimised. As previously noted, cinema is an expensive business – particularly when working with 35mm celluloid. The formats which have been developed for amateur,

[38] Baron, *The Archive Effect*, 20-21.

domestic and industrial use have become progressively less expensive, which leads to the devaluing of the concept of economy in capturing footage on camera. Simply, when it comes to these media, it is possible to "just leave the camera running". James Moran's definition of the "home mode of video" (an extension of Chalfen's and Zimmermann work on the "home mode" of domestic photography and home movies, respectively[39]) notes the increase in the potential subjects for domestic video afforded by the format's large recording capacity and re-writable media. Thus, where in the past a home movie of a wedding may consist of a tightly-controlled series of shots crucial to appreciating the event, an amateur video equivalent may also include all sorts of extraneous – and, even, contentious – material.[40] Popular culture has ensured we are familiar with the dual capabilities of what Moran refers to as the "waste" which media formats such as analogue video make possible – happenstance and ennui. The capability to just keep the camera running retains the possibility of something extraordinary being captured in the midst of unremarkable events, previously deemed unworthy of coverage by more economically constricted media. Similarly, this tendency can result in long stretches of nothing much happening – an outcome which seems tailor made for concomitant technological features such as fast-forward and random-access. Films which feature these technologies can and do exploit these qualities to extend and constrict shots and scenes in ways which are integral to the source media, but can be used for dramatic reasons such as instilling tension or adding jump scares.

The rich variety of the contemporary image economy presents a multitude of modes and material textures which can be incorporated into film in a way which broadens cinematic language, through engagement with spectators' knowledge of their context and uses. Roscoe and Haight – in their study of the "mock documentary" - note that the conventions of the documentary are employed within the drama-documentary fiction form to engage audiences in factual situations within an entertainment format.[41] The "real" events and situations presented are legitimised – despite their constructed portrayals – through association with the conventions of the documentary mode. This is a form which exists at the commercial end of a broad spectrum of the project of new historicity, which – as Patricia Zimmermann has stated – undermines previous monolithic narratives of history,

[39] Richard Chalfen, *Snapshot Verions of Life* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Press, 1987). Zimmermann, *Reel Families*.
[40] Moran, *There's no Place like Home Video*, 41.
[41] Craig Hight and Jane Roscoe, *Faking It* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

with a multiplicity of voices, what Berkhofer has called ”multivocalities”.[42] Cinema’s incorporation of a range of alternate moving image media should be seen as a parallel project or tendency to similarly disrupt the monolithic narrative devices of realist film conventions with a variety of techniques and technologies from other disciplines and practices.

[42] Patricia Zimmermann, “The Home Movie Movement,” in *Mining the Home Movie*, eds. Karen I. Ishikuza and Patricia Zimmermann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 5. Zimmermann quotes Robert F. Berkhofer, *Beyond the Great Story* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995).

Prior Work in this Area – Format Specificity

Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis* (orig. publ. 1946) – a foundational work on the study of literature's approach to representing the real world – has, as one of its central tenets, the contention that what *is* said, at any point in history, is a function of what *can be* said. Auerbach makes the point that the range of subjects in literature was substantially broadened by the emergence of a Christian humanism – until this point literature had concerned itself largely with the affairs of kings, statesmen and major historical figures and events. Although there are localised political and ideological reasons for this restriction, Auerbach argues that the affairs of everyday men and women were excluded from representation, as literature had not yet developed the tools with which to convincingly render them as experienced. The problem was primarily conceptual; the high-style developed in classical antiquity could not possibly hope to convincingly depict the life of the low-born saviour.[43]

Film – borrowing extensively from literature from its very inception – would seem not to be subject to these same restrictions. A whole range of human experience is explored in cinema of the early 20th century – from the broad historical sweep of Gance's *Napoleon* (1924) and Guazzoni's *Quo Vadis?* (1913), to the slapstick exploits of the clownish everymen of Harold Lloyd and Charlie Chaplin. Instead of a fissure between human experience and its representation (per Auerbach) in cinema, what has emerged during the latter half of the 20th century has been a divide between human experience of the world through a range of visual media and how this compares to the strategies and methods of cinema. Though the most obvious example of this conflict can be located in the challenge to the dominance and language of the movies presented by television in the 1950s, the television monitor has proceeded to present home viewers with imagery from an increasing number of media formats, all of which pursue different strategies and use different codes when representing the real world.

Of course, cinema as a medium has undergone a number of significant revisions as a media format, although the underlying technical basis as a practice and institution persisted for most of the 20th century: 35mm celluloid, standardised projection technologies and reception circumstances. The introduction of sound, colour and changes to the dimensions of the frame have altered both the ways in which films are made and

[43] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 42.

experienced by audiences. However, as Metz reflects in relation to film sound, "a technical invention can never resolve a problem in art; it can only state it, so that it can be resolved by a second, properly aesthetic, invention."[44] Though a number of technical innovations have been introduced to counter a perceived economic threat from formats such as television – for example, widescreen formats such as Cinerama (1952) – it has fallen to practitioners to integrate these capabilities into the pre-existing range of tools which feature film supplies for the telling of stories and rendering reality. This is not always possible or even desirable – a number of innovations such as 3D have repeatedly failed to capture the enthusiasm of both audiences and film-makers.

It remains to be seen whether the current move away from celluloid to a digital substrate and projection technology will materially impact the ways in which film-makers tell stories. The indexical link between the object and the representation is seen as crucial to the sense of film as a medium which has a realist stance, although film has many applications which are not beholden to realism, such as traditional cel animation. In the dominant mode of the fiction feature film, it could be argued that the extensive use of digital post-production techniques undermines the sense of cinema as a medium which aspires to render the world as we experience it. However, despite the indexical connection of celluloid to the filmed object, the photograph – moving or otherwise – has long been seen as an inferior "copy" and loses some of the resonance of representational arts such as painting or sculpture. In Walter Benjamin's terms, the reproducibility of the work of art distances it from the cultic or religious significance of earlier modes of representation, which were not designed to be available to the masses.[45] The large-scale distribution which has developed with the Hollywood system extenuates this distinction. And now, with home formats designed specifically to be even more widely available, it would seem that they reproduce reality at the apex of this movement towards squeezing meaning (social, religious, political) from what is represented.

A recent branch of media criticism has formulated the term "Media Archaeology" to describe the approaches necessary to understand the products of media which are inherently technological and cannot be explained purely in terms of human agency, labour and intentionality.[46] The traces left by machines and software are imprinted on media products regardless of the methods used to deploy them in the service of rendering reality

[44] Metz, *Film Language*, 55.
[45] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (London: Penguin, 2008), 22.
[46] For a good attempt at a definition from one of the foremost scholar in this field see, Jussi Parikka, "What is Media Archaeology, beta definition ver. 0.9," https://jussiparikka.net/2012/12/16/what-is-media-archaeology-beta-definition-ver-0-9/, accessed 04/12/2018.

or storytelling. It should be noted at this stage that there are different approaches within this emerging branch of media criticism:

> When classifications of media archaeology have been attempted, a binary division has usually been drawn between the socially and culturally oriented Anglo-American studies and the techno-hardware approach of German scholars, who have taken their cue from Friedrich Kittler's synthesis of Foucault, information theory, media history, and McLuhan's emphasis on the medium as the message. The German tradition has been claimed to emphasize the role of technology as a *primum mobile*, which has led to accusations about technological determinism, whereas Anglo-American scholars often assume that technology gets its meanings from preexisting discursive contexts within which it is introduced.[47]

This is a breach between two traditions that alternately argue that media products are material events which escape the capabilities of human beings to fully comprehend and elucidate their essence, and a counter argument that this essence can only be fully grasped through the examination of media as embedded in social, political and cultural institutions. Interestingly, in their introduction to a collection of recent writing within this tradition, Huhtamo and Parikka identify Jeffrey Sconce's book *Haunted Media* as an example of the latter tradition.[48] While Sconce's book does examine what he terms "electronic presence" as a phenomenon charted through its appearance in various cultural forms, including newspaper articles and short stories, the book is also structured as a "media history", where the introduction of specific technologies is key to the emerging cultural sense of electrical media.[49] In this sense the book suggests that there may be a third approach to media archaeology which can combine the two traditions.

That the products of technical media are often reliant on historically-contingent technology for accurate recall and replay, further removes their epistemological basis from purely human endeavours. It is now a significant issue for archivists and historians that so much of the media output of the latter half of the 20th century requires out-of-date technology to be recalled in the form in which they would have been experienced when produced.[50] A number of data formats now rely purely on emulation for access, which is intrinsically inaccurate and experientially dissociative. The sense that human beings are no longer the sole auteurs of these artefacts of our emerging recent past – especially regarding media products – can be troubling to human concepts of the ontological basis of the historical record.

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[47] Erkki Huhtamo & Jussi Parikka. eds. *Media Archaeology*, 8.
[48] Ibid, 10.
[49] Jeffrey Sconce, *Haunted Media* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).
[50] See, for example, Giovanna Fossati, *From Grain to Pixel* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009).

If this is the case, in incorporating these formats within cinema (a "fixed" or embodied one-to-many representational format), does cinema seek to "infect" them with some of the remaining reverence for the represented? The process of incorporation of alternate media in narrative feature film does remediate formats, as their products are directed to the overall storytelling effect, rather than revealing their material effects in isolation. Wolfgang Ernst states that Media Archaeological objects differ from Archaeological objects in that they release their essence only when being played – as opposed to simply being, as a vase displays its essence in being looked at.[51] Thus, alternate media are revealed in cinema in the act of the replay of footage. Incorporation of alternate media in cinema is itself media archaeological, although narrative fiction can co-opt such footage in ways which distort or rework the authenticity of such media. The narrative element subsumes the facts of the media artefact (the non-human epistemological content) with affective elements that come from authorial intentionality, the codes of the incorporating medium and the subjective knowledge of both medium and their practices brought by the spectator.

Indeed, films can utilise this disconnect a spectator may detect between the intent of a piece of incorporated footage and the ways in which narrative incorporation transforms it. This is an instance of the second aspect of Baron's "Archive Effect", as mentioned above – in these cases it is intentional difference, rather than temporal distance which provokes the effect in the viewer. In fiction film, incorporated footage is often a construct (rather than actual, real-world found footage), so that in these cases the format markers which denote moving image media as non-cinematic are imprinted by the film-makers. The Archive Effect is deliberately triggered in audiences for dramatic and aesthetic effect.

This kind of faux-amateur presentation is common in passages from alternate media incorporated into feature films. Though often justified in narrative through reference to non-professional status of in-diegesis videographers and camera operators, it also refers to the supposed gaps in the technical capacity of non-cinematic moving-image media to accurately render reality to the same standard as the cinema. Moran presents an interesting counterpoint in his examination of the marketing tactics and aesthetic pretensions of the "event videographer" – a semi-professional film-maker who seeks to transcend the "home mode of video" through co-opting the professional film-makers toolset when capturing footage of weddings and other domestic rituals. The event videographer works with social

[51] Wolfgang Ernst, "Media Archaeography,", in *Media Archaeology*, eds. Erkki Huhtamo & Jussi Parikka, 241.

actors to choreograph events for the camera, scores them with library music or favourites chosen by his clientele and ensures that sequences are carefully edited to tell officially sanctioned stories. The event videographer uses the techniques developed by the commercial cinema to convey information about events in an economical manner which excludes "waste" and extraneous or contradictory details.[52] By contrast, the director of the mock-documentary or found-footage film, fakes the perceived limitations of the amateur when it comes to practice and command of technology. When a film incorporates footage from other sources it often does so in ways which highlights technical deficiencies in the latter through the inevitable contrast with the conventional cinematic language which surrounds it.

As previously discussed, narrative incorporation of other media often highlights what Bolter and Grusin refer to as "Hypermediacy" – as opposed the affected "Immediacy" to which the fiction feature film aspires. Cinema has historically worked to efface the spectator's awareness of the apparatus; in-diegesis reference to other technologies and their products draws attention to their materiality and interfaces. However, digital cinema may mark a point at which the commercial fiction feature film begins to abandon strategies of immediacy. Lev Manovich makes the point that the move to digital practices in cinema marks a return to proto-cinema forms such as the magic lantern and art forms incorporating collage and animation, etc. Digital post-production techniques, in particular, reinforce this notion of cinema as no longer reliant on the indexical relationship to what is in front of the camera; instead, the "film" component is just one stage of an overall production chain which build images through processes of layering and manipulation of camera imagery (or in cases of pure CGI, no original indexical images at all). What is perhaps missing from such claims is a historical view which sees such practices as continuations of pre-digital special-effects techniques common in such genres as fantasy and sci-fi, such as the use of matte paintings, stop-motion animation and rear-projection. An analysis of digital image manipulation techniques should always seek first to identify historical antecedents; otherwise, there is the risk that we identify what is merely a remoulded cinematic tool as a signifier of something revolutionary.

[52] Moran, *There's no Place like Home Video,* 65.

Summary

There now follows four chapters where I apply the methods outlined above to a number of primary film texts which deal with the following alternate non-cinematic technologies of the moving-image: small-gauge and "amateur" celluloid; CCTV and "live" video; analogue or "home" video; and digital video. While each chapter deals almost exclusively with a single grouping of technologies, where profitable I will reference other technologies and their inclusion in films where it underlines points I am making regarding the unique aspects of the technology under discussion. Crucially for my argument, in the chapter on digital video I will draw a number of comparisons to earlier technologies and their treatment in film, in order to analyse whether there is something intrinsic to new media technologies which threatens (or promises) to radically alter the way in which the dominant mode of the feature film represents the "real world".

Chapter 1 begins with a brief outline of the industrial and technological developments which led to what is commonly referred to as "small-gauge" film stocks (8mm, Super 8, 16mm, etc.) and a discussion of the standard applications of these formats. I will then examine the ways in which Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960) utilises scenes featuring small-gauge film technology to alter temporal flow and ration character detail and motivation to the spectator. I will demonstrate how the physical and technical effort required to capture and replay footage in this format is dramatized and directly impacts the way that narrative in communicated throughout the film. I will compare the ways in which this is achieved with instances in other films, such as Kieslowski's *Amator* (1979).

I will then move on to the question of how cinematic incorporation of imagery from these alternate film stocks is revealed and remediated. I will briefly outline the industrial associations of small-gauge film technology with journalism and examine how notions such as "truth" and "access" could be subverted through a discussion of the "entertainment documentary" movement which originated in Italy in the 1960s – now referred to as the "mondo" movie. I will examine how practices such as faking footage and imposing voice-over worked to exploit viewer associations regarding the documentary and its attendant technological base to peddle entertainment and Western ideological bias regarding "exotic" lands and peoples. I will then use Paolo Cavara's fictionalised portrait of "mondo" film-makers – *L'Occhio Selvaggio* (1967) – as a bridge to a full discussion of the ways in which Ruggero Deodata's *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980) fakes the format specificities of small-

gauge film and practices to critique the truth claims of practitioners such as journalists and documentarians.

In Chapter 2 I will focus on film's use of footage from "live" video technologies such as CCTV.[53] Again, I will briefly sketch out the origins and standard uses of the technology. I will spend some time discussing the ethical problems in relation to the public display of private behaviour which has been integral to some uses of this technology, before examining how these concepts are applied to Peter Weir's *The Truman Show* (1998). I will show how Weir utilises audience awareness of the controversies surrounding video monitoring to alternately reinforce or undermine narrative development throughout the film. I will show how the film uses scenes of surreptitious video imagery to allow the spectator to construct Truman's life and character in a way which undermines that which is imposed on him by the televisual conventions of the eponymous "show". I will then turn to two other examples of films which feature protagonists who appear "on television" – E*dtv* (1999) and *Pleasantville* (1998) – to examine the way in which they critique the capacity for the medium to accurately render the world as we experience it, which is perhaps a boast that indexical, isomorphic cinema wishes to retain for itself.

Discussing "format specificity" in film's inclusion of footage from CCTV and "live" video, I will concentrate on Andrea Arnold's *Red Road* (2006). I will show how Jackie's operation of the various CCTV cameras in the film reveals the capabilities or limitations of the technology as a means of uncovering truth – especially as this concept relates to subjectivity and motivation. I will also compare the way that the film dramatizes CCTV usage in oppositional terms such as private/public and individual/state to other instances in films where surveillance technologies have an embodied character, such as *Freeze Frame* (2004) and *Death Watch* (1980).

Chapter 3 will commence with an examination of the narrative impact the incorporation of home video in film, utilising Moran's definition of the "home mode of video" and Bordwell's theories on conventional film narrative. I will apply these concepts to analyse the way that Atom Egoyan employs a number of analogue video technologies and techniques in *Family Viewing* (1987). I will show how Egoyan exploits his spectator's potential associations of the truth-telling capabilities of different video formats to demarcate physical spaces where some of his characters alternately lose or gain authority, regarding the statements they make and the justifications posed for their actions. I will show how video technologies are also utilised to constantly play with the temporal

[53] The use of the term "live" indicates the lack of an intermediate storage medium – such as celluloid in cinema.

ordering of the film's narrative in ways which are resonant for the communication of character psychology and motivation.

Focusing on the way in which cinema can reveal aspects of specificity of home video technologies, I will analyse a number of films which were either produced or set in specific periods in the lifespan of analogue video, which extends from its introduction in the mid-1960s until the arrival of digital technologies at the end of the century. For each film I will briefly sketch the industrial history of the technology at that point and examine the ways in which the film both renders and/or remediates technical aspects of video formats and engages with a number of wider social, industrial and political concerns which were associated with the wider use of these technologies, at that time. I have chosen Paul Schrader's *Auto-Focus* (2002)[54], David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1983), Michael Haneke's *Benny's Video* (1992) and Michel Gondry's *Be Kind Rewind* (2008) as films which engage directly with aspects of home video technologies under debate in the periods in which they were produced or set. These films are not just cinematic examinations and remediations of video in general, but specific ruminations on particular historically-situated instances of home video technology.

I will turn to digital video in Chapter 4, beginning with a brief outline of the history of digital imagery, as incorporated in fiction feature films. I will make a distinction between the use of CGI and the subtler uses of the technology, utilising Bolter and Grusin's concepts of "hypermediacy" and "immediacy", arguing that many of the more "obvious" applications of digital imagery in film have clear antecedents in analogue or practical special effects techniques. I will then proceed to examine *Open Windows* (2014) as a film which breaks the traditional film "frame" down into parallel, narratively self-contained and differentiated segments which are used in ways which transform or undermine standard fiction film narrative techniques such as continuity shot-editing. I will compare the ways in which Vigalondo utilises digital video to achieve these aims with similar strategies in films which incorporate other technologies, such as *Family Viewing*, *The Truman Show* and *Cannibal Holocaust* and discuss the extent to which difference in ultimate effect are products of each technology utilised.

I will also briefly examine the ways in which digital technologies may intervene in the editing process using a recent film in the "puzzle film" subgenre – *Triangle* (Christopher Smith, 2009). Expanding the discussion on this recent narrative tendency in cinema, I will analyse the ways in which features in this subgenre comment on the wider

[54] A period piece, this biopic spends much of its first half detailing the impact of the earliest video technologies (circa 1965) on its central characters.

impact of digital technologies, particularly as they relate to questions of modern subjectivity and identity.

I will extend this discussion of the perceived difference in specifically digital rendering of moving imagery into an analysis of George A. Romero's *Diary of the Dead* (2007). I will show that – as a work which is designed to use digital technology to incorporate a number of video applications and practices – the film places the concept of "convergence" front-and-centre. I will utilise a comparison with similarly-mixed-media works such as *Videodrome*, to identify the specific qualities of digital video which present unique capabilities relevant to the representation of reality at the core of the standard fiction feature film.

Throughout these chapters, where particular instances of incorporation are identified as generic I will make references to other films which also feature these kinds of tropes and conventions – including films which are outside of my primary filmography – however, this study is not an attempt to identify trends and genre conventions. I am focused exclusively on the uses to which film-makers have placed non-cinematic technologies in the service of discussing media representations of the real world and the various ways these can alter and are altered by cinematic presentations. At a time of increasing change in the materiality and practices of the cinema, such an approach seems necessary and prudent, if cinema as an institution is to continue to maintain a dominant position in the image economy of a digital future.

Chapter 1: Amateur Film Formats, Professional Practice

Introduction

Before undertaking an examination of a number of fiction feature films which utilise and comment on so-called "sub-gauge" film stock and equipment, I will briefly outline the origins of these technologies and how they were developed and, crucially, marketed in opposition to the "professional" standard – 35mm.[55] As I will argue that the use of these technologies within mainstream film gains resonance through the associations such technologies have with audiences, it is important to spend some time examining the historical development and standard usages of them.

Establishing a Standard – 35mm

One of the identifying features which marks cinema as an industrial practice, just as much as an artistic one, is standardisation. From its earliest inception, and throughout the whole of its commercial application in the twentieth century, cinema has been based on a set of industrial standards based around the use of 35mm film. While some debate still takes place concerning the reasons for its initial specification, it is generally acknowledged that the Edison labs initial order of 35mm film stock from Kodak in 1889[56] marks the beginning point of a remarkably stable standard in the use of film for the recording and replay of moving imagery. Until its very recent replacement with digital storage technologies, 35mm film has formed the base of almost all commercial film industries worldwide.

If there is some debate regarding the reasons why this format was first established[57] there is general agreement that the longevity of 35mm was abetted by the commercial interests of the major film-producing centres, principally Hollywood. From a very early

[55] "Sub-gauge" is a standard industry term for film stocks with a gauge, or size, smaller than 35mm.
[56] Enticknap, *Moving Image Technology*, 47.
[57] There a line of argument that 35mm was settled on for aesthetic reasons – i.e. it gave enough detail to "see life as it is" – Comolli, quoted in Belton, *Widescreen Cinema*, 18-19.

stage in the evolution of narrative feature film as a commercial industry, national film centres – whether based in Hollywood or in Europe – quickly realised the economic potential of export markets. Given this financial incentive it became clear that maximising the potential to export prints of films, which would unspool without modification on equipment in countries around the world, would be key to establishing film as a dominant cultural pursuit and participating studios as huge sources of revenue.[58] On the other side of the nascent business, it also became clear to the myriad of film equipment manufacturers that they could sell more cameras, printers, editing decks and other associated equipment if they made them compliant with the dominant standard. A mutually-reinforcing process was set in motion which quickly established 35mm, 4-perferation, Academy-ratio film as the de-facto standard for commercial film production and distribution.

A number of competing standards quickly fell by the wayside as trade and industry bodies, commercial standards organisations and film studios adhered to the 35mm format and not even the intervention of an anti-competition ban in the US in 1917[59] could halt the, by then, fully established form of the commercial film base. However, in response to a number of demands and forces from outwith commercial film production, ancillary standards did emerge in the years following the standardisation of commercial film production. In response to the perceived threat of television in the 1950s, a number of producers and studios revived aborted prior attempts to establish a market for widescreen cinema, based on a number of technologies which exploited larger-gauge film, chiefly 70mm.[60] For a number of reasons the widescreen revolution failed to gain commercial traction, and although the shape of the cinema image was changed, much widescreen cinema remained locked within the standard 35mm gauge.[61]

The Development of Sub-Gauge Film Stocks

[58] Enticknap, *Moving Image Technology*, p.45. This drive has also been behind the need to standardise in home entertainment formats to maximise studio revenue – hence, VHS over Betamax, Bluray disc over HD-DVD.
[59] The Supreme Court decision to disband the Motion Pictures Patent Company, established in 1908 by the Edison company, a variety of other interested American organisations and one European film company – Pathé – to restrict the application of camera equipment and film stock patents. See Enticknap, *ibid.*, 48-49.
[60] Belton, *Widescreen Cinema*, 50.
[61] In a move which reinforces the points made about the power of standardisation, theatres resisted the cost of outfitting projection booths to support widescreen formats (including surround sound) and the new widescreen picture became largely facilitated by masking of standard 35mm gauge film.

A more successful innovation was the introduction of a number of smaller-gauge film stocks for non-commercial use. While members of the commercial industry were quickly arranging for the formation of the 35mm standard for film production, a number of smaller concerns introduced camera equipment – aimed chiefly at the amateur and enthusiast – which used a range of non-standard film stocks, ranging from 9.5mm to 17.5mm.[62] Almost to prove the point of the larger companies, the fact that these film stocks and associated equipment were not interoperable with each other, meant that most of these innovations had very short and unsuccessful lifespans. With the exception of Pathé-Frères 9.5mm amateur format – and only, then, in Europe – no amateur format gained traction until the involvement of the same company who had been so instrumental in the success of 35mm. Kodak introduced its own 16mm amateur system in 1923, as a package of camera, projector and an arrangement to sell and process stock, designed to be self-contained, in an effort to simplify the process of filming for the amateur and hobbyist.[63]

Another aspect which drove the development of the Kodak 16mm stock was the need to move from nitrate to a less flammable base. The use of nitrate in film stock had led to a number of tragic fires in projection situations and the formation of a number of regulatory bodies and controls in response – such as the British Board of Film Censors in the UK.[64] The dangers inherent in nitrate film stocks had led to the formation of opinion in the commercial film industry that such film stocks should not be made available to amateurs. Instead, less flammable bases such as acetate were employed in stocks designed to be used in domestic and other non-commercial situations.

Sub-Gauge Stock in Practice

This practical issue was one example of the ways in which the commercial industry set the tone regarding the acceptable usage of film in amateur situations, but such prosaic concerns were soon joined by more ideological ones. Zimmermann identifies a process of soft-propaganda waged through hobbyist magazines and other literature aimed at the film hobbyist, designed to demarcate what was acceptable in amateur film practice.[65] An

[62] Enticknap, *Moving Image Technology*, p.66.
[63] *Ibid.*, p.67.
[64] An industry self-regulatory body established in 1913, see Tom Dewe Matthews, *Censored* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994), 24.
[65] Zimmermann, *Reel* Families, 40.

emphasis was placed on "pictorialism" and the range of subjects restricted to those of what she terms the "home mode" of earlier forms such as photography: family events and rituals. Magazine commentary – often written by Hollywood film professionals – often stressed the amateur's duty to capture reality realistically, to avoid 'artifice', which should remain the provenance of the commercial feature film.

Despite these attempts to restrict the field of amateur film practice, many middle- and upper-class cinematographers utilised small-gauge film technology to capture the details of industrial settings and manual workers. Though often funded and supported by management of such companies, these works remain a valuable historical record of labour conditions in the early 20th century. Many of these works have the effect – through the camera's mechanical capture of similarly mechanised and repetitive labour – of utilising film technology to critique the methods and practice of a then-emerging late-capitalist industry. Given the social background of many of the filmmakers, the extent to which this was intended may be disputed, but this perhaps suggests some of the innate capabilities of film to engage with and counteract some of the ideologies of capitalism, and explains the reluctance of the film industry to allow technology to be used in this manner. Other more explicitly politically-engaged filmmakers used amateur film technology to document labour rallies and events. In addition, given the emerging link between film censorship and the dangers of nitrate, amateur film stocks were often used to disseminate politically radical material in some territories.[66]

Kodak broadened the market for sub-35mm film stocks in 1932 by splitting existing 16mm in two to create a new standard: 8mm. The increased reduction in manufacturing and processing resulted in broadening the commercial appeal of filmmaking to amateurs and hobbyists. During the 1930s both formats continued to thrive with the emergence of amateur film societies showing reduction prints of commercial fiction films in community arenas such as town halls.[67] A number of companies were formed in the US and Europe which acted parasitically on Hollywood film studios in establishing rental libraries of titles which could be made available on a mail-order basis to societies and individuals, to be projected domestically – anticipating the later VHS rental market, in shape if not quite in scope.[68] Markets such as these were facilitated by continued advance both in film stock –

[66] Heather Norris Nicholson, "As if by Magic," in *Mining the Home* Movie, eds. Ishikuza & Zimmermann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 215.
[67] Heather Norris Nicholson, *Amateur Film: Meaning and Practice 1927-77* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 5.
[68] This author, who was born in 1972, spent many Saturday afternoons watching reduction prints of Disney films, which were projected in a local community centre in a small Scottish town.

with the development of Super 8, which provided more picture space within the existing film – and in innovations which allowed synchronised soundtracks.[69] Proceeding alongside these advances for amateur and hobbyist use of film was a greater use of film in industrial, educational and scientific spheres. Lighter and more economic film equipment and stock allowed schools, businesses and researchers to utilise film for both the recording of moving imagery and its replay as an educational tool.[70]

Finally, perhaps the most important area impacted by smaller gauge film technologies was journalism. Newsreels had been produced using 35mm technology from the earliest period of film's commercial popularity in the western world, but now the lightweight and economical equipment facilitated by the smaller-gauge stock allowed film-based journalism to go to more inhospitable and remote locations and capture footage. Much as lightweight 16mm cameras began to be used in commercial fiction films to capture "trick shots" and footage in situations and angles which were difficult for bulky studio cameras[71], the same cameras were utilised by news-men and –women in remote locations and war-zones, where mobility was mandatory and, occasionally, life-preserving. Similarly, small-gauge film technology was heavily utilised – particularly in the Second World War – as the principal source of government-sanctioned news, i.e. propaganda.[72] I will return in more detail to uses of small-gauge film technology in journalism below.

As has been briefly summarised here, small-gauge film technology had a wide and diverse impact on several spheres of life in, particularly the western, developed economies, in the first half of the twentieth century. In the post-war years this continued, with small-gauge technology utilised by artists and film-cooperatives, a continuing market for reduction prints of films, domestic 'home mode' moviemaking and increased utilisation of 16mm film in news and documentary production. Though it's arguable to what extent such technologies were in any significant way ubiquitous to the average cinema-goer in this and later periods, as I will now show below, filmmakers utilised the capabilities and characteristics (as well as audience associations) of these technologies within narrative fiction film. Filmmakers allowed some of the nimbleness, promiscuity and egalitarian

[69] The oldest UK-based distributor of small-gauge reduction prints closed as recently as 2011. Richard Hollis, *"Derann – 8mm Movie Moguls," The Dark Side*, 181 (January 2017): 57.
[70] Zimmermann, *Reel Families,* 116.
[71] Enticknap, *Moving Image* Technology, 36-37.
[72] Barry Salt, *Film, Style & Technology* (London: Starword, 1992), 229.

nature of these explicitly “amateur” formats to infect the previously stolid and homogenous world of commercial 35mm film.

Part 1 – Narrative Incorporation

If a number of filmmakers have utilised or referenced small-gauge film technologies and practice in film, in what ways have they done so, and to what effect? In this section I will concentrate on the effect on film narrative. Of course, it's eminently possible to construct a narrative wholly using sub-35mm film stock – several theatrically-released films have been shot on, for example, 16mm, and have been 'blown-up' to 35mm for exhibition.[73] Despite this, 8mm or 16mm tends not to be regarded as a format suitable to narrative fiction film. Instead it is associated with home movie-making, with story content confined to domestic rituals such as weddings or birthday parties. Small-gauge film also tends to be associated with a number of non-commercial, art-film contexts in which approaches may tend to accentuate formal characteristics and aesthetic effect over the construction of regular narratives. However, despite ideological assumptions or prescriptions that small-gauge is best suited for pictorialist capture of domestic events or avant-garde endeavour in film-cooperatives, standard narratives of the type developed in the classical Hollywood cinema have been produced throughout the lifespan of 8mm and 16mm formats in a number of contexts. What I will examine here is what takes place when a standard, commercial, narrative feature film is punctuated with sequences originating from sub-35mm stock or the practices associated with it.

Not many films of this type simply interrupt the flow of the overarching film with small-gauge film footage. Mixed-media works which move through sequences shot on different stock usually do so for aesthetic effect, which situates this activity more in the art or experimental film than commercial cinema. When standard narrative fiction film incorporates scenes from sub-35mm stock it usually prepares an audience for shifts in perspective and in aesthetics through exposition – simply, the film contextualises such moments in advance. Often this is performed through the narrative inclusion of the means through which such imagery is or will be produced: the film itself, cameras and those characters who will operate them. Alternatively, in films where these characters and devices are not presented in advance, the provenance of any footage shown is likely to provoke key questions which will drive narrative, such as, where did this footage come from, who shot it, and why?

[73] Selected high-profile examples – *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), *Clerks* (1994), *Alice in the Cities* (1974).

This foregrounding or 'hypermediacy' of the incorporated camera technology expands cinematic space – from the events and locations which appear in front of the standard 35mm film camera to the space in front *and behind* the incorporated small-gauge film camera. Typically, the film is concerned not only with the events from the footage which is included, but with the meaning of the footage, which almost always includes the characters and circumstances surrounding its production. The footage is often shot and presented in such a way that provokes audience extra-textual knowledge of filmmaking on these formats: whether that knowledge comes first-hand, from home movie-making, or second-hand, from viewing documentary or news footage. The camera is mobile in a way which is relatable – it doesn't glide like a studio dolly or Steadicam shot, in an immediate[74], non-obtrusive manner – it may shake when handheld, lose focus or zoom erratically in a way which we identify with its operation by an in-diegesis character. The incorporated small-gauge footage is of the world; not simply a window through which the director allows us to see into it.

[74] 'Immediacy' – the medium does not intervene between spectator and object; 'hypermediacy' – the medium makes itself evident in rendering the object. See Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*.

***Peeping Tom* (Michael Powell, 1960)**

Peeping Tom opens with a close-up shot of an eye opening – the very blue eye of the film's protagonist, Mark. However, this is closely followed by another close-up of what is arguably the film's true POV – the lens of Mark's Bell and Howell Filmo 16mm camera. In this opening sequence and the ones which follow, Powell deftly outlines the nature of his protagonist's scopophilia and utilises the incorporation of the (putatively[75]) 16mm footage he shoots and screens to play with spectatorial point-of-view and narrative chronology.

Figure 1: Cinema's remediation of the small-gauge camera viewfinder

To return to the opening scene, as Mark approaches a prostitute on a dark London street, he conceals his camera within his overcoat and switches it on. From this point there are a number of shots which are framed within a matte approximating a camera viewfinder (*figure 1*). It is important to note that these shots are not representative of Mark's point-of-view, as the camera is hidden within Mark's coat at torso-level, in a position where he cannot look through the viewfinder. Despite this, as the prostitute talks to Mark she addresses her look into the camera lens, rather than above it, at his face. Later in the

[75] The level of image definition, colour and contrast in the imagery which purports to be from Mark's 16mm camera suggests it is, in reality, shot on the same 35mm stock as the overarching film.

sequence [2:18], as Mark and the woman move up the stairs to her apartment, another woman descending also looks directly into the concealed lens, rather than at Mark's face. This is not a directorial oversight of the kind that are too readily apparent in the slew of cheap "found-footage" horror films which followed the runaway success of films such as *The Blair Witch Project* (1999). This is a wholly intended directorial choice by one of the masters of British post-war cinema. This scene is played out wholly for the camera – the camera is addressed throughout, it is not a bystander to the crime that Mark commits. The camera – and, by extension, the spectator – is directly implicated.

To reinforce this sense of spectatorial complicity, the director sacrifices a measure of realism in the way that the camera is utilised. Powell departs from realism in this scene in the way that Mark is seemingly able to move the camera from its concealed position – with no access to the viewfinder – to, for example, pan up and down the woman's legs [1:30]. He also moves the camera to look towards a dustbin, as he discards an empty film container [2:00] – a moment of cinematic exposition which seems to work against the realistic depiction of amateur practice, as there is nothing in this moment which seems related to Mark's pathology (*figure 2*).

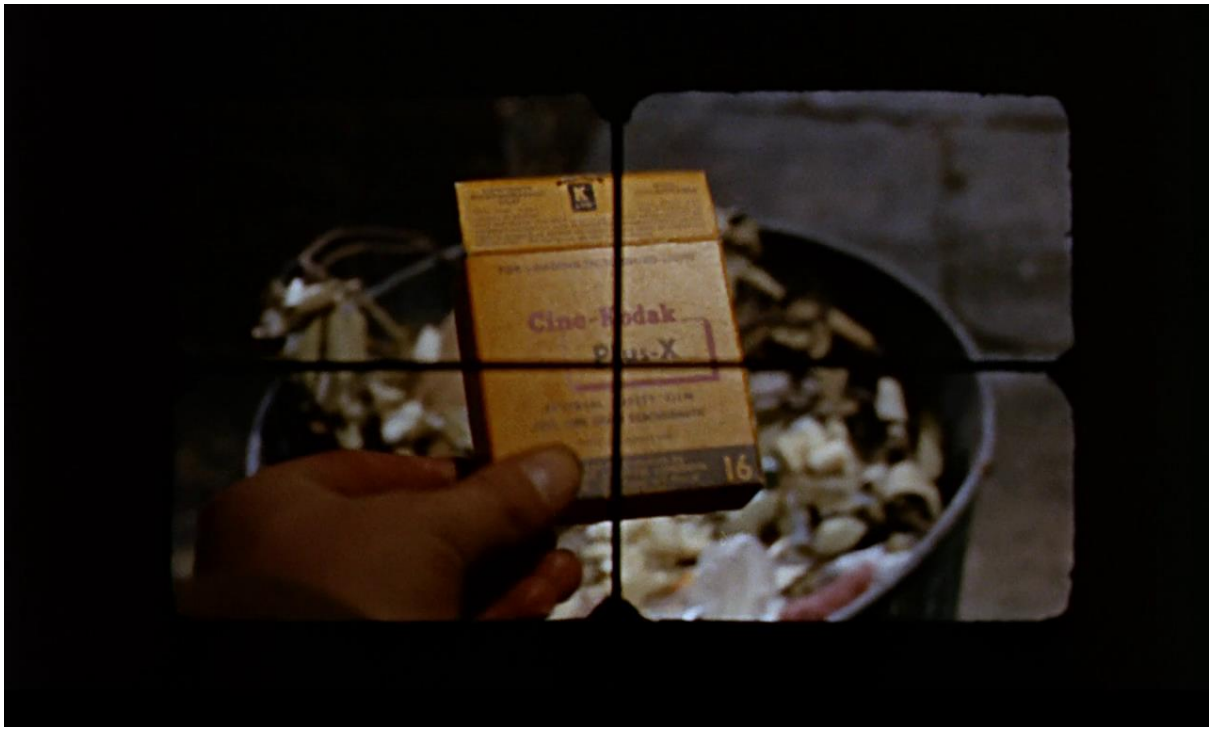

Figure 2: Narrative exposition over psychological realism.

He also subtly foreshadows the following scene by disturbing the temporal order of this otherwise, wholly real-time sequence. Immediately following this shot of the dustbin, there

is an edit [2:03] to a shot of the woman unlocking the door, which may prompt the perceptive viewer to speculate whether they are watching a screening of this footage, rather than being an accomplice to its production.[76] Nevertheless, as this scene draws to its conclusion, there is a moment where the materiality of the camera – rather than a sense of its omniscience – is reiterated. As the woman undresses, the camera tilts and Mark's hand moves in front of the lens, as a click signifies that he has made some sort of modification (as we learn later, he has unsheathed the blade hidden in the tripod leg). This moment of disruption of the omniscient gaze reminds the spectator of the material contingency of the small camera in this scene – and that Mark, rather than they, is responsible for both its operation, and the moment of violence which is about to take place.

As Mark's camera moves towards the increasingly agitated woman, her screams are transformed into the shrill, high-pitched mechanism driving a projector, which now appears on screen, and the film on which it unspools is – in the next cut – revealed to be his document of this latest murder. Mark is shown sitting to one side of the projector as the black-and-white image is projected in a darkened room. Another cut eliminates him from shot and the spectator is left with the screen in a mise-en-abyme presentation as extra-diegetic music appears on the soundtrack and the film's credits are overlaid on the image [3:33]. The sense of temporal disruption instilled in the spectator, in the smash-cut forward from the murder to its replay in another context, is further complicated by the move from an embodied, implicated sense of presence, in the use of the Bell & Howell camera, to the explicit reminder that we are not just watching a film-within-a-film with Mark, but that Mark is merely a character in a fiction film made by a list of credited craftsmen and women (*figure 3*).

[76] There is nothing in the rest of the film to indicate that Mark edits the murder scenes in any way, which marks this as Powell's edit, not Mark's.

Figure 3: It's only a movie

Long before its employ as ballyhoo for exploitation horror films such as *The Last House of the Left* (1972), Powell asks his audience to remind themselves that "It's only a movie", in this case twice over – as he draws the spectator back from their uncomfortable implication in a filmed murder, to its distanced, frozen replay on Mark's private screen and then, once again, back into their seats in the theatre, watching a fiction film.

These opening minutes not only introduce us to the film's protagonist and his pathology, but serve as a sampler and key to reading Powell's methods and modes through the rest of the film. He doesn't draw the spectator back from the first murder scene to excuse them from responsibility, rather he executes a vertiginous ascent from the depths of Mark's psychopathy and technologically-enabled worldview, through its realisation on celluloid, and equates it with the spectator's motivations in watching such material in the cinema. It's made clear throughout the film that cinema – and especially its attendant technological base – operates as a fetish for Mark. He jealously guards his collection of cameras and equipment in a darkened room hidden away from the rest of his apartment by a curtain. Even when his quasi-sexual relationship with cinema is threatened by Helen's attentions his relationship with her is complicated by it, such as when he continually checks his watch when speaking to her [50:20] as his latest film is developing. He physically reacts to screenings of the murders he has committed – in the first instance

[4:30], appearing to experience some kind of climax at the moment of death, and later [1:15:00], expressing frustration that a scene is "no good" as he collapses forward onto the screen in exhaustion. It's clear that Powell is partly drawing parallels with the fascination that cinema has on the kind of "chained, captured, or captivated"[77] patrons of which early theorists of film spectatorship wrote, infusing it with a sexualised reading which became common in criticism in the 1970s.[78] That he is choosing to do so through the figure of the "amateur" and the tools of amateur film-making also stresses the influence of *eros* over utility, given the etymological base of such a designation.

However, if we draw back from the larger thematic implications of Powell's use of amateur film for a moment, we can see that using it in film narrative serves another more expedient and story-driven purpose. Helen is a crucial figure in *Peeping Tom*, not just because she introduces conflict which drives Mark forward into the final moment of crisis, but also as trigger for a scene of narrative exposition, which is facilitated almost solely through film-enabled flashback. She is first admitted into Mark's 'inner sanctum' when she arrives to bring him a slice of birthday cake. She asks to see one of his films – specifically, the viewing she has interrupted, which is footage Mark has taken of the police removing the body of the prostitute from her flat. Mark shows her instead some 'home movies', footage his father had taken of him when he was a child. This footage, along with Mark's terse responses to Helen's questions, outlines the nature of his relationship with his father, which is heavily suggested as causal to his current psychopathy and character.

The home movie footage is in black and white and initially the sharp image definition indicates that the source is more likely to be 35mm gauge than a sub-35mm format. However, beginning with the sequence with Mark spying on the lovers in a neighbouring garden [22:55], the image betrays some damage, with a number of scratches and evidence of dirt (*figure 4*).

[77] Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinema Apparatus," 44.
[78] See Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*.

Figure 4: Home Movies

Given that this footage was created expressly for use in *Peeping Tom* and features Powell as Mark's father and Powell's son as Mark, these signs of print neglect or ageing must have been imprinted onto the newly-shot footage by Powell and his production team. These effects reinforce the sense that this is footage from the relatively distant past – especially when compared with the other footage which Mark watches, which he does, literally, as soon as the film is dry.[79] This sequence, which is edited to deliver a series of crucial plot points as efficiently as the maintenance of contextual credibility will allow, compresses several events in Mark's childhood: his father's experiments; the development of his voyeurism; the death of his mother and her replacement in a step-mother; his first camera, a present from his father. That this reel of footage relates the plot information in such a compressed and focused way has two possible readings: either Mark has edited the footage together in self-recognition of each event's importance to who he has become, or Powell, once again departing from strict realism, has assembled this reel in service to narrative economy. To stress this point, if Mark has not edited the footage, we are led to accept that Mark's father only filmed these crucial events in Mark's childhood and nothing else. Each scene also contains edits which alter perspective, either introducing close-ups

[79] In a rhyme of the earlier scene where Mark continually checks his watch while speaking to Helen in his kitchen, as his film is developing in the darkroom, while out at a restaurant with her Mark again obsessively keeps time as – in an insert shot – the film is hung out to dry [1:10:00].

such as the lizard which is dropped on to the sleeping Mark [23:57], or reaction shots. These flashback scenes, though containing material which bears some resemblance to the standard usage of small-gauge, amateur movie-making (scenes of childhood, a birthday) are expressly cinematic in their incorporation of techniques from commercial cinema. They also contain scenes which would not usually be captured by home movie-makers, such as a child viewing a dead parent [25:45] or spying unseen on the intimacy of others, topics considered outwith the 'home mode' of domestic photography. All of this marks this footage out as a construct – an assembly of scenes which fakes the appearance of home movie-making, but is wholly subservient to the storytelling needs of the overarching and incorporating film.

This 'document' of Mark's childhood is a kind of filmic summary of the events which have directly led to his current obsessions – it is a kind of origin story. It is mirrored in two ways in the film. It has an academic corollary in the leather-bound textbooks which line the bookshelves in Mark's apartment, which document his father's research and may help explain his dilemma, if not suggest a resolution. Also, it serves as a template for the documentary project which Mark undertakes, presumably to explain himself to the world, the 'evidence' he will leave behind to tell his own story, if not justify his actions. Mark films each of his murders, but he also films the reaction to their discovery, as if he were both director and compiler of his film's EPK[80] or DVD special features. In addition to the aforementioned filming of the police's recovery of the prostitute from her flat, Mark films the discovery of the dead body of a colleague he has murdered and left in a trunk on the set of the film he works on. In Mark's private screening room he has an archetypical director's chair with his name stitched on the canvas back rest; in his professional life he is a tertiary presence on the set of a beleaguered, low-budget British comedy, a 'mere' focus-puller, an underling to a *professional* cameraman and director. Though he tells Helen he "hope[s] to be director very soon" [18:42], in reality he is one of many young hopefuls in a cynically-presented business, discussing the latest films at "The Everyman" with colleagues in coffee shops and staying after hours at the studio to shoot on loose-ends with aspiring understudies. Perhaps unlike most of his colleagues, however, Mark is actually making his own movie. That he describes it as a documentary marks it off from the frivolity and banality of the fiction film we see him work on, which is comically undermined by the inadequacy of its lead actor. The women in Mark's film are not acting, he insists on

[80] Electronic Press Kit – an assembly of behind-the-scenes material and cast interviews commonly given out to press to help market a film on release.

absolute authenticity and is only thwarted by the incapacity of the camera to capture a truth which dies when "the lights fade too soon." [1:14:48]

Mark spends the latter third of *Peeping Tom* under increasing suspicion by the police, but in most other senses his amateur filmmaking is pursued with freedom from interference from any authority other than himself. He undertakes his work in solitude – either concealing his camera from his victims until their final moments, or pretending to be a news photographer at the subsequent crime scene.[81] He screens dailies in private and it's clear that he doesn't intend to be around for any public premiere. The one moment where he almost encounters public censure is when he is interviewed by the police at the film studio. He brazenly films them with his Bell & Howell and even hands the camera over to the inspector when requested, although he is extremely agitated until it is returned (*figure 5*).

Figure 5: Mark is nothing without his camera

Blithely unaware of the subversive or corrupting influence that filming has on Mark ("all this filming isn't healthy", remarks Helen's *blind* mother [1:18:15]), the police require further nudging from another professional – the psychologist who attends the studio following the discovery of Viv's body in a trunk. When they finally corner Mark in his

[81] In the best joke of the film, Mark responds to a question concerning which organisation he works for with the line, "The Observer".

attic studio, one of them shouts, "It's only a camera" [1:38:46], as glass tumbles onto them from a punched-out window, from which Mark films them. To the police in *Peeping Tom* the amateur cameraman is an unthreatening hobbyist – why, he wouldn't even harm a fly.[82]

[82] The film has obvious similarities to *Psycho* (1960) and to a number of auteur-helmed self-reflexive works made around the same time, including Fellini's *8 1/2* (1963) and Henri-Georges Clouzot's aborted *L'Enfer* (1964).

Amateur vs Professional Practice in *Amator* (Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1979)

As long as his filmmaking is hidden, confined to the domestic home, or cloaked in the veneer of accepted professional practice, *Peeping Tom*'s Mark does not draw attention to himself or his camera. In Kieslowski's *Amator*, by contrast, Filip's increasingly aspirational attitude to amateur filmmaking *does* cause problems for various authorities, whose spheres of protected influence are punctuated by his unauthorised endeavours. His initial motivation does place his filmmaking practice in the 'home mode'. Purchasing a simple Russian Kwarc 8mm camera, he plans to document the early life of his new-born daughter – "month by month" [6:52]. Even at this early stage, however, he comes into conflict with his wife who resents the intervention the camera makes into their domestic life. When she returns with the baby to their small apartment, Filip asks he to leave and re-enter with the baby as he has forgotten to film the moment, which she refuses, claiming that filming this would be "a bad omen" [11:50]. This is a prophetic response, given the wedge that filmmaking will place between them in the future.

However, it is when Filip's employer becomes aware of his filmmaking that the conflict between his amateur auteur-ism and the demands of officially sanctioned professional practice first becomes apparent. He is asked to film the firm's upcoming jubilee event and is initially reluctant, saying, "I've only just bought the camera. I wouldn't know how." [13:10]. By this point he has shown himself to be comfortable, even compelled, when it comes to filming domestic events, but he approaches a semi-professional commission with trepidation. Significantly, the film stock to be used to film the event is to be purchased from the firm's "culture budget", so it is from this point that Filip begins to relinquish his control of the means of production (*figure 6*).

Figure 6: The means of production

The term "culture" also automatically shifts the definition of what he produces from the realm of amateurism and the ephemeral to a realm where produce is assigned worth and economic, social and cultural value. His agreement with the firm's manager[83] becomes a verbal contract, sealed with a handshake, which an assistant is asked to witness. This contract will ultimately prove to be somewhat Faustian.

The initial interventions in his films comes in two forms of censorship. The first is motivated by the organisation's need to have the final say on what content is presented within the film. Filip is asked to remove all scenes which feature one of the party members – whether this is due to the individual's subsequent removal from the company/party or his inappropriate presence at the event is left open to question. Filip is also asked to remove the scenes he films of party members leaving the boardroom to smoke in the bathrooms

[83] His actual title is "director", which may just be a prosaically-accurate detail, but is significant in the way in which he intervenes in Filip's films.

(*figure 7*). The preservation of an impression of professionalism and propriety is sought over any representation of reality.

Figure 7: Filip films the board members smoking

The second type of censorship is more aesthetic in its motivation. Barred from filming in the boardroom, Filip waits outside and films a number of whimsical scenes from the upstairs window – including some workers play-acting a fight and pigeons squabbling over breadcrumbs on the windowsill. These scenes of everyday life are excised at the company director's request and – though we may sympathise with his presumed view that they are inappropriate to a piece of company promotion – it is clear that through these instructions Filip's authorship of the film is completely undermined. When the company director subsequently arranges for the film to be entered into a competition for amateur filmmaking in Lodz, this draws Filip further into the realm of the professional film-maker, as it exposes him to a number of cultural bodies and individuals who all have their own opinions on what should motivate his filmmaking practice. The figure who introduces Filip into this world is an attractive woman from the Amateur Film Federation, who – in what is subtly suggested to be a dream sequence – Filip kisses in a restaurant on his visit to the

film competition. This brief moment of fantasy and the slightly fish-out-of-water behaviour of Filip in the city, accentuates the transformation which these events precipitate in his attitude to film-making. The plant's director continues to fund improvements in their filmmaking capabilities – including the addition of a small lab/screening room and the purchase of a Krasnogorsk-3 16mm wind-up camera with a zoom lens – but raises the stakes of his involvement in the enterprise by subsequently requesting full script approval for any films made using the equipment (*figure 8*).

Figure 8: Filip negotiates with his 'patrons'

What clearly emerges in the exchanges Filip has with the cultural authorities in his trips to the city is a conflict between competing ideological views of what localised, non-professional filmmakers represent when they capture scenes of everyday domestic and, particularly, social and workplace situations. During the panel discussion at the amateur festival the representative from the TV station says:

> "[The films] reveal a knowledge of life drawn from TV and newsreels, not from personal experience. It is the duty of television to broadcast certain things – Amateurs have no such duty, you can do what you like. That's where your strength lies. I can't believe your life consists solely of meetings, ovations, presentations, parades and civil

> defence exercises. On the other hand, I'm sure you could make films about yourselves and about your workmates who work really hard to keep us all fed." [41:34]

This criticism of the films which have been shown, including Filip's, is based on an ideological opinion of the potential for amateur film – films made outside of the institutional demands of television, etc. – to reveal the reality of life for everyday working men and women. The reality of Filip's situation – as we have seen earlier in the film – is that his films are already made with accommodations to a set of prescriptions imposed by the company which part-funds and provides the subject of his work. Writing about a similar production context in the UK amateur film-making scene in the mid-twentieth century, Nicholson identifies similar strictures:

> … middle-class enthusiasts saw industrial or technical topics as a means to combine filmmaking with philanthropic or local commercial interests. Gaining permission or being invited to film on an industrial site might fulfil a local civic or social as well as a personal interest. Sometimes, hobbyists were able to justify or support— at times both— their costly pastime by producing industrial footage that might "instruct, inspire and entertain" or simply advertise local business activity. Films could thus combine various objectives: as long as footage was acceptable to the enthusiastic local sponsor or amenable company…[84]

Filip is a working-class man operating within an institution and is permitted to document it only so far as the outcomes serve one of the aims identified by Nicholson – in this instance, to promote the company, if not commercially, certainly in ways which reinforce the position of the management within existing Communist Party structures of the time. As such, although he subsequently takes the admonishment of the TV representative to heart, his initial forays into documentary filmmaking are curtailed by the narrow bounds set on his ability to engage with reality, and his license to employ a personal voice.

When he does attempt to focus on the lives of individual workers he picks a disabled worker, which provokes the ire of the company director. His motives are questioned – whether he is exploiting the worker's disability in order to gain attention and (as indeed does happen in this instance) a television commission. Kieslowski does achieve a sense of balance in the way that he allows some sympathy for the company official and allows the spectator to question Filip's self-expressed integrity, as he is simultaneously influenced and compromised by figures on all sides. The film calls into question whether even a supposedly 'innocent' figure – such as the amateur, motivated by his love of what he does and the simplicity of his subjects – can truly represent any event realistically and without bias. As Filip moves from 8mm to 16mm and from local screenings to television

[84] Heather Norris Nicholson, "As if by Magic," 215.

exposure, his voice remains compromised, but even his intentions begin to lose focus. His final piece of filmmaking references one of the great apocryphal stories of illusionism of the modern age – the Potemkin Village.[85]

Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

Figure 13

[85] A famous, but possibly highly exaggerated, account of Grigory Potemkin's attempt to convince Russian Empress Catherine II of the happiness of her subjects by erecting painted wooden villages on the banks of the river where she was undertaking a tour.

Local party officials have decorated the front of a group of terraces in Filip's town, to make them more visually appealing to visitors, while leaving the rear in squalor. Taking the company's new 16mm camera, which requires that he employ an assistant to direct him while filming with the heavy machine, he shoots the renovated front of the building (*figure 9*), then moves backwards (*figure* 10) through the dark close (*figure* 11) into the area in the rear of the building (*figure 12*), revealing the hypocrisy of the partial renovation (*figure 13*). The felicity of the mobile camera is employed to capture the sense of contrast in a single shot, punctuating the illusion. Spurred on by the middle-class intellectuals in Lodz, Filip exposes the conditions in which working people live in the town. Ultimately, however, this activity has dire consequences. Filip's truth-seeking or self-aggrandisement (Kieslowski leaves room for both interpretations) results in the sacking of his friend and the threat of removal of funds for further town development from the Party. Film is revealed as just another tool for telling sides of a story, an illusion like any other:

> In turning selected streets into facades, Soviet rulers adopted the eighteenth-century technique of creating a fake reality. But, the twentieth century brought with it a much more effective technology for creating fake realities – cinema. By replacing the windows of a carriage or car with a screen showing projected images, cinema opened up new possibilities for simulation.[86]

The part-renovated terraces are a simulation of the good quality accommodation that the Party would like to suggest exists for working people in towns like Filip's. However, Filip's film exposé of this is only a partial representation of the reality of the more subtle financial negotiation which – the company director explains – exists between the town officials and Party managers. Film's capacity – and, especially, the aspiring amateur's ability – to capture such subtleties on celluloid is called into question. This is a common theme in films which feature film journalism, as I shall explore further below.

[86] Manovich, *The Language of New* Media, 146.

Part 2 – Format Specificity

If filmmakers feature sequences shot on small-gauge film stocks, or refer to practices associated with sub-35mm gauge film, to transform narrative and alter spectatorial point-of-view, in what ways does this also represent or remediate these technologies? As I have shown from the example of *Peeping Tom* above, works of cinema can pretend to feature footage from small-gauge film stock, but choose to simply utilise the same 35mm grade celluloid which forms the material base of the overarching footage instead. Or it may use 35mm and imprint format markers which audiences may associate with features of small-gauge film. One way it may do so is to present an image with characteristics of ageing or disrepair, such as tears, dirt, speckling and scratches. Small-gauge film practice has often been concentrated in non-commercial contexts, where the lack of intrinsic economic value has led to film being discarded or preserved in sub-optimal conditions. Thus, as spectators, we have become accustomed to viewing much of this material in a literally degraded form, whether it is featured within a historical documentary or retrieved from a family member's attic. These film stocks also have intrinsic characteristics which mark them out as different from 35mm, chiefly image detail – simply, the smaller frame area results in a reduction in image clarity when projected.[87] 8mm has less detail than 16mm, obviously, and was designed as an economical format for amateur use. The 16mm specification was the first successful amateur format, but came into wider use when it was deemed the least acceptable frame size capable of retaining an image comparable to that which could be achieved on television.[88] Accompanying many of the commercially available instances of these formats has been clearly identifiable characteristics which may provoke audience recognition when featured within films or other media – for example, the fact that 8mm colour stock was widely available from Kodak for amateur production in the 1930s[89], has meant that audiences are familiar with grainy, brightly-coloured images from wide use in historical documentaries.

Whether cinema does incorporate footage from actual sub-35mm stock or fakes its format markers, what effect does the change in aesthetic appearance have on these sequences? The spectator may experience a sudden shift in perspective – this is no longer the view of the omniscient film director, perhaps, instead the point-of-view is displaced

[87] Depending on screen size, obviously – this is the reason why a smaller gauge could be successful in non-commercial settings where screen size is likely to be markedly smaller than in a cinema.
[88] Enticknap, *Moving Image* Technology, 70.
[89] Zimmermann, *Reel Families,* 63.

onto one of the characters from the diegesis. That the sub-35mm gauge film often utilises light-weight camera equipment which facilitates a mobile, nimble view of the cinematic mise-en-scène may confer greater narrative information. Spaces presented in carefully-composed ways in the overarching film can be explored and penetrated by the mobile camera in ways which may make them seem more real to the spectator. Characters within these spaces may be presented with a greater sense of presence than in more static cinematic practice, where they are simply pinned to an art-directed background. This is one possible outcome; another is that the mobile camera may confuse the spectator, it can be subject to rapid movement, judder and damage that can actively obscure surroundings and events which can be utilised for affect in a number of ways.

The associations the audience has with footage of this type may lead them to view this incorporated footage in an evidentiary light, as when both the actual "Zapruder footage" and its staged recreations are featured with Oliver Stone's *JFK* (1991). The appearance of this type of footage may have a focusing effect on audiences, the shift suggesting that something of narrative significance is about to be revealed. This may often occur in footage which purports to be from the distant past – extending back further than the chronology of the incorporating narrative – and revealing a past event which will unlock some conundrum in the cinematic present. An audience's potential association of newsreel or journalism with these types of images can be exploited to either verify or question the truth-value of events presented in these sequences. These associations may be an inevitable result of audience exposure to newsreel, television news and journalism over the decades. However, a number of films have utilised the technology of the film journalist and documentarian to critique the simple equation between image and reality in these contexts. In the sections below I'll begin with some cautionary history concerning the history of newsreel film, before moving on to films which utilise the enabling technology and practices of journalists and documentarians to pose questions concerning the ethics and authority of their work.

Small-Gauge Formats in Practice – Newsreel, Documentary and Journalism

In the first decade of the twentieth century, as the embryonic cinema continued to evolve into the form in which it became most successful and profitable – fictional feature-length narratives – one avenue pursued by producers was the 'News Film', which later evolved into a shorter form which could play between longer-form entertainments – the 'Newsreel'.[90] These short film reels purported to show some of the major newsworthy events of the day - from armed conflict and natural disasters, to famous trials and sporting events. There were several problems with this in practice, if not in concept. The independent companies producing these reels were not connected in any way with existing news organisations working in established media such as print, so they did not have access to the national and global infrastructure which these organisations utilised to quickly and accurately report from events as and when they occurred.[91] The other problem was the unwieldy nature of film technology in the early 20th century – large, heavy and expensive camera equipment with flammable film stock (which could not be sent through regular mail channels). Producers solved this problem by re-staging actual events for the camera. Fielding identifies the first recorded instance of this in 1894, with the restaging of a boxing match for the purposes of a News-Film, but also states that: "Apparently there was not a single major film producer in the period 1894-1900 that did not fake news films as a matter of common practice."[92] This continued to some extent throughout the life span of newsreel, which continued to play between features until the late 60s in the US. Outright restaging of real events gradually decreased as both lightweight camera technology and the development of more professionalised film crews spread across the globe, making possible the capture of events as they happened by multiple filmmakers.

The faking of imagery was not the only way in which reality was tampered with, however. Early film technology ensured that much of the imagery was shot without synchronised sound and the requirement to make brief segments intelligible to an audience meant that intertitles and voice-over were added, which could distort or transform the meaning of events and the speech of individuals. With the launch of the *March of Time* series of newsreels from 1935, the balance of reportage shifted from the raw presentation of events to a more editorialised and cinematic presentation of news. Regularly featuring

[90] Raymond Fielding, *The American Newsreel* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2006), 145.
[91] *Ibid.*, p.28
[92] *Ibid.*, p.26

staged recreations, and focusing occasionally on controversial subjects or the lives of celebrities rather than statesmen, *The March of Time* was clearly marketed to film exhibitors as part of their total entertainment offering, rather than a serious attempt to educate and elucidate on topics and events of the day.[93]

Operating at the other end of the scale, at least in principal, were 'serious' practitioners of documentary film, such as the filmmakers assembled under the GPO Film Unit in the United Kingdom and figures such as Robert Flaherty in the US. Operating in what has since been referred to the 'expository' mode[94], these works utilise devices such as voice-over to lead an audience through a series of filmed events in a way which attempts to educate the spectator and expose the subject in a transparent and direct manner. The potential for such an approach to fall prey to the partial subjectivity of the filmmaker led to subsequent documentary modes, such as "[o]bservational documentary [which] arose from the availability of more mobile, synchronous recording equipment and a dissatisfaction with the moralizing quality of expository documentary."[95] Documentaries in this mode attempted to dispense with any device which inserted the film-maker between the subject and the spectator. However, early works in the expository mode, such as Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922), were compromised by less ideological concerns, with several scenes staged in the same manner as was common in early newsreels.

16mm film had enjoyed success from its introduction in 1923 as an amateur format, and had gone on to have some success in ancillary markets, such as in education, industry and science. However, it was not until the outbreak of – and, particularly, US involvement in – the Second World War that its use as a film production format became truly established.[96] The ability for small cameras to be utilised in cramped spaces such as the interiors of fighter-bombers and to be operated by single cameramen in combat zones, enabled US propaganda films to bring home to citizens a greater sense of the urgency and moral purpose of the country's involvement in the conflict. That these films played in cinemas to large audiences meant that their often rough-and-ready style introduced spectators to a greater sense of the materiality of the filmmaking apparatus. Films produced in combat zones often had instances where the familiar steady gaze of the camera was disrupted by blasts from shells, or shook as its operator hurriedly moved to escape enemy gunfire:

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[93] *Ibid.*, pp.154-155.
[94] Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1991), 34-38.
[95] *Ibid.*, p.33.
[96] Salt, *Film Style & Technology*, 231.

> America fought World War II with cameras and guns. While the guns downed Japanese or German planes, 16mm cameras raised morale in propaganda films for the home front. These 16mm combat films instilled a new stylistic realism to Hollywood narrative films. World War II advertised and legitimated 16mm amateur equipment more than Kodak or Bell and Howell could ever have imagined.[97]

The release of war propaganda films such as *The Battle of Midway* (1942) and *San Pietro* (1945), both filmed by established Hollywood directors[98], normalised the camera as an active, embodied and vulnerable presence in a cinema where it had previous been an invisible and omniscient element: "This 'camera rattling,' formerly an amateur transgression against Hollywood conventions of unified composition and organization, was reinterpreted as experiential, audience-directed, participatory realism when employed in commercial films."[99] However, once again, a note of caution should be sounded when we approach such supposed indications of realism. *San Pietro* was largely a restaging of the actual Battle of San Pietro Infine, and Huston simulated the effect of shellfire on the camera by shaking it.[100]

Regardless of the actual realism of some of the footage which made up the war propaganda films of the Second World War, its influence – alongside the continuing development and popularity of small-gauge camera technology – had an impact on several streams of filmmaking practice in the following years. These changes were further abetted by developments in sound recording:

> The development of the Nagra – a fully professional tape recorder just the size of a small suitcase – by Stefan Kudelski in 1958 made flexibility of synchronous sound shooting a real possibility, especially when the Nagra was used with one of the new light-weight Éclair or Arriflex 16mm cameras developed at the same time. The result was an image-sound combination fully adequate for television showing and a new observational style – *cinema verite* or direct cinema – was born around 1960.[101]

In the narrative fiction film, 16mm came to be employed by a number of small, independent filmmakers producing films for the exploitation marketplaces in grindhouse and drive-in circuits. Though working on standard 35mm gauge film, filmmakers in European art cinema continued to develop the capabilities afforded by the mobile camera and on-location synchronous sound recording – especially its perceived capacity for greater 'realism' – such as the French *Nouvelle Vague (1958-)* and Italian *Neorealism (1944-)* movements. To summarise, the combined forces of technological development of

[97] Zimmermann, *Reel Families*, 90.
[98] John Ford and John Huston, respectively.
[99] Zimmermann, *Reel Families*, pp.105-106.
[100] This is discussed by Steven Speilberg in the documentary *Five Came Back* (2017).
[101] Armes, *On Video*, 79.

small-gauge technology and its utilisation in the Second World War altered audience perception of the role that the camera played in works of cinema. No longer a window through which the spectator cast their gaze, but an active participant. That these developments freed up the camera to expand the language of, and spectatorial engagement with, cinema should be viewed as a positive outcome. That the resultant gaze should inherit some of documentary and newsreel's assumptions of the unmediated representation of 'reality' is more troubling, and it is to this I will now move below.

The Entertainment Documentary – "Mondo" and *L'Occhio Selvaggio* (Paolo Cavara, 1967)

Though, as has been pointed out above, much of the footage may have been staged, newsreels correctly identified and exploited audience interest in other lands and cultures. That the absence of wide-spread access to foreign travel, for most of the cinema audience in the early twentieth century, could remove the need to represent such lands with accuracy was also exploited. Before spending some time examining the commercial exploitation of foreign cultures and peoples, however, it is worth referring to the role which small-gauge, amateur filmmaking technologies had on the cinema of travel. As is standard practice today, cameras – including film cameras – were seen as essential items for travellers undertaking trips to foreign lands. The ability to capture footage of exotic landscapes, people and practices and preserve them for viewing at home among friends and family was attractive to those who could afford such technology from an early period in its development and was actively encouraged by manufacturers.[102] As developed Western economies recovered from the impact of the First World War, the opportunity for upper- and middle-class individuals and families to travel abroad became more numerous. The films which were taken on these trips, however, question the extent to which such travel broadened the mind. Nicholson refers to the travel films of UK tourists in the period, where "…chance encounters with street traders, children, and other local people provided collectible visual trophies that helped differentiate between places… For some enthusiasts, showing was proof of having visited particular places, perhaps replacing the need to display knowledge too."[103]

This is perhaps not so different from the way that many of us still utilise our cameras when travelling to foreign countries to this day. A more insidious aspect of travel film in the interwar years was the way in which it could reinforce colonial and racist ideologies. Zimmermann refers at some length to a travel film recorded by Mortimer Fuller, an American on safari in Africa in 1930, including this illuminating record of an encounter with a local Village Sultan:

> Fuller photographed an African man riding a motorcycle… On occasion, the man rapidly glances at the camera as he steers the motorcycle. This image seems almost surreal. Before this shot, the only modern, engine powered vehicles we view are safari jeeps, always driven by whites. Fuller explains, "This is the sultan of the village. He had a motorcycle. He was so pleased we wanted him to ride it. We gave him a couple

[102] Zimmermann, *Reel Families*, 73.
[103] Nicholson, *Amateur Film: Meaning and Practice 1927-77*, 194.

> of shillings. He went round and round a circle." Fuller's narration shows how exchange relations materially altered cultural contact. The sultan riding the motorcycle in a circle is trapped and corralled by the white home movie maker in a burlesque of contradictions: a Third World "primitive" driving modern technology as spectacle for the amateur camera. The amateur camera dominates a sultan, while the sultan emerges as pure performance, stripped of his power.[104]

The sultan has not been made to look foolish by inserting him in a context in which he would otherwise not be found – it is his motorcycle, after all – but the act in which he performs has been cajoled out of him through the economic incentive provided by the Western traveller. That the act is then recorded and immortalised is what leads Zimmermann to refer to it as "burlesque", a performance that depends for its power on the contradictions inherent in the mind of the producer and his audience, rather than the reality of the situation which is filmed.

The prejudices of largely white, western middle-class audiences are apparent in the films which began to appear in this period which featured similar subject matter, i.e. exotic lands and peoples. Though the strictures of several waves of censorship (the "don'ts-and-be-carefuls" (1927), the Motion Picture Production Code (1930)) leavened the tendency of major Hollywood studios to treat issues of race with outright salaciousness, a number of independent exploitation filmmakers produced several films which showed no such qualms. Films such as *Ingagi*(1930) and *Beyond Shanghai*(1935) utilised stock footage taken from foreign travelogues and combined them with salacious material shot in Hollywood backlots and parks, which foreground supposed 'native'[105] nudity and bizarre rites, with suggestions of bestiality and cannibalism. Many of these films were presented as educational documentaries, masquerading as actual records of scientific and ethnographic study: "Exotic exploitation films could hew to either a narrative or a documentary line, although most straddled these distinctions. To a large extent, the exotics grew out of early documentary practices in the silent era. The first of these was the adventure travelogue."[106] The reckless melding of fact and fiction depended partly for its

[104] Zimmermann, *Reel* Families, 76.
[105] Most 'natives' were played by African Americans.
[106] Eric Schaefer, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 265.

success on audience associations of documentary aesthetics with unmediated reality. *Beyond Shanghai*, in its staged sections, which purport to be shot in the jungles of Cambodia, simultaneously fakes the dense jungle and hypocritically masks female nudity by imposing a matte approximating jungle foliage over the image (*figure 14*).

Figure 14: Peek-a-boo masking

In doing so it makes a (entirely inadequate) attempt to present such footage as observational documentary – shot on-the-fly in situations with sub-optimal shooting conditions, such as thick jungle. The film is also preceded by what Schaefer refers to as an example of the 'square-up reel'[107] an introduction in which a number of learned gentlemen outline the worthy nature and motivation of the footage which follows, as if what then unspools is an ethnographic study screened at a gathering of anthropologists, rather than a stag film in a smoking room.

These kinds of exploitation films existed at the margins of mainstream cinema – they were exhibited outside of the first- and second-run theatres and were 'road-showed' across the US by hucksters and showmen, either booking dates in grindhouse theatres or showing them at carnivals. Despite this their salacious nature ensured that the most popular films had theatrical lives which in some cases extended for decades after their production. The arrival of the entertainment documentary or travelogue into mainstream cinema did not occur until the decade when social attitudes loosened in the US and UK: the 1960s. Even when it did arrive, it was not an internal phenomena, but arrived from Continental

[107] *Ibid.,* p.72.

Europe, specifically Italy. *Mondo Cane* (1962), an assembly of scenes of avowed 'bizarre' practices, filmed around the globe, was an enormous success worldwide and spawned a large number of sequels and imitators.[108] Sumptuously shot and with an outstandingly lush score – which garnered an Oscar nomination for composer Riz Ortalani[109] – the film was directed by Gualtiero Jacopetti, Franco Prosperi and Paolo Cavara, and combined a slickly edited sheen with what was, at the time, some truly shocking imagery. In a similar manner to the exotic exploitation films of the 30s and 40s, it began with a statement attesting to authenticity:

> All the scenes you will see in this film are true and are taken only from life. If often they are shocking, it is because there are many shocking things in this world. Besides, the duty of the chronicler is not to sweeten the truth but to report it objectively.[110]

The statement claims that the film is a sober work of anthropology, which has been made under a sense of 'duty', rather than a commercial film designed to exploit largely Western, middle-class prurience and racism, which is what it patently is. In the documentary *The Godfathers of Mondo* (2003), Prosperi – who actually *was* trained as an anthropologist – makes a number of revealing statements regarding the motivations for *Mondo Cane*. He states: "We started shooting documentaries and realised that they were much more lucrative than scientific studies." [03:15], and "We were aware that we were shooting documentaries in a totally different manner. The cuts were quick, lively and concise. Making a synthesis of a scene and showing it. And also, it has to be said, we wanted to shock the audience. Shocking and alternating emotions. Inserting soft scenes to allow digestion of the violent scenes." [10:38]. It's clear from these comments that the team's motivation was commercial success, rather than a desire to educate the audience, and that the methods they utilised were ones which were much more prevalent in the fiction film and, indeed, antithetical to documentary practice.

The scene which best illustrates the divide between standard observational documentary practice and the commercial imperatives and ethical abandonment inherent in the 'mondo' film occurs at [1:09:50]. A camera pans up to a sign on an upper floor in a Singapore street, which reads, "No Photograph Should be Taken. By Order.", and on the soundtrack the narrator states, "Here photographs are prohibited," as a shaky handheld shot

[108] A thorough list and examination of these can be found in David Kerekes and David Slater, *Killing for Culture* (London: Creation, 1993).
[109] Nominee – Music (Song) category – see https://www.oscars.org/oscars/ceremonies/1964 - accessed 04/12/2018.
[110] *Mondo Cane* (1962), opening titles, at 00:15.

looks through barred windows at a group of emaciated elderly people, who are laid on floor mats in a dark room (*figure 15*).

Figure 15: Filming death in Singapore

He continues, “We have forced our way through a barrier to show you The House of Death in Singapore. The sick are all brought here, to this tragic boarding house for the dying. In the Chinese houses filled to the rafters with children, there’s no place for them.” The camera position then shifts to the interior, where a number of dying men and women are shot in a number of highly intrusive close-ups. These scenes are then alternated with a street scene, which the narrator attests is a group of relatives who – “as per Chinese custom” – indulge themselves with food and revelry to “urge the Gods on”, to end the suffering of the sick and dying. Watching these scenes without the commentary, they appear merely to be standard shots of people eating at a number of restaurants. The insert shots showing musicians and a man in ceremonial costume leaping over a fire are not even established to be in the same area. Regardless of the veracity of the narrator’s statements the segment is difficult to watch – we are left unsure as to whether the dying have had any say in the decision to film – and the soundtrack alternates an exaggeratedly jaunty theme

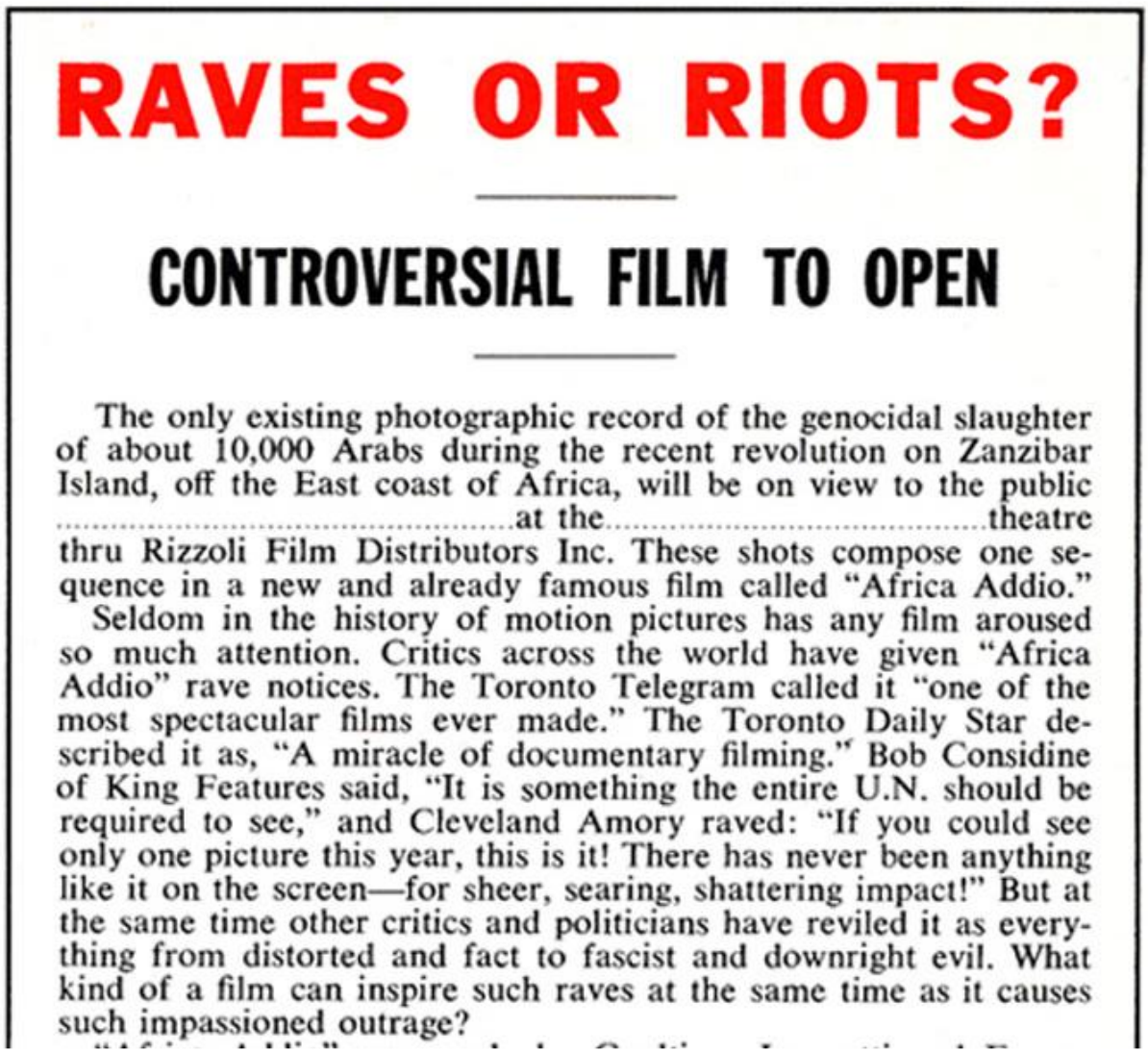
when showing the revellers, with a funereal dirge when the sick are shown. What is plain is that the directors have taken every opportunity – in this and other sequences – to contrast the behaviour and customs of 'foreign' peoples with those of the targeted audience, the 'civilised' West. Of the sequence, Prosperi states: "And as for the principle of not showing human death on screen, to be honest, we ignored it", while Jacopetti comments, "This was a discovery, and we filmed it. Something rather sensational, especially in those times."[111]

It seems that the third member of the trio began to have a somewhat different reaction to these methods. When Jacopetti and Prosperi decamped to Africa to make a documentary on the uprisings and conflicts which followed the cessation of colonial rule in Tanzania and Congo – released as *Africa Addio*(1966) – Cavara stayed behind to edit the rushes which were sent back to Italy. During the making of the film a number of articles were published in *L'Espresso* - written by an Italian journalist, who had spent time on location with the filmmakers - accusing them of participating in some of the acts of genocide they had filmed, goading mercenaries on to acts of violence and murder.[112] When Cavara viewed one scene – in which a man who has allegedly set fire to a school and killed several children is summarily executed at gunpoint – he alerted the authorities:

> When our material arrived in Rome it was viewed by our editors. Paolo Cavara was also on the staff, but was left out of the crew of all our films except *Mondo Cane*. Maybe he was holding a grudge, mostly against Jacopetti, so when he saw some of the footage, he claimed he had seen us forcing a mercenary to kill a black man just to complete a scene.[113]

Although they were initially charged by the Italian authorities over this and other matters, Jacopetti and Prosperi were able to exonerate themselves and the film was released to justified outrage in a number of territories.

[111] *The Godfathers of Mondo,* [09:44].
[112] *The Godfathers of Mondo,* [51:16]. A portion of the *L'Espresso* article is included in the *Africa Addio* pressbook, which then contains a long rebuttal by the production team.
[113] Franco Prosperi in *The Godfathers of Mondo*, [55:44].



RAVES OR RIOTS?

CONTROVERSIAL FILM TO OPEN

The only existing photographic record of the genocidal slaughter of about 10,000 Arabs during the recent revolution on Zanzibar Island, off the East coast of Africa, will be on view to the public .....at the.....theatre thru Rizzoli Film Distributors Inc. These shots compose one sequence in a new and already famous film called "Africa Addio."

Seldom in the history of motion pictures has any film aroused so much attention. Critics across the world have given "Africa Addio" rave notices. The Toronto Telegram called it "one of the most spectacular films ever made." The Toronto Daily Star described it as, "A miracle of documentary filming." Bob Considine of King Features said, "It is something the entire U.N. should be required to see," and Cleveland Amory raved: "If you could see only one picture this year, this is it! There has never been anything like it on the screen—for sheer, searing, shattering impact!" But at the same time other critics and politicians have reviled it as everything from distorted and fact to fascist and downright evil. What kind of a film can inspire such raves at the same time as it causes such impassioned outrage?

Figure 16: From the Africa Addio *pressbook*

The US pressbook for the film (*figure* 16) contains long sections justifying the motivations of the filmmakers but can't help but include suggested promotional material for exhibitors which highlight the film's violence: "[t]he only existing photographic record of the genocidal slaughter of about 10,000 Arabs during the recent revolution on Zanzibar Island… will be on view to the public..."[114]

It seems that Cavara remained scarred by this incident and by his exposure to the methods of Jacopetti in particular. His film *L'Occhio Selvaggio* (1967) has as its protagonist a very thinly-disguised caricature of Jacopetti – Paolo, an Italian documentary filmmaker - who seduces a married woman and proceeds to involve her in a number of staged, wildly-unethical scenes which ultimately results in her death. There are a number

[114] *Africa Addio* US pressbook, p.3.

of direct references to scenes from Jacopetti and Prosperi's work. At [28:38], the crew visit a hostel for opium addicts in Singapore, where Paolo offers a charitable donation in order to film the men's treatment. However, when viewing it he remains dissatisfied, saying: "Well doctor, it's all magnificent, but it's not very much, movie-wise. Do you understand? Look I'm ready to make charity enough to make these gentlemen fat as Buddahs. Of course, I'll have to make some changes when I shoot, if you'll agree. But, you'll be satisfied." [30:28]

Figure 17: The cure, 'movie-wise'.

The men are then laid out in the courtyard in darkness, lit by a number of standing arc lamps, and – while Paolo's cameraman tracks hand-held amongst them – they are beaten with sticks. This is a clear reference to 'The House of the Death' segment from *Mondo Cane*, also in Singapore, and would seem to call into question the methods Jacopetti employed to secure that footage. Also referenced is a scene in *Mondo Cane* where a Vietnamese monk self-immolated as a political protest – a scene which Jacopetti now admits was shot using a dummy provided by Carlo Rambaldi.[115] In *L'Occhio Selvaggio*, Paolo spends several scenes attempting to engineer this event through financial bribery.

The film is more than just a piece of character assassination, however, referring further back to filmic exploitation of developing nations and their peoples by white, Western travellers throughout the twentieth century. If we recall the filming of the Sultan by an American on safari in Africa – as recounted by Zimmermann earlier – we find a very similar scene in *L'Occhio Selvaggio*. Paolo and his crew arrive at a temple in Thailand to find that most of the monks have died due to starvation and disease, leaving only the local

[115] The Italian special effects artist who designed and built *E.T.* (1982).

Sultan and his wives. Initially frustrated, Paolo again uses money and the promise of food to enlist the Sultan in a scene where his degradation is exploited for the camera. The centre of the temple is strewn with artificial lights and the Sultan is made to stand in the centre and attempt to catch a swarm of butterflies with which the crew have filled the room.

Figure 18: "All the scenes you will see in this film are true and are taken only from life."

Standing at the back of the room, Paolo directs the cameraman as he moves the handheld camera to capture the Sultan from below as he frantically waves his arms, all the while shouting at him to perform. He then instructs his guide to catch one of the butterflies and ask the Sultan to eat it (Paolo does not speak the Sultan's language), which the guide initially refuses to do, as the Sultan is a strict religious vegetarian. Ultimately the Sultan's poverty and destitution force him to comply, though his expression clearly communicates his sense of shame and embarrassment. Paolo subsequently attempts to purchase one of the Sultan's wives, seeming to do so simply to further humiliate him, although the Sultan refuses this as an insult too far. The comparisons between this fictional representation, clearly informed by Cavara's exposure to real behaviour of a 'mondo' filmmaker, and an actual instance from the early years of amateur travelogue filmmaking attests to the enduring attitudes to race and xenophobia and their exploitation on film by white, Western, middle- and upper-class filmmakers. *L'Occhio Selvaggio* at least attempts to address the institutionalised form of this abuse of the filmmaker's privilege and suggests that – despite the opportunities afforded by lightweight film equipment to go out into the world – many practitioners could only make films which exposed their own ideological shortcomings and prejudices.

Cannibal Holocaust (Ruggero Deodato, 1980)

The 1970s was an extraordinary period for the breaking of taboos in cinema. The work of directors in the New Hollywood which emerged in wake of *Easy Rider* (1969) and the increasingly visceral nature of European and British genre cinema ushered in a slew of challenging films which foreground sex, violence and politically-controversial elements. Many of the products of the decade continued to encounter censorship issues in countries such as the UK until relatively recently.[116] Throughout the decade, subgenres emerged which traded almost exclusively on contentious subjects: rape-and-revenge (*Straw Dogs* (1971), *The Last House on the Left* (1972), *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978)), religion (*The Exorcist* (1973), *The Omen* (1976), *The Devils* (1971)), sex (*Caligula* (1979), *Last Tango in Paris* (1972), *Emmanuelle* (1974)) and horror (*Dawn of the Dead* (1978), *Halloween* (1978), *Alien* (1979)). This brief list illustrates that such contentious material was not confined to independent producers, but was embraced fully by the Hollywood majors. European producers had, by this time, been executing a strategy of following trends as they developed in Hollywood cinema. Utilising the nimbleness of small crews and a relaxed attitude to the observance of employment or health-and-safety legislation, they were able to quickly produce and release films which piggy-backed on emerging trends in US cinema.[117] Combined with an already more direct attitude to the presentation of aspects such as sex and violence, they responded to the new licentiousness of American and British cinema with challenging work of their own. Italian filmmakers, in particular, who had successfully exploited US trends with sub-genres such as the globally-popular 'spaghetti western', responded by developing extremely challenging and extreme cinematic strains, such as "nazisploitation" (*The Night Porter* (1974), *Salon Kitty* (1976), *Salo* (1975)), *poliziotteschi*[118] (*Gang War in Milan* (1973), *Milan Calibro 9* (1972)) and *gialli*[119] (*The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (1970), *Lizard in a Woman's Skin* (1971)).

Perhaps the most challenging subgenre to have emerged in this period of Italian cinema is what is referred to by modern critics as the 'cannibal film'. Umberto Lenzi's *il*

[116] For example, *The Last House on the Left* (1972), released uncut in 2008 - http://bbfc.co.uk/releases/last-house-left-1972#relatedWorks - accessed 04/12/2018.
[117] Howard Hughes, *Cinema Italiano, ix*-xi.
[118] Italian cop thrillers, largely inspired by the success of *Dirty Harry* (1971), but often uniquely Italian in their setting and politics, with the student protests and the *Brigate Rossi* of the period looming large.
[119] Italian thrillers, often featuring bizarrely illogical narratives and relying instead on stylish costume design, art direction, camerawork, lush scores and extreme violence. Generally critics acknowledge Mario Bava and Dario Argento as key directors in defining the genre, but also relying on previous work by German directors in the *krimi* style, often adapted from the work of English crime writer Edgar Wallace.

Paese del Sesso Selvaggio (1972), which would seem to have been inspired by the success of the Hollywood film *A Man Called Horse* (1970)[120], is generally considered to be the first film in this subgenre.[121] The film introduces many of the genre's staple elements: a white westerner comes into contact with a 'primitive' society in the jungles of a third world nation; the film features violence against animals, usually arranged by the filmmakers; the tribe practices cannibalism; the film foregrounds sex and violence, often in a jarring way which is independent of narrative demands. Like many Italian genre originals, the film spawned a number of official and unofficial sequels and rip-offs.[122] Perhaps the most notorious film of the genre is Ruggero Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980). There are two reasons for this. First of all, the film is extremely violent, in a way which is often sickeningly convincing. It also contains a number of scenes of violence against animals, which has perversely raised its profile over the years as such material has become more unacceptable on cinema and television.[123] The second reason is that the film features a surprisingly sophisticated execution of the film-within-a-film concept. It is this aspect which caused the film to become more widely known when it was cited as the inspiration for the popular series of films which emerged in the wake of the success of *The Blair Witch Project* (1999)[124] – referred to by many critics as 'found-footage horror films'.

The film begins as a television documentary, which explains that a group of documentary filmmakers have recently gone missing in the Amazon rainforest and sets out the TV station's expedition to determine what has happened to them. It then shifts into a standard jungle adventure story, with Professor Harold Monroe and his guides proceeding into the Colombian Amazonas and eventually encountering a tribe of cannibals, who have constructed a grim totem of the bodies of the documentary crew and their film equipment. Returning to the New York station with the footage, the latter half of the film consists of segments of the recovered film, occasionally punctuated with scenes of Monroe discussing it with the television station executives and interviewing relatives of the crew. The presentation of the opening documentary (or news) segment already foregrounds the

[120] The international title was *Man from Deep River*.
[121] Kerekes & Slater, *Killing for Culture,* 109.
[122] *Jungle Holocaust* (1977), *Emanuelle and the Last Cannibals* (1977), *Eaten Alive* (1980), *The Mountain of the Cannibal God* (1978), *Cannibal Ferox* (1981), *White Cannibal Queen* (1980).
[123] In recent years the film has been released in versions which advertise that all animal violence has been excised, such as the 2011 UK release from Shameless Screen Entertainment - http://www.shameless-films.com/films/cannibal-holocaust/ - accessed 04/12/2018.
[124] The film's directors claim not to have seen the film and, instead, cite earlier pseudo-documentaries, such as *The Legend of Boggy Creek* (1972) as their primary inspiration. Eduardo Sanchez and Daniel Myrick, "Into the Woods – The Blair Witch Project revisited," https://lwlies.com/articles/the-blair-witch-project-revisited-eduardo-sanchez-daniel-myrick/ - accessed 04/12/2018.

materiality of television documentary production, with the footage initially presented full-frame before a panning shot from a New York movie theatre to a group of people watching a bank of television sets in the window of a store confusingly reveals that they are watching the report with us, the cinema spectator. The preceding shots of various New York locations operate as a kind of thematic counterpoint to the presenter's initial to-camera and then voice-over commentary:

> Primitive tribes isolated in a ruthless and hostile environment where the prevailing law is the survival of the fittest – and this jungle, which its inhabitants refer to as The Green Inferno is only a few hours flying time from New York City. Was it to remind us of this that four brave young Americans went there to make a documentary on life in the jungle? Was it also to remind us, for instance, that before venturing into space, we should become more acquainted with the planet we live on?

This commentary, which plays out over shots of people milling about in streets between towering skyscrapers, simultaneously justifies the reference to technological modernity and calls into question the divide between civilisation and savagery, as the streets appear dirty, overcrowded and chaotic. The shot which then tracks from a movie hoarding advertising *Dracula* (1979) to the shots of people watching the news report on television emphasises the captive nature of the television news audience – silently watching in a group, presumably unable to hear what is being said. It's as if Deodato is commenting on the dominance of television and televisual renditions of reality, in particular – this is now where the audience is.

Figure 19: Film on television, on film.

The report appears to have been filmed – as it would have been at the time – on 16mm film, but at this point appears within a matte approximating a television screen.[125] It is only at [3:52] that the film camera directed at the 'TV screen' tracks in to the full image, and a cut moves to the crew preparing for departure, that the footage reverts to the standard news report, un-remediated by television.

This initial segment seeks to exploit the spectator's association of small-gauge film as documentary or news – and, in the sequence that extends from [3:10] to [3:52] - as material which is most at home on television, rather than in the cinema. It exploits what Baron identifies as the 'Archive effect' to simulate an intentionality in this footage, which is putatively outwith the main narrative of the overarching 'film'. This report has been constructed, not to provide backstory to the events of the film *Cannibal Holocaust*, but to inform the audience of the Pan-American Broadcasting Company, a television station. This foregrounds one of the themes of the film, which is the ethical responsibility of television executives when broadcasting material which is not only contentious or salacious, but has been obtained in ways which are themselves unethical, or which obfuscate or transform reality. I'll move on to how this is examined in the second half of the film below, but it will be fruitful at this point to examine some of Deodato's stated intentions in making the film. The director states: "At that time on the television we were always seeing death scenes, they were the years of terrorism and my film was also a condemnation of a certain type of journalism."[126] The terrorism he refers to would seem to be that of the *Brigate Rosse* and associated groups who waged a campaign of violence across Italy in the 1970s, but could also refer to Italian TV coverage of similar terrorist acts across Europe, such as those perpetrated by the *Baader-Meinhof* group in Germany. It could also refer to television coverage of conflicts in the same period, particularly those in Africa and Asia, including Vietnam. Given this statement, the opening sequence, with its deconstruction of the materiality of television news, does give some credence to the stated motivation of Deodato in *Cannibal Holocaust*. If, however, the director bemoans the presentation of scenes of explicit violence on television, the content of his film does seem to show him willing to countenance such material in the more socially regulated confines of the cinema. Perhaps – unlike Cavara – Deodato feels somewhat constrained by his own professional affiliations to openly attack filmmakers in the way that he does their television counterparts. Deodato did, in fact, have some prior history with the cannibal film prior to

[125] The lack of glare or other televisual format markers indicates this to be so.
[126] Harvey Fenton, Julian Grainger & Gian Luca Castoldi, *Cannibal Holocaust* (Guildford: FAB Press 1999), 19.

Cannibal Holocaust. He was chosen to direct the sequel to the original cannibal film, discussed above, when he helmed *Last Cannibal World* in 1977 – a film which contains similar amounts of sex, violence and racism as its genre counterparts.

Despite this, the film does in fact spend much of its second half presenting its contentious material in a way which self-reflexively calls attention to the questionable ethics of its production and, by extension, all films in this sub-genre. The film which the spectator views once Professor Monroe returns to the offices of the Pan-American Broadcasting System – provisionally entitled *The Green Inferno* – is comprised of the rough footage shot by the documentary crew as they travel deeper into the jungle in pursuit of the fabled cannibal tribes.

Figure 20: Two cameras - shot and reverse shot

The crew is shown to have two camera operators – Mike and Jack, although the two other members of the crew occasionally share this responsibility – and two cameras (*figure 20*), justifying the coverage in scenes where Deodato cuts from one camera's POV, to a wider shot of the filming taking place. Almost exclusively, Deodato limits himself to this conceit throughout this footage – all shots are handheld, all are confined to the narratively-explicated equipment at the crew's disposal. From this point on, Deodato can claim that the spectator shares the point-of-view of Alan, the director of *The Green Inferno*, rather than the director of *Cannibal Holocaust*. However, before we see this footage there is a

sequence where Professor Monroe is shown some of the crew's previous work – a documentary entitled *The Last Road to Hell*.

Figure 21: Real death, real film.

As with the television documentary footage from the beginning of the film, the footage is initially contextualised within a special effect matte – on this occasion the grainy 16mm documentary footage appears within a frame which approximates the moviola device around which Monroe, a technician and a female television executive congregate (*figure 21*). The footage in this case is assembled from real-life documentary footage of atrocities in the Ugandan and Vietnam conflicts, including prisoners executed by firing squad. When the footage has finished the executive asks, "Pretty powerful stuff, huh?", before adding, "Well, just to give you an idea of how Alan and the others worked, everything you just saw was a put-on – that was no enemy army approaching, Alan paid those soldiers to do a bit of acting for him." [43:18] This comment is preparing the spectator to approach *The Green Inferno* with a sceptical frame of mind and forewarned regarding the lack of documentary ethics of its director.[127] It's also impossible to view this sequence as anything other than a reference to the conduct of Jacopetti and Prosperi in *Africa Addio*. Deodato has spoken admiringly of the aesthetics and prophetic nature of their work: "Jacopetti managed to intuitively know, twenty years in advance, everything which is happening now. His films

[127] It also acts, as Brottman argues, as a cinematic counterpart to the faked violence of the overarching film – "*The Last Road to Hell* is a testament of the actual transgression of all the rules that *The Green Inferno* merely pretends to break …" Mikita Brottman, *Meat is Murder* (London: Creation, 1998), 149-150.

were truly beautiful."[128] However, it's impossible to read this filmic reference to their methods as anything other than condemnatory.

From the first frames of *The Green Inferno,* there is an attempt to heighten the sense of realism through the hypermediacy of the camera. As the crew fly to their destination they shoot from the cockpit of the small seaplane – the image is initially very dark and the lab technician assisting Monroe says, "This shot's dark because the diaphragm setting on the camera was wrong." The shot then lightens up, to which he says, "There – now he's got it right." [44:41] There is another technical discussion shortly after, between the female PBS executive, Monroe and the technician:

> Executive: "Why didn't it print the whole thing?"
> Technician: "The negative needed special treatment because of the humidity. The quality isn't the best, but it's pretty good given the lousy conditions they were shooting in."
> Executive (to Monroe): "Unfortunately, two reels were light-fogged and we had to throw them out."
> Technician: "I put a piece of black leader between one sequence and the other."
> Executive: "Good." (to Monroe): "That's where we'll put the interviews with the families and the one in which you talk about your search for them." [49:03]

There are a number of points here – at this point we have already seen the series of interviews the executive refers to – they are all present in *Cannibal Holocaust,* if not in *The Green Inferno* as filmed by Yates and not yet assembled by Monroe/PBS. There are effectively three films existing in parallel – *Cannibal Holocaust,* Alan's raw footage from the jungle and *The Green Inferno,* a work-in-progress edit for television broadcast. Which film the spectator is viewing at any one point often remains unclear. It's also never outlined what the material in the two missing reels contains – there are a number of sequences in the film which suggest that there has been editing *in camera* but the missing reels remain as innuendo, for the spectator to imprint with their imagination. The technical discussion here also works to excuse the quality of *The Green Inferno*, and thus allows the artefacts which Deodato fakes to be used for a number of purposes, in ways which are explicated within the overarching film.

These interventions of the materiality of the camera, film and other equipment, between the spectator and the events of *The Green Inferno*, continue throughout the film. At [49:30], there is a small segment with no sound, which precipitates a discussion between the technician and the executive concerning how much footage has synchronised sound (the answer is "less than half"), which is a factor which presumably has

[128] Fenton, Grainger & Castoldi, *Cannibal Holocaust*, 16.

consequence for the film's commercial viability on television. The status of the film as a partial assembly by a third party (the technician) is highlighted by the presence of insert shots cut into the footage (as opposed to in-camera edits) and the editing together of footage from both cameras – for example, in the scene where the crew needs to extract a tarantula from Faye's arm, where the editing betrays the influence of standard commercial narrative film techniques for the building of tension. This leads immediately into the scene where the crew's guide, Felipe, is bitten by a poisonous snake and they amputate his leg.

Figure 22: Deodato degrades the image to conceal an effect

Before the blow is made, the camera or film suffers some sort of over-exposure defect (*figure 22*), which bleaches the film for a second and either obscures a cut or the intervention of some sort of special effect. Before this is carried out someone says, "Are you still shooting?" and a response, "Yeah." At [56:54], there appears to be an edit and the film brightens appreciably as if the camera lens aperture has changed. The camera is handheld and extremely jerky although it appears that it is being held by Alan, who is otherwise not involved in any of the activities of the others to save Felipe. The handheld movement stops at [57:15] and the camera is stabilised to get a shot of Jack attempting to cauterise the wound with a hot machete blade. At [57:25] there are two seconds of print damage. When this ends the scene has moved on – Felipe is dead and the point-of-view is from someone filming Alan shooting his body. This is accompanied by voice over commentary from Alan, rather than synchronised sound –another instance of the technicians' rough edit assembly. These format markers heighten the materiality of the

camera and its associated technologies, but they have been utilised in this case to mask inadequacies in the special effects required to simulate the amputation. These are interventions from director of *Cannibal Holocaust*, which are further masked by editorial choices made by the in-diegesis character of the lab technician/editor. The resultant footage aspires to the effect of reality, but also outlines the technological contingency involved in mediating reality. The fallibility of the camera and its stock is simultaneously exploited and exposed.

Where this partial and contingent nature of documentary practice and technology comes up against the ethical issues in representation of other cultures it is revealed as wholly subject to the whim of the individual filmmaker. At [1:01:43], the crew arrive at a village – a few straw huts on the edge of a river. Alan moves in to shoot a close-up of the face of the chief and the film switches to the camera's POV to show the confusion on the faces of the villagers. At [1:02:53] there is evidence of some fairly sophisticated cutting by the in-diegesis technician/editor of *The Green Inferno* as Faye moves towards the camera held by Mark and takes it, followed by a reverse cut to the 2nd camera held by Alan as she lifts the camera up to her eye and then a switch back to this camera's POV as the men then run through the village, with the camera following. After Mark shoots a pig which is tethered in the centre of the village, Alan says (to camera): "Here we are at the edge of the world and human history. Things like this happen all the time in the jungle, it's survival of the fittest. In the jungle it's the daily violence of the strong overcoming the weak!" Jack then fires his rifle into the air causing panic amongst the villagers. At [1:04:20] Alan says, "Ready? The massacre of the Yacumos by the Yamamatos!" as they prepare to torch the hut into which they have herded the villagers.

Figure 23: Caught on camera

As the torches are applied, Professor Monroe is heard saying – "A set-up. All a set-up." Mark says, "Just like Cambodia" as he applies a torch to a hut (*figure 23*). As the villagers try to escape they are forced back inside. There are a number of edits here – some for continuity and some which remove the crew from the events – presenting instead shots of the villagers inside the burning huts. "It's beautiful!" yells Alan at [1:05:20] as the huts burn.

The technician's rough cut tells a different story than that which would have been presented in the official filmmaker's edit of *The Green Inferno*, which presumably would have removed all shots showing them as being behind the attack. He retains just enough shots which excise the crew from the carnage to suggest what the official edit would have shown. This sequence refers back to a number of scenes of supposed "savage" native peoples which have populated films from the 'mondo' genre, through the 'exotics' of the classic US exploitation period, to early travel film, and calls into question the partial and constructed nature of the footage which has been left behind – the extent to which all of this footage is "all a set-up", as Professor Monroe says. It also reminds us to question all such documentary footage, as presented in newsreel or otherwise, as unmediated reality. To take one example, we only have the written testimony of Mortimer Fuller that he coaxed a performance out of the Sultan by paying him, rather than coercion of a more objectionable kind. It's helpful to view all instances of such footage in their proper

historical context. This sequence in *Cannibal Holocaust* bring to mind the outrages of then recent conflicts, such as the Vietnam War, in particular the massacre at My Lai:

> Deodato also invites us to question to what extent the reporter is innocent in capturing, and profiting from, atrocity footage. The notorious My Lai Massacre, for instance, was photographed by Ron Haeberle, who, as acknowledged by Bilton, did nothing to stop the rape and slaughter of innocent people but retained copyright of his harrowing images and profits from their publication to this day. The horrors of war were of commercial benefit for some.[129]

Waddell makes the point that we too often equate documentary footage solely as the undisputed record of the incident which has occurred in *front* of the camera, while spending less time examining the motivations and moral responsibility of those *behind*. Films which utilise and dramatise the mobile, small-gauge camera have the ability to suture those two spaces in ways which make it possible for the spectator to be given a fuller picture of the process from which reality is rendered into journalistic product. *Cannibal Holocaust*, through its foregrounding of not just the documentary filming process, but the extent to which editing and soundtrack assembly can also alter the story which is ultimately presented to a paying audience, does make an attempt to demystify them for spectators.

[129] Calum Waddell, *Cannibal Holocaust* (Auteur: Leighton Buzzard, 2017), 61.

Conclusion

It may be regarded as something of an ironic paradox that the utilisation of smaller-gauge film stock – and the lighter camera equipment which it made possible – could be utilised to present a larger, more complete view of the world to audiences. Feature films which referenced such technologies began to emerge at the same time as the short-lived revival of "big screen" attempts to put the audience in the picture, such as 3D and ultra-widescreen techniques, such as Cinerama. That these cinematic innovations – and their modern equivalents[130] – should have fallen by the wayside, while two of the bigger money-makers of the turn of the millennium[131] relied, instead, on tiny, mobile cameras, indicates the potency such embodied representations have for audiences.

Peeping Tom and *Amator* both illustrate the potential for filmmakers working in the commercial cinema, to utilise these technologies to make larger points about the ideological constraints that they operate within, when individual vision must, by necessity, utilise established corporate, cultural and political structures to fund production. *Peeping Tom*, in particular, makes the point that – no matter how much the film camera is co-opted as the means to generate profit in the name of entertainment – it remains wedded to our, occasionally irrationally, primal, need to make sense of the world around us. In this sense, no matter how institutionalised, the filmmaker is always an amateur. Despite the attempts to regulate and prescribe the uses of amateur film technology, to mark it as intrinsically 'other' to commercial film, it performs the same basic functions. "Amateur" film cameras and stock helped to democratise the moving image and were then co-opted to bring a greater sense of 'realism' to images in service of the war effort in World War 2. The subsequent spread of these technologies in industrial and commercial contexts could be paralleled in the way in which working class men[132] were rewarded for their service with a greater involvement in the peace divided which followed the end of hostilities, through such legislation as the GI Bill (1944) in the US, and socialist reforms such as the NHS and house-building programs in the UK (both 1946).

If image-making was democratised then the cinematic gaze itself was set free. The Classical Hollywood style of filming which obfuscated the role of the filming apparatus

[130] Despite the success of *Avatar* (2009), audiences have proven to be highly sceptical and resistant to Hollywood attempts to establish 3D presentations. Similarly, 3D television has failed to establish the technology in the home.
[131] *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) and *Paranormal Activity* (2007).
[132] Women, of course, were largely expected to return to domestic labour following WW2.

was gradually undermined by a number of practitioners who began to utilise the lightweight camera to probe and explore previously static studio and set tableau. The influence of documentary on fiction film technique began to emerge in the post war years, but as I have shown in the examples above, the strategies and ideologies of commercial film also infected the documentary. Regrettably, a number of fiction and non-fiction films also illustrate that, while filmmakers from developed nations gained the ability to shoot in remote locations, they remained unable to leave their prejudices behind.

Finally, while utilisation of 16mm film technology in journalism allowed practitioners to get closer to the truth, the truth doesn't necessarily get any easier to read in close-up. The history of the filming of actualité demands that we continue to view documentary and journalistic footage with a measure of scepticism. In this context one of the best tools which has emerged to allow audiences to think critically about the documentary process has been fiction films about non-fiction practice. Who best to draw back the curtain on the capability of documentarians and journalists to misrepresent reality than those filmmakers who make lying an art form? Films such as *L'Occhio Selvaggio* and *Cannibal Holocaust* are focused very specifically on the misdemeanours of a small group of filmmakers working in a relatively obscure subgenre of documentary, but they do indicate the capability that fiction film has – when it utilises the tools of the journalist or documentarian – to reveal any supposedly inherent truth-telling capabilities as wholly contingent on the ethics of individuals.

Chapter 2: "Live" Video

Introduction

Before analysing some examples of the ways in which the products and practices of "live" video, such as those of broadcast television and CCTV, are represented in feature film, I will briefly outline some of the history of these media.[133] Doing so will be profitable, as it will be important in any analysis of the uses of these technologies to remind ourselves that they did not emerge in isolation and that any discussion of material aspects, standard uses or aesthetic effect should be made with cognisance of the interrelationship of various audio/visual media. I will first discuss the genesis of broadcast television as a medium which extended prior developments which lead to radio, before outlining some of the inherent qualities of its initial application – specifically, "live" events. I will then expand this discussion to note some of the other industrial, military and commercial applications of video technology. These aspects of the video medium will be explored in detail in the second part of this chapter.

From this initial history of video I will move to some of the aesthetic qualities of the medium, as it has been experienced in a number of contexts. I will review some of the critical commentary on the supposed "liveness" of television – which, some have argued, is inherent even when pre-recorded content is broadcast. I will then bring the discussion up-to-date with a discussion of popular forms of television such as "Reality Television", arguing that, in these formats, there is a fusion of the two aspects of the video medium with which I am primarily concerned: telepresence and surveillance.

[133] The designation "live" is here used to describe video technologies which do not utilise intermediate storage.

Brief History of "Live" Video

Amateur film and its associated film formats developed alongside the 35mm film stock which has formed the base of the commercial cinema. In much the same way, television emerged from a series of loosely-associated and parallel research developments, which fed into many of the audio-visual technologies of the first half of the twentieth century. While photography and, subsequently, film relied on a number of advances in photochemistry in the 1830s, television – in its infancy merely characterised as the ability to send imagery over large distances – relied on scientific developments initially put to other uses in the same century:

> … the basic radio and electronic technologies needed to make broadcast television a reality were in place by the 1890s, and were evolved by a number of individuals and organisations over the first half of the twentieth century...[134]

Earlier work on electricity and the capability to send coded messages over distances by modulating pulses or wavelengths – telegraphy - combined with the ability to amplify the signal in transit and on receipt, laid the technological groundwork for the sending of sound and image. As is common in the history of audio-visual industries, this technological capacity existed several decades before it was exploited commercially. The establishment of national radio broadcasting did not emerge in the US until the 1920s and its early period was characterised by some turbulence as industry and government worked variously at loggerheads and together to establish the framework in which it could exist profitably and in a manner which was acceptable to legislative and political governance.

Early efforts in sending images over the telegraph were restricted to single images, in what was eventually to be termed facsimile or "fax" transmission.[135] While the restrictions of data bandwidth on the line meant that such image transfer was initially a slow process, the technological barrier to the sending of motion images was primarily a matter of image capture, not transfer. Simply, the means necessary to capture and encode a moving image were not in place in the period where it became possible to do the same for audio. The process through which a solution to this problem was arrived at was lengthy and, quite often, a matter of individual inquiry. Independent researchers laboured on the issue and it was only in the proofing stage that companies – such as RCA with Farnsworth in the US and the UK government (through the BBC) with Baird – that acceptable, standardised methods for the capture of moving imagery became settled. Even when this

[134] Enticknap, *Moving Image Technology,* 161.
[135] Winston, *Media, Technology and Society*, 283.

process seemed to have come to an end, the commercial exploitation of television was interrupted by the advent of the Second World War. Limited commercial broadcasting did take place prior to this event – for example, from the BBC Alexandra Palace transmitter in London in 1936. There was also some limited urban broadcasting in countries such as Germany in the pre-war years.[136] However, it was only the cessation of hostilities and the combination of the return of economic prosperity and the freeing-up of technological resources in countries such as the US, which allowed the prospect of commercial television broadcasting to be viable.

Once this process was underway the nature of the nascent medium of broadcast television revealed itself to be aligned with the, by then, full-established radio business - a focus on live performance and a resistance to "canned" music and performance of other kinds:

> Broadcasters consciously differentiated themselves from the record industry by promoting the fact that almost everything they transmitted was live. As David Morton's research has revealed, the broadcasting of pre-recorded radio programmes was initially perceived as being culturally inferior, a perception that was deliberately encouraged by the radio industry of the 1920s and 1930s in order to distinguish their product from records and, to a lesser extent, films. The radio industry was following the lead of record and film producers up to a point, in that it was making money by selling the same content to an almost infinite number of customers. But broadcasting had the added attraction of making the process time-specific.[137]

In the early days of US commercial television, production was centred on New York and utilised the existing studio and artiste base of the radio business. In part this could be seen as an embryonic medium struggling to find its own voice and purpose, but there were other reasons for this, which may lead us to view early television as a technologically-restricted medium, rather than a fully-formed business actively modelled on radio. In the early 1950s, it was not yet possible to effectively scan and transmit film, preventing the broadcast of existing film library content, which studios were in any case wary of making available outside of the theatre circuit. In addition, unions representing musicians and actors were against recording and rebroadcasting performances.[138] Given this, it is, perhaps, unsurprising that the same musician who broke the taboo of recording and rebroadcasting in radio would have a hand in enabling the same move in broadcast television. Bing Crosby, whose high profile ensured that he personally did not need to worry about being shut out of earnings from rebroadcasts of his work, pushed for his east coast radio show to be recorded and rebroadcast on the west, rather than be performed

[136] Fielding, *The American Newsreel*, 191.
[137] Enticknap, *Moving Image Technology,* 162.
[138] Armes, *On Video*, 57-58.

twice.[139] Having taken an interest in the magnetic recording technology which enabled this, his company were instrumental in introducing early video recording of television signals.[140] It was this capability, which replaced the short-lived and limited practice of recording television on 16mm film (telecine), which was the death-knell for the expensive live television industry. By the mid-1960s, much of US television schedules were made up of rebroadcasts of either previously-recorded live performance or – increasingly – content specifically made-for-television by Hollywood film studios.

Television, however, was not the only application to which electronic capture and transmission of moving imagery was applied. As is common with many new technological developments the military in the US and elsewhere began to explore whether electronic imaging could be of use in defence contexts. Indeed, in radar, we have one of the first examples of an imaging technology which fully realises the abstraction and representation of a live and evolving referent:

> With radar, we see for the first time the mass employment (television is founded on the same principle but its mass employment comes later) of a fundamentally new type of screen, a screen that gradually comes to dominate modern visual culture – video monitor, computer screen, instrument display. What is new about such a screen is that its image can change in real time, reflecting changes in the referent…[141]

Instead of the simulation of the experience of motion through the replay of previously-recorded images in rapid succession, as in cinema, radar updates the spectator in real time (or near real time). In radar applications, crucially, the spectator not only believes in the indexical relationship of image to referent as something which *has* existed, but *does* exist *right now*. In radar the image is abstracted from its materiality and reformulated as a coordinate on a two dimensional plane – only the characteristics necessary to perform a function survive the mediation of the referent. With video surveillance applications, which – much like television – took several decades to emerge from the period where it was technically feasible, the image on the CCTV monitor retains much more of the visual texture of the original source, although the economic cost of implementing multiple cameras and monitors have historically meant that image quality has been often less than optimal. As will be outlined in more detail later, CCTV installations have in recent decades spread from military and industrial use to become a common aspect of many urban centres in the industrialised world. As imagery from CCTV cameras has come to be featured

[139] Winston, *Media, Technology and Society*, 266-267.
[140] *Ibid*., pp.269-70
[141] Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 99.

extensively in television (and, as I will argue, narrative cinema) it has become as much a part of the total image economy through which we experience the contemporary world.

Qualities of "Live" Video

As I have referred to briefly above, in relation to radar technologies, electronic moving imagery is capable of communicating a sense of what Sconce has referred to as "telepresence" – the notion that these technologies bring us into direct contact with the objects they depict.[142] This is both a spatial and temporal concept. As we are presented with a visual rendition of a remote scene, we feel a proximity to it and the events which take place therein – the distance between the spectator and the subject is effaced. This effect is heightened by the instantaneous nature of such electronic video media, such as live television broadcasts and CCTV footage – we feel a greater sense of proximity, of almost "being there", because the event depicted is happening *right now*.

How does this compare to audio-visual media which rely on intermediate storage formats, such as celluloid? It is a material impossibility for such media to exhibit this instantaneousness, but presence as defined above is not solely a matter of contemporaneity:

> Broadcast TV declares itself as being in the present tense, denying recording as effectively as cinema uses it… Broadcast TV has a very marked sense of presence to its images and sounds which far outweighs any counterbalancing sense of absence, any sense of recording… In addition, unlike cinema, the signal comes from elsewhere, and can be sent live.[143]

Broadcast TV *can* be live, but exudes a strong sense of presence regardless of whether the events it depict are happening now. It seems somewhat paradoxical that live video of this kind retains a sense of presence to the spectator, although it is beamed from a remote location to an individual monitor, whilst a cinema patron should not experience presence when she can look up and see the beam of light which carries the images from projector to screen. The cinema patron is in much greater proximity to the source of the image than a television spectator or a CCTV operator. Crucially, however, the celluloid base is an intermediate format, a link in a chain which extends from source image to the viewer. This is not to say that live video in any of its applications does not depend upon some form of technological infrastructure, only that – to the spectator – such links do not intervene in the sense of immediate apprehension which we encounter when viewing images on a monitor.

Though this sense of telepresence could be characterised as a compelling argument for the overwhelming success that television as a product - and broadcast television as a commercial practice – has had since its widespread introduction in the post-war years,

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[142] Jeffrey Sconce, *Haunted Media*. The term was originally coined by A. I. pioneer Marvin Minsky, "Telepresence," *OMNI* (June 1980).
[143] John Ellis, *Visible Fictions* (London: Routledge, 1992), 134-135.

some scholars have characterised the attention we offer to the images it presents as something less than that which we give to cinema. As opposed to the standard characterisation of the cinema spectator as someone who is "chained, captured, or captivated"[144] by the images on the screen and gives up their "gaze" solely to it, the television spectator instead merely concedes the small-screen image a "glance".[145] This relative lack of attention is seen as partly the result of the ubiquity of TV sets in households, where their presence is as unremarkable as any other item of furniture. However, it is also a function of the very nature of broadcast television – where schedules present viewers with a seamless "flow" of programmes, segments, advertisements and previews, which encourages a varying degree of audience engagement.[146] While individual viewers may have their own favourite shows, which they watch with undivided attention, in general the broadcast television schedule encourages a *laissez-faire* attitude to audience engagement: it is hard to imagine any television show beginning with an announcement to viewers to turn off their phones, for example.

Whilst this attitude to broadcast television can seem to lead to a passive or blasé attitude to spectatorship there are a number of situations where the images presented can lead to focused attention and a potentially emotionally threatening view of the medium. In the case of news – particularly live broadcasts – there is the potential for violent or other shocking imagery to invade the cosy domestic setting of everyday television viewing. This is an extension of the very concept of presence, which – in bringing the spectator closer to the events portrayed – implicates or subsumes them within the event as it happens. That this is a function of the "liveness" of media, rather than the overpowering quality of visual media per se, is evident in Sconce's analysis of responses to tragic events as reported live on radio:

> The instantaneous experience of mass public tragedy by radio was a genuinely new human experience, as was the mass participation in the private tragedies of individual citizens. Events such as the explosion of the *Hindenberg* and the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby hailed a nation of new electronic witnesses, foregrounding radio's ability to link the nation and in the process forever tying its sense of simultaneity to the potential for sudden disaster. [147]

What is evident here is that the introduction of radio and, subsequently, television connected households to the world outside in ways which were not without unpleasant

[144] Baudry, Jean-Louis, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinema Apparatus," 44.
[145] Ellis, *Visible Fictions*, 137.
[146] See, for example, Raymond Williams, *Television, Technology and Cultural Form* (London: Routledge, 1974).
[147] Sconce, *Haunted Media*, 110.

effects. While exploiting a basic human need for contact with, and information of, other people and the world around them, these technologies held the potential to disrupt the carefully-constructed ideologies that were at the foundation of – in particular – the drive to suburban life in the developed world in the immediate post-war years. Television ensured that for the average suburban American the decades following the Second World War were not just the years of the nuclear family and consumer-driven prosperity, but were also the years of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, social upheaval and scandals such as Watergate.

It's only in recent years that television has evolved into a medium which is capable of two-way communication. Televisions and set-top boxes now have a number of features which allow users to utilise video-conferencing, face and voice-recognition and to request content on-demand. However, there is a sense that – since the mass introduction and success of television – the audience have always been a part of it, that we have all been "on camera". *Candid Camera* premiered on US television in 1948, and a number of shows which exploit the public, through covert capture of everyday behaviour on video, have followed. In recent years, the wave of "reality television" which followed shows such as MTV's *The Real World* (1992-), has been successful in filling the schedules of the increasingly absurd number of channels made available through cable and satellite subscription services. Though the significance of this strand of television is partly that they are shows about so-called "real people", they also contribute to a concept of television content as being not just of the world, but a world in itself – perhaps, this world. Just as live news events retain the potential to pierce the domestic lives we construct for ourselves with unpleasant reminders of our connectedness to the random contingencies of the outside world, Reality Television reminds us that this world is constantly under surveillance. A number of shows now focus on and draw much of their content from the various surveillance cameras which increasingly proliferate the developed world – whether it is body-cameras on police officers or CCTV in public areas and privately-owned stores. The recent ability for many of us to easily "film" ourselves and others and send these images quickly to whomsoever we wish, and the appetite that news and public organisations such as the police have shown in co-opting and utilising this footage, all combines to present a notion of a world in which the wide-open spaces of the nation and the continent now only extend as far as the video eye can see.

Part 1 – Narrative Incorporation

The Truman Show (Peter Weir, 1998)

It may be true that much of our public life now takes place under the gaze of omnipresent and unrelenting surveillance of one kind or another, but our lives are still our own to live. Unlike the characters within feature films or television serials we don't follow a script, perform for a camera or struggle to maintain continuity of character or scene, or if we do sometime feel this way, it is only in a metaphorical sense. In Peter Weir's *The Truman Show* (1998), the eponymous title character does, in fact, find himself in this position. Truman is an orphaned child who has spent his entire life living within Seahaven - an enormous set which simulates a 1950s-era US suburbia, which itself seems to be modelled on the popular sitcoms of the so-called "golden era" of US television.[148] Truman spends his days walking through a number of events which have been scripted by the production team and directed by Christof, a God-like character who works – and seemingly lives – in a control tower hidden behind the moon painted on the interior of the vast dome which contains Seahaven. The film charts Truman's increasing sense of justified paranoia, as a number of events impinge on the carefully-constructed continuity of the show. Technical issues, the inability for real people to consistently inhabit written roles and the shows own internal narrative logic begins to unravel.

The Truman Show has three main narrative strands which continue to develop over the course of the film: Truman's quest to unravel the conspiracy he gradually senses surrounds him; the efforts of the production team to keep Truman in the dark and to respond to pressures from their audience, sponsors and corporate bosses; and the audience themselves, who comment on the show at select points throughout the film. In the first, primary, narrative we share Truman's point-of-view as we watch him navigate the town of Seahaven and interact with the characters and situations which have been pre-arranged and scripted in advance. Much of this is filmed in accordance with standard classical narrative film conventions, with shots selected and edited to heighten such effects as comedic effect,

[148] The appellation "Golden Age" of US television, as it applies to the 1950s is generally meant to signify the cultural relevance of high-quality, "live" television drama which persisted in this era. This definition is somewhat compromised by its more widespread use in current times, which often refers to low-culture offerings such as sitcoms, including *I Love Lucy* (1951-1957) and *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* (1952-1966).

narrative coherence and dramatic tension. Occasionally, however, Weir inserts a shot which remediates surveillance video (*figure 24*). These shots, which retain the visual fidelity, resolution and colour saturation of the overarching film (i.e. it seems they are shot with the same film camera) are presented within a circular mask which cuts off the corners of the frame and operates to heighten the presence of the physical camera.

Figure 24: Truman under surveillance

A number of these shots appear in the opening segment of the film and serve a narrative purpose in the way that they make clear to the audience that Truman's every move is tracked and captured, without his knowledge. However, in one early example of this kind of shot, Weir departs from narrative realism, as Truman emerges from his front door and greets his neighbours [02:40], he looks directly into this "surveillance camera" shot – suggesting that he is cognisant of the camera and is not speaking to his neighbours, but through the camera to the show's audience. Assuming that this is highly unlikely to be a simple continuity error on the part of Weir, we must conclude that it is instead an instance where Weir relaxes the conceit in a way which tacitly recognises the difficulty of maintaining this visual scheme in a standard Hollywood narrative film. As the film progresses, these "surveillance camera" shots are gradually abandoned and Truman's scenes are largely covered in the manner of standard narrative cinema.

In the second and third narratives – that of the production team and the audience – the cinema spectator is allowed to share their view of Truman, as shots of events in Seahaven are shown on various monitors within a mise-en-abyme presentation. Indeed, the

first shot of Truman in the film is from the perspective of the hidden camera behind the two-way mirror in his bathroom cabinet. This shot begins with a close-up of Truman's eye, before slowly tracking back to reveal that it is being captured from within the bathroom cabinet, and then continuing further back to further reveal that the image is being displayed on a monitor in a television control room [00:47-00:57]. This early shot functions as an index for the modes of viewing to be experienced by the spectator within the film: we will be sharing Truman's POV; the view from a myriad of covert cameras placed by a television crew; and, ultimately, will see the finished result – a television show called *The Truman Show*. Following this shot, there are a number of brief interviews with the cast of the show (not including Truman, obviously), which take the form of the kind of glowing testimonials which generally appear in promotional materials in a film or television EPK.[149] This early front-loading of information that the characters we will shortly encounter are actors playing roles, and the motivations they profess in these interviews, prepares the spectator to doubly-read their performances within the overarching film narrative. Functioning somewhat like foreshadowing in the thriller genre, the audience is presented with narrative information which is withheld from the protagonist, ensuring that encounters between these characters functions on multiple levels. That these segments follow the conventions of television – i.e. the kinds of promotional interviews which appear on that format, which often promote a work of cinema – troubles the status of the overall work. Is this a piece of cinema, is it a cinematic remediation of a television show, or some sort of hybrid? Like many other works cited in this study, the formal experimentation introduced by mixed-media appears early in the film, and is gradually abandoned as the film progresses.

This is not to say that the second and third narratives – and their formal structure – are wholly abandoned in favour of the primary narrative, in which the audience witnesses events through Truman's eyes, utilising conventional narrative cinema methods. Once the film has expended the effort to establish the nature of the show, the primary narrative continues to be punctuated by scenes featuring the television crew and audience, but such scenes no longer have the disruptive formal effect of the scenes in which they were introduced. The secondary narrative is employed to support the primary, in that a large part of Truman's growing self-awareness is due to production failings, which then require the direct intervention of production staff. It is also utilised to provide ironic commentary on some of the formal strategies of television and the ways that they exploit the emotions of

[149] Electronic Press Kit.

the audience through hackneyed staging, soundtrack and dialogue. In one scene, Truman's friend Marlon has a heart-to-heart talk with him about his growing paranoia. Though Marlon's dialogue is full of the kind of small-town pseudo-wisdom which suffuses the whole conception of Seahaven, the earnestness of the performance, combined with the cinematic staging (close-ups intercut with shots of an impressive set) and subtly emotional score, prompts the spectator to buy in to his display of concern. We know that Marlon is an actor, but his earlier professions in the "EPK" segments, combined with the full arsenal of cinematic technique, supress our suspicion of possible ulterior motive. However, in the middle of this speech [55:12] the shot switches to Christof in the control room, as it is revealed that he is feeding lines to Marlon through an earpiece. Christof says, "I'd gladly walk in front of traffic for you.", and – as Marlon repeats the line and Truman cries in response – the scene is shown on a monitor and the mise-en-abyme presentation, small screen and radically distorted image (horizontal lines, poor colour reproduction) all combine to visually cheapen the moment in a way which thematically parallels the deception of Truman.

Figure 25: Marlon follows Christof's direction

The Truman Show is a fiction film, directed by Peter Weir, but we do not feel deceived by the puppetry which brings it to life. As an audience we understand that the fiction film requires direction of actors, all playing a role, in service to a predetermined series of events set out in a script. The film is a construct which, on completion, is fixed on celluloid and we engage in a suspension of disbelief when we experience it. In live television, however,

the intervention of an off-camera influence, which subverts and imposes motivations, lines of dialogue and emotional responses does disrupt the spectator's ability to assign credence to any sense of psychological believability and unity – whether of a character in a fiction or an individual in non-fiction contexts. In this way we equate simultaneity with spontaneity, or at least its possibility. The contrast between what Marlon says and his professions to the wholesome purity of *The Truman Show* in the EPK segments, and the cynicism inherent in his recital of Christof's script breaks the contract between the audience and the work – that they are willing to engage in a work of fiction as long as the characters maintain a capacity for narrative agency, based on their individual motivations. In drawing back the curtain and revealing the specifically televisual nature of this construct, Weir explicates the differing nature of each medium's approach to rendering character and psychological believability.

The Truman Show dramatises the relationship between the television show and its audience in the way that it features a number of characters who pop up occasionally to comment on events, from a number of self-consciously "normal" settings: living rooms in apartments; a workplace common-room; an urban bar. This third narrative simultaneously comments on the success of the show (and, by extension, the whole genre of "reality television" in this period) and provides commentary on the success or otherwise of the show's project to keep Truman in the dark and his attempts to escape his prison. As the previous scene continues, Christof reintroduces the character of Truman's father (previously thought to have died at sea – i.e. "written out"). This is an incidence of forced narrative continuity – the actor playing Truman's father, presumably either consumed with remorse, or just down on his luck, has previously broken on to the set and confronted Truman. Christof copes with this extra-diegetic intervention by reintroducing him into the narrative and explaining his absence as a case of "amnesia" – the kind of extreme narrative contrivance familiar to viewers of popular soap operas.[150] As Truman collapses into the arms of his "dad", viewers are shown in a bar, watching the events on a small set perched in the corner of the room. The introduction of Truman's 'father' is necessitated by narrative continuity but is actualised in the soap-operatic, melodramatic convention of the "plot twist". In fact, it's overdone – Christof says to one of the production staff, "Easy on the fog", as the father walks out of it towards Truman. Cristof then directs a crane-cam to capture the shot – shown on the monitor in the control room – rising from behind Truman as the two men walk towards each other. Despite this scene having a patently ridiculous

[150] Most famously, the incident in *Dallas* (1978-1991), where Bobby Ewing was reintroduced to viewers and his death – in addition to much of the prior season – attributed to one character's dream.

effect on the cinema audience, there is a shot of the waitresses in the bar (*figure 26*) which illustrates that the desired effect is being made on the audience of *The Truman Show*.

Figure 26: Lapping it up

The unreality of the scene – for the cinema audience – is accentuated when it is further revealed that the music in this scene is being directed and delivered live from within the studio control room. Again, in cinema, we accept the presence of non-diegetic music as a tool of the producer, emerging mysteriously from the ether at moments of heightened emotion – it either works or it doesn't. In a live broadcast, the emotionally manipulative character of such an audio accompaniment is much more pronounced, as Christof waves to a piano player to increase intensity at the moment of reunion. Like the fog sprayed onto the set, Christof works in real time to ensure that the music is emotionally pitched at a level designed to achieve an effect. A live studio director is also a member of the audience, in a way that a film director can never be – he bends and shapes the work *as it takes form* to comply with either his own demands or a projected sense of wider audience (and sponsor) expectation.

Christof and the production team respond with joy to the success of the scene and the TV audience also respond tearfully to the manufactured pathos of the scene. "Great television!" says one of the staff [58:17]. It's difficult to feel otherwise than what Weir intends to signify in this scene that what is good enough for television – at least, for its audience, or for its producers – is not good enough for cinema. Other snipes at the medium

are taken in the various references to product placement and the restrictions the involvement of commercial sponsors has on content. At [13:48] Meryl bribes Truman out of his travel thoughts with the promise of sex. This is followed by a brief scene with a couple of – presumably, night-working security guards - where they talk with frustration about the fact that they never show the sex scenes with Truman. This illustrates the conflict between the concept of the show as a 24 hour portrait of someone's life and the censorship demands of advertisers and broadcast networks to avoid contentious material.[151]

So, *The Truman Show* strives to comment on aspects of commercial broadcast television and, in doing so, employs a layered narrative which allows it to utilise and exploit a range of aspects of the formal characteristics of the medium. Scenes such as the one described above reveal live television's obsession with the construction of a series of impactful moments, and reveal the self-sufficiency of the medium, which works to obfuscate the apparatus and ideology from which it constructs content.[152] However, in one important segment it fails to walk this tightrope effectively. The character of Lauren provides both the impetus for Truman to seek to escape Seahaven and is the only character in the film as a whole who operates across all three narrative levels. She exists as a character in the diegesis of the television show, is featured in a scene where she ambushes Christof during a live television interview and is shown as a member of the audience, watching along from her apartment like the waitresses in the bar, the security guards at work. She first appears in a flashback. Truman is shown buying women's magazines – ostensibly for Meryl – from which he cuts out parts of women's faces, in an effort to combine them in such a way as to form a picture of Lauren. He keeps this in a scrapbook in a chest in his basement, from which he extracts and caresses a women's sweater. At [18:35], as the waitress in the bar says, "See, they got rid of her, but they couldn't erase the memory", a shot of the television set shows Truman holding the sweater and a circular wave effect disrupts the image (*figure 27*).

[151] Also, possibly, the demands of Christof for the show to be a sort of 50s-era portrait of a lost American innocence.
[152] Sean Cubitt, *TimeShift: On Video Culture* (London: Routledge, 1991), 145.

Figure 27: Flashback incoming

This video-enabled effect is a common feature in television shows, denoting a transition to another time or place, or – in this case – both, as a flashback now takes place to Truman's high-school years and the meeting with Lauren. From [18:47] to [24:14] the film follows the conventions of standard narrative cinema, with no intervention from the 2nd or 3rd narrative strands or the "surveillance camera" shots from earlier in the film. The story of Lauren's meeting with Truman and the show's conspiracy to remove her is told in conventional terms. Only when the couple escape the library and run onto the beach, where they are tracked by a few of the show's cameras, does the presence of the production team become asserted. Lauren's "father" arrives from out of nowhere and spirits her away as she tries to tell Truman about the show and his part in it. When this sequence is complete, we are returned to the waitress in the bar and the bar manager hurries her along, saying "We've already got this on the greatest hits tape." [27:03] It seems that the spectator is expected to draw from this sequence that this has been a flashback, inserted into the show to explicate a narrative plot point – to whom does this sweater belong, whose face is Truman attempting to construct? There are two problems with this – one minor and one fairly serious for the narrative consistency of the film. It is stressed within the film that *The Truman Show* is a 24-hour record of Truman's life – with no breaks, not even for advertisements.[153] In this context, the whole concept of flashbacks seems not to make any

[153] This explains the show's constant need to engineer scenes which have conspicuous product placement.

sense. It also asks the spectator to accept that the production crew have the ability to constantly queue up footage from narratively significant parts of Truman's life, at short notice, to explain or justify his current behaviour. These minor points may fall within suspension of disbelief – far more serious is the way in which this whole scene, which would have been a major problem for the crew *when it actually happened*, a near-miss regarding Truman's knowledge of the show's existence, is then shown to the television audience a second time – thus reminding them of a major failure in the show's history. In narrative terms, the flashback takes place for the cinema audience, not the television audience, who are already aware of Lauren's story – many in fact having it "on tape". Despite this, Weir depicts the flashback taking place within the show, as is clearly denoted by the video wave transition effect. The tension between the concept of *The Truman Show* as a fictional 24-hour live reality television show, and its depiction and remediation within a feature film, proves to be too much to bear in this sequence and Weir's solution sees him largely rely on a conventional formal strategy – the flashback – rather than seek to stay within the restrictions of the three-pronged narrative structure from which the film is otherwise constructed.

On Television/In Television – *Edtv* (Ron Howard, 1999) & *Pleasantville* (Gary Ross, 1998)

As previously noted, "Reality Television" had proven extremely popular by the time *The Truman Show* went into production. Two other Hollywood films exploiting the public's fascination with television were released in close proximity to Weir's film: *Edtv* and *Pleasantville*. Although similar to *The Truman Show* and to each other in their concern with television and the relation that the medium has to contemporary culture, each film approaches the subject in a different way.

Sconce writes about the impact that various electronic media have had on the cultural imagination of – particularly – the US, arguing that responses to them, as reported in newspapers and other literature, indicates that the sense of presence they evoked occasionally led to a conception of them as somehow embodying an actual place, which audience members could inhabit. With radio this electronic elsewhere was bound up with notions of the supernatural and early scientific concepts such as the "ether"; with television, the visualised space it constructed became more defined:

> Television does not threaten to transport them 'elsewhere,' but succeeds in assimilating them, at least temporarily, into its own 'nowhere'. Television thus threatened to consume its subjects, if not into the actual vacuum of outer space, then into its own logic and fictions that existed in an ethereal space that, nevertheless, could often feel more real, more 'live' than the everyday material environment of the viewer's home.[154]

In some ways, it could be argued that Reality Television works as a kind of response to this kind of television – it strips away the "logic and fictions" which have developed over time in standard commercial television programmes and aspires to replace them with the everyday, prosaic reality which the spectator inhabits. Though it is outside the scope of this chapter, it should be enough to note here the naiveté of such a conception of Reality Television and, instead, to assert merely that its rise should only reflect a shift in attitude on the part of programme makers and audiences. Or, to quote Christof in *The Truman Show*: "We've become bored with watching actors give us phony emotions. We're tired of pyrotechnics and special effects." [00:20] Though this kind of statement provides a rationale for the formal shift which occurred with the introduction of Reality Television, both *The Truman Show* and *Pleasantville* construct a kind of televisual elsewhere which responds to the complexities and conflicts of modern life with remarkably backward-

[154] Sconce, *Haunted Media*, 142.

looking, reactionary and conservative ideological foundations. In the former film, Seahaven is modelled on a Neverland existing only on television soap operas of the 1950s and 60s; in the latter, two modern-day teenagers are extracted from the "real" contemporary world and beamed into just such a show – the fictional *"Pleasantville"*.

The opening scenes depict the harsh contemporary reality for its teenage protagonist, David, as he has to listen to his mother arguing with an absent father about care duties [4:07]. Prior to this there is an opening montage where various teachers at his school inform the students of the dangers of modern life that await them, including unemployment, the threat of contracting HIV and climate change. It is suggested that David's obsession with the fictional TV show is a response to these kinds of pressures – a regression into a fantasy 1950s world where life is safer and more predictable. As Christof warns Truman at the end of *The Truman Show*: "… there's no more truth out there than there is in the world I created for you – you see lies, you see deceit, but in my world you have nothing to fear." [1:27:50] As David and his modern sister, Jennifer, battle over control of the television set, the remote is broken and the TV repairman[155] who arrives to fix the issue somehow does so in a way which spirits the teenage couple out of "reality" and directly into the diegesis of *"Pleasantville"*, where they take on the pre-existing roles of Bud and Mary Sue. After they are transported into the show, the television in their home continues to receive the broadcast, with the kids replaced with them [12:54] (*figure 28*). This mise-en-abyme shot depicts distance in a way which is related doubly to physical distance and diegetic distance: David and Jennifer have been transmitted to Pleasantville – wherever that is – but they have also been extracted from the previously established narrative where they chafe against the pressures of contemporary teenage life in the US and are, as will soon be seen, now subject to the scripted demands of established roles in a fictional television series.

[155] The TV Repairman is played by Don Knotts – an actor most famous for his part in *The Andy Griffith Show* from 1961-7. This kind of small-town America show is one of the models for the fictional Pleasantville and also has a link to later lionising of this era of US TV in featuring Ron Howard, later to star in *Happy Days* (1974-84) - and, even later, to direct *Ed TV*.

Figure 28: David and Jennifer, "on" television or "in" television?

It is not explored whether they are being broadcast to other homes receiving the marathon, or they are somehow inside an “instance” of the show which is only occuring in some mystical land which is somehow on the other side of the glass screen of this single television. There are none of the “vox-pop” audience sequences of *The Truman Show*, indicating that the latter explanation is more likely. *Pleasantville* makes its argument about the inability and undesirability of an escape to a fictionalised past solely through the interplay of its primary characters, without resorting to a “Greek chorus” of audience stand-ins.

At [12:58] there is a shot of the kids looking around which is presented as if an old television broadcast is being filmed off-screen – with fuzzy imagery and high contrast. This is immediately replaced with a number of establishing shots of the interior of the house, which is in the sharp black and white of 35mm film. When the film goes back to a shot of the kids it is also now in 35mm black and white. A brief instance of the materiality of 50s era television – the reduced contrast of 16mm and the blurry nature of the telecine prints used to preserve such shows – is employed to contextualise the diegetic shift which has taken place. Once this has been flagged to the spectator, the film settles down to continue the narrative utilising conventional film, (initially) restricting itself to black and white solely for narrative consistency and thematic potential. The kids listen to an explanation from the TV repairman, who now appears on the set in the Parker home, and at

[14:02] there is a high-angle surveillance-camera style shot of Jen's date knocking on the door of their, now empty, home – suggesting that the repairman has extensive powers to broadcast scenes from anywhere in the (real) world. David still holds the remote, but it has no effect on this television. When he turns the knob the channels display actual television shows of the period. This is interesting as it appears to show that the fictional Pleasantville has been actualised – made real – in the time period in which it is set. It is not wholly fictional but has become a real world presence in the period of its diegesis – "April 1958" as the calendar reveals at [15:35]. Dave and Jen are adrift in space *and* time. As Jen looks around, family portraits already display their images, as if they have been retrofitted into the world. As Sconce points out in the quote above, the "ethereal space" of *"Pleasantville"* has been made more real than the material world. David and Jennifer have been assimilated and the world they left behind reaches them only through fuzzy images on a television set.

If the appeal of retro-television can be explained as partly the wish to return to an imagined simpler past, then the appeal – for some – of Reality Television is in the way in which it fulfils the promise of Andy Warhol's famous statement that "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for fifteen minutes."[156] The potential for ordinary members of the public not only to appear on television, but through their very presence on it, achieve fame has seen such shows not only enjoy longevity and success on schedules around the world, but also attract large numbers of people to auditions – in many cases, themselves integrated into the shows.[157] In Ron Howard's 1999 film *Edtv*, the protagonist is a videostore clerk who is thrust into the national limelight when a struggling cable executive plucks him from an impromptu interview in a bar into his own 24-hour live reality television show. Seemingly picked for his unassuming charm and down-to-earth nature, when *"Edtv"* starts gaining ratings Ed comes under pressure to conform to public expectations of a celebrity lifestyle. Principally, his budding relationship to similarly down-to-earth UPS driver Shari is sabotaged by a public who, instead, get behind the machinations of the production crew to pair him with the gold-digging Jill.[158] In a similar strategy to *The Truman Show*, Howard utilises "vox pop" sequences featuring characters

[156] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/15_minutes_of_fame - accessed 04/12/2018.
[157] See *Britain's Got Talent* (2007-), *The X Factor* (2004-), *American Idol* (2002-), etc.
[158] In a piece of inspired casting, Jill is played by Elizabeth Hurley, an actress arguably better known for appearances in tabloid newspapers than her film work.

who represent the show's audience [159], as they argue over the merits of Jill or Shari, and various other sundry elements of Ed's remarkably non-remarkable life.

The film, which largely unfolds in the manner of a series of set-pieces, turning on the comedic effect of the difficulties caused by the ever-present camera crew which accompany Ed, functions as a kind of allegory for the way in which many of us see ourselves differently from the way that others do. This simple human dilemma is amplified in Ed's case by the fact that this "external" view is beamed to millions across the nation. Even in the most intimate situations, Ed's life is invaded by the medium of live television.

Figure 29: Up close and impersonal.

Edtv's fictive exploration of the nature of both Reality Television and the way in which it is melded by audience expectation, suggests that it has turned the video camera from a documentary or storytelling tool, into an enabler of surveillance. When Ed briefly separates from Shari and goes for dinner at Jill's he is cheered on by a large crowd who wait expectantly outside of her house for imagery of consummation within. The audience celebrate their own ability to manufacture an event, as it is press reports of the audience's antipathy towards Shari which has forced the couple to separate. This parallels Reality Television's partial fulfilment of long-prophesised television interactivity, in the way in

[159] In a way which reflects on Hollywood's growing appreciation for the need to be *appear to* be representative of cultural, racial and gender differences in contemporary society this audience contains a black family and a gay couple. The film itself does not feature any significant gay or black characters. Despite the presence of Ellen de Generes in a major role, her character's sexuality is not revealed.

which many shows in the genre court and respond to audience votes. It could certainly be argued that in films such as *Edtv*, this implied criticism of the craven nature of the audience-producer feedback loop in Reality Television is somewhat hypocritical, given the highly-focused development cycle of modern Hollywood production.[160] *Edtv* does end with Ed releasing himself from his television contract by threatening to reveal the personal details of the show's executive producer. It is interesting to consider whether such carping at the television industry could be sustained in the current climate in Hollywood.[161]

In the end, in different ways, both *Pleasantville* and *Edtv* comment on contemporary television audience demands for the medium to respond to their thoughts and desires – whether that is fulfilling a dream of escape into the past or an imagined future where each of us has the potential to be plucked from the crowd and be recognised for our unique individuality, sprinkled with the fairy dust of television. Both films posit the medium as capable of rendering the world in a way which cuts it off from the mundanity of the material world and creating a space where people live lives which are closer to fiction, where each moment is significant and worthy of broadcast. While this may be a dream for the audience, both films – in addition to *The Truman Show* – ultimately reveal such a created world as a nightmare for its principal characters. The puppetry of broadcast television may result in amusing scenes for the public, but for the unwitting actors it results only in paranoia, existential despair and torment. Each of these films is ostensibly about broadcast television and models its fictive worlds on popular modes in the medium's history – from 50s soap operas to present-day Reality Television, but all three ultimately concentrate on the experience of protagonists who are not actors but ordinary people, attempting to live lives under the constant gaze of the video camera. There were always two sides to the capabilities inherent in live video. The instantaneous character of the representation of a scene turned it into an event. Live video allows events to be represented as they happen and brings them to audiences. Broadcast television exploited this second capability - whatever happens, you will be there to see it. The first capability exploits the surveillance characteristics of live video which, as I have demonstrated above, has some troubling implications in their application to television genres such as Reality TV. I will now explore how film has explored more explicitly-defined surveillance technologies and the role that cinema has in provoking discussion regarding the moral, ethical and societal impact of them.

[160] Including focus groups, test screenings, etc.

[161] The well-publicised backlash against manipulation of male-female power relations in the wake of the Harvey Weinstein scandal, for example.

Part 2 – Format Specificity

CCTV – a Brief Introduction

In his 2010 novel *The Prague Cemetery*, Umberto Eco's narrator relates pages of a diary kept by an amoral fraudster and notary – Simonini. At the mid-way point, Simonini is forced to kill a lawyer, in order to silence him on a matter on which he could be incriminated, and afterwards he makes a token attempt to stage the scene as a suicide:

> It wasn't hard to put the pistol in his hand. Fortunately this occurred six or seven years before the discovery of a miraculous powder that allowed the prints of fingers that had touched a weapon to be clearly detected. At the time Simonini had settled his score with Joly, the methods of a certain Bertillon were still followed, based on the measurements of the skeleton and particular bones of the subject. No one could have suspected that Joly's death was other than suicide.[162]

This episode takes place sometime in the 1880s in Paris, so is correct in that fingerprints were first utilised in criminal cases in Argentina in 1892.[163] Bertillon is also an accurate and relevant historical reference as he was a French police officer who pioneered the first forensic identification system to be widely used by law enforcement authorities, which was confined to identifying the body from its measurements.[164] The ease with which Simonini fakes Joly's suicide and the lack of care he takes in doing so is testament both to his venal nature and the need for more effective means of identifying criminals in the 19th century. Bertillon is also thought to have taken the first "mug shot" – a term referring to a sequence of photographs taken to identify a suspect in a criminal case. So, much in the way of the entertainment arts, criminology exploited the advances in technology of image in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Also paralleling the application of instantaneous transmission and reception of moving video imagery to commercial entertainment in the broadcast television industry, the application of this technology to surveillance did not fully emerge until after the Second World War. As the fictional case of Simonini implies, this is not because – to put it in Winston's terms – there was no "supervening social necessity"[165] present to effect

[162] Umberto Eco, *The Prague Cemetery* (London: Vintage, 2012), 342.
[163] https://www.nlm.nih.gov/visibleproofs/galleries/biographies/vucetich.html - accessed 04/12/2018.
[164] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alphonse_Bertillon - accessed - 04/12/2018.
[165] Winston, *Media, Technology and Society*, pp.5-7

technological innovation's application to problems encountered by government. In addition, popular culture had already provided a number of models for the kind of situations to which this technology could be applied – although it is revealing that many of these are of the dystopian kind, such as their employ in shoring up the empires of crime established by such figures as Dr. Mabuse.[166] Instead there were some technological barriers which prevented live video's application in the surveillance field, in the period when it first became suitable for television:

> … the invention of television, which became commercially viable in the 1930s, and potentially allowed for the surveillance of remote sites by cameras … was limited though, since the film would still have to be developed before it could be viewed – an expensive and time-consuming process. It was only with the advent of videotape and the Video Cassette Recorder (VCR) in the 1960s, that the images from a camera could be captured on film without the need for chemical processing, allowing a cheap and simple method of recording and the prospect of instant playback. Thus, around 130 years after the birth of photography, its true panoptic potential was about to be realised. It was now possible to have cameras linked to centralised control rooms where the images could be monitored, remotely, by a single person and a permanent record kept of everything that was seen.[167]

As the invention of magnetic recording of the video signal solved broadcast television's problem with repeat performances, it fully realised the potential of surveillance in not just monitoring behaviour, but capturing and preserving it. Also holding back the technology's wide deployment in the decades following the Second World War may have been social attitudes – stoked by Western governments – that widespread surveillance was something which was an emblematic tool of the kind of communist, totalitarian regimes behind the Iron Curtain.[168] Regardless of this, the first significant CCTV initiatives emerged in the UK in 1960s, with Liverpool City Council introducing a mobile camera, supported by plain-clothes officers, in 1964[169], and a company called Photoscan offering CCTV systems to commercial premises in 1967.[170]

Indeed, the UK has and continues to play a pivotal part in the history of the provision of CCTV. The UK "is the largest market for CCTV in Europe and accounts for one-fifth of all CCTV cameras worldwide."[171] Norris and Armstrong point out that this proliferation has been abetted by the UK's lack of regulation regarding the taking of photographs in public places, "unlike many other European countries".[172] This lack of

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[166] See Fritz Lang(dir.), *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler* (1922), *Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse* (1933).
[167] Clive Norris & Gary Armstrong, *The Maximum Surveillance Society* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 18.
[168] *Ibid.*, pp.27-33
[169] Roy Coleman, *Reclaiming the Streets* (Cullompton: Willan, 2004), 102.
[170] Norris & Armstrong, *The Maximum Surveillance Society*, 18.
[171] Coleman, *Reclaiming the Streets*, 6.
[172] Norris and Armstrong, *The Maximum Surveillance Society*, 26.

regulation allowed "mission creep" to be a factor in early CCTV initiatives, such as in Airdrie (a small town near Glasgow, Scotland), where a specific local crime issue – "teenage shoplifters disappearing into the massed ranks of dancing teenagers at a local youth club"[173] – became the justification for the installation of a 12-camera system covering the whole of the town centre in 1992. Another factor in the rise of CCTV installations – particularly in urban centres – has been the focus on public-private partnerships, where the national government has provided financial aid and expertise to local government to set up surveillance systems, in cases where they can be wholly or partly funded by private enterprise. This has led to the situation today where the majority of urban CCTV monitoring systems are privately owned and managed.[174]

From this brief sketch of the early history of surveillance video – and the specific role the United Kingdom has played in its deployment – I will now analyse a number of British-set films which deal with CCTV and video monitoring. Doing so will provide an indication of the ways in which practitioners of the cinema regard this technology: its differences from the visual texture and capabilities of the film camera, and the ways in which it impacts on and is viewed by the societies in which it operates in an increasingly obtrusive manner.

[173] Jason Ditton & Emma Short, "Yes, it Works, No, It Doesn't: Comparing the Effects of Open-Street CCTV in Two Adjacent Scottish Town Centres," in *Surveillance, Crime and Social Control*, eds. Clive Norris & Dean Wilson (London: Routledge, 2006), 26.
[174] Coleman, *Reclaiming the Streets*, 77.

Red Road **(Andrea Arnold, 2006)**

In *Red Road* – the debut feature from British director Andrea Arnold – Kate Dickie plays Jackie, a young widow working in a CCTV control and monitoring centre in Glasgow. Struggling to come to terms with the loss of her husband and young daughter in a car accident, she spends her days idly working her job, scanning absent-mindedly across the deprived, working-class area she has been assigned. The company she works for – CityEye – provide her and other employees with the kind of quasi-official uniform which is familiar from the many different private security firms which have sprung up in the UK in the last couple of decades - it is emblazoned prominently with the company's logo. On completion of each shift, she removes the VHS tapes which have preserved the imagery from the cameras and places them into filing cabinets, before returning to her empty apartment. This sleepwalking existence is occasionally punctuated with small moments of distraction – the man with the old, sick dog who she tracks sympathetically with the CCTV camera, or the loveless affair she is having with a married colleague. However, her intentionally flattened emotional life is suddenly and violently impacted one evening when the camera reveals that Clyde, the man responsible for the accident which killed her family, has been released from prison.

This scene explores both the felicity of the surveillance camera to capture images of individuals and its insufficiency to reveal aspects of their behaviours and motivations, an aspect which should be key to CCTV as a crime-fighting technology. At [13:05], as Jackie works an evening shift in the control room, there is a film camera close up of a CCTV monitor, which displays the face of a girl, with extreme distortion (*figure 30*). The shot changes to a view of Jackie's eyes (*figure 31*) and then a full-screen monitor view where the view opens up to reveal a blonde-haired young woman sitting down in the doorway of garage crying (*figure 32*). The CCTV camera tracks back to a wider view which shows the garage in full (*figure 33*) as Jackie is heard reporting the scene to the police – she provides a description of the woman's age – again tracking in as she does so, presumably to confirm this detail. She states that she will "keep her in sight 'til you get there", and then adds, "She shouldn't spend a night there", indicating that she has placed this call, motivated by empathy, rather than the security of the premises. In a subsequent, medium shot of the monitor the ring-binder Jackie looks through is revealed to have a mug shot of a women – presumably known offenders, such as prostitutes (*figure 35*).

Figure 30

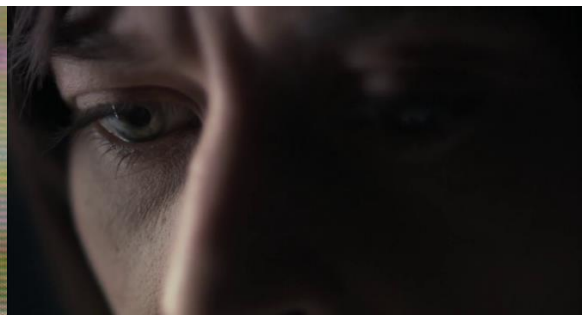

Figure 31

Figure 32

Figure 33

Figure 34

Figure 35

The presence of the clear horizontal bars in the image in *figure 30* indicate that this shot is an extreme close-up of the video monitor, where the detail of the digital film image heightens its material qualities – specifically, low-resolution.[175] It is only when we share Jackie's POV in *figure 32* that the image become acceptable as a means of identification – somewhat perversely, distance aids the spectator in seeing the image with greater clarity. All visual media have a horizon – defined by resolution – beyond which what we see as an intelligible image melts into merely the elements from which it is constructed, but this sequence clearly marks out the CCTV camera as inferior to digital film in this regard. In *figure 33* greater context is sought and provided as Jackie manipulates the camera to zoom

[175] Marks refers to such incidences of extreme heightening of video distortion as "haptic visuality", as the ways in which they frustrate the visual sense may provoke other senses to engage with the stimuli. Laura U. Marks, *Touch* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 9.

out and identify location, though doing so causes the young girl to fade from the image as bright light now over-exposes the image, the camera struggling to cope with the fluctuation in illumination. *Figures 34 & 35* reveal Jackie seeking further contextual information, as she browses images in a binder, looking for a match with the video image of the young girl. It is clear, however, from her language and intonation that – even if she did identify the girl as an offender – she would be encouraging a considerate response from the authorities. We can contrast Jackie's human response with the automated directives likely to be triggered by modern surveillance systems using facial recognition software.[176]

At [13:42] Clyde, another man and a woman arrive and the other woman moves away behind the garage, eventually followed by Clyde. As the police arrive and talk to the other couple, Jackie switches cameras and uses the joystick to track their movements and, as the woman runs behind a wall and is approached by Clyde, she picks up the phone to report what – initially – looks like a potential assault, but is subsequently shown to be a moment of consensual intimacy. The lack of resolution inherent in the video camera image does not provide enough detail to allow either the spectator or Jackie to determine whether the woman welcomes the man as he slowly approaches her, in what could be either a menacing or a seductive way (*figure 36*).

Figure 36: Assault or assignation?

[176] Norris & Armstrong, *The Maximum Surveillance Society*, 19.

At [15:00], as the couple have sex, Jackie keeps the camera on the couple. The shots alternate between a full-screen view of the monitor and shots of Jackie and parts of her body displaying some signs of arousal – she grips her left thigh and she caresses the joystick with her right hand. This is a more serious abuse of the capabilities of CCTV than the casual voyeurism in which Jackie indulges earlier in the film, where she spies on the man with the dog and a cleaner dancing in an empty office. Indeed, this kind of activity when perpetrated by private security firms is not only a concern for the public but is one of the sticking points between them and official police forces.[177] As Clyde's head turns she leans forward as if she recognises him. There are a series of increasingly closer shots of the monitor's image (film camera zooms) and her (medium shot, then face, then just her eyes) as there is a sting in the soundtrack. She then loses Clyde as he moves out of shot and uses the joystick to pan across the view rapidly, but only succeeds in capturing a fox who escapes symbolically across a nearby road.

As the film progresses, Jackie is increasingly frustrated by the CCTV camera's refusal to provide her with evidence of Clyde's continuing criminal activity, which she seems to both assume is an inalienable part of his character and validates her need to continue to damn him with guilt. She further abuses her role at CityEye by stealing the tapes of the incident at the garage and tracks Clyde across the city, lying to colleagues that he is a suspect to force them to track him when he moves out of her area. When she observes him buying something from a pharmacy and then approaching a teenage girl outside of a school, she misreads it as plying a vulnerable girl with drugs, when Clyde is actually attempting a reconciliation with his daughter with some cosmetics (*figure 37*).

[177] Coleman, *Reclaiming the Streets*, 209.

Figure 37: Clyde, the predator?

Her obsession with Clyde even leads to an incident where her carelessness results in the failure of the system to capture an incident where a girl is stabbed. Though her abuse of the system resolutely fails to provide her with any inkling of what motivates Clyde's movements, it does provide her with raw information – she obtains his mobile number from the side of a van he uses as a self-employed locksmith, and she finds out where he lives. Once she has this information, she abandons her attempts to use the system to incriminate him remotely, and directly intervenes in his life, face-to-face. We might wish to read this sequence as commentary on the perceived lack of efficacy of surveillance technologies to replace traditional community policing such as the constantly lionised (in the UK) "bobbies-on-the-beat". It is true that, when the girl is stabbed, the sight of her sitting forlorn on the pavement, blood pooling in her hands, while Jackie sits helplessly in the control room, does indict such systems as operating at a cold, physically- and emotionally-distanced remove from those it is meant to protect. On the other hand, it could be argued that the very impartiality and flat, characterless quality of the video image is a counter to accusations of bias and prejudice in policing (for example, in attitudes to young people, people from minority communities, etc.).[178] Jackie's project to put Clyde back in prison reveals and validates both of these perceptions of surveillance technology, as she first of all fails to establish guilt using the cameras, and then uses it to supply "facts" to the authorities when she seduces him, fakes an assault and then ensures she is caught on camera when leaving his apartment block.

[178] Norris & Armstrong, *The Maximum Surveillance Society*, 188-189.

One aspect of this mechanical, objective aspect of the videocamera is the way that it is employed in conveying narrative information in the film, and how this compares to the sequences in which it does not feature. The previously cited sequence where Jackie observes the two couples at the petrol station extends from [13:01] to [16:48] and unfolds entirely in real time. Although the video camera footage does not always appear on-screen, the fact that the entire scene revolves around the events it depicts, seems to force Arnold to choreograph shots around a core which consists of a single event which occurs at a distance, yet commands Jackie's full attention and directs her responses – from her interaction with the authorities to the cigarette she smokes outside as the scene closes. In scenes not subject to the remorseless literalism of the unblinking, automated CCTV camera, Arnold allows the instinctive narrative trickery of conventional cinema to reassert itself. As she follows Clyde from his apartment block to a café [34:20], Arnold dilates the time taken and distance traversed by editing the sequence. This is not done in a way which draws attention to itself – there are no sudden, disruptive shifts in perspective, for example – but the editing becomes more noticeable in comparison to the prior scenes which have revolved around the insistently real-time nature of the live video camera feed. Later in the film, at [38:40] Jackie appears to instantly teleport from the control room - where she has been watching another real-time, narratively wasteful scene of Clyde buying alcohol with some friends - to stand directly outside of his apartment. Clyde, as subject of the camera's gaze, has every banal action constantly followed and recorded, while Jackie – the film-protagonist – flits here and there according to the demands of narrative economy.[179] The aesthetic shift which occurs when Jackie travels to the area she has been observing through the surveillance camera also operates on a thematic level – the area around the Red Road flats suddenly seems more alive, more akin to the "real" world. There is a paradox at work here, in that we have become used to viewing CCTV footage in non-fiction contexts, such as crime reports, television news, etc., whereas the tools of the cinema are employed in the service of artifice and story-telling.[180] Perhaps the most vital aspect of the shift from CCTV image to (in this case, digital) film is that it validates the operation of suture which the spectator necessarily employs when viewing the fixed angles of the surveillance

[179] "The video recorder never laid claim to authenticity, but it permanently affected our relation to time … Its most prominent use now is in surveillance, as the medium for measuring 'empty time'." – Thomas Elsaesser, *Film History as Media Archaeology* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016) 91-92.
[180] Nichols argues that such long-takes inevitably draw attention to the materiality of the shot by exceeding what he refers to as "reading time". Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 60.

camera.[181] When Jackie travels to Red Road the spectator, through the fluid camera pans and edits, is suddenly presented with a more fully-realised and three-dimensional narrative space and compares this with the mental construct previously provoked by the surveillance footage.

The film engages directly with the concept of emotional and spatial distance, and the difficulty that exists in resolving issues related to both using media such as CCTV systems. While CityEye's system has the minimum necessary coverage to comply with the terms of its contract with the state – in the sense that there are cameras in place at physical locations, operating with the required resolution to capture incidents of interest – the film demonstrates that this is not sufficient to provide emotional information to users. Jackie's physical intervention in the space of the Red Road flats becomes necessary for her to determine Clyde's motivation. The difference between the CCTV system and the interoperation of actual human beings which constitutes civil society under late capitalism can be stated by utilising Jameson's notion of the "spatial analysis of culture",[182] or what can be more concisely described as "cognitive mapping":

> At this point the phenomenological experience of the individual subject - traditionally, the supreme raw materials of the work of art - becomes limited to a tiny corner of the social world, a fixed-camera view of a certain section of London or the countryside or whatever. But the truth of that experience no longer coincides with the place in which it takes place. The truth of that limited daily experience of London lies, rather, in India or Jamaica or Hong Kong; it is bound up with the whole colonial system of the British Empire that determines the very quality of the individual's subjective life. Yet those structural coordinates are no longer accessible to immediate lived experience and are often not even conceptualizable for most people.[183]

In terms of Jackie's lived experience, the operation of state power as it applies to herself and to Clyde is represented through the limited codes of the CCTV camera: guilt and innocence, right and wrong. Similarly, the deprivation of the Red Road flats is presented as a bare set of facts – this is a problem area which must be constantly surveyed for evidence of the criminality which surely exists. The reasons why the area is deprived, the whole interconnected social and economic map of modern life in the United Kingdom, escapes the purview of the flat, pixillated, real-time camera system. The impact of various phases of deindustrialisation and the diminished national wealth under the collapse of colonialism

[181] David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (London: Routledge, 1985) 111-113. Bordwell argues that the Oudart's notion of "suture" does not fully account for the possibility that the spectator will in most cases mentally "fill-in" off-screen space.
[182] Fredric Jameson, "Cognitive Mapping", in C. Nelson & L. Grossberg. eds. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 348.
[183] Ibid, 349.

requires a historical perspective which the insistently present-tense surveillance system cannot grasp.

Ultimately *Red Road* has to revert to the film camera to resolve Jackie's dilemma: the closure she requires can only be obtained by talking directly with Clyde. That the CCTV camera only supplies imagery is at the base of a number of mistakes she makes in reading his behaviour and implying his motivation. Surveillance footage may provide indisputable visual evidence, but any moral judgement made on events when utilising it involves more fallible human intervention, as has been shown in several famous cases where video evidence played a major role – such as the Rodney King beating:

> George Holliday's amateur videotape took a close (albeit fuzzy) look at the urban world and it laid bare the cruelty and the ugliness of modern life on America's mean streets. Perhaps the day will come when some sort of video polygraph will be admissible evidence in a court of law (of even in the court of public opinion). Such a technological breakthrough would certainly represent a true Bazinian 'asymptote to History.' Until that time, however, fallible human beings will have to rely on fallible technology and their own experiences to adjudge the truth value of events in the world or the legal guilt and/or innocence of individuals and entire societies.[184]

Jackie can only approach the truth of Clyde's involvement in her family's death when she recognises the way in which her own perceived culpability colours the way she views him. She reveals that the last words she said to her daughter on the night she died was "get out of my sight", her husband taking her out to give her some respite. The guilt this has embedded in her has prevented her from moving from grief to acceptance. That this angry plea to remove a loved one from view has led to an obsessional voyeurism is one of the film's ironies and it's only the simple human conversation with which the film ends that could resolve it. That Arnold utilises a potentially dehumanising visual technology to lead the spectator through the story broadens the thematic relevance of *Red Road* from a simple tale of a mother's grief to one of the most relevant films we have about the way we assign guilt, innocence and other values to others when we rely on the inherently valueless medium of surveillance technology.

[184] Frank P. Tomasulo, "I'll See It when I Believe It," in *The Persistence of History,* ed. Vivian Sobchack (New York: Routledge, 1996), 85.

Embodied Surveillance – *Death Watch* (Bertrand Travernier, 1980) & *Freeze Frame* (John Simpson, 2004)

Michel Foucault's essay "Panopticism" outlines his argument that the psychological effects inherent in government or state security – as embodied in Jeremy Bentham's "Panopticon" proposal for the construction of institutions, such as prisons[185] – ultimately removes the need for them to enforce this power: the individual, constantly conscious of being under surveillance, polices himself:

> Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers.[186]

Though some prisons have incorporated aspects of Bentham's original concept – such as circular designs – he himself failed to construct such a building and some technical aspects have proven either impractical or morally indefensible. One of these is the notion that, although the observer in the Panopticon should be able to view the occupants at all times, the occupant should not be able to determine when he is being observed. Though prisons contain surveillance systems, it is generally not the case that individual cells contain cameras – it is assumed that there is a practical impossibility in monitoring large amounts of camera feeds at once, that the benefits of doing so would be minimal, and that invasive surveillance of this kind works against prisoner compliance with staff and the project of rehabilitation.

However, such is the proliferation of security cameras in urban centres in the UK that we can argue that there is a measure of Foucault's reading of the Panopticon in operation in the town centres, shopping malls and retail parks of contemporary Britain. Part of the justification of the efficacy of surveillance systems is that they act as a deterrent – that people's awareness of the cameras instils a propensity to self-regulate their own

[185] The Panopticon model of institutions posits a central observation tower surrounded by a peripheral structure, housing individual cells or rooms, which allows for their occupants constant visibility and separation from other occupants/prisoners. See - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panopticon - accessed 04/12/2018.

[186] Michel Foucault, "Panopticism," from Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1977) cit. in *Race/Ethnicity:Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*, Vol. 2, No. 1, p.6 (Autumn 2008), 1-12.

behaviour. In *Freeze Frame*, Sean Veil has been acquitted of a triple-murder charge, but spends his days within the purview of an elaborate surveillance system which he himself has created. Gripped by a paranoiac belief that he was not only set up by the police, but could at any point be arrested for a further unrelated crime, he ensures that every minute of every day is recorded and preserved – an indisputable alibi. In addition to this he changes his appearance to facilitate the efficient capture of his image by his own surveillance cameras and those of others – he shaves his head and eyebrows to maintain a distinctive, unmistakable identity (and also to minimise the potential forensic material which can be collected and misused against him). When moving around outside of the converted warehouse he has made home, he straps himself into a camera rig which ensures that his presence at any place and any time is fully verifiable. His evidence – an enormous bank of videotapes – is obsessively catalogued and stored in a locked vault in his home. Of crucial importance in this "evidence" is the combination of imagery and textual information, in the form of the on-screen timestamp, which places each frame indelibly within a specific chronological reference point. Without this indication that a particular event not only took place, but took place at a specific moment in time, the surveillance tapes lose their status as alibi.[187]

The central room in Veil's home is covered by several CCTV cameras, whose live feeds are shown on a bank of monitors on a desk in the centre. He has, in effect, constructed his own panoptical prison, where he is both jailer and prisoner. Though he replays news coverage of his trial – where the police officer and a psychiatrist make it clear that they still regard him as guilty – the early scenes in the film do not reveal to the spectator anything to justify Veil's extreme paranoia. In Foucault's terms the absence of the actual effect of power has been rendered obsolete because Veil has internalised it. Veil has privatised the state operation of power, taken it out of their hands and assumed full responsibility for keeping himself under observation. The Panopticon is again referenced in Veil's early foray outside of his home, where he spies on the police psychiatrist and "forensic profiler" Seger, as he launches a new book from within a seemingly-abandoned prison.

[187] This refers back to my previous point, that CCTV is essentially a hybrid technology that depends for its efficacy on a capacity to observe *and* preserve. It is a medium which is wholly defined by the concept of the present, which justifies its utilisation through obsessively cataloguing such moments for recall.

Figure 38: Veil observes Seger, and is himself observed, from the gantry of the prison.

Seger's book – *"Darkness Invisible"* – is self-described as a series of studies of unsolved murders which will "help you recognise the hidden signs that point to the darkness invisible in the hearts of Britain's uncaught killers." Seger stresses that such people may appear outwardly normal and operate without issue in workplaces and homes throughout the country. As he talks, the members of the audience shift uncomfortably and look askance at each other. In his capacity as a forensic consultant to the police, Seger should work to scientifically determine the likelihood of a suspect's guilt, but in a related private capacity his books function to instil a general sense of paranoia in the public. In this climate, where people are encouraged to doubt the mental state of people around them, the onus is on Veil to ensure that *he* – at the very least – ensures that all outward evidence of *his innocence* can be independently verified. Choosing surveillance technology to perform this task has intrinsic merit – this is the technology of the state and the security forces, regularly employed as forensic evidence in trials and associated with truth and objectivity.

A rather more science fiction conceit is employed in Bertrand Tavernier's *Death Watch*, where television cameraman Roddy has a video camera implanted in his eye (or both, the film seems largely uninterested in the actual means by which this feat is achieved). He is to be assigned to the television show *Death Watch*, a Reality Television show in which a dying person is covertly filmed as they live out their final days. The reason that such a subject is of public interest is that the film is set in a near-future UK where scientific advances have eradicated all disease – people now live much longer and usually die of natural causes in special care homes away from public sight. The subject of the show is identified when Katherine Mortenhoe – a programmer of computer-generated

novels – is diagnosed with a fatal disease. She resists the financial advances of the production company and goes on the run, although she is quickly located and befriended by Roddy, who covertly records her for the show merely by observing her.

The film is set in Glasgow, with little in the way of set dressing to suggest its future setting. It utilises the relative depredation of the council estates of East Glasgow in the late 70s to suggest that – despite, or perhaps because of, the advances in medical science – many people live in poverty. Katherine and Roddy spend a night in a church which acts as a refuge for "travellers", who are fingerprinted and moved on to other locations. There appears to be a state-led surveillance operation aimed at countering social unrest, possibly caused by mass unemployment. In this context, the television show seems to act as a kind of palliative for the population who, divorced from the heightened emotion brought by the consciousness of their own mortality, seem beaten down by the flat, drab existence of a modern world ravaged by scarce resources and industrial strife.

Roddy has to accommodate his look to the restrictions and abilities of the camera. Emerging from the hospital where he has been fitted with the implant, the spectator is treated to a lush widescreen view from Glasgow's Royal Infirmary of the city's famous Necropolis (*figure 39*). This is filmed from Roddy's point-of-view, however when he turns to respond to a nurse the shot switches to a full-screen view of a grainy television monitor (*figure 41*). The next shot shows four monitors showing this same view in the television control room (*figure 42*). While it is assumed that the spectator may assume that Roddy's visual implant merely records and transmits what he sees without materially effecting how his brain receives such imagery, this remains somewhat ambiguous and the film works to suggest that, in some way, even if only in a moral sense, his vision is somehow compromised by the camera.

Figure 39

Figure 40

Figure 41

Figure 42

Following this scene, Roddy wanders around the city, turning his head from side to side, as if conscious of his implant – he has become a machine[188], specifically a camera. In the control room a discussion ensues – "What's he doing?" "He's having fun!" [05:13] Later Roddy discusses the initial footage with Vincent, his producer:

> Roddy: "How was the first stuff?"
> Vincent: "Beautiful."
> Roddy: "Not too grainy?"
> Vincent:"No, perfect. There was a few panning shots which were blurred, but we know you were playing around. Was gorgeous stuff – beautiful work." [08:08]

In the scenes before Roddy "elopes" with Katherine he wanders the city, apparently aimlessly – it seems that testing the efficacy of the technology requires that he take certain steps to maintain the technology (eyedrops, ensuring that he does not spend extended time in the dark, sleeping tablets), but that otherwise the subject of this test footage is irrelevant to the studio. Despite this there is an interesting thematic point as Roddy reviews footage of children playing, with Vincent. Vincent suggests that it resembles the work of photographer Jacob Riis. As Riis was a photo-journalist whose work documented and supported but also – it has been argued – exploited immigrant populations in New York in the late 19th Century[189], this seems an apposite comparison to make: the producers of

[188] Warhol is relevant here again – the automatism pursued in his work and a quote attributed to him ("The reason I'm painting this way is that I want to be a machine" - https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Andy_Warhol - accessed 04/12/2018) suggest that the artist would have been very happy to receive this kind of implant.
[189] Maren Stange, "Jacob Riis and Urban Visual Culture," in *journal of Urban History* (May 1989): 274-277.

Death Watch are interested in the visual fidelity and capture of scenes of suffering, yet seem incapable of being moved by it.

Both films have protagonists who internalise and embody the modern impulse to identify, categorise and manage individuals by the state. Though *Death Watch* does not clarify whether NTV is a state or private broadcaster, the fact that they effectively force Katherine's doctor to lie to her about her illness and covertly film him doing so, suggests that the organisation either operates with state-like impunity or falls within the overall apparatus.[190] In this way they dramatise and fulfil the promise of Bentham's panopticon and, especially, Foucault's reading of its potential. That both films use the motif and material qualities of surveillance video and treat it in a dystopian manner, suggests a measure of concern about the potential abuses of this form of audio-visual technology. Norris and Armstrong argue that there is a need for such examination and criticism in fiction forms, given the disturbing way that CCTV footage has been co-opted and utilised in an unquestioning way in areas such as television news journalism and reality television.[191] Film-makers, the best and most committed of whom continually show themselves to be, not just technicians, but philosophers of the image, are perhaps best placed to carry out this crucial examination of the emerging surveillance infrastructure.

[190] In addition, at the time of the film's production, there was only one commercial broadcast television station operating in the UK.
[191] Norris & Armstrong, *The Maximum Surveillance Society*, 75.

Conclusion

Amateur film formats such as 8mm and 16mm may have allowed private individuals, groups and families to shift cinema exhibition out from the film theatre, but the paradigm remained the same – moving imagery preserved on celluloid, replayed in darkened rooms on a reflecting surface. The instantaneous quality of television shifted the mode of reception, with audiences bound together through the quality of telepresence and the demands of the broadcast schedules. Once broadcasters realised that audiences were not irretrievably wedded to the actual 'liveness' of performance – that telepresence consisted of more than simultaneous production and reception – the shift in content allowed other, more specifically televisual, programme forms to develop. If television had persisted in providing its audience with a series of offerings which replicated earlier forms established in radio and theatre it would be interesting to imagine whether there would be as much critical commentary generated around it. Despite the low-culture attributions constantly hurled at such strands as Reality Television, the formal rupture and sense of experimentation which marked their introduction have provided critics with space to further examine the overall approach to audio-visual art in contemporary society. In my examination of the ways in which some film-makers have utilised television's formal strategies as they are applied to development of narrative, I have shown that engaged writers and directors have been a part of this conversation.

The other ways in which television technology has been exploited – in defence and security contexts – has, and continues to, further expand the way that we think about the impact it makes on concepts such as distance, the morality of surveillance and the implications of preserving visual information as objective evidence. Film, as a format and practice, is wedded to a model which can never achieve this sense of simultaneity, of presence. While the suspension of disbelief demanded of cinema audiences does solicit us to *imagine* that events are happening now, only very young children can ever fall prey to the implication that they actually are. As media of all forms continues to penetrate so many aspects of our lives, the overall media-literacy of societies continues to develop. In an age where so many of our encounters with the real world are mediated through a mix of technologies, modes and forms, it should be unsurprising that many of us approach the narrative fiction film as both a story to be told and an audio-visual performance, to be appreciated for the way that it speaks to us in the multiplicity of languages each of us encounters across our daily lives. So, I have argued, cinema has utilised, mediated, and, sometimes, faked the language of live surveillance video to a variety of ends, including the

basic need of contemporary art to accurately engage with how reality feels to its audience *right now*, and to enter into a debate concerning some of the issues the use of these technologies raise.

Surveillance is, almost instinctively, an uncomfortable subject. The incredible success of broadcast television has proven that human beings are curious and prey to voyeuristic impulses. However, most of us would pause before agreeing to have our lives broadcast to others. While CCTV systems have proliferated – especially in the UK – unease about the invasive nature of modern surveillance does exist. Films such as *Red Road* and *Freeze Frame* exploit and discuss this disquiet in the way in which they dramatise its use within the films themselves, and reference the conflicts it causes, in thematic and narrative senses. Both of these films co-opt and remediate the surveillance camera to examine the way that societies, government agencies and individuals use the product of such technologies to ascribe guilt or innocence, evil intent and motivations, etc. As Reality Television and the general use of surveillance video in entertainment and news contexts has increased, films such as *Death Watch*, *The Truman Show* and *Edtv* examine the moral decisions made by producers and other production staff and the ethical dilemmas involved in exploiting images of others for profit, especially when there is a lack, or impossibility, of consent.

Chapter 3: Analogue and "Home" Video

Introduction

I have already briefly touched on the origins of home video in the previous chapter, as a domestic off-shoot of storage formats developed for the broadcast television industry. As the technology improved in relation to areas such as image clarity and colour reproduction – and as the cost of VCR (Video Cassette Recorder) machines gradually reduced - marketing such devices for home use became common. Home video had an extended life span: from the introduction of the first truly mass-market formats in the mid-1970s until the success of digital replacements such as DVD and online streaming at the end of the century. Originally marketed as devices for time-shifting television broadcasts or creating a home library of such content as films and television shows – and despite initial hostility from both film and television studios – an enormous market developed for the rental and sale of feature film for home viewing on video. The combined utility of popular formats such as Betamax and VHS for both recording television broadcasts and viewing films, drove ownership of machines throughout the 80s and 90s - 75% of US households had at least one VCR by 1992.[192] Although, as I have also illustrated in Chapter 1, there was a domestic market for features and short films on small-gauge formats such as 8mm throughout the 20th century, the ubiquity and success of the domestic VCR as an after-market for theatrically-distributed films, meant that the cinema audience increasingly represented a diminishing share of the total viewing public of such content.[193]

As I will outline more fully in Part II of this chapter, the pervasive and extended commercial success and availability of home video inevitably lead to a heightening of analogue video's profile in the total image economy of the last two decades of the 20th century. The term "video" was also bolstered in terms of cultural recognition by the spread of video-generated content on television, such as the aforementioned use in television news and in the development of cable channels such as MTV, which aggressively front-loaded and marketed its content as music *video*. While 16mm was retained for use in higher-budgeted television advertisements, series and music promos, video as an economical

[192] Wasko, *Hollywood in the Information Age*, 125.

[193] Although this did not mean a diminishing in number of cinema ticket sales, which – in the US - stabilised in the 1980s and began to rise in the late 1990s. https://www.statista.com/statistics/187073/tickets-sold-at-the-north-american-box-office-since-1980/ - accessed 04/12/2018.

production tool was extensively utilised from the 1970s, with a number of high-profile advertising campaigns for products and musicians produced on the format. The defining characteristics of analogue video in this period – low-resolution, colour inaccuracies and "bleeding" – meant that such content was deemed unsuitable for theatrical exhibition, where the large screen size only magnified these deficiencies. However, the smaller television screen could operate as an appropriate medium for the widespread dissemination of a wide range of content on analogue video. Domestic audiences, therefore, quickly became accustomed to the "look" of video, both through exposure to television content produced on the format, and works which originated on film and were remediated for the home through VHS or Betamax. Television had already operated as a hybrid medium since the introduction of analogue video, with more expensive serials and features shot on either 16mm or 35mm celluloid and more ephemeral, low-culture or news content produced on video.[194] With the advent of the home VCR, films were viewed at home on a device which rendered an image retaining much of the instability and colour issues present in video-originated content on broadcast television.

The use of video in broadcast television, in particular, began to lead to the breakdown of the unified single-screen and logic of substitution, which had been inherited from cinema. As video keying and editing matured throughout the 1960s, news, advertisements and sports broadcasts began to feature multiple video and text overlays in ways which increased the density of information presented. The dimensionality of the spaces represented could be enriched by multiple windows showing different perspectives from multi-camera setups, rather than proceeding from one to another as in the editing patterns of cinema and pre-video television. The combination of live studio news commentary accompanying windowed pre-recorded footage and the practice of instant-replays in sports coverage complicated the notion of television as a strictly "live" medium. I have previously referenced incidences from early cinema where optical printing techniques were utilised to achieve split screen and composite mise-en-scène effects - this was often used in ways which disrupted the temporal narrative order, for example in the rendering of characters recalling past events. This practice was vastly extended in broadcast television's utilisation of video technology and was a portent of what we are now familiar with from digital cable, satellite and internet content, with their hyperextended density of information from a number of spatially and temporally dispersed sources.

[194] Public awareness of the distinction between the two can be seen by the way that it was effectively satirised in the Monty Python sketch, "The Royal Society for Putting Things on Top of Other Things". *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, Series 2, Ep. 18. First Broadcast 27/10/1970.

In a further similarity with small-gauge film formats, analogue video was not only exploited for professional and commercial use. Video cameras which recorded to external, bulky VTRs were marketed to domestic consumers from the mid-1960s, but it was only following the introduction of smaller, self-enclosed tape formats such as Betacam that integrated "camcorder"-style units became commercially successful in the mid-80s. While much of the content that was produced using these cameras was purely for viewing within the sphere of immediate family and friends, there was some utilisation of them in ultra-low-budget features with minor releases on a direct-to-video model.[195] In addition, the ubiquity and self-contained nature of the video cassette facilitated the exchange and distribution of content, which was exploited by television shows featuring tapes sent in by amateurs, and the addition of amateur shot-on-video imagery to the established practice of eye witness testimony in news broadcasts. The amateur nature of such footage could often be determined by the presence of poor framing and erratic movement, signs that the operator of the device was not professionally trained or had not yet mastered its features and use. This, once again, has parallels with the way in which 16mm camera footage from combat zones entered into the film language of audiences in cinema news segments and broadcast television, during World War II and the post-war years, respectively. Although such small-gauge footage was captured by trained military camera operators or professional news crews, the contingent and often dangerous filming situations resulted in a widespread abandonment of standards of filmmaking established by film studios and professional documentary practice. While video cameras often had inbuilt auto-zoom features which prevented the kind of focus issues which are common in war footage shot using 16mm technology, the medium instead offers up another enabler of authenticity in its standard incorporation of on-board microphones, which ensure that much eyewitness video testimony seen on broadcast television is accompanied by on-the-spot and unrehearsed audio commentary[196]. This works to give a greater sense of the presence of the videographer in such situations and provides the spectator with a sense of embodiment in the scene which is captured and represented.

Throughout the period of home video's dominance a number of writers, directors and other cinema practitioners grappled with the representational, social, political and personal impact of analogue video formats and the ways in which they changed how

[195] Many of these actually utilised the cheapest camcorders which recorded direct to VHS. Some of these titles have achieved a small cult following and have had recent DVD releases, such as *Black Devil Doll* (1984), *Boarding House* (1982) and *Sledgehammer* (1983).

[196] A comprehensive outline and description of these features can be found at http://repairfaq.cis.upenn.edu/sam/icets/camcord.htm - accessed 04/12/2018.

people saw themselves and the world around them. They were motivated to comment on the ways in which it modified other related media such as television and cinema itself. A number of the texts I will examine incorporate sound and images from video into the cinematic narrative – simply, videos are "played" and a television or monitor is filmed. Where the images have central dramatic importance, the screen is allowed to completely fill the cinema frame; where the narrative is focused on the "effect" that video produces on its audience, the screen (and, sometimes, the overall apparatus, including tape and player) and viewer are shown within the frame. Video's place in the home is stressed through mise-en-scène which establishes the domestic setting characteristic of video viewing. A number of these titles also reference specific characteristics of video technology including "re-recordability", scanning, and tracking problems in ways which drive narrative. Other films consider the wider industrial context of home video. These films were produced in a period of rapid technological transformation of the ways in which media is produced, distributed and consumed – with home video and related technologies often triggering legal actions and social debate regarding potential harmful effects.

The following sections will focus on a number of these films to delineate the ways in which cinema practitioners incorporated video to leverage its capacity and felicity to record and replay reality instantaneously, to play with narrative flow and economy. Certain films also utilise the domestic nature of home video to examine the way we document our own lives, what it reveals about the stories we tell ourselves, and the differences from, and similarities to, the way that cinema renders reality. A number of the films also engage with the differences in the aesthetics of home video and cinema, and what is revealed about the investment the spectator brings to imagery which is presented through either format. There is an exploration of the materiality of home video and the wider apparatus which is required to experience it – an apparatus which is more familiar to the viewer than the components which the institution of cinema works to obscure. These films refer to video at specific moments in its quarter-century at the heart of the way that our culture represented itself, and necessarily reflect shifts in the way that we regarded the format and it reflected us.

Part 1 – Narrative Incorporation

While narrative fiction film often works in a non-reflexive manner that obscures the cinematic apparatus, when it features other media it inevitably reveals the processes involved in producing imagery using those formats. In narrative terms what is significant are the circumstances surrounding the production of the imagery which is featured within the film. On the face of it this is no more surprising than a case where, when a letter is introduced in cinematic narrative, what is written and who wrote it is narratively meaningful. However, in the case of audio/visual media, the *direct* recall of an event or events places greater focus on the circumstances and motivation of the capture of the imagery. Moran refers to the appearance of video within cinema's mise-en-scène as VIT - "video-in-the-text".[197] Where the VIT differs from narrative objects such as letters and photographs is in the way they must be "played" - facilitating the direct recall of a prior event which is free from the subjective position involved in narrative devices such as flashbacks.[198]

In this sense, the VCR operates like a "time machine" in narrative terms. Any appearance of the VIT within cinema narrative necessarily alters the temporal position – there occurs an instance of "this has happened" within the "this is happening" of the enclosing cinematic narrative. In addition, any appearance of an alternate recording technology within cinema also posits the possibility of a future narrative replaying of the action of the present moment. A related factor to the ubiquity of home video is the ease with which it can be disseminated. Video tapes are highly portable and the means through which they can be replayed are (or have been, until relatively recently) present in a large number of places, domestic or otherwise. This factor allows the narrative information that a tape may carry to be easily spread across multiple characters and locations in feature films which feature them, with a minimum of unnecessary contrivance.

In terms of the VIT's usefulness in communicating narrative information it is fruitful to employ Bordwell's explanation of the operation of "film style" as a component of *syuzhet* (the means in which narrative in communicated), and the way that both concepts interact in communicating overall story information, or *fabula*. Operating within the overall mise-en-scéne, the VIT is both an object and a communicator of story information.

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[197] Moran, *There's no Place like Home Video*, 167.

[198] Although such events are often portrayed through an in-diegesis camera operator's POV, what is shown is usually presented as what actually happened.

As I outlined in my introduction, the ways in which the VIT is integrated into the film frame may vary and this is an aspect of what Bordwell refers to as "film style":

> When alternative techniques exist for a given syuzhet purpose, it may make a difference which technique is chosen. For instance, the syuzhet may require that two story events be cued as occurring simultaneously. The simultaneity may be denoted by crosscutting from one event to the other, by staging the two actions in depth, by use of split-screen techniques, or by the inclusion of particular objects in the setting (such as a television set broadcasting a "live" event). Whatever stylistic choice is made may have different effects on the spectator's perceptual and cognitive activity. Style is thus a notable factor in its own right, even when it is "only" supporting the syuzhet."[199]

When these stylistic choices include the employ of video imagery within the film frame, the embodied spectator responds by constructing *fabula* information according to hypotheses which necessarily include their own knowledge of home video technologies and uses. Though other approaches could have been taken in presenting story information, utilising video technology in this way transforms and extends it in ways which are particular to the technologies utilised. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, the use of video imagery within the film frame does not just contribute narrative information through the imagery itself, but also through the appearance and utilisation of the medium. Bordwell includes a number of cinematic techniques in his definition of what he refers to as "film style", but if we are to extend its use to the incorporation of non-cinematic moving image media, its sense should be further expanded to also include the range of uses and aesthetic effects of those media formats.

As previously noted, Zimmermann and Chalfen arrived at a definition of the "home mode", which constitutes a series of practices and aesthetic effects that make up what we commonly associate with domestic, amateur film and still camera usage, respectively. What is included in this is perhaps less interesting than what is excluded – especially, the reasons why they are excluded. Things which are deemed to be outside "home mode" usage include emotional conflict, sexual activity, violence, bodily functions and unsociable behaviour in general. Moran has extended this definition to apply to what he terms the "home mode of video" - videos which document everyday family activities and events such as birthday parties and other celebrations, but where aspects of the video medium retain the potential to expand the subjects of the traditional home mode of amateur film and photography:

[199] Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, p.52.

> Videotape's low cost, extended running time, and capacity to be recycled substantially increase the potential range and volume of events and behaviours recorded during home mode production … Therefore home videos may portray not only the birthday party itself but also baking the cake and wrapping the presents; not only the smiling faces directed to say "cheese" but tears, boredom, or anger when subjects forget they're on camera…[200]

The "home mode of video" as defined here refers exclusively to non-fiction, standard domestic uses of video camera technology. The kinds of inappropriate or controversial activities which video's economical nature has greater capacity to record, are exactly the kinds of events which we may expect to find in narrative fictions. The sudden intervention of shocking or unusual events in everyday domestic scenes are familiar to audiences from a number of user-generated video-based TV shows.[201] Thus, there is a known context for spectators when the cinema incorporates such events in narrative fiction films. Similarly, the capacity for home mode video to contain extended scenes of "narrative waste", where nothing of significance appears to take place, can also be utilised for affect in cinema. Audiences which may respond badly to scenes of excessive narrative *longeur* in cinema, may view such scenes with greater acceptance when presented as part of their own extra-textual understanding of the codes and conventions of the standard practices of home video.

[200] Moran, *There's no Place like Home Video*, 41-42.
[201] Such as *America's Funniest Home Videos* (US, from 1989) or *You've Been Framed* (UK, from 1990).

Family Viewing **(Atom Egoyan, 1987)**

Egoyan's film mixes traditional celluloid with a number of different video technologies, resulting not just in a variance of visual texture, but in a tonal palette which he employs to communicate character psychology and manipulate narrative drive. One of the ways this is achieved is through departures from the accepted home mode of amateur video. In the film, Stan records sexual activity with his new wife over videotape footage featuring his previous partner - mother to the film's protagonist, Van. When Van discovers this, it reinforces existing resentments and questions regarding his mother's disappearance from the family home. Egoyan subsequently dramatises the split between repressed domesticity and Van's exploration outside of the home by presenting the former exclusively recorded on video and the latter on film. The scene where this is contrasted to greatest effect involves a sexual act between the father and stepmother and a phone-sex worker – Aline - whom Van has befriended (and, of whom, he is unaware of any association with his father). His father has procured Aline to vocalise over a phone line while he has sex with his silent partner, excited by (one presumes) her absence and her French accent. The scene alternates video footage of the father's bedroom with film imagery of Aline in her empty apartment – coalescing the film's narrative switches, which clue the viewer in to doubt the supposed cosy domesticity of the family home and accept the reality and truth of the outside world in which Van seeks his mother.

Figure 43: Stan's bedroom/studio

Egoyan used two video cameras normally used to shoot studio-set action for television and edited on set.[202] In this scene, Stan also records his activity with Sandra on a standard domestic video camera. The bed is lit by two standing lights and the video camera is on, with the monitor in the background capturing the bed from that angle (*figure 43*). It is intercut with Aline in her apartment, shot on film. Thus, the scene is covered by three different camera technologies: Aline, on film; Stan and Sandra in medium shot, on studio-grade video; and a video camera, which is used to probe Sandra's actions and gestures. As Aline starts to talk to Stan, Egoyan's camera pans into the monitor which captures Sandra's distaste. It then switches to a side-on shot of them on the bed, not facing one another. Stan's questions and Aline's responses are used to give directions to Sandra; Egoyan switches between video cameras to capture her actions. When Aline can't continue and hangs up, Egoyan switches to a long shot in her apartment and slowly zooms in to capture her distress and upset.

[202] Timothy Shary, "Video as Accessible Artifact and Artificial Access," *Film Criticism* (Spring 199): 11.

Figure 44: Sandra under the gaze of the recording device

There are multiple levels of meaning in the use of the three cameras in this scene. On film, alone in her apartment, Aline represents the reality of the financial transaction which exploits her sexuality and emotional vulnerability – a fact that Stan is wilfully blind to. In his studio/bedroom, Stan is the de-facto director of his own fantasy – a reality he constructs where his partner is subjugated to his will and animated by an atavistic other – the exotic, French woman. It is this absent other who is the paid soundtrack to the third class of imagery – the recording on video tape. This is the item of record, the evidence of Stan's success in actualising his fantasies. As the view from this third camera is introduced in this sequence at 56:53 (*figure 44*), Sandra glances fearfully at the camera, as if it is the capture of her performance that is the thing she truly despises. The spectator is directly implicated in this sequence, not only by Sandra's look into the videocamera, but in Aline's look [56:00] into the film camera prior to commencing the call. In addition, before she makes the call, Aline applies make-up and brushes her hair, which can only be for the benefit of the film spectator. Egoyan rhymes this with the events of Stan's bedroom, as

Sandra also fixes her hair as she waits (*figure 43*). In the terms outlined in my introduction, the sequence begins on film, defers to studio-grade video as it switches to, and intercuts with, Stan's bedroom, and uses a camera zoom to move into the video camera monitor in a whole-frame quotation of her status as object.

This scene establishes a hierarchy in the use of imaging technologies for the reproduction of reality. Film is equated with the inescapable fact of the "now", the present moment. It is significant that film captures the reality of the sexual transaction from a remote location – outside of the sphere of influence of Stan, the exploitative "author" of this constructed scene. The presentation of Aline's distress in the medium of film underlines its irreversibility: images on film cannot be overwritten, they are usually presented in a form which cannot be paused, rewound or edited. By contrast, the video imagery of Sandra is captured to be replayed by Stan. He records the video to be rewound and re-watched at his leisure and for his pleasure. Video disconnects the moment from the present reality and freezes it into a moment where the author and owner can recall it at will and who can imprint it with his own ideological associations. Between these two extremes the establishing shots from the studio video cameras negotiates the distance between these two positions. The shots are localised to the bedroom and all characters are represented in a medium shot – although Aline is present only through the telephone. Stan is shown front-on, while Sandra has her back to the shot, her face hidden – shown only to the video camera. The quality of the video imagery is a slight step up in resolution and colour reproduction from that of the video camera, but a marked downgrade from the film imagery which shows Aline in her apartment. There is a seeming conflict between what the spectator is being shown (by Egoyan) and what Stan wishes to be perceived and concealed, which is reinforced by the studio camera's slow pan into the video camera's view of Sandra, where her disgusted look undermines Stan's constructed fantasy.

Format distinctions which negatively code home video are often exaggerated in cinema. The colour balance of the video footage in *Family Viewing* is heavily skewed to greens and yellows, giving the imagery a sickly, undefined look. As previously stated, two video technologies are utilised: studio-grade TV video cameras for overall coverage of the drama within Stan's home and an in-diegesis video camera which Stan has used in the past to record Van's childhood and now uses to record sex with his new partner. The video camera footage of Van's childhood replicates the look of amateur video familiar from the

kind of domestic material produced by home videographers of everyday events. Thus, in both its materiality and in content, the footage replicates the home use of video.

The scenes recorded using the studio cameras instead confirm to standard soap opera or domestic television drama conventions, with very little dynamic movement of the camera and largely static set-ups. Henceforth, I will refer to these scenes as "video domestics" – as they are wholly confined to Stan's home. As presented through the studio cameras, this place is an unreal pastiche of domestic harmony, with stilted dialogue confined to everyday trivialities and activities restricted to chores or banal pursuits such as watching television. Early in the film, before Van has made his decision to reject his father and escape to an independent life with Aline and his grandmother, there are a number of scenes which depict a quasi-incestuous relationship between him and his step-mother. These scenes are presented in a "soap opera" fashion.

Figure 45: Domestic harmony

In the first of the "video domestic" scenes, Van is alone at home watching television. Sandra arrives and removes her coat before sitting with him on the sofa (*figure*

45), asking about his day and whether he "missed her" [5:15]. The in-diegesis soundtrack from the comedy Van is watching is synchronised to the action, such that Van and Sandra's dialogue is met with laughter. They lean in for a kiss before there is a freeze-frame, accompanied by video static and audience applause, before the scene rewinds and pauses at the beginning with a shot of Van. The laugh track underscores the unreality of situation, prompting the spectator to question whether this scene is an accurate representation of events. That the video nature of these domestic scene is reinforced by Egoyan's use of freeze-frame and rewind – with attendant format markers, such as static and distortion – is important, in that this early scene marks out Stan's apartment as a space mediated by video technology. The spectator is prompted to doubt the events which take place – or, at least, to meet them with a measure of scepticism – by the rewinding of the action. We are prompted to question whether it really occurred. This is developed in later scenes, with another "romantic" moment between Van and Sandra underscored with light piano music [10:40-12:23]. Van's growing appreciation of Stan and Sandra's abusive relationship puts a strain on his relationship with her and such scenes gradually lose such effects as background music and their dialogue becomes more naturalistic, which detaches the scenes from the "soap opera" aesthetic.

"Video domestic" scenes featuring all three characters are staged in such a way to reinforce the power dynamics enforced by Stan. Sandra is shown performing domestic tasks for the two men: pouring beer or cooking.

Figure 46: Women's work

The scene of all three in the kitchen [13:17] has Stan and Van seated at the kitchen table, while Sandra is in the background preparing breakfast. While Van attempts to broach the difficult subject of Armen's birthday and her unhappiness in the nursing home, Sandra is figuratively and literally excluded from the conversation and obliviously hums an innocuous tune while the men converse (*figure 46*). Though the kitchen setting and the way it is presented visually conforms to the standards of video-produced soap operas, the subjects Van discusses breach the carefully-constructed domestic harmony which Stan imposes in the home. The dialogue departs from the standard home mode of video in this production context. Scenes shot on film proceeding this introduce the themes and concepts which Van attempts to introduce in conversation with Stan, and the latter responds to such interjections with disdain and alarm. In this way, the video-based conventions which represent Stan's ideological position are undermined by the events which emerge in the filmed framing footage.

The reality of the situation – Van's missing mother and his father's sexual abuse of his stepmother – are confined to either the framing footage, which is shot on film, or the

in-diegesis video camera, which functions as evidence. Video is associated with Stan; film with Van and his attempts to escape into a life outside of this "constructed" family. Van's father has been obsessively recording his family life and is attempting to erase evidence of Van's mother by recording over the tapes with footage of his sex life with a new partner. When Van recovers some of the earlier tapes he uncovers footage of a happier home life with his mother and grandmother. Although still recorded on domestic videotape, this footage is from a garden scene and the natural light gives the images a warmer tint than the ugly sepia tones of the contemporary domestic interiors. Although Stan is not the in-diegesis videographer of the "video domestic" scenes they are coded to his psychological need to imprint a personal view of domestic harmony on Van and his stepmother.

The scene where the split between the aesthetics of the two video technologies is first clearly articulated occurs at 26:06. This is the first instance of a video domestic scene which moves the narrative forward, rather than detailing the characters and their relationship to each other and the first to depart from domestic soap opera aesthetics.

Figure 47

Figure 48

Figure 49

Figure 50

Figure 51

Van wanders into Stan's room and sees the video camera set up to point at the bed (*figure 47*). When Van turns it on there is a medium shot of the video monitor showing Stan staring back at the camera before caressing a naked and uncomfortable-looking Sandra (*figure 48*). The film then switches from a medium shot on the TV set to full frame before there is a band of rolling static (*figure 49*) and the scene changes to a suburban backyard. Stan moves away from the camera (*figure 50*) and is joined by a young Van

playing soccer. There is a reaction shot of Van smiling in surprise as he settles on the bed to continue watching. Egoyan cuts back to the video footage which now shows Armen, Van and his mother speaking Armenian together. When the videographer – Stan, who is now behind the camera – asks if Van can sing him an English song, he says he can't, there is an edit and Van's mother looks uncomfortable. Egoyan cuts back to the present video domestic as Sandra emerges from the shower - she is shocked to find Van has discovered what she and Stan have been doing with the camera. There is a cut back to a medium shot of the video monitor as it switches back to imagery of she and Stan in bed making love (*figure 51*) as she gazes with a numbed expression at the camera. She attempts to downplay the behaviour as just "a thing he has. He likes to record." However, Van is more concerned with the erasure of a past life which his father seems to be attempting, in these new recordings.

This scene plays with the temporal ordering of narrative in ways which appeal to spectatorial extra-textual knowledge of domestic video technology. It uses format markers unique to videotape to delimit the edges of flashback in ways which are comparable to standard cinematic techniques – such as fades, etc – but are intrinsic to the medium and the particular instance of domestic video tape:

> Most home tapers have experienced the frustration of realizing that they have taped over a part of a recording that they meant to save, either because the cassette wasn't labelled or cued properly or because the deck was programmed incorrectly. On playback, the viewer may experience jarring accidental jump-cuts between unrelated texts and only then realize that one thing was taped over another.[203]

Thus, an aesthetic characteristic of video tape is utilised to clue informed spectators in to an upcoming transition. In this instance, the scene which is presented on video is a double flashback, as footage from the recent past is replaced with that more temporally distant. The informed spectator is also made aware of the palimpsest-like nature of the narrative information through the medium of video tape – the format markers evident between scene transitions also inform them of the rewriting which has taken place. The jump cut which intervenes between Stan's request for a song in English and Van's mother's discomfort is accompanied by an obvious moment of video flicker and reframing. In this instance the imperfections of domestic video's capacity for in-camera editing is utilised to suggest narrative information (an argument has taken place) in a way which is consistent with the

[203] Lucas Hilderbrand, *Inherent Vice* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 12.

spectator's knowledge of the home mode – that domestic unpleasantness is to be avoided as a subject.

Egoyan's use of video technologies in *Family Viewing* co-opts the malleable and democratised domestic medium to tell a story in which multiple characters and their histories are depicted in a struggle for visibility. Unlike standard narrative film, the use of video allows the director to stress that our stories have increased meaning when they are not just subjective – as presented in flashbacks and through a single character POV shots – but exist in a material form which can stand as historical testament. The rolling and static that exists on Stan's video tapes marks the dividing line between the authentic past and the inauthentic, constructed present domestic life of Van and his family. This authenticity is further codified by the look of the video footage in each situation: the overlit, pornographic lighting of Stan's bedroom and the natural sunlight of the garden scene, which video records with a greater capacity for colour and contrast fidelity. The static also serves as material reminder of the project which Stan is undertaking – in gradually overdubbing the original footage this in-between tape contains layers of reality and meaning which is delimited by video format markers such as static and rolling (*figure 49,51*). These reveal the evidence of overdubbing – the rewriting of history, or at least its denial.

"Waste" and Ubiquity – Video as Narrative Object

Another way in which the use of video tape footage impacts cinematic narrative is its interaction with notions of narrative "economy" – the influence its use has on the film-maker's ability to move the spectator through the beats of the story. As noted above, most spectators will bring to films which feature video tape their own experience of imagery typical to the format – domestic scenes, whether self-recorded or featured within television programmes, often foregrounding amateur technique and content of a trivial (or highly personal) nature. The *Paranormal Activity* (2007-present) series is both an illustration of the home mode as characterised by Moran (in its diegesis) and an example of the use of home video technologies to infiltrate the cinema by independent practitioners.[204] The central hook of the series is that the films themselves are constructed out of (artfully faked) video camera footage from "normal" American families.[205] Of course, such families may have employed all sorts of image-making technology to document their lives, since the invention of the still camera. The novelty which is introduced in the use of video tape – and the aspect which is employed to drive narrative suspense – is "waste". As noted above, Moran points out the greater capacity for video tape footage to contain incidents which accentuate the amateur nature of videography, its tendency to allow the user to unintentionally capture details and incidents outside of the intended subject, whether it be a grandfather sleeping during a wedding speech or a domestic dispute at a party.

One of the ways that the *Paranormal Activity* films illustrate the change in home mode practice are the extended takes introduced by use of video formats rather than domestic film camera technologies. The opening scenes of each film are stuffed with seemingly-insignificant padding and domestic detail. These serve the dual purpose of establishing character and setting, in addition to serving the faux-authenticity of what purports to be "found footage" of a real family. When the films move on to the later dramatic scenes, the tension between the "home mode" aesthetic and the demands of narrative film emerge. A scene in the first film has Micah set up a camera in his bedroom to reassure his partner Katie that nothing unusual is happening while they are sleeping. The series' lore has developed to state that supernatural events takes place in the early hours of

[204] The first film was a micro-budget independent production which was a pick-up for Paramount Pictures. The sequels have continued to be produced on a relatively low budget.
[205] The film series uses a variety of video technologies – analogue and digital, webcams, Xbox Kinect peripherals, etc. Parts 1 & 3 rely for the most part on camcorder footage.

the morning, so there is a period of several hours between the couple going to bed and narratively significant events occurring. In one scene, Katie gets up and stands by the bed watching Micah sleep for several hours.

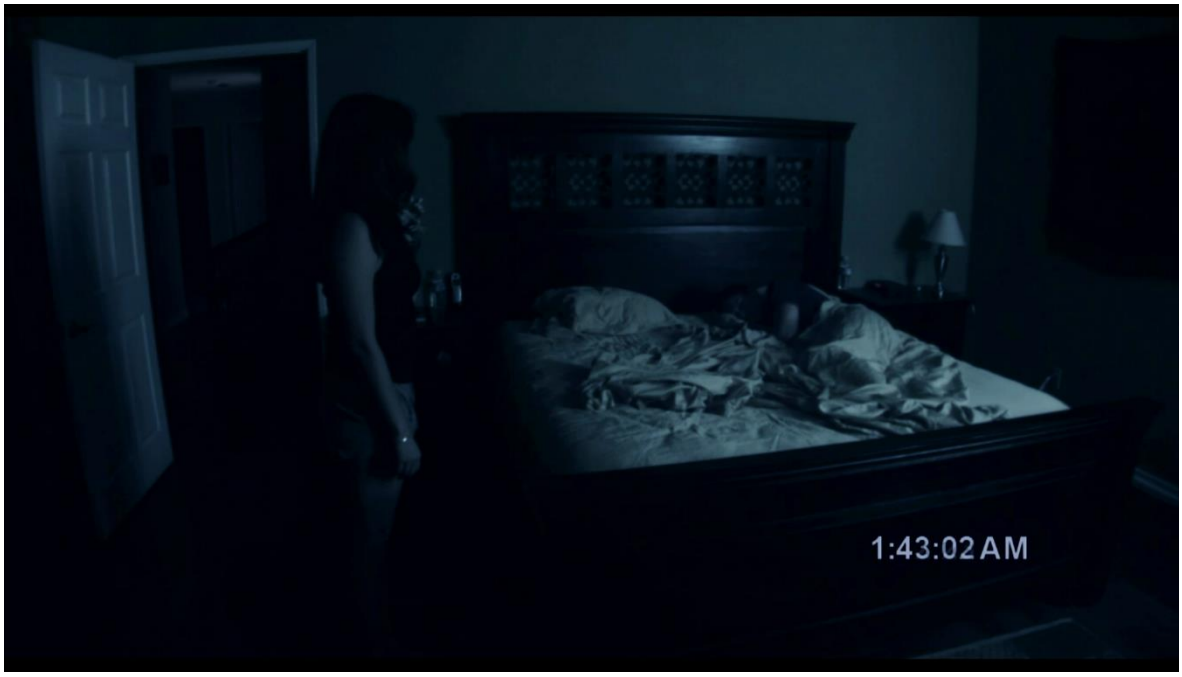

Figure 52: The "film" fast-forwards as Katie watches Micah.

In a traditionally-shot film an edit would dilate the film's timeframe at this point, however the necessity to maintain the faux-authentic conceit demands that the footage be replayed in full. The solution employed by Oren and Peli is to show the footage in fast-forward (*figure 52*), only restoring standard play just before something narratively significant occurs. The film uses extraneous and insignificant footage (waste) to suspend audience disbelief, but it must compress such "waste" to conform to traditional cinematic narrative economy. The conventions of film narrative demands that when this waste is present that it is elided by fast-forward.

Another aspect of the impact video tape footage has on narrative economy is a function of the technology's ubiquity in society. Video penetration in households across the world quickly escalated in the early 1980s – in the US the majority of homes had at least one machine by 1985 and adoption was more rapid in parts of Europe and the Middle East.[206] As a result, films which feature video tape as a narrative object benefit from

[206] Frederick Wasser, *Veni, Vidi, Video* (Austin: University of Texas, 2002), 68.

audience familiarity.[207] In addition to hardware, the proliferation of video software in wider society naturalised the video cassette tape as a narrative device in fiction films. The difference between video and earlier non-cinematic moving image formats can be seen if we compare the way that 8mm film footage operates in Joel Schumacher's *8mm* (1999) and video tape in *Ringu* (1998). In the former film, 8mm footage of a suspected murder of a young girl sets the plot in motion – Tom Welles is a private investigator who is summoned to a country estate by a widow who has found the film among her husband's effects. He is ushered into a private room where a projector and screen have been assembled and is left in darkness to view the footage. Although unseen, it is obvious that someone must be acting as a projectionist. Though it is a format which has been widely available for non-professional use, 8mm requires a greater arrangement of various apparatus and a viewing situation to be viable to a spectator – in fact, conditions which directly mirror that of its professional counterpart – 35mm, which in this case forms the material base of the overall framing narrative.

Figure 53: The cursed tape in ***Ringu***

By contrast, in *Ringu* – like many other films in which video tapes are featured – the recorded footage is easily acquired and viewed, usually in a standard domestic setting.

[207] Though VCRs are disappearing from many homes today, they have been replaced with similar technologies, such as DVD and Bluray players.

Reiko comes across the cursed video tape easily (indeed, accidentally) on a shelf among many others (*figure 53*).[208] Viewing the tape requires nothing more than inserting it in the machine which is present in the cottage in which she is staying – its presence there unremarkable and without any trace of narrative contrivance. The screenwriters do not need to move characters around, create situations and insert narrative objects when employing video tape to move the plot along – they are as pervasive and natural as paper and pen. The differing reception modes of home movies and home cinema allow cinema narratives to more easily depict discovery and replay/reception of video footage.

In *Ringu* the footage is also more mobile and nimble in the way that it is discovered and viewed by a number of characters. A video tape is small, easy to pass to others and standardised for replay in everyday household appliances most of us own. In contrast, the film footage in *8mm* is never viewed outside of the space which has been contrived for its initial screening. Video footage can also be easily copied – it transcends the tape on which it is initially imprinted – and it is this capability which is, at the end of *Ringu*, revealed as the modus operandi of the curse. Like several films which feature video tapes, the fluidity of video footage – the ease with which it makes its way from person to person – is presented as troublesome and worrying. It's interesting to contrast the conception of home video as "homely" and their incorporation in films which present them as "unheimlich" - uncanny, or literally "*un*homely" - as defined by Freud.[209] One aspect of this is the ways in which its distribution is portrayed as uncontrolled, unlike a moving image format such as cinema, which is highly regulated by governments and managed by global corporations. In contrast to the celluloid of dominant feature film formats, video tapes are easily available for the production of invalid texts; easily able to distribute to people who are unprepared for their reception. In ***Ringu*****,** Reiko's son watches the tape while she is sleeping and is exposed to the curse through the simple, everyday act of inserting a (unmarked) tape in a machine. Even when steps are taken to prevent unauthorised viewing, the ease of access and ubiquity of video conspires to expose – such as in *sex, lies and videotape* (1989), when Ann's husband breaks into Dalton's apartment and views her interview tape. The very aspects which enabled video tape to economically drive narrative in film are also commented upon – within the diegesis – as potentially troubling to society. In films such as

[208] Interestingly, as *figure 53* illustrates, Reiko's POV momentarily switches to a moment of video distortion when she first encounters the tape.
[209] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII (1917-1919): An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, 217-256.

*Ringu***,** *sex, lies and videotape* and *Family Viewing* videos are seen by people who should not or were not intended to see them, which causes them distress or harm. I will return to this theme in a later section.

Part 2 – Format Specificity

When films include moving imagery created using technology other than that of the cinema, it has the potential to comment on the aspects of format specificity itself. The format is made up of technical properties such as image resolution, colour, frames-per-second (fps) and its interfaces, such as the apparatus required to record and replay images and the ways in which human beings operate the hardware and software. Film itself – when used to display such "alternate" formats – reveals its own specificity. For example, although video is typically recorded and displayed on monitors with a higher fps than film,[210] film footage of a television monitor will be displayed at 24 fps. Indeed, technical solutions to this specific problem had to be developed to prevent "strobing" imagery when video monitors (including standard television sets) were filmed.[211] Cinema has always modified other media formats to fit the demands of narrative film – witness, for example, the different ways in which handwriting is formatted in letters or text fonts increased on newspapers when the information they contain needs to be communicated to an audience. This kind of re-formatting has continued with modern devices such as mobile phones, where text is often increased in size to allow easier reading by an audience when such things are shown within a film. Though it would be stretching the point to suggest that such incidences display critical commentary by a film-maker, or cinema as an institution, towards these media, the ways in which films reformat other moving image media artefacts can be a profitable source of information regarding how cinema practitioners and institutions view how such media represent reality.

With direct reference to video - and especially video imagery recorded on and replayed from videotape - the format is marked by several features and tendencies which can identify the source of the imagery to an informed spectator: the images tend to have lower resolution than broadcast television and markedly lower resolution than celluloid; the images have lower contrast than these formats; certain colours, especially red, tend to "bloom" or "bleed"; tracking errors cause "rolling" of the image, which can also be caused by tape damage. In regards to sound, commercial video formats such as VHS and Betamax tend to reproduce sound in a way which heightens lower frequencies and suffers distortion

[210] Typically determined by the nature of the power supply and resultant screen refresh rate – measured in Hz, although modern bluray players often enforce a 24fps playback mode for films on that format.
[211] This is something which *Videodrome*'s DoP Mark Irwin talks about in detail in his audio commentary on Criterion's DVD release – (from 11:00).

when played at moderately high volumes. Such markers of format specificity do vary with hardware and the technology has improved over time, but they remain emblematic of the format and film spectators with experience of video tape should be familiar with them.

As I noted in the introduction to this chapter, home video was highly successful technology and a pervasive presence throughout the last two decades of the 20th century. While the base technology – particularly the VHS format – was largely standardised for much of this period, as a medium the utilisation and perception of home video shifted throughout the period of its economic dominance. From the initial impact of timeshifting and the conflict this caused with television and film studios, to moral concerns with the format's provision of adult content, to the philosophical, aesthetic and economic questions surrounding the replacement of analogue re-recordable video with a digital substitute at the end of the century, home video has taken a central role in a number of wider social, economic and political debates. In general terms, home video also marked the beginning of the democratisation of the moving image, which has only increased since its introduction.[212] Until the introduction of television, moving image entertainment had to be viewed in specific, controlled and regulated environments. With television, the option to remain at home was introduced, but the provision of content remained under the control of the broadcaster. The VCR not only allowed viewers to escape the tyranny of the schedulers, but enabled them to build home libraries which challenged the notion of who owned moving image content, post-broadcast. As I will outline below, the market established by the widespread provision of video hardware opened up film content in ways which initially disrupted the established business models of major film and television studios.

In the next section I will examine some films which foreground home video technologies. Each of them was produced at a particular moment in the two decades of video's domestic dominance and reflect a cluster of contemporaneous concerns regarding the technologies at the time. In each case, I will briefly sketch out the industrial, social and economic background as it relates to video technology, before analysing how the film's use of home video references and comments on these debates. However, I will start with some brief pre-history and a film which, while produced several decades after the period in

[212] This was a process already underway with the introduction and popularisation of small-gauge film formats, as I have shown in Chapter 1, but the economy and the control over production *and* distribution which it enabled marks video's use by amateurs as a greater shift in terms of democratic access to moving image media.

which it is set, utilises authentic early home video technology and both depicts its contemporary impact and foreshadows some of the concerns which would later surround the medium.

An Evolving Format – Video in Film

i) The Early Days of Home Video – Auto Focus (Paul Schrader, 2002)

As Winston (1998) has identified, it is impossible to trace the evolution of home video in isolation to related technologies, such as those which crystallised in the emergence of wireless communication, broadcast television and audio recording. What is relevant to this study is the point in the development of video as a mass-market product – the point at which it became a topic for discussion in the culture industries and a subject for artists who would seek to contextualise and explain its place in, and impact on, wider society. While Video Tape Recorders (VTR) have been in use in industry and media organisations since the mid-1950s[213], the first machines marketed towards everyday consumers did not arrive for another decade, with machines such as the Sony CV2000 marking a point where VTRs first became affordable and convenient enough for use by more well-heeled domestic users - although retaining a form factor vastly different from what would become acceptable to consumers in later decades.[214]

It's perhaps indicative of the limited domestic penetration of video technology in this period that home video technology does not feature to any significant extent in feature films.[215] However, more recent films set in this period do foreground the technology. *Auto Focus*, Paul Schrader's biopic of former *Hogan's Heroes* (1965-1971) actor Bob Crane features several scenes featuring early domestic video technology.[216] Crane, who is depicted as being subject to a form of sexual addiction, had a long history of amateur photography and was an early adopter of video technology, to which he was introduced by Sony salesman John Carpenter in the mid-1960s, just as the technology was entering the United States.[217] Both men quickly applied the video equipment to recording sexual

[213] Enticknap, *Moving Image Technology*, 177.
[214] Introduced in 1965. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CV-2000 - accessed, 04/12/2018.
[215] Performing keyword searches on a number of sites such as IMDB.com for "vcr", "video" and a number of related keywords gives only some examples of video technologies in a surveillance context, in spy dramas of the late 1960s such as *Mission Impossible* (1966-1973).
[216] Another recent example is Antonio Campos' *Christine* (2016), which is set in an early 1970s regional US TV news station, in the process of moving from 16mm to video for location shooting.
[217] Not director John Carpenter – known for his series of successful action/horror films in the late 70s/early 80s.

activity and the film contains many scenes where they are either recording such activities or re-watching imagery. In one scene Crane replays a recording of a three-way sex act with Carpenter and a woman, the image is in black-and-white and is extremely low-resolution. This is in keeping with the video technology available at the time in which the film is set – the mid-60s, when Sony first introduced its VTR machines in the United States.

Figure 54: An authentic Sony Vidicon video camera in ***Auto Focus***

In the *Auto-Focus* DVD commentary, during the scene where Crane unpacks a new video camera to show his first wife (*figure 54*), Schrader confirms that all of the early video footage seen in the film was shot with an original Sony video camera:

> By the way this is the real camera. We found an unused, brand new, Vidicon camera – this is the exact camera that Crane used and it's the one that we used to shoot those black and white video scenes that were just shown on the TV set … Some people try to tell you that you can fix that digitally … we can degrade it and… you know, that's not true. This is the camera and this is it – how it worked. And it has all that phasing and all that blurring, the tacky image – it actually has a tube in it…. Using the real camera actually had a couple of advantages – one was that it was authentic, we didn't have to pay to degrade it and two, the sexual activity was all the more obscure just because of the low quality of the black and white image.[218]

[218] *Auto Focus* DVD Commentary, [31:13-32:12].

This, at first glance, seems like a simple practical decision made to preserve historical and visual authenticity and secure a rating for theatrical distribution, but it also serves another purpose. Schrader contrasts the black-and-white, handheld, "blurry" images from the video camera with the primary-coloured and professionally-shot framing narrative to illustrate the double-life Crane is leading. He also contrasts the videos of sex acts with the "authorised" use that Crane makes of the same equipment – filming his family within their suburban home, scenes which are of the "home mode" of video as outlined by Moran. The film is designed to visually illustrate the moral descent that Crane undertakes - which eventually led to his murder in a motel bedroom – by starting out with a brightly-lit, pastel-coloured mise-en-scène with little camera movement and gradually darkening to a point where there is what Schrader refers to as a "bled-out" look and the employment of a ragged, handheld camera style. The distorted video imagery both foreshadows this visual degeneration and retains its own aesthetic and thematic relevance: Crane struggles to clearly see what he is doing to himself and others around him. Despite constantly recording and re-watching his activities, his life is literally out of focus. The film takes a position on a much-discussed, unsolved murder case and attempts to explain it not just in terms of a motivation to murder, but as a life lived with a blissful ignorance, fated to end badly. The film explains; the video "evidence" provides only the facts, in an unreliable format which is difficult to read.

ii) The Video Revolution – Videodrome (David Cronenberg, 1983)

Despite the initial success companies such as Sony and RCA had in penetrating the home market it was not until the late-1970s that VTRs became truly affordable, reliable and user-friendly enough to achieve mass-market status. Many of the developments made by – in particular, Japanese technology companies – were focused on reducing the size and complexity of VTRs, to make them marketable to domestic users. Early VTRs in use by large corporations or broadcasters were very large and heavy and used reel-to-reel tape mechanisms. The development of tape cartridges, and VTR loading mechanisms, gradually made reel-to-reel machines obsolete and further allowed the machines themselves to be reduced in size. By the early 1970s, machines such as those utilising Sony's U-matic cassette format, were deemed user-friendly and portable enough to be used by travelling salesmen and in schools and colleges. By the mid-decade, further improvements led to new formats such as Betamax (1975) and VHS (1976) beginning to create a truly mass-market domestic opportunity for dealers and distributors.

While video recording and playback had been in use in media organisations and businesses since the mid-1950s, their applications in this sphere largely replicated the use of prior media technologies such as 16mm. Video was adopted for cost and ease-of-use reasons, but did not materially change the practices to which they applied. News organisations continued to gather and disseminate the news, businesses continued to educate workers and research institutes continued to document experiments. The first significant impact on an existing industry was with broadcast television. Sony had marketed its Betamax home video product to US consumers by highlighting the ability it gave television viewers to "timeshift" broadcasts.[219]

[219] James Lardner, *Fast Forward* (New York: Norton, 1987), 97.

Figure 55: Contemporary Advert for Sony Betamax VCR (1978)[220]

As was made very clear in marketing material (*figure 55*), VCRs could record television programmes to be watched at the consumer's convenience, rather than when broadcasters had scheduled and – crucially – when advertisers had paid for commercials to be aired. Combined with the ability to fast-forward through "ad breaks" and negate the financial opportunities inherent in "re-runs", home video recorders presented a clear commercial threat. It was this which led to a law suit between Universal and Sony, which dragged on for much of the first half of the 1980s, before an eventual ruling that domestic users were

[220] Obtained from https://www.retroist.com/2010/04/22/watch-whatever-whenever-with-the-sony-betamax/ - accessed 04/12/2018.

not infringing copyright by taping broadcasts and that manufacturers were not liable for any potential infringement. [221] In other countries – such as France – this conflict had been neutered by a small levy on the price of a blank video tape, to be distributed to content holders.[222]

David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* is a film which directly addresses the impact the VCR made on television broadcasting. The introduction of home video was part of a series of technological changes in the 1980s (alongside satellite and cable distribution) which challenged the long-established business models of the major networks. Video specifically, also began to disrupt the one-to-many distribution pattern of broadcasting, with the video audience now able to receive, record and retain moving image content from a number of varied sources. Moving image media became personal, something that anyone could easily own, create or share. In the film, the imagery which drives the narrative is initially believed to be an unauthorised satellite television broadcast, which is then recorded on videotape. It is through the medium of videotape that the protagonist – Max Renn – is literally "programmed", changing his behaviour to follow the subliminal instructions of a nebulous agency. There is some foreshadowing of this early in the film where Renn is woken by a video alarm clock, which features his secretary reading his daily schedule; his television transformed from a receiver of mass broadcasting, to a personalised device which feeds him instructions. It is only when the Videodrome broadcast signal is recorded onto videotape and watched – when it shifts from a blanket broadcast to a materially-embodied, *personal* item - that Renn begins to experience hallucinations. Central to the second half of the narrative is one such hallucination which leads Renn to see a vagina-like slit appear in his abdomen, into which both he and other characters insert weapons and videotapes. The tape inserted by Barry Convex represents the programming of Renn to carry out a series of murders as a proof-of-concept for Convex's organisational remit – a test-run of the Videodrome signal's efficacy in mind control. It is not clear whether it is the Videodrome signal which forces Renn to embody this process in the form of the tape/body interface; or it is Renn's daily occupation as a cable television professional, who sources new content through videotape demonstrations, which induces him to visualise it in this way.

It is through another "evangelist" of the video revolution that Renn's counter-programming takes place. Professor Brian O'Blivion is already dead at the start of

[221] Wasko, *Hollywood in the Information Age*, 129.
[222] Mike Hennessey, "France Approves Black Tape Royalty," *Billboard* (13th July, 1985): 9.

Videodrome - as he himself says, he was “Videodrome's first victim” [35:20]. Despite this, he continues to exist, making an appearance on a live television chat show with Renn and others.

Figure 56: Max first meets Nicki on The Rena King Show…

Figure 57: …although, even at this early stage, she may just be a video image

The Talk-show sequence begins [09:04] with Max appearing on a small series of B&W TV monitors before cutting to medium shot of him on the sound stage (*figure 56*). When he

turns to offer a cigarette to Nicki the shot angle shows instead her image on a colour video monitor, which blocks her out from the spectator (*figure 57*). The shot then switches to a medium view of the entire stage showing Rena King and all her interviewees, including Professor Oblivion on a television monitor. The show going live is denoted by a shot on another colour monitor displaying the title card before switching to a close up of Max.

Figure 58: Prof. O'Blivion responds to questions from Rena, from the grave.

O'Blivion is featured in illogical reaction shots throughout, where he turns his head to look at who is speaking (*figure 58*), despite not being able to actually see them or tell where they are. Cronenberg introduces what is a patently absurd concept (in practice) to introduce a theme – the ability of human beings to transcend death through media. As is shown later in the film, O'Blivion exists solely as a vast bank of videotapes, recorded prior to his death, which was caused by a brain tumour, ostensibly triggered by exposure to the Videodrome signal. This suggests that O'Blivion somehow responds to questions in the present through a selection of pre-recorded responses formulated in the past. Though the film makes no attempt to present the technological means necessary to achieve this (which seem to presuppose the kind of digital, computer-based media of the present day), it does mirror the temporal misconception which Renn labours under regarding the Videodrome signal – i.e. he confuses a pre-recorded programme on videotape with a supposed live satellite broadcast. This does hint at one of the major controversies surrounding videotape

at the time the film was made: the capacity for home video to remediate live television broadcasts into home library content.

Benson-Allott discusses *Videodrome* as a response to contemporary debates regarding the cultural colonization of Canadian media by the United States: "Specifically, the movie interweaves images of a despondently privatised, economically depressed Toronto and brand new or futuristic video technology to present Max's story as a certain form of Canadian technonational experience."[223] This is a conflict which is certainly referenced explicitly within the film, in that the Videodrome signal, originally thought to originate from Malaysia, is tracked by Harlan to Pittsburgh. When Nicki – a radio personality and journalist - is assigned to Pittsburgh, she tells Max that while there she intends to "audition" for the programme and promptly disappears.

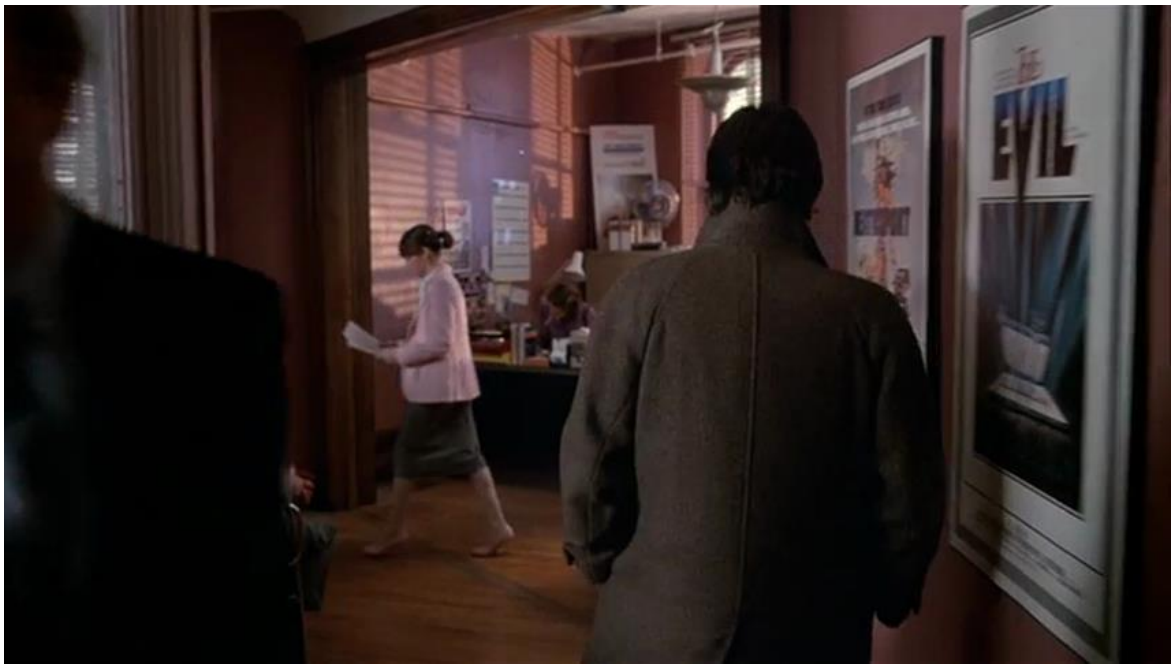

Figure 59: Civic TV's offices are decorated with film posters.

Beyond this, however, there is little in the film to support that idea that it is a contribution to the real contemporary debate regarding US media's malign influence in Canada. The offices of Civic TV are decorated with a number of film posters (*figure 59*), but these are the kind of low-budget independent exploitation film productions which were often made

[223] Benson-Allott, *Killer Tapes and Shattered Screens*, 78.

in Canada during this period, largely facilitated by tax breaks, and so were natively (or, at least, partially) Canadian.[224]

The stated objective of Convex and his associates is that "North America has gotten soft, padron, and the rest of the world is getting tough. Very, very tough. We're entering savage new times and we're going to have to be pure and direct and strong if we're going to survive them." [1:01:00] Max and his cable station are targeted as a kind of right-wing conservative action against the licentiousness of their programming. Civic TV are also portrayed as an open channel to foreign content – such as the videotapes of "Samurai Dreams" which are offered to Max by the Japanese salesmen, or "Apollo and Dionysus", the softcore sex film sold by Masha – who is presumably Greek, though this is not stated. Max receives videotapes containing contentious material from foreign distributors and broadcasts them to the domestic populace. The "Videodrome" programme is pitched as the kind of *ne plus ultra* logical conclusion of the sex and violence which the conservative right see as infecting commercial entertainment – in the US as much as in Canada, although Canada in this period was certainly in the vanguard of the development of cable television.[225] The kinds of Canadian stations and programming which are referenced in *Videodrome* were soon a staple of US television – with the development of cable TV strands such as *USA Up All Night* (1989-98) offering viewers exactly the mix of sex and violence which are present in the films whose promotional posters adorn the walls of Civic TV. The "Videodrome" programme is to act as the Trojan horse, which gets the mind-control signal into the living rooms and eyeballs of a viewing public which the conservative right see as insufficiently mobilised to counter an imagined foreign threat – whether economic, military or merely cultural.

However, the film also deals with the ways in which human perception of the real world is being manipulated by the then emerging medium of home video. The film makes reference to the national origin of this technology in the form of the Japanese erotic programme "Samurai Dreams". In this way the film – which was produced by a major Hollywood studio, Universal – could be seen as a broader North American (or even Western society) response to a foreign medium. Cronenberg himself recognises the subtle

[224] Rodley, *Cronenberg on Cronenberg*, 69.
[225] Benson-Allott, *Killer Tapes and Shattered Screens*, 73.

irony that the film was part-financed and produced by Universal, a major Hollywood studio, under the auspices of Sid Scheinberg, a notoriously conservative executive[226]:

> In retrospect I realise how extraordinary and unusual it was: first, that they even partially financed it – they were one of the most conservative major studios – and second, that they allowed it to continue once they saw what it was becoming. And, finally, that they should make good their word and release it with a fair amount of enthusiasm … I remember Sid Scheinberg saying that he felt it had been a mistake to release the film wide; that it should have been handled as an art film … but he liked the picture.[227]

Cronenberg states that he wrote the *Videodrome* script partly to explore his own responses to criticisms he had received, regarding violence in his films. The resulting film does trouble a liberal response to such criticisms and – connected to a notion of video as a prime technological enabler – perhaps appealed to Universal executives, despite the film's overt violence and sexual content. The film can be read as a conservative response to the results of the liberalisation of broadcast media, under pressure from the emerging global media market in material distributed on videotape.

As stated above, during the production of the film, Universal was embroiled in a legal case against the Japanese manufacturer and developer of the Betamax videotape format, Sony, over the legality of home taping of television programmes. Despite this, they – along with most other Hollywood major studios – had begun to make large parts of their film libraries available for sale and rental on Sony's Betamax and JVC's VHS video tape formats. Harlan reveals to Max, towards the end of the film: "I was playing you tapes Max – pre-recorded cassettes." [1:00:00]. The "Videodrome" programme has not yet been broadcast; the threat has not been from satellite transmission. Although the ultimate plan is for Videodrome to be broadcast to CivicTV's cable subscribers, this initial test has been facilitated through the rapidly emerging medium of home video.

[226] Lardner, *Fast Forward*, 24-25.
[227] Rodley, *Cronenberg on Cronenberg*, 101.

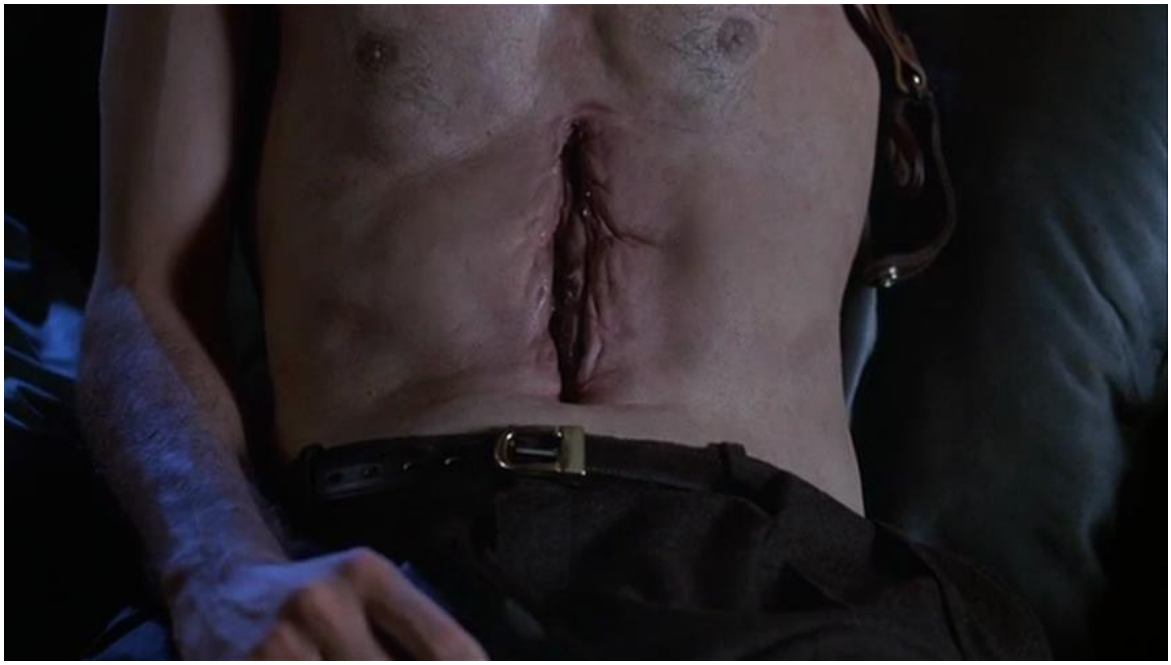

Figure 60: Video-induced body mutation

In the DVD commentary, Cronenberg refers to the media theories of Marshall McLuhan (1964), especially his conception of media as extensions of the human body. However, as Benson-Allott points out, in portraying video as a medium which transforms the human body (or at least, the brain), Cronenberg moves beyond McLuhan-ite conceptions of media as *extensions* of the human body, rather, portraying all media's potential to be *embodied.*[228] That it does so in an apparently dystopian manner can be tempered if we take account of Cronenberg's wider oeuvre.[229] The McLuhan-ite theory that media are extensions of the human body is pushed forward by Cronenberg to the point where people literally embody the technologies required for the recall of pre-recorded imagery. When infected with the Videodrome virus the human body reconfigures itself to accommodate the direct insertion and replay of videotape – through a slit in the abdomen (*figure 60*). The videotapes are themselves presented as living, organic items. The subject begins to experience a series of hallucinations, in Renn's case to the extent that – as O'Blivion tells him – his "reality is already half video hallucination." [36:11]. In this way, *Videodrome* does seem to be a

[228] Benson-Allott, *Killer Tapes and Shattered Screens*, 95.

[229] Cronenberg has often stated that he conceives his early science fiction films as being told from the perspective of the virus, where the human costs it wreaks are just the necessary consequences of its nature. This theory is most explicit in films such as *Rabid* (1977) and *The Fly* (1986).

cautionary tale regarding the dangerous potential of a new medium and, particularly, a specific instantiation of it in Sony's Betamax format.

When Renn is reprogrammed by O'Blivion's daughter – again, through the insertion of a videotape – he becomes an evangelist of what appears to be a clandestine movement behind the charitable work of O'Blivion's "Church of the Cathode Ray". Hunting down and executing Convex and associates results in both they and Renn himself experiencing bodily transformations, acts which Renn carries out to the mantra of "Long live the new flesh!" By the end of the film, many of the characters are dead (including Renn), some who were dead appear to be alive again through video imagery and many characters have been bodily transformed through exposure to video. In *Videodrome* the theory of embodied media is presented literally, as bodies mutate under the influence of video signals to perform ideologically-motivated acts and to accommodate material manifestations of the video medium – i.e. video tape, specifically Betamax.[230] Given that the film deals with hallucinations it is not always easy to determine which scenes are actually happening and which are the product of Renn's Videodrome-influenced mind.[231] This results in a denouement which collapses in on itself in ways which leaves several plot strands unresolved and which is a radical departure from the standard conventions of techno-conspiracy films of the time, such as those made by Michael Crichton.[232] It's perhaps indicative of Cronenberg's stated intention to play devil's advocate with himself regarding criticism he has received about violence in his earlier films - his ambivalence results in an unresolvable narrative and an inconclusive resolution.[233]

[230] At the time of the film's production, Betamax was vying for domestic dominance with the VHS format. Cronenberg, however, states that the decision to use Betamax tapes was due to the smaller form factor, purely an aesthetic or practical decision.
[231] Interestingly, Tim Lucas' production diary of the film notes that one abandoned visual effect – "video twitches" of the film image – would have accentuated this effect. Tim Lucas, *Videodrome* (Lakewood: Millipede Press, 2008), 120.
[232] Such as *Westworld* (1973), *Coma* (1978), *Looker* (1981) and *Runaway* (1984).
[233] Rodley, *Cronenberg on Cronenberg*, 94.

iii) Video Backlash – Videodrome (cont.) & *Benny's Video* (Michael Haneke, 1992)

So, in the production history of *Videodrome*, it is clear that in addition to the broadcast television studios, home video had a significant impact on – in particular, Hollywood – film producers.[234] Initially ignored by the majors, the emerging market for pre-recorded feature films distributed on video tape grew spectacularly through the 1980s, until in 1985 it represented the primary function of the home VCR.[235] This led to a bonanza for rights holders of all kind of content as distributors scrambled to release tapes to the shelves of video rentailers in those countries where VCRs were making inroads into homes.[236] By the mid-1980s "at least half of all households" in Great Britain and the United States had a VCR.[237] From the early 1980s onward, film markets such as Cannes, MIFED[238] and the American Film Market (AFM) were inundated with video distributors looking for new features. Independent film makers and studios with back-catalogues found distributors eager to buy and easy to find.[239] As a result, despite initial concerns with piracy and the potential dilution of the box-office take and traditional after-markets such as television, the major studios began to release limited numbers of catalogue titles into a market which had already developed its own distribution and sales networks.[240] The market which the majors began to tepidly explore was one which was markedly different from the traditional film business. There were a large number of independent distributors, making their own deals for individual films or packages from rights holders. There was an even larger amount of independent rentailers and other store owners who mixed video rental or sale into their existing businesses.[241]

The impact of this was felt in the legislatures and media in the US and elsewhere. Chief among the concerns were that the industry was unregulated in terms of sex and

[234] In this period, the consolidation of media businesses often meant – as is the case with Universal – that film and television studios operated under the umbrella of a wider media corporation.
[235] Wasko, *Hollywood in the Information Age*, 135.
[236] The term "renatilers" became commonly used in this period to refer to the many – largely independent – video stores which offered film titles primarily for rental on home video.
[237] Mark Levy & Barrie Gunter, *Home Video and the Changing Nature of the Television Audience* (London: John Libbey, 1988), 1.
[238] A Milan-based European film market.
[239] "MIP-TV: Video to the Fore," *Video News*, v2 n6 (1981): 18-19.
[240] Wasko, *Hollywood in the Information Age*, 133.
[241] Joshua M. Greenberg, *From Betamax to Blockbuster* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008), 64.

violence and a number of measures were taken to curb this – including the introduction of the Video Recordings Act (1984) in the UK and changes to the ratings system of the MPAA in the US. Efforts made by national governments to support domestic film production such as the Eady Levy (in the UK) and Canal+'s broadcast license's requirement to support French film had previously been instituted partly to combat US dominance of cinema. When it came to home video, once again there were concerns expressed regarding the dominance of the US on the emerging format. I will now discuss *Videodrome*'s relevance as a video release in the period where legal and political measures were taken to address the perceived problems of home video, before utilising Michael Haneke's later film *Benny's Video* (1992) to illustrate the longevity of such concerns.

Videodrome was a key text in the emerging debate regarding violence in films and their viewing in the home on video. After all, Cronenberg does tell a story which involves a man being driven to violence through exposure to violent video imagery. Despite garnering a number of positive critical reviews, the film had a relatively unsuccessful theatrical run.[242] In the US the distributors had been forced to bow to the demands of the MPAA and institute a small number of cuts to scenes, against the strong objections of its director. However, when the film was released on home video in the UK, the distributors CIC made further cuts on a voluntary basis to the version which had been approved by the British Board of Film Classificiation (BBFC) for UK theatrical exhibition. The reasons for doing so were a question of timing and political sensitivity:

> … CIC's reasons for making their voluntary cuts are perfectly understandable. As md Laurie Hall says: "We have built up the reputation of being the dealers' friends and we aim to stay that way. The last thing we want to see are our customers, the dealers, being prosecuted simply for stocking our products … We took legal advice on *Videodrome* and were told that it was likely that this title would be seized by police if these cuts were not effected."[243]

At the time of release, the UK government was in the process of drafting the Video Recordings Act (1984), which required all programmes available for rental or sale in the UK to be classified by the BBFC. This bill was demanded by members of parliament in response to concern from the public and a large number of alarmist stories in some national newspapers, regarding the types of material which were becoming available in the – then,

[242] Rodley, *Cronenberg on Cronenberg*, 102.
[243] "Let's Not Jump for the Editing Machine – Yet!" *Video Business* (Mar. 12th 1984).

completely unregulated – home video market. In particular, there was concern that the availability of titles featuring sex and violence in the home could lead to their viewing by children (unlike cinemas, where age-certification regulates admission). In advance of the legislation, a number of prosecutions had been undertaken of dealers who had rented or sold contentious titles – with a small number of convictions and a large number of voluntary seizures and fines.[244] This led to a climate where a small number of anti-censorship campaigners were heavily outweighed by the large number of practical businessmen and women who wished for clarity regarding what titles could and could not be safely made available. It is in this context that CIC chose to make further cuts to *Videodrome*, in the expectation that the title could prove problematic once the VRA came into force.

It is interesting to note the parallel between the motivations of those who wished to censor home video titles such as *Videodrome* and the themes of the film itself. Prior to the instatement of the VRA, prosecutions of violent films on video were made on the basis of the Obscene Publications Act (1959), which states:

> … an article shall be deemed to be obscene if its effect or (where the article comprises two or more distinct items) the effect of any one of its items is, if taken as a whole, such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely, having regard to all relevant circumstances, to read, see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it.[245]

Therefore, videos prosecuted under this act were those which the public prosecutors deemed liable to corrupt those who viewed them. Given that CIC had legal opinion that a video release of a title which had already been given a theatrical release was likely to be prosecuted, it seems that prosecutors regarded watching a film on video *more* likely to deprave or corrupt a viewer, than in the cinema. Much of this attitude was down to the place such videos were likely to be viewed – i.e. in the home, outside the sphere of control of the state. Nonetheless, this legislation and the media hysteria which led to its enactment, did combine to present a view of the video tape as somehow a threatening, invasive technology which could harm "sensitive" individuals. As with Renn in *Videodrome*, video could potentially modify an individual's behaviour – with consequences such as a instilling

[244] See Kerekes & Slater, *Killing for Culture*; David Kerekes & David Slater, *See No Evil* (Manchester: Headpress, 2000); John Martin, *The Seduction of the Gullibile* (Nottingham: Procrustes, 1997); and Kate Egan, *Trash or Treasure* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).
[245] Obscene Publications Act 1959, 1. Test of Obscenity, Section 1). The National Archives collection of UK Government Legislation. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/7-8/66/section/1 - acccessed 04/12/2018.

a propensity for violence. Much of the discussion in the press at the time is class-based, arguing that – for example – the unemployed (often used as a shorthand for the working class in this period), would be adversely affected by exposure to video.[246]

Given the response of the right-wing press in the US and the UK, the legal battle over home taping in the US and the response to home video in the UK, it becomes clear that the themes and subject of *Videodrome* engage clearly and specifically with the phenomenon of home video at the particular moment of its production and release. That it received the support of a major, largely-conservative Hollywood studio and that it takes an even-handed approach to the debate regarding the invasiveness and threat of video format is a reflection of the intensity and importance of the discussion it provoked at this time.

Michael Haneke's *Benny's Video* (1992) depicts the life of the titular teenage boy as wholly immersed in video technology. Produced almost a decade after *Videodrome*, at a moment in the development of home video when it was almost completely synonymous with the replay (usually through rental) of pre-recorded feature films, the film engages with the contemporaneous social debates regarding the video medium. Haneke features both pre-recorded films on video and camcorder footage within *Benny's Video*. The former category is largely made up of violent action films that we watch with Benny – Haneke foregrounds Benny's future actions and response with his passive reaction to the films on video. Benny visits a video rental store several times throughout the film. The store is decorated with posters for a number of – primarily US - violent action and horror films.

[246] "Video on the Dole," *Video News*, v3 n6 (1982): 34.

Figure 61: US cultural imperialism?

The large poster behind the cash register is a German-language poster for the US horror film *Graveyard Shift* (1990), which is advertised prominently as "Nr.1 Hit U.S.A." (*figure 61*). This would seem to be an illustration of Haneke's criticism of US cinema – especially the kind of action and horror cinema which European youths such as Benny are depicted as favouring: 'My films are polemical statements against the American "taking-by-surprise-before-one-can-think" cinema and its disempowerment of the spectator.'[247] The film that we actually see Benny watching in the video store and at home is *The Toxic Avenger* (1984), a rather bizarre choice as it is both an independent production, rather than a Hollywood film, and – while certainly violent – is more of a parody of 1980s US action cinema than emblematic of it (*figure 62*).

[247] Haneke, quoted in Vinzenz Hediger, "Infectious Images: Haneke, Cameron, Egoyan, and the Dueling Epistemologies of Video and Film," in *A Companion to Michael Haneke,* ed. Roy Grundmann (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 91-112.

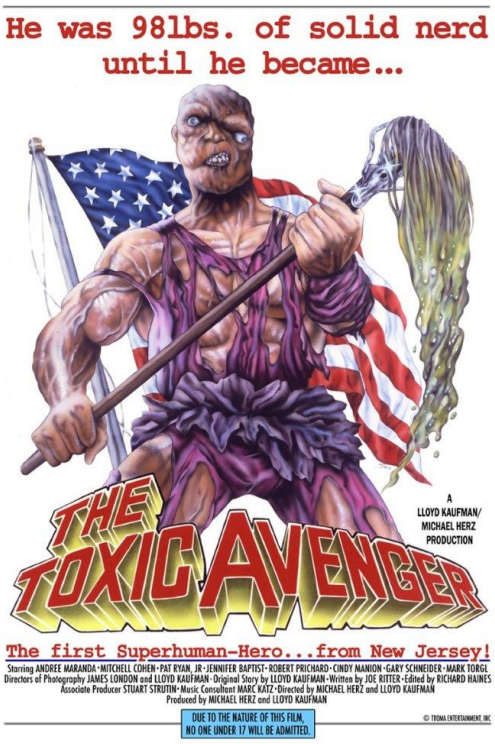

Figure 62: ***The Toxic Avenger (1984)*** *theatrical poster*

This is perhaps indicative of Haneke's rather essentialist and humourless attitude to the commercial cinema, especially Hollywood commercial films in the action and horror genre.[248] We see Benny in the video store watching a scene from the film with headphones in a line of viewing stations with other customers. At home, he watches the film in bed in the darkness of his room at night – giving his domestic viewing of the video a rather clandestine and forbidden edge. Although the scene features a car chase which ends in a spectacular crash, the closeups of Benny which Haneke alternates with the video betray no emotion – he seems entirely unmoved by the imagery. When he brings a girl back to his bedroom it is his own production – the killing of a pig – which he chooses to show her, rather than the films which he has rented. The actual – rather than the simulated – is what he is moved by, and what he uses to prompt a response in others.

When he finds himself unable to explain his killing of the girl to his parents, it is through his video recording of the act that he expresses himself to them, to confess. In an interview accompanying the DVD release of the film Haneke explains:

[248] It's also possible that it was just easier and cheaper to obtain the rights to this film.

> … the impression… if I have an image of something, I own it. And of course it's idiotic. Created on account of the media, I think. It's because people see the world through the media, so they're in danger of believing that it's only through the medium that reality exists. And in truth it's exactly the opposite.

This is how Benny approaches the world – his "view" of the world is that of a TV monitor, a live feed from a video camera in his bedroom, pointed outside from an otherwise shuttered window. He understands enough about the image-producing culture to know that the violence it portrays is "all plastic and ketchup" [23:34] but not enough to bridge the empathetic gap between lived experience and that which is merely observed, second-hand. When he kills the girl, it is not enough that he has actually committed the act, it requires review on video tape. The aftermath – examining the body and attempting to conceal or, at least, temporarily obscure, the evidence – must be placed on record. It is as if the record actualises the occurrence. Haneke is as interested in his audience as his characters – in terms of how they comprehend violence and the role and prevalence of violence in media: "…it's a double screen. They see the screen, and behind it, in the image, another screen. And this technique … makes the audience aware of where they are. Especially in scenes where there is the danger of being totally manipulated by the feelings that are brought up, we're practically obliged to make them conscious of their role."[249] Haneke feels morally obligated to complicate the view when he films a violent scene and, in *Benny's Video*, he does this through a mise-en-abyme quotation of these scenes. He co-opts the video monitor as a visual figuration of Benny's POV – the technology he uses to attempt to circumnavigate his lack of empathy and engagement with the world is utilised to provide spectators with the moral distance Haneke sees as necessary to make their own judgements.

Benny's Video explores – in a highly didactic way characteristic of Haneke's work on modern media – the supposed deleterious effect that children's exposure to violent videos has. It does so in a way which mirrors tabloid coverage of the "video nasty" affair in the UK and elsewhere and also in several studies of home video's effect on children such as those by Keith Roe. Roe's study focused on adolescents in Sweden in 1987 and examined their use of VCRs along with other factors such as social class, family constitution and peer contact:

[249] Haneke, from the interview on the DVD release of *Benny's Video*.

> … low achievers have lower self-esteem, more negative and pessimistic feelings about life, a higher level of VCR use, and more frequent viewings of pornography, violence, and other socially disapproved of contents … [t]his interpretation is supported by the fact that those who are more active with peers devote more time to VCR use … the peer group functions in a positive way as an alternative source of identity for those alienated from the school and/or their parents. The problem for society is that this may involve engagement in various deviant and delinquent activities.[250]

Benny is shown to be a reasonably conscientious student – in a number of scenes he is depicted doing his homework, although he does copy a friend's work at one point. He also takes part in the school choir – although in an early scene the boys are depicted exchanging money and drugs behind their backs. Benny involves his school friends in the same Ponzi scheme he has witnessed his sister undertaking with her friends, which she has done without censure and with the tacit approval of her parents. He also smokes and goes to noisy clubs with his friends, but there is little shown that is out of keeping with the mildest of teenage rebellions. What is more significant is Benny's isolation from his parents. While the film does not show any obvious signs of conflict, Benny is often left on his own and the conversations between them are cold and distant. It could be argued he exhibits the kind of transferal of approval from family/school to peers identified by Roe, as his friend Ricci is the first person he attempts to tell of his crime, but soon after he visits his sister (ultimately telling neither). His video use is also not explicitly connected to peer approval. Throughout the film he rents, watches and returns videos on his own and is never shown discussing them with others, with the sole exception of the girl he meets at the video store. Overall, Benny – despite, or because of, his mild financial exploitation of classmates, smoking and liking for heavy metal – is presented as a largely normal teenager. It is his outward passivity and disconnection from family which are presented as abnormal.

Ultimately, such media flashpoints have a long and continuing history – from the panic over the "horror comics" of the 1950s to current day concern over violence in video and computer games. Stanley Cohen defines these phenomena as "media panics" in his foundation study of "moral panic":

> There is a long history of moral panics about the alleged harmful effects of exposure to popular media and cultural forms – comics and cartoons, popular theatre, cinema, rock music, video nasties, computer games, internet porn. For

[250] Keith Roe, "School Achievement, Self-Esteem and Adolescents Video Use," in *The VCR Age: Home Video and Mass Communications*, ed. Mark Levy (Newbury Park: SAGE, 1989), 184.

> conservatives, the media glamorize crime, trivialize public insecurities and undermine moral authority; for liberals the media exaggerate the risks of crime and whip up moral panics to vindicate an unjust and authoritarian crime control policy. In these 'media panics', the spirals of reaction to any new medium are utterly repetitive and predictable.[251]

Cohen classifies these 'predictable' stages as moving from an initial identification to response and reaction, each involving a number of state or governmental interests, in addition to various social groups and individual actors. Crucial to the identification stage is the notion that "deviance is [not] the intrinsic property of an act" and is instead a quality that is assigned by one or more interested or impacted parties within a society.[252] In the case of the reaction to home video as outlined in *Videodrome* the quality of deviance is assigned by the right-wing conservatives behind the Videodrome signal. This moral deviance takes the form of a "soft" compliance within the population to scenes of sex and violence on the emerging technology of cable television and its rebroadcast of images from "foreign" videotapes. In *Benny's Video* there is a similar censure against Benny's consumption of rented videotapes of U.S. action films. As a moral arguments presented within theatrically-released feature films, it is difficult to escape the notion that the criticism of the individual is extended to the medium of home video itself – that the quality of deviance is shifted from the naïve consumer to the producers and distributors of material on videotape. This is a designation which is oppositional in quality – "video is **not** film" – and has a rational, existential motivation in the perceived threat that home video presented to the institution of cinema in this period.

Films such as *Videodrome* and *Benny's Video* are thoughtful, early responses to what was, in the case of the former, then just emerging as a mass medium, and in the latter, an established yet still debased media format. Though the arguments they rehearse are to a large extent format-specific in terms of visual language, the societal context in which the debate takes place is familiar from earlier media panics and those which continue today.

[251] Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (London: Routledge, 2002). xix-xx.
[252] Ibid, 5.

iv) The 'Death' of Home Video – Be Kind Rewind (Michel Gondry, 2008)

Figure 63: ***Be Kind Rewind*** *DoP Ellen Kuras with the "silent movie" VHS camera rig.*

Before the Hollywood majors entered the home video market, and for a brief period before distributors had been fully able to begin what became a bonanza for rights holders of independent and low-budget feature films, there was a period where other types of programme briefly flourished on home video. For example, in the UK in 1984, ten of the top 40 wholesale titles were in the music video genre.[253] At this time, with VCRs marketed largely as time-shifting devices, there was a sense that the pre-recorded market could have developed into an appendage of the self-improvement industry, which had been so prolific throughout the 1970s, with a bewildering array of educational and instructional titles released in video's early years.[254] Instead, as noted above, within a few years home video became overwhelmingly an aftermarket of the Hollywood film industry. Over time, the amount of distributors diminished as competition squeezed out smaller operators and businesses consolidated. The professionalization of the rental market also led to a similar

[253] *Video Business*, vol. 3 nr. 46, (1982), 22.
[254] The so-called "Me Decade", as extensively chronicled at the time by writers such as Tom Wolfe and Christopher Lasch.

period of consolidation in high street stores – with large chains being formed to cope with the terms of a limited number of distributors. The Hollywood majors had for a time struggled to recoup greater returns on each title by instituting a number of highly unpopular rental agreements, which were resisted or ignored by independent rentailers. Once the market had matured and the independents had been "shaken out" they began to reap the kind of profits which quickly dwarfed what they made from their traditional box office business: "By 1987, revenues were $7.46 billion, far exceeding theatrical box office receipts."[255]

By the end of the 20th century, the proliferation of so-called "mom-and-pop" video rentailers had been completely replaced with a small number of large corporations, such as Blockbuster Video. Video tape as a format was in the early stage of being replaced by the non-rewritable Digital Versatile Disc.[256] As Hilderbrand has shown, this incipient obsolescence was accompanied by a reconsideration of the uses and potentialities of analogue video, especially standard commercial formats such as VHS.[257] In *Be Kind/Rewind* Gondry dramatizes the way in which consumer video formats can be utilised to counter corporate attempts to homogenise media production and the ability of communities to preserve and tell their own history. The initial ineptitude of the characters' attempts to re-make Hollywood product using domestic video gives way to impressive and inventive production design and a low-tech innovation which replicates the look of silent-era film on home video (*figure 63*), which is utilised both in-diegesis and by Gondry himself in the framing narrative. There are three categories of "film" production in *Be Kind Rewind*: the overarching narrative, which is shot in a standard widescreen film format; the in-diegesis amateur recreations of Hollywood films by the film's characters, which are shot on a consumer-grade VHS camcorder; and the short film "Fats Waller was Born Here", which was shot on the same camcorder, set to black and white mode, with a jury-rigged extension in front of the lens which houses a fan and some vertical strings. The black and white setting, fan and strings simulate the material format markers of aged silent-era film: monochrome, flicker and scratches. The use of video also gives the footage an undefined character which further simulates the appearance of old film prints. This assembly is an

[255] Wasko, *Hollywood in the Information Age*, 135.
[256] A rewriteable DVD format did emerge, but was initially expensive and was not in wide use for several years.
[257] Hilderbrand, *Inherent Vice*.

invention of Gondry and his camera crew, but it is also dramatized within the film, where it is the mechanic Wilson who proposes and creates the camera rig.

Figure 64: Wilson attaches a fan to the camcorder.

Wilson explains the method: “Hey look, this is how you make it look old. The fan gives the impression that it’s an old film and the string is for the scratches, see?” [1:19:50] (*figure 64*). This is a fully analogue solution to what – at the time of the film’s production – was already being implemented through digital production and post-production effects. The in-diegsis driver to utilise these primitive – but highly effective – solutions is the limited means of the community effort to tell the story of Fats Waller, which is seen in all aspects of production design, whether it’s cardboard flats for vintage cars or pizzas for blood splatters.

The film acts both as a story about a community coming together to tell its own history and a how-to manual utilising domestic video technology. The DVD making-of documentary makes Gondry’s intentions explicit. The production team moved into a warehouse in the centre of the city and took the time to learn the area and get to know local people. They rented a dance hall and used it to cast locals as extras. Throughout the documentary an array of actors testify to the “organic” nature of Gondry’s direction of the film – allowing scenes to develop while shooting and accepting contributions and suggestions from professional actors and technicians and non-professional locals. This approach extends to the technology used to shoot the film:

> The idea to use VHS in the movie was a great idea because the cameras that we're using have such amazing resolution – we look at VHS next to the MiniDV and the MiniDV just didn't have the same quality to it and there's a kind of softness to it, really organic feel to the VHS. So we shot all of the Fats Waller movie on a VHS, a real VHS camera.[258]

Despite this, however, there appear to be limits to the extent to which a major picture from a Hollywood studio will bear the non-cinematic image. Once Gondry has introduced the idea of Mike and Jerry using a camcorder to shoot versions of Hollywood films, the amount of screen time taken up by the video imagery begins to recede. The film moves from showing us the "sweded" (Jerry's term for their video interpretations) versions, to the production circumstances surrounding them – which are largely covered by Gondry's film camera. This reaches its apotheosis in a highly complex and unrealistic single take "montage" of Jerry, Mike and their collaborators working on multiple "sweded" films, which showcases the highly inventive and resourceful budget production design of the characters and the skill and capability of Gondry and his production crew. It is only at the end of the film, when the finished cut of the Fats Waller biopic is screened to the community who made it, that the video imagery is once again allowed to squeeze out film in terms of screen time.

Film representations of home video often obscure the dominant function of the home video format itself – i.e. repackaging of film content for a domestic home market – instead featuring characters using video in, primarily, "home mode" practice. It seems like there is a self-denying ordinance in play when it comes to (particularly) Hollywood representation of home video in feature film. Films such as *Be Kind/Rewind* (2008) on the other hand, do explore the ways in which home video has – and continues to - change the nature of the market for films. Wasser has pointed out that the initial marketing of the VCR was a function of the medium's extension of television:

> The history of home video technology was a succession of cultural shifts that started with the abandonment of network hostility toward recording technology … Akio Morata of Sony and Kenjiro Takayanagi of JVC stayed with the original idea that home video would sell on to the mass market as an extension of television. Nonetheless, the competition between Betamax and VHS was decided on the basis of video as an extension of the movie theatre.[259]

[258] Ellen Kuras, from the DVD Making-Of feature, *Be Kind Rewind*.
[259] Wasser, *Veni, Vidi, Video*, 75.

He also argues that films on video have worked to elide a sense of format-specificity – in a way that previously did not exist in translations from, for example, stage to screen.[260] Hollywood tends to regard video as simply an extension of the traditional film business, rather than a production medium.

Gondry's film, on the other hand, does touch on video's capacity to rework the cinema apparatus in the age of home video. I have already discussed the video camera assembly which is constructed in the film to simulate the aesthetic of silent-era film. The means through which this is achieved is explained narratively through the relative impoverishment of the residents of Passaic, especially the characters at the core of the production of the Fats Waller biopic – we can presume that they don't have the means to achieve the results through digital manipulation of the video imagery. However, it is also in keeping with the physicality of the production design and special effects within the earlier "sweded" versions of Hollywood films. Although operating on a budget (or, more precisely, no budget) the methods do follow pre-digital, analogue means operating in standard Hollywood feature films. When Mike runs in place and a mock-up of the circular interior of a spacecraft is revolved around him, it only departs from the actual effect from *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) by a matter of degree. That it is shot on consumer-grade video is not seen as a liability by the producers or their increasingly ardent consumers in Passaic. They are still "making movies". The motivation behind the construction of the silent-era movie camera rig is less a question of legitimising video in a film production context than it is imprinting authenticity on a historical document – as Wilson says, "This is how you make it look old." [1:19:50]. The "sweded" films are pastiche; the "Fats" film is a wilful recreation and reclamation of a community's past, by the community and for the community. Though based on a falsehood (Fats was not actually born in Passaic) it aspires to authenticity and this requires the tools of authenticity, or at least their simulation. It requires the indexical: it needs to be cinematic. While the "sweded" films comply with the logic of commercial exploitation and the operation of the Hollywood entertainment industry, the documentary – while still comedic – is a "discourse of sobriety".[261] The movie camera VHS rig is an enabling technology which enforces this discourse through its simulation of format markers of historical authenticity and professionalism.

[260] *Ibid.*, 198.
[261] This is Bill Nichols' term for various non-fiction forms, including the documentary – Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 3.

Though, by 2008, the primacy of the cinema for telling stories in the audio/visual mode had been superseded in economic terms, the cultural legitimacy of the institution and of the apparatus still persisted. That the characters of *Be Kind Rewind* aspired to make and project a piece of "cinema" reflects the persistence of this perceived legitimacy. The means by which this is achieved, however, is reliant on the portability, convenience, pervasiveness and economy of home video. "Fats Waller was Born Here" and the circumstances of its production lies somewhere between the never-quite-realised democratisation of amateur production through video and a cinema which is owned and responds to the needs of communities. It was made at a time when there could be some perspective on the failures, successes and overall impact of the home video revolution and at the very beginning of cinema's own existential digital crisis.[262] It elucidates these debates in a manner which enlightens and entertains and provides some insights as to what may have been gained and lost as a result of these changes.

[262] Regarding the 'cinephilia' displayed by the film, Sperb argues that it "would be informed perhaps by a rhizomatic hybrid of innovative newness and still unrealised past technological potential, of pre-existing critical traditions and self-reflexive nostalgias." Jason Sperb, "Be Kind … Rewind/Or, the A-Zs of an American Off-Modern Cinephilia" in *Cinephilia in the Age of Digital Reproduction: Film, Pleasure and Digital Culture* ed. Scott Balcerzak and Jason Sperb (London: Wallflower, 2012), p.94.

Conclusion

The sections above have outlined a number of ways in which cinema practitioners have incorporated home video in narrative feature film. They have done so in ways which engage with and manipulate narrative conventions: altering the flow and economy of storytelling and the way in which cinema conventionally relates plot and character information to spectators. To a greater or lesser extent, the ways in which video is incorporated relies on the materiality of home or analogue video and the uses to which the format is put in other contexts, particularly the home or amateur mode of video. Directors such as Haneke and Cronenberg have exploited the cultural associations of the "look" of home video to clue spectators into plot points and character psychology in their films which have incorporated video. Both directors have also, alongside Nakata's *Ringu*, drawn on some of the negative associations home video has had with the portrayal and delivery of violence into the home to engender fear and horror in audiences. Alternatively, Egoyan and Schrader have drawn on audiences' embodied experience with home video technologies to incorporate them in a way which grounds their use in film as an analogue to the standard practices with which many are now familiar: their use in these films is not alien or "other". The imagery in this second category of films and the extent to which it is meaningful and significant to their characters is understandable and transparent to contemporary audiences. These films dramatise the uses and effects of home video in a way which does not trouble or destabilise a realist narrative tradition.

Whilst the films examined in this study are selected for their specific concentration on and use of home video within narrative, the question remains why were these films made in a way which foreground the technology to such an extent? I do not seek to identify these films as typifying a trend of greater use of video technologies in the years where the technology became so ubiquitous in many countries across the world. What I have identified in these films and in commentary surrounding their production is a sense that filmmakers – as practitioners of the image-making industries and cultural commentators thereof – have in these specific instances felt a need to engage with the debate which has necessarily accompanied their introduction into everyday life. In specific terms, their presence in a myriad of formats and outlets and the way they engage with all aspects of our cultural life: narrative storytelling; news reporting; advertising; government information; and so on. As video became one of the dominant frames through which we approached the

world, and it became so invasive – becoming a fixture in homes, a domesticated format – it demanded a greater presence in how the world was represented elsewhere, including the cinema.

In addition to engaging with the way in which home video technology altered how we view the world, certain films also attempt to contextualise the economic, social and industrial impact it has had. A number of the films exhibit a fear of video – especially its impact on the young, the associations with depictions of violence and on sexual relationships. Film-makers have responded to news reporting and commentary regarding these threats from video by dramatizing fictional scenarios which allow spectators to see these arguments played out. That these stories consciously foreground the technologies and character's use of them allows spectators to use their own experience with VCRs and camcorders to gauge the efficacy of lines of argument on either side, as waged by tabloid newspapers, politicians and the commentariat. If video ultimately failed to democratise the image and image-making, at least its ubiquity has allowed consumers and spectators to authoritively engage with discussions regarding its uses and impacts.

Chapter 4: Digital Video

Introduction

The introduction of digital technologies to film *production* has proven to be controversial, for a number of reasons. However, before I proceed to outline a number of areas of critical contention, I will spend some time establishing what is meant by the term "digital" and some of the specific characteristics of its application to the recording, storage and replay of moving imagery. Given that digital media is defined to a significant extent by its difference to analogue media, it is useful to utilise a definition which references both:

> An easy way to imagine how analogue recording works is to think of it as an analogy: images or sounds are represented, or analogised, as continuously variable physical quantities which can be read and written by a machine which converts them to and from visible images and audible sounds… Digital media does not record a direct representation of a continuous process of change. Instead, it represents that process as information, or *data* (from the Latin 'datum', meaning 'something given'). That information takes the form of numbers, hence the word 'digital'.[263]

The principal of the "analogy", that analogue media aspire to render moving imagery in a way which invites comparison to the indexical object, is central to pre-digital technologies of the image. With digital technologies, the image that is recorded and rendered is information *derived* from the object, but need not necessarily rely on its real-world existence to the same extent. This is seen in the way in which digital imagery is highly fluid in the ways in which it can be disseminated, manipulated and copied – and the felicity with which digital media tools can be utilised to render photo-realistic imagery from raw data alone. The majority of the imagery incorporated into the films discussed in the earlier chapters in this study was recorded on equipment which utilises analogue recording, storage and replay: small-gauge celluloid; broadcast and closed-circuit television; and domestic videotape.[264] Cinema, as an institution and practice, relied on the analogue medium of standardised 35mm film for almost all of its first 100 years in existence. However, as many of the standard applications of other imaging technologies – such as surveillance, broadcast television, and home entertainment – have become reliant on digital

[263] Enticknap, *Moving Image Technology*, 203.
[264] Some of these, of course, do not always require storage.

imaging, cinema itself has undergone a process of converting to digital media within the last two decades.

The increasing viability of digital cameras as a production tool resulted in an increasing number of fiction features made using cameras such as the Sony DCR-VX1000, from the mid-90s onwards.[265] Prior to this, feature films utilising analogue video as a recording and storage format had been largely relegated to low-budget amateur production, as the low-resolution and attendant issues with colour reproduction was deemed to be below audience tolerance, compared to standard 35mm film.[266] Analogue video had been used as an intermediate format in film editing on a limited basis in the mid-80s, with film transferred to tape and edited on that format, prior to the implementation of the cuts on the source negative.[267] This activity was further encouraged and enabled by computer-based editing systems in the 1990s. Digital technology made further inroads into film production in this period with the application of computer-generated imagery (CGI) to achieve state-of-the-art special effects in films such as *Terminator 2* (James Cameron, 1991) and *Jurassic Park* (Steven Spielberg, 1993). Prior techniques utilising green screens and chroma-keying to combine live action and computer-generated effects were gradually replaced by the practice of transferring film to digital video, where the images were more amenable to direct computer manipulation. The use of this "digital intermediate" process gradually expanded from application to individual sequences (for special effects) to entire films, as a means to facilitate the greater economy and flexibility of digital editing software.

So, in terms of its emergent use in the field of special effects and editing, digital technologies grew out of and supplemented existing analogue technologies and practices. In terms of the ontological distinction between the representation of a scene in analogue and digital media, it has also been noted that digital film and video also has clear antecedents in earlier technologies and practices in the recording of imagery:

> … the manual construction of images in digital cinema represents a return to the pro-cinematic practises of the nineteenth century, when images were hand-painted and hand-animated. At the turn of the twentieth century, cinema was to delegate these manual techniques to animation and define itself as a recording medium. As cinema enters the digital age, these techniques are again becoming commonplace in

[265] These include *The Idiots* (Lars von Trier, 1997), *The Book of Life* (Hal Hartley, 1998) and *Bamboozled* (Spike Lee, 2000).
[266] Figgis, *Digital Film-Making*, 23.
[267] Enticknap, *Moving Image Technology*, 223.

> the filmmaking process. Consequently, cinema can no longer be clearly distinguished from animation. It is no longer an indexical media technology but, rather, a subgenre of painting.[268]

This is the distinction between the automative character of film – its mechanistic recording of the subject – and the additive nature of digital media where there is the intervention of human agency in the construction of the final image. There is also the abstraction of the image into data, and this is also pre-figured by a number of image-making technologies which pre-date computer-based visual media, such as the Jaquard Loom, which was the first machine to utilise numerical instructions (in the form of punched cards) to generate patterns.[269] Photolithography, the practice of utilising grids of individual points to mass-reproduce photographic images, was central to the industrialisation of the image in the 19th century and marks the point where imagery was abstracted into data to facilitate reproduction and manipulation – which is central to the logic of digital imagery.[270]

It is this abstraction into data which has proven controversial in terms of the ontological nature of digital versus analogue film formats – the notion that the indexical link between subject and representation is broken by both the remediation of the unified image into a discrete stream of information, and that this is so amenable to manipulation. Manovich does note that this digital break is only one further step in the transformation of the image, which was initially effected by earlier pre-digital electronic technologies: "…in essence, television and radio signals are already new media. Put differently, in the progression from material object to electronic signal to computer media, the first shift is more radical than the second."[271] From this perspective, much of the concern which has been expressed regarding the so-called "death of cinema" – at least, as the end of celluloid – seems bound up with a notion of cinema as an institution and practice which has a uniqueness and intrinsic connection with a notion of photographic isomorphism,[272] from which follows its claims to realism. This narrow view of realism deifies one branch of image-making technologies, while simultaneously denigrating the ontological potential of electronic analogue and digital visual media, and the extent to which the ubiquitous

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[268] Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 295.
[269] Ibid, p.22
[270] Sean Cubitt, *The Practice of Light* (Cambridge: MIT, 2014), 89-90.
[271] Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 133.
[272] "Analog photography and film, in the end, are a technological singularity since they are the only representation systems that are fully transcoding-free and isomorphic with the originating image, as photographic images are transcribed and stored in a way that is intelligible for us without any kind of transcoding process", Fossati, p.18

presence of their products in our lives contributes to our everyday realities. Caldwell suggests that this attitude is something which has been fostered at least partly in film and media studies departments:

> Throughout the 1990s, scholars in the fields of visual arts and film studies in particular rushed to embrace digital and new-media forms in conferences and exhibitions as important parts of their changing disciplines. Yet a recurring pattern in such venues was the attempt to connect digital media with early protocinematic forms (in film studies) and early avant-garde and art-world forms (in the visual arts) that prefigured new media by as much as a century. As I have argued elsewhere, such scholars somehow managed (through ignorance or intention) to ignore the sixty to seventy years of television and broadcasting history that now seem to have assumed a much more central role in inflecting and defining new media than either film or art-world practices.[273]

It is certainly a (perhaps unavoidable) feature of much of the literature on so-called "new media" generated in the 1990s, that prophecies of the uniqueness of digital film and its potentials is combined with a lack of connective contextualisation with other pre-digital electronic media. While predicting a transformation in cinema, there is also often an unfortunate lack of contemporaneous examples to justify such claims. In this chapter, writing from a point where digital film practice has been embedded in the mainstream for over a decade, I provide some examples which will examine the extent to which digital is transforming feature filmmaking. I will do so, however, while comparing such transformations with previous stylistic and narrative developments which were effected by, and reflected the wider impact of, pre-digital technologies of the moving image.

Finally, one related aspect of the critical effort to nail down just what difference is made by the digital mediation of moving imagery in cinema, is that when approximating the general aesthetic appearance and strategies of fiction filmmaking there can often be no appreciable difference from a spectatorial point of view. While the digital shift has led to enormous economic changes in film production and distribution, from a film consumption perspective there has arguably been no perceptual break at all.[274] Thus, while spending some time looking at the changes digital technologies have enabled in film production, I will also examine some detectable trends in narrative content in digital features – chiefly,

[273] Caldwell, "Second-Shift Media Aesthetics" in Caldwell & Everett (eds.) pp.131-132

[274] There are some caveats to this. One example would be the resistance of audiences to digital presentations which depart from the "filmic" look of the standard 24fps of pre-digital cinema. The highest profile case of this would perhaps be Peter Jackson's experiment with *The Hobbit* – see, Laforet, Vincent, "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Masterclass in Why HFR Fails, and a reaffirmation of what makes cinema magical", http://blog.vincentlaforet.com/2012/12/19/the-hobbit-an-unexpected-masterclass-in-why-hfr-fails-and-a-reaffirmation-of-what-makes-cinema-magical/ - accessed 26/11/2018.

an attempt to engage with the wider issues introduced by the spread of digital technologies in societies. As I will illustrate, prior technologies of the image were a visible presence – their analogue materiality, including physical manifestations with which spectators could have direct interactions, encouraged filmic representations which foreground embodied presentations of these devices, apparatus and products. Digital, with its abstraction and immateriality, perhaps requires a subtler and more nuanced investigatory approach by filmmakers, in an attempt to uncover – and represent – their intervention in the total image economy.

Digital Aesthetics

It's important to note at this early stage that when we refer to "digital film" we are referring to a class of technologies which has undergone rapid change within the last quarter of a century – and that this technological change is inevitably reflected in the products of these technologies, i.e. the aesthetic qualities of feature films. Early digital cameras such as the aforementioned DCR-VX1000 had limited resolution and contrast when compared to 35mm film and produced an image which was appreciably different from standard film shot on celluloid. However, while the image could not approach the level of definition of 35mm, the technology had other benefits:

> I thought the new technology was something that would give a new vitality to the relationship between the director and actors – to the whole film-making process – by radically reducing the number of people who needed to be on the set. It also gave great physical freedom to the actors, because they no longer had to concentrate on hitting specific floor marks for the sake of focus – instead it was possible to follow them wherever they went and not worry about lighting, because one could shoot digital in very low light situations. On automatic, the cameras adapt very quickly, and – in my opinion, perfectly satisfactorily – to a change in low light conditions.[275]

So, the reduction in lighting – both in terms of production staff required and time to achieve optimal conditions – resulted, for Figgis and other early adopters of digital cameras, in a greater freedom in terms of the capture of performance. The lightweight nature of many of these digital cameras and attendant technologies also facilitated ease of movement, with many directors – including Figgis – choosing to operate it themselves. Early digital films such as *Tape* (Richard Linklater, 2001), *Festen* (Thomas Vinterberg, 1998) and *The Idiots*, exhibit highly mobile camerawork and a direct mode of address in which performance is captured in a series of intimate close-ups. Instead of traditional Hollywood narrative filmmaking conventions which utilise edits between a series of long-, medium- and close-up shots to navigate the spectator from character to character during conversations, the lightweight, light-tolerant digital camera moves within the overall space, quickly panning between bodies and tracking quickly into faces in moments of narrative significance and emotional intensity.

While this may seem at first to aspire to a strategy of realism, Laura Marks points out this approach accentuates the spectatorial cognisance of the presence of the camera –

[275] Figgis, pp.6-7

i.e. the film *as* film, as a constructed narrative work of art. In an argument we may initially think of as somewhat paradoxical, she maintains that this strategy actually functions as a return to what she refers to as *analogue firstness* – the direct experience we have with sense data from the surrounding world, which she contrasts with *digital thirdness*, an experience of the world which is mediated through technologies which have already extracted, categorised and are engaged in a representation of scenes and events.[276] This is an approach which utilises some of the aspects of digital visual media, to work against some of the aspects of computer technology which are controversial for those who regard their intervention into narrative storytelling as somehow dehumanising.[277] Other critics, such as Rombes, have also identified this approach in early digital cinema as possessing a distinctly humanist bent.[278] However, as I have identified in chapter 1 of this study, the introduction of the mobile camera in narrative cinema was already a feature of post-World War II film – it was realised by advances in 16mm camera technology, and audience tolerance of such a handheld aesthetic was abetted by wartime propaganda footage.[279] Fossati notes that "aesthetic motivations are very much intertwined with economic ones. From this perspective, the choice of digital made today by Dogme 95 filmmakers and Linklater are not very different from the choice made by Nouvelle Vague filmmakers..."[280] So, while it may be the case that technology-specific characteristics such as low-light shooting has led to stylistic avenues in digital filmmaking, we need to be careful when discussing aspects such as the mobile camera as something unique to digital.

Much of the aesthetic characteristics noted above are at least partially unique to early digital filmmaking – the period when cameras such as the DCR-VX1000 and PD-150 were used. We can refer to this as the "first wave of digital cinema", but this movement has been superseded by a second wave of films whose 'look' more closely resembles what audiences have become accustomed to from 35mm film. Rombes identifies *Bubble* (Steven Soderbergh, 2005) – shot using the CineAlta HDC-F950 – as a film that "looks markedly different – and more 'film like' – than earlier digital features from the Dogme 95 movement that had a pixilated, rough, hand-held aesthetic. Ironically, *Bubble* looks so

[276] Marks, *Touch*, 154-155.
[277] Such as the (over)use of CGI effects in the modern Hollywood blockbuster.
[278] I will expand on Rombes thoughts on this later in this chapter, in the discussion of the representation of identity.
[279] Rombes also notes the similarity between the digital filmmaking aesthetic of the Dogme95 movement and the productions of the US military in the 2nd Iraq War – Rombes, *Cinema in the Digital Age,* 60.
[280] Giovanna Fossati, *From Grain to Pixel* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 53.

'good' that it almost appears to have been shot on 35mm film, although Soderbergh suggests that he was not trying to replicate the look of film…"[281] While this technical advance has somewhat undercut the arguments of early digital film critics that the format could never replace celluloid, because it could never look as "good", it has instead opened up another line of attack where digital video is attacked for aspiring to "masquerade" as something which it is not. Indeed, some practitioners – such as Mike Figgis – have attacked filmmakers working with the latest digital video formats for negating the above-mentioned felicity of video in low-lighting, by over-lighting scenes in an attempt to approximate the "look" of film: "Among certain professionals there is a stated assumption that in order for video to look good – and by 'good', they mean 'as close to film as possible' – you have to use a lot of light. I find this bizarre, because video is *not* film. And this addiction to a 1930s look is an anachronism which needs to be abandoned."[282] While this tendency is understandable in terms of the industry's wariness in acceding to a perceived audience conservativism, it also reflects the inevitable and above-mentioned tendency for all new audio-visual technologies to define themselves in relation to established practices.

I will end this discussion on the aesthetics of digital video, by identifying a couple of directions in which digital era filmmaking does seem to be exploiting the capacities of the technology in ways which hold some potential to modify the standard conventions of mainstream narrative filmmaking, before exploring these notions directly in some film examples. These tendencies are related, and both involve the notion of time – particularly the representation of narrative temporality in cinema. Digital video as a viable format for both broadcast-quality television and as a medium acceptable for theatrical exhibition emerged at roughly the same time as the world-wide popularity and utilisation of the World Wide Web (WWW). As such, as a term, "digital" has become inextricably wedded to notions of real-time transmission of information. This notion has bled over into the associations we have with the digital moving image. I have already established the essential characteristic of a perceived "liveness" in analogue video technologies such as surveillance video and broadcast television. This has been inherited and remediated in new digital media products. As previously discussed in relation to the early development of radar, Manovich marks this point as the establishment of the "screen of real time", and

[281] Rombes, *Cinema in the Digital Age*, 137.
[282] Figgis, *Digital Film-Making*, 67.

includes live video, including the representation of real-time changes within a computer's memory.[283] Developments in television news – such as live 24-hour news channels and the practice of incorporating "ticker tape"-style text overlays – give the spectator an impression of simultaneity of content with transmission and reception. Live updates and instant access to information on the internet provoke the same sense of telepresence - a term which encapsulates the archetypal news anchor's phrase, "we now take you live to the scene" - and which seems to operate regardless of whether the images are "live" or not. Williams suggests a key difference in the nature of the "liveness" of pre- and post-digital technologies: the former often "leans upon" the past, in terms of the transmission of *pre-recorded* imagery; the situation today is characterised by a media which "leans up against" the future – as media responds and provokes our desires to anticipation for *future* content, which is provided to us "on demand".[284]

Allied to this focus on the present moment is the capacity for digital technologies to preserve and simultaneously deliver a multitude of different perspectives with greater felicity than previous media. The enormous storage capabilities of digital media enabled by the various mechanical and solid-state memory devices of our age allows us to both abandon selectivity when recording and more easily locate, recall and edit (i.e. make, or manufacture, sense of) the raw imagery. This is as true of mainstream filmmaking as it is of domestic photography. Given that the number of takes is now limited only by the endurance of actors, the importance of editing (and the editorial staff) is pushed ever further to the forefront of the filmmaking process. When it comes to representing individual scenes, a number of digital films have increasingly resisted the substitutive logic of traditional editing patterns and adopted the windowed look of the computer desktop – presenting multiple screens which compete for spectatorial attention. This is a shift from traditional montage to continuity within a single shot.[285] It is an approach which retains the hidden, dead time which can be explained away in montage and aspires instead to the perpetually-present moment. That such an approach can now be fairly commonly encountered in mainstream cinema indicates both a confidence in and acceptance of what

[283] Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 99.
[284] Mark Williams, "Real-Time Fairy Tales," in *New Media* eds. Anna Everett & John T. Caldwell (New York: Routledge, 2003), 163.
[285] Again, the "newness" of such an approach should be viewed with caution. I have referred previously to some pre-digital examples of the mise-en-abyme in cinema. Also, Manovich identifies several example of this in early cinema – Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 148.

Bolter and Grusin refer to as the "remediated self" of the contemporary spectator.[286] That is, a spectator whose frustrated desire for immediacy has been thwarted by the inadequacies of previous generations of audio-visual media, and who is now acclimatising to a hypermediated existence, where multiple devices and windows constantly compete for their attention.

[286] Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, 230.

Part 1 – Narrative Incorporation

I will now focus on one particularly dense implementation of digital video in a mainstream, theatrically-distributed feature film, to discuss the ways in which the incorporation of some aspects of the medium transforms the delivery of narrative information, in comparison to the standard methods of – particularly – conventional Hollywood fiction filmmaking. While Nacho Vigalondo's 2014 film *Open Windows* may exist at the extreme end of this kind of utilisation of technology, the fact that the film is a mainstream release and exists comfortably within an existing, well-established cinematic genre, opens it up as a viable object of study for the ways in which standard fiction features can and do respond to the opportunities afforded by new digital video technologies. I will concentrate on a close analysis of several scenes in the film to elucidate the ways in which techniques such as the incorporation of multiple windows, exploitation of potential audience experience with the standard uses of digital video devices and an attempt to use them to leverage notions of the immediacy and "real-time" nature of digital video, impact on the delivery of narrative.

Once I have completed an analysis of the film I will compare the ways in which it utilises aspects of digital video to my previous examples with pre-digital non-cinematic moving-image technologies in previous chapters. Doing so will provide clarity over the extent to which digital video can be used to deliver and transform narrative in feature film in ways which are either unique to the medium, or to varying extents extensions of what has been achieved using pre-digital media by other filmmakers and films.

Open Windows (Nacho Vigalondo, 2014)

In this film Vigalondo utilises the narrative framework of a relatively mainstream subgenre – the techno-conspiracy thriller[287] – as a base for an innovative formal approach to storytelling which utilises some of the inherent characteristics, and audience associations with, digital media. The plot is relatively simple. Nick, the webmaster of an obscure fan site, is invited to attend a promo event for actress Jill Goddard's latest film. Awaiting a scheduled dinner-date/interview, he watches the event on his laptop from a hotel room when he is contacted by someone who – while initially professing to be a member of the film's PR team – gradually reveals himself to be a cyber terrorist with a hidden agenda which involves Jill. Increasingly trapped by the machinations of the terrorist's plot, Nick – aided only by the random intervention of a rival hacking group – must strive to extricate himself from danger, and perhaps save Jill from whatever fate is being arranged for her.

This is a fairly standard, though satisfying "twisty", example of the kind of techno-conspiracy thriller widely released in the past couple of decades – examples would include, *Minority Report* (2002), *Enemy of the State* (1998), *Conspiracy Theory* (1997) and *Cypher* (2002). Where the film departs from these examples is in the formal conveyance of narrative. These films – while often utilising screens within the mise-en-scène, in the form of various surveillance technologies – deliver narrative information with an adherence to standard Hollywood filmmaking conventions. *Open Windows*, on the other hand, utilises a single screen – Nick's laptop – to which the "film" defers.[288] While the spectator's gaze is directed within this frame – the camera pans and tracks between various segments, windows and applications on the laptop screen (or 'desktop') – the film never leaves its confines. While *Open Windows* is not the first film to use this conceit[289], it – along with the contemporaneous *Unfriended* (also 2014) – is among the first mainstream theatrical releases to utilise such an approach. Given that the film is at heart at fairly conventional thriller, it has to work hard to maintain this approach, given that it contains dramatic action

[287] While this subgenre has – perhaps inevitably, given the rapid evolution of digital media – seen something of a renaissance in the current era, its base characteristics (questions of identity, a dystopian attitude to technology, a relentlessly paranoiac bent) have been present in other pre-digital era films in this study, such as *Videodrome* and *The Truman Show*. Arguably – as Sconce illustrates – it even exists in embryonic form in thrillers set in the radio (*Death at Broadcasting House (1934)*) and early-television eras (*Murder by Television (1935)*). See Sconce, *Haunted Media*, 128.

[288] I'm using the term 'deferral' as outlined in my introduction.

[289] There are a number of low-budget and/or independent films which have exploited this narrative conceit of webcams for large parts of their running time. One of the earliest is *The Collingswood Story* (2002).

which unfolds across various locations in the city in which the film is set – including an extended car chase sequence. The film is locked into the view of the protagonist Nick, as this is technologically realised through his 'window on the world', his laptop computer, but must also account for and depict the actions of the antagonist, operating at a distance for much of the film. The film must also track the movements of Jill – the 'damsel in distress' figure – and various other secondary characters. And, perhaps, most perilously for the film's continuity, Vigalondo chooses to attempt all of this narrative choreography in real time.

Before attempting all of this, however, the film does begin with a scene in the traditional Hollywood style. A science-fiction plot is sketchily drawn as a group of people trapped in an abandoned bowling alley are shown under siege from an army of zombie-like assailants. Battling through the wave of "zombies" a young couple seek a place to hide and, as they embrace, the film encounters a number of freeze-frames, particularly when the female character is on screen – the screen pauses and a camera shutter sound effect is heard, the image briefly brightening, as if under a flash. As this sequence draws to a close, Vigalondo's virtual camera draws back to reveal that this scene is streaming from a browser window, the official site for the fictional film, "Dark Sky".

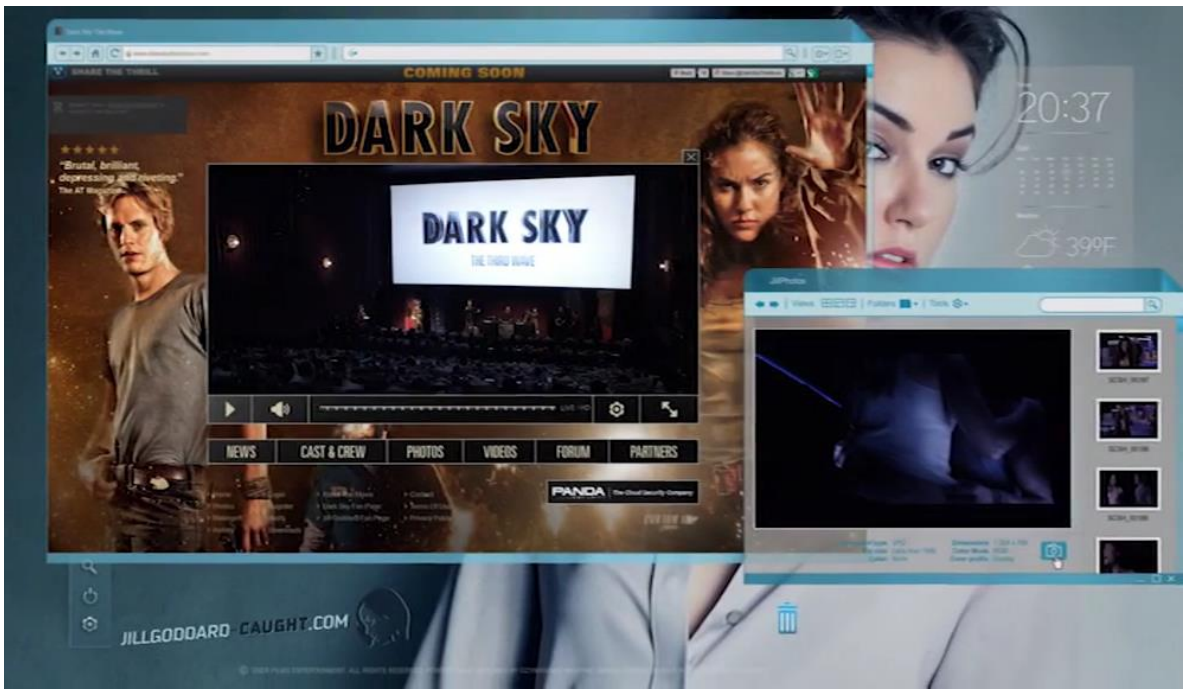

Figure 65: Nick's "window on the world"

As the camera tracks back to a view of the full desktop we see that the window on the right of the screen is of a capture tool and the images therein explain the freeze-frames experienced within this sequence – Nick has been taking snapshots of the promo film. The desktop "wallpaper" in the background has an image of the film's star, Jill Goddard and the text in the bottom left of this image identifies his fansite URL: the somewhat creepily-titled, "JILLGODDARD-CAUGHT.COM". A widget on the top-right of the screen indicates the time – whilst this is not heavily featured in the overall film, occasional glimpses reinforce the real-time conceit. At [5:20], as the streaming video shows a panel discussion involving cast and crew, the on-screen mouse pointer moves over to the capture tool and the user begins flicking through the images which he has taken from the video stream. At this point Vigalondo's virtual camera also tracks across the desktop to the capture tool window, to the extent that the "Dark Sky" website and video stream are partially off-screen. This camera movement allies the spectator's gaze with the notional laptop user and also acts as a directorial instruction to him that the capture tool now contains narratively important information, while the video stream – which maintains an audio presence – is momentarily diminished in this regard. That the images are solely of Jill and that the last one is of her naked back indicates that the user has an obsessive and potentially prurient interest in her.

When a pop-up message reading "Chamber, Nick – You've got new mail!" appears [5:35], the camera tracks across to it, zooming in to the exclusion of the other desktop applications and windows. This action both simulates the user's POV in a physical, embodied way – the movement of head and eyes, the application of focus – and mediates the information delivered in a way which is cognisant of potential reception situations, i.e. the text must be readable on a small screen, such as an average domestic television or a mobile device. Now that the user has been given a name, the following scene gives him a face and further enriches the dimensionality of the flat, 2D plane the film otherwise restricts itself to. At [5:55], as Nick clicks a link on an email invitation, a pop up window provides a cantilevered view of someone's back, as they are hunched over a desk in a hotel room. As Nick turns and looks directly at them, the spectator makes the connection that this is our protagonist Nick, and that these are the eyes through which we have been viewing the events of *Open Windows* through the film thus far.

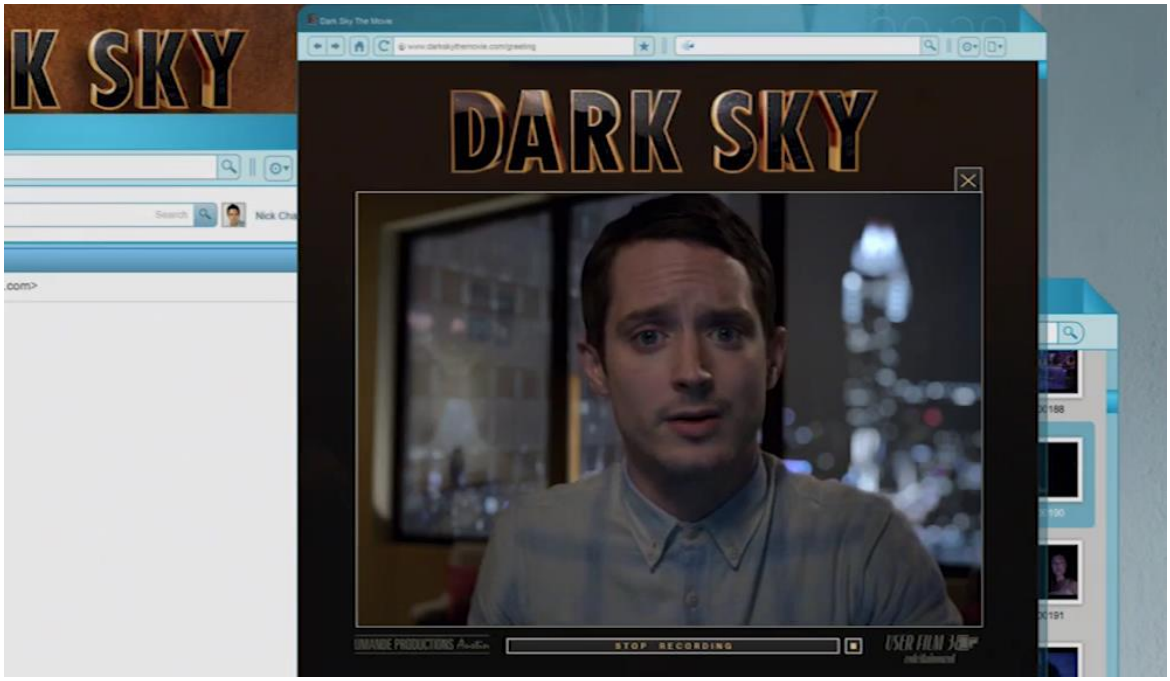

Figure 66: Spectator->Nick->desktop->window->camera->Nick

Nick retrieves the device from the bed and we realise that it is some kind of camera as he places it on a tripod next to the desk. He then sits down and records a "greeting video" as instructed by the email he has received. This sequence complicates and enriches the diegetic space of this scene, as we are now provided with a sense of the three dimensions of the environment in which Nick is situated. Where, previously, we were only conscious of the flat plane of the screen and were oblivious to its existence as part of a physical object in an actual space, we now gain a sense of its existence in an actual mise-en-scène, despite one which is still highly mediated and restricted through the desktop. As Nick records his greeting, there is a significant directorial intervention as he moves the laptop from a central position on the desk, to one where the device is on his right hand side, between him and the camera. It could be argued that this is a natural movement which allows Nick to refer quickly down to the questions on the invitation email while recording, but it also aligns his eye movement with the movement of the virtual camera in this sequence. As Nick looks down and to the left (his right) the camera performs the same movement across the desktop to focus tightly on the text of the email in the bottom left of the screen. As the film maintains the conceit that we are embodying Nick's POV, this is a significant attempt to retain this even while it is complicated by the fact that Nick – one version, or view, of Nick – is now on the other side of the screen. This is an attempt to

perform the same narrative function as conventional Hollywood editing and shooting techniques designed to operate as a suture in dialogue scenes – in this case modified significantly for a situation where we simultaneously embody a character's POV, while looking straight at him.[290] Carefully replicating the camera movement with Nick's eye movement triggers the operation of suture in the spectator, stitching together the desktop view and the implied three-dimensional space the character is depicted as inhabiting.

As Nick continues to watch the stream of the panel discussion he receives a video call from Chord, the antagonist, who initially pretends to be a member of the film's PR staff. He quickly exhibits a great facility with technology as he induces Nick to click links which provide hacked images from the event security cameras [11:04] and, subsequently, Jill's phone [12:05]. As Jill leaves the event and makes a call to her agent, Chord switches the view of the phone to the rear camera, thus providing the spectator and Nick with an approximation of her POV as she leaves the theatre, once again providing the spectator with a three-dimensional sense of embodied presence in a space depicted previously through the fairly static two-dimensional presentation of the panel discussion, as provided by the official Dark Sky website.

[290] See Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 111-113. Discussing Oudart's concept of cinematic suture, he argues that the spectator is already minded to construct the off-screen space by the way that the shot is framed and pre-existing or learned hypotheses and schematas. In this case, the film may rely on spectatorial extra-diegetic knowledge of webcams, computer desktops, etc.

Figure 67: Jill leaves the Dark Sky promo event

This is the first instance in the film where there is significant camera movement, with the minor exception of Nick's transfer of the video camera to the tripod. The covert nature of the imagery is reinforced with the off-angle and undirected nature of it – the phone, held up by Jill to her left ear, casually captures the theatre hoarding and the close presence of what is presumably some sort of studio employee: someone who is tasked with preventing unwanted approaches, but is completely oblivious to the close proximity of observers in this instance. This sequence also accentuates the way in which Vigalondo's strategy of unifying all events, regardless of distance, on the desktop, facilitates his insistence on doing so in real-time, without what Manovich refers to as "substituitive" editing, the construction of narrative by the replacement of images with others through montage on the single "dynamic" screen.[291] This "dynamic" screen – with its representation of reality as sequences of constant change, both temporally and spatially – is replaced with the "screen of real-time", where montage is "within the shot". In *Open Windows* as in other digital era films such as *Timecode* (Mike Figgis, 2000), montage is replaced with direction which guides the spectator between competing frames – in the latter through fluctuations in the sound mix which concentrate narrative information in one of four ever-present windows. Thus, in the scene in which Jill leaves the theatre, both the sound and the virtual camera initially direct the spectator to focus on her conversation with her agent, before Chord's

[291] Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 143.

intervention directs both image and audio focus back to Nick and his dialogue with Chord. Instead of sequentially depicting Nick's bewilderment at the situation, Chord's machinations and Jill's movement through the film's extended diegetic space, the film retains all three narrative threads – running concurrently, as a single computer executes multiple processing threads in parallel – and the director switches back and forth between them as the delivery of narrative demands.

The depiction of movement and action challenges this approach and Vigalondo's success in melding his restrictive desktop conceit with the traditional demands of the thriller genre is both impressive and, ultimately, compromised. While Nick is sat in his hotel room, the idea that the spectator's POV can be comfortably restricted to his view of windows on a laptop can be accommodated. However, from [28:20] Nick is on the move, guided remotely by Chord as he leaves the hotel room and moves to a rental car in the hotel basement. He then spends most of the remaining film travelling across the city, often involved in high-speed pursuits with Chord and the city's police department.[292] This necessitates the employment of a dash-cam, which extends Nick's POV out into the world in a way which recalls Sobchack's reformulation of Donna Haraway's theories on cyber-humanism and McLuhan's notion of media as extensions of the human body.[293] As I discussed in chapter 3, Benson-Allott sees *Videodrome* as a film which allies its technological focus closer to Sobchack's notion of embodied technologies as devices which allow us to "see technologically", rather than devices which we utilise to extend or enhance our everyday human senses. In that film, the various video technologies mutate and transform Renn's body in ways which do not result in a modification of spectatorial POV with him – we still experience the film as a series of events which are filtered directly through Renn's body. In *Open Windows*, the dash-cam and various other camera technologies are aligned closer to Haraway and McLuhan's notion of technologies of seeing which are "bolted-on" to Nick's visual sense: they enhance his ability to see, in ways which are narratively driven by both the demands of genre and self-imposed directorial choices. There must be action; Nick must be involved in it, and the spectator must somehow share his experience of it. This demand ensures that Nick must carry his laptop from the hotel room into the car – "Don't shut it you idiot!", screams Chord [28:20], as Nick almost inadvertently brings the film to a premature end. Nick's POV is highly

[292] From [31:00-1:15:00].
[293] Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts*.

mediated by the various technologies the film uses to depict his interaction with, and experience of, the world.

The increased movement demanded by the film's plot at this mid-way point – Jill goes to her apartment and is pursued by Chord, Nick escapes the hotel, where he has incapacitated her agent – demands greater coverage, a cartographic representation of the film's diegetic space which the spectator can refer to in order to track the position of each of the film's participants, while otherwise restricted to the many video images of cameras which present character POV or fixed-position surveillance. The film accomplishes this by introducing "Triops", a trio of hackers who have broken into Chord's systems – ultimately opening a secure video-call to Nick's laptop - in the mistaken belief that he is fabled uber-hacker, "Nevada".

Figure 68: The desktop struggle to contain character movement

Deciding not to disabuse them of this belief, Nick utilises the team's technical capabilities to track down both Jill and Chord, which they guide him to with the use of a real-time GPS representation of the city's traffic system, which they open in a window on his laptop. This functions both as a narrative device which explains how Nick can attempt to extricate himself from the situation Chord has placed him in – effectively a decoy for Jill's kidnap – and a visual representation which replaces the coverage generally demanded of action

sequences such as the car chase. Otherwise restricted to the dash-cam footage which is displayed on Nick's desktop, the GPS window is employed to illustrate police cars (depicted as flashing blue lights) converging on and engaging with Nick's rental car, and – subsequently – the car Chord uses to escape with Jill to his hideout. This videogame-style overhead viewpoint works – alongside both off-screen audio and windowed webcam imagery of the Triops team – to build tension and accentuate the excitement of the scenes where Nick races alternately to escape the police and hunt down Chord, in ways which would be compromised or dulled by the restriction of the film purely to his single POV. Even with these tools available, Vigalondo increasingly abandons the depiction of multiple windows within the frame to – for example – pan quickly from zoomed-in full-screen windows of the view from the dash-cam and the Triops team, which is a tacit admission of the inability of his restrictive visual scheme, and a retreat to standard cinematic montage, in handling action scenes.

Ultimately, the film's approach works best in quieter moments which accentuate the novelty of multiple real-time perspectives on a single scene. At [39:05], Nick watches from the laptop in his car as Chord opens a live feed from a head-mounted camera he is wearing, which shows him seated in a dark room. Another window shows the view from Jill's webcam in her apartment. Chord threatens to hurt Jill if Nick does not open an attachment which will send Jill images of the torture of her agent and underlines this threat by rising from the desk, taking a log from a nearby woodpile and throwing it into the next room.

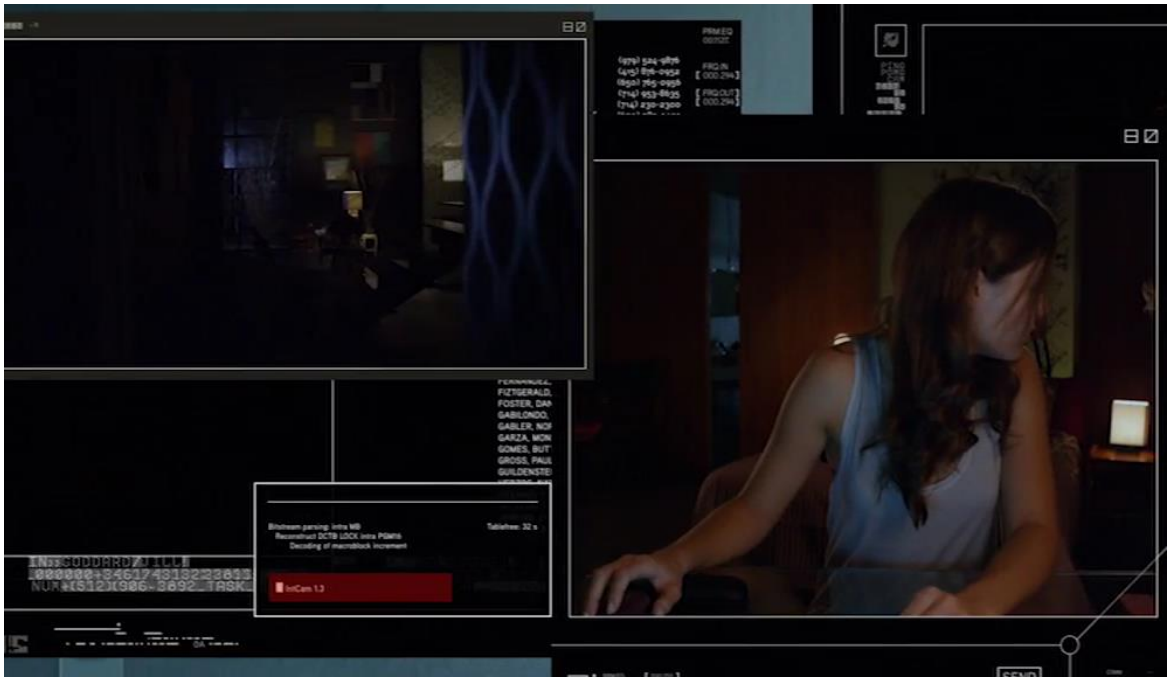

Figure 69: Chord throws an object from one window to another

This moment is preceded by an establishing shot of the complete desktop, with Chord in the upper left, Jill in the centre and Nick in the bottom right. When Chord throws the log into the room, Jill immediately turns her head at a noise and both the spectator and Nick are jolted by the realisation that Chord and Jill's windows are not just spatially aligned on the desktop but are different perspectives on the same diegetic space. The moment also highlights the spatial isolation of Nick, who is located next to Jill on the desktop but is – at this point – unaware of where she is in the city. Chord appears to throw an object out of one window, directly into another, and – in doing so – shatters the boundaries of the frame. Unlike traditional substitutive montage in traditional cinema, the moment happens in multiple perspectives simultaneously. The sudden movement of Jill's head is less a *reaction to* an event than a seamless part of a single unified event which occurs from multiple points of view, as is Nick's response of frustrated impotence.[294] Cleverly, almost immediately following this sequence, Vigalondo subverts the real-time nature of the film, by presenting a police raid on Jill's house where they utilise (and Triops feed to Nick's laptop) security camera images. Closing in on the room where Chord sits at table, they are

[294] The film has many similarities with *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954), but this moment is where it gets close to all-out homage.

astonished to find it empty, as he has substituted the camera feed with time-delayed pre-recorded footage.

Digital and pre-Digital - The Delivery of Narrative

Open Windows utilises digital video to construct a conventional narrative, which itself conforms to the narrative form of an established genre – the techno-conspiracy thriller. The means by which crucial plot points are relayed, however, are reliant on some unique aspects of digital technologies. Unlike – to take an example - film noir, the spectator is not just encouraged to solve the mystery through the medium of their identification with a protagonist, but is targeted directly by the technological means through which story information is delivered. In *Open Windows*, the spectator has parity of vision with Nick, sharing the exact same measure of visibility of the events the film depicts, solely relayed through the desktop window. When it is revealed that Nick, in fact, is "Nevada" and has been playing a role throughout the film, we do not feel hoodwinked. There has been no unreliable narration. Instead of receiving narrative information through the eyes of an unreliable witness, we have been presented with the bare facts of the case.[295] There is no subjectivity in the medium of digital video as incorporated into *Open Windows*. When Chord mistakenly believes that he has killed "Nevada", the truth only requires that the video evidence be allowed to play out long enough to reveal the movements of his still-breathing body.

It is telling that the two moments of narrative misdirection in the film rely on the replay of time-delayed digital video imagery: the aforementioned incident where Chord leads the police to the abandoned apartment, and a moment towards the end of the film where "Nevada" leads Chord out of the hideout to check on Nick's crashed car, subsequently revealing the live feed as a recording and unmasking himself as the mysterious hacker. The ubiquity of "live" digital video applications, such as web streaming, video-conferencing and surveillance may tend to squeeze out our associations between digital video and storage media – its potential materiality, even as merely an assembly of data on a magnetic disc. Also, despite the nervousness with which the ease of manipulation of digital video is viewed by academics concerned with questions of indexicality, in *Open Windows* the spectator is misdirected solely by context – the stored image masquerades as "live", it is not changed in any way. In this way, the use of digital video in narrative terms is really no different from the reference to small-gauge film

[295] With some directorial guidance, as I have shown above – primarily to conform to genre demands.

technology at the beginning of *Peeping Tom*, where the smash-cut from the killing of the prostitute to Mark's private screening room shifts the temporal mode of the footage from present to past. Where the ease with which digital video can be captured and manipulated is referenced is in the relative temporal displacement of moving imagery in both films. As I have shown, *Peeping Tom* dramatises the material processes and labour involved in recording, developing and replaying 8mm film footage, necessitating a significant chronological gap between capture and display, which instils a tension in both Mark's scopohilic character and the narrative of the film itself. In *Open Windows*, the simplistic technological means through which the same process can be achieved allows Vigalondo to bypass such depictions of the effort required in the temporal displacement of imagery, allowing this to function as audience misdirection and narrative drive.

In storage-based media, temporality is implicit in the image. In analogue storage-based media, degradation of the image ages it in ways which provokes the spectator to utilise extra-textual knowledge of these media and their attendant material enabling technologies and practices. As I have pointed out in my discussion of *Family Viewing*, it is the rolling imagery, static and picture breakup which accompanies the scene transitions in Stan's home movies, which allows the spectator to make the cognitive inference as to their relative temporal position in the film's plot. The clean, one-to-one correspondence of the digital copy and the imperceptibility of the edit, supresses this capacity in *Open Windows*, which allows both Chord and "Nevada" to perform temporal slights-of-hand as they seek to bamboozle each other, the police force – and, crucially, for Vigalondo to do the same with the spectator.

Digital video is still an emerging medium and the ways in which it is utilised in the total image economy are evolving – from the wholesale simulation of existing, long-established media forms such as the feature-length 35mm-based work of cinema to the brief snippets of amateur video on platforms such as YouTube and social media outlets. While a film such as *The Truman Show* can utilise the technologies and practices of television to both critique the overall ideology of "Reality TV" and broadcast television in general, this is partly a result of a cinema audience which is well-versed in the media products and conventions it incorporates to do so. Both *Open Windows* and *The Truman Show* begin with a sequence which simulates the conventions of promotional material for a media product which exists within the diegesis – the "Dark Sky" film and "The Truman Show" television programme, respectively. While *The Truman Show* defers and delays the

primary narrative while this material is shown – as I have previously pointed out, in a manner of an existing media form, the EPK – the "Dark Sky" event itself is surrounded by a large amount of tertiary promotional media, which is *in construction* as the primary narrative unfolds. Nick is a member of the large group of non-professionals co-opted to help promote works of media, including cinema, in the digital age. His capture of screen shots for his amateur website and the video greeting he records are all part of the far-reaching, fluid and rapid feedback loop between producers, so-called amateur "content creators" or "influencers", and audience in the digital age. That *Open Windows* should be constructed in such a way necessarily reflects the increasing complexity in these kinds of relationships between a media work and its audience. Whether such a multiplication of perspective is now almost implicitly necessitated by any attempt at cinematic reflexivity is a question I will address in my conclusion.

Excess, Editing and Parallel Narratives in Digital Era 'Puzzle Films'

As I briefly noted in the introduction to this chapter, digital technologies have intervened in, and transformed, several phases of the filmmaking process and one of the ways in which these technologies has had a major impact is in the editing of feature films. Prior to the introduction of digital technologies, analogue video was utilised as an intermediate format for editing purposes - for reasons of economy and to avoid damaging the original elements. Once digital video had developed to the point where it became feasible and cost-effective to transfer moving imagery from film to computer storage, this practice was merely extended. Indeed, by 1995 more films were edited in this way than traditional "mechanical" editing procedures.[296] When digital cameras became viable as a production format at the end of the decade, the vastly superior economy of digital tapes and other storage formats meant that the kind of selectivity which needed to be exercised on set – due to the expensive nature of celluloid – was almost completely eradicated. That various digital tools are available to record and track recorded footage with metadata, which assigns scene and shot information, means that an enormous weight of what used to be referred to as "footage" can be assigned to an editor on a daily basis. This is especially compounded by the felicity with which shots that may have previously been discarded due to bad lighting or continuity errors can be corrected via digital post-production.

There is some evidence that the role of the editor is becoming more pronounced in feature filmmaking, perhaps as a direct result of changes in filmmaking technology.[297] Mike Figgis, one of the earliest mainstream filmmakers to adopt digital video makes the point:

> It used to be that you'd often see the credit 'Writer-Director', but hardly ever 'Director-Editor'. It's much more common now. A lot of film-makers have come up through editing … Most of the young directors that I've met are totally familiar with things like Final Cut Pro or Avid and have cut together their own films. And now with film students, it would be very rare – though it still taught in some film schools – to be taught to cut on a Steenbeck flatbed editing table. Pretty much

[296] Fossati, *From Grain to Pixel*, 38.

[297] This is especially the case when the editing process engages with the kind of image "layering" enabled by digital technologies. See, Stephen Keane, *CineTech: Film, Convergence and New Media* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), 40.

> everyone has their laptop and some form of editing system software, and they do their own.[298]

He also states that, in his opinion, one result of utilising digital video as a production format may be "… a different way of crewing. In digital film-making I would say the function of the editor should be to be onboard from day one of the shoot. The editor should be the person on set – or the editor's assistant, certainly someone from the editing department – who makes sure that the footage is being issued and catalogued in a way that they understand."[299] One further aspect of this is whether the relative shift of selectivity in the film process from filming to editing encourages those who are involved in the construction of plot and narrative to construct stories which can be more easily realised due to these technological changes. Rombes hints at this:

> The ability to move or to drag frames – literally to shift data from one database to another – has a profound impact not only on the way movies are made, but on the way they are experienced. Recombinant films of the digital era, such as *Go, Run Lola Run*, *Memento*, *Inland Empire* … are the direct result of thinking made possible by digital technologies. Of course, films of this type – such as Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (directed with Alexander Hammid) and *At Land* – existed in the pre-digital era, where they were often considered as avant-garde, as gestures made to subvert or defy dominant modes of cinematic storytelling. But today, it is the avant-garde itself which has been frame-dragged into the bright, eternal light of the mainstream.[300]

These modern "recombinant films" are those which constantly rearrange, replay and modify scenes and play with the temporal order of narrative. However, Rombes – while recognising that such instances are present in pre-digital films – provides a number of examples which are not actually "digital films", but "films of the digital era".[301] This term is used by a number of critics and theorists to refer to generalised aspects of modern film (often films from the new millennium), which recognises the influence of digital technologies and associated practices, whilst sidestepping the thorny implications of whether or not the film itself originates on a digital format.[302] One of these aspects could be the influence of non-linear editing practice as it has emerged in analogue video intermediate editing and accelerated in utilisation of digital storage.

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[298] Figgis, *Digital Film-Making*, 118.
[299] Ibid, p.113.
[300] Rombes, *Cinema in the Digital Age*, 36.
[301] Of his examples, only *Inland Empire* was shot on digital video. In fact, Christopher Nolan – director of *Memento* - has been an outspoken critic of digital video.
[302] For example, Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second*.

If we broaden Rombes' conception of "recombinant films" and examine a number of films which not only play with temporal ordering, but – in general – construct narrative in a way which is complex and provokes spectatorial involvement in "solving" conundrums, I feel that we have a broader range of modern films which do exhibit a level of narrative experimentation in mainstream fiction filmmaking, which betrays some influence in changes to the editing process. This category or tendency in modern cinema is often referred to as the "puzzle film".[303] These are films which often have a twist – either at the end or during the film, in which events, characters or situations are often revisited and their prior meanings subverted. They often play with temporal ordering or have an explicit time-travel theme. They explicitly involve an audience in a game which has at its end result an arrival at a solution which directly impacts on the epistemological nature of the overall film – what did these events mean? Could the presentation of certain events or the statements and actions of characters be believed? This mode of storytelling has obvious origins in a number of allegorical tales, experimental fiction (such as Jose Luis Borges) and paranoiac science fiction (particularly the work of Phillip K. Dick). Similarly in cinema, there have been antecedents in a number of films made in the years prior to the digital era.[304] However, I would argue that the number of films which fit into this category has increased markedly in the years following the critical and commercial success of *The Sixth Sense* (M. Night Shyamalan, 1999), which popularised the trend for the inclusion of final-reel twists in mainstream films.[305]

What is common in a number of these films – including examples which Rombes cites, such as *Go*, *Run Lola Run*, and *Memento* – is the notion of repetition. Scenes and situations are constantly and obsessively replayed in ways which are either explicated by an explicit time-travel aspect, or subjectively within a character's own mind, as a representation of inner psychological processes. The modern-day ubiquity of such films, the persistence of these types of scenes and – in many cases – these films' popularity with

[303] This term seems to be in general use online and in film forums. As critics have noted, it may have originated with Norman Holland's 1964 article, where he used the term "puzzling movies" to apply to complex art-house cinema of the time such as *L'avventura* (Michaelangelo Antonioni, 1960), *8 ½* (Federico Fellini, 1963) and *The Seventh Seal* (Ingmar Bergman, 1957). See Miklos Kiss and Steven Willemsen, *Puzzle Films* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 19.

[304] The "old, dark house" dramas of the 30s, paranoid film-noir of the post-WWII years and the aforementioned conspiracy thrillers of the 1970s, all share some of these characteristics on occasion.

[305] While a list of such films is out of scope for the present study, there are innumerable lists on IMDB.com and other films sites listing such films. Common films include *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004), *Primer* (2004), *The Matrix* (1999), *Source Code* (2011), *Inception* (2010), *Moon* (2009), *Donnie Darko* (2001) and *Shutter Island* (2010).

audiences would seem to indicate something at play in the wider culture which calls for such a narrative approach. Elsaesser suggests that this narrative shift may be prompted by the digital shift in filmmaking:

> "… 'new media' theorists have begun to rethink the logic of traditional narratives, arguing that the storytelling we know and are familiar with from Homer to Homer Simpson may itself be a historically specific and technology-dependent – and thus a doubly variable – way of storing information and of organising direct sensory as well as symbolic data. It would therefore be not altogether unreasonable to assume that new technologies of storage, retrieval, and sorting, such as the ones provided so readily and relatively cheaply by the computer or internet servers, will in due course engender and enable new forms of 'narrative,' which is to say, other ways of sequencing and 'linking' data than that of the story, centred on single characters, and with a beginning, a middle, and an ending.[306]

Whatever the truth of this, I would argue that this phenomenon is, at least partially, abetted and realised through the tools which have emerged with – in particular – the utilisation of digital editing methods in cinema. To take one example – *Triangle* (Christopher Smith, 2009) – the film is constructed around a narrative loop which continually finds the protagonist Jess, trapped on a deserted sea-liner with friends following the capsize of their yacht, experiencing the same events over and over again. While a mysterious assailant stalks and kills her companions, Jess survives - only to find the yachting crew, including another version of herself, boarding the liner as the cycle begins anew. This looping plot necessitates that the majority of the film would have represented a continuity nightmare for a film production crew, with a group of individuals moving through a complex network of corridors and halls increasingly filled with dead versions of their earlier selves and multiple copies of Jess.

[306] Thomas Elsaesser, "The Mind-Game Film," in *Puzzle Films* ed. Warren Buckland (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 22.

Figure 70: Jess v1 hides as Jess v2 and the crew explore the liner

While, as we would imagine to be common to these types of film, the core concept and narrative of *Triangle* was determined in advance of filming, Smith talks at length in the bluray disc commentary of the difficulties that were encountered during filmmaking to maintain the parallel threads of the looping narrative. He originally planned to stress the cyclical nature of events by filming each new group's early exploration of the liner by repeating shots and editing patterns, but ultimately found that such an approach was disrupted by the necessity to accommodate the intervention of the earlier versions of Jess in these scenes. He then goes on to explicitly state that this conundrum was resolved by experimentation – a process of trial and error - and that, out of this process, the film's editor – Stuart Gazzard – assembled several sequences which were not in the original script in order to reinforce continuity and narrative coherence.[307] This recalls Figgis' comments on the benefit of directly involving the editing team more closely in the daily production of digital features, as the technology facilitates a tighter feedback loop between raw footage and the decision making that will decide its viability and the efficacy of shooting decisions in realising the intentions of the director. It's feasible that the same result could have been arrived at using celluloid, mechanical editing and an approach to editing that worked at the traditional remove from the shooting process – but Smith's comments indicate that this would have been a vastly more time-consuming and difficult process. Returning again to Figgis, the extent to which filmmakers are cognisant of the potentials of new filmmaking technologies is often underestimated by film critics and theorists. It is difficult to accept

[307] *Triangle* bluray director's commentary [55:00].

that filmmakers who attempt formally and narratively experimental and complex stories in the medium of film, are not aware in advance of the potential of new digital technologies to make such an approach easier to achieve.

Part 2 – Format Specificity

Puzzle Films and the Representation of Digital Identities

I will now consider two more examples of recent digital films in what I have referred to the "puzzle film" subgenre. In looking at these films I will draw attention to ways in which their narrative content and formal stylistic effects are reflective of some of the aspects of digital technologies which have had wider cultural impact over the last decade. As I have argued throughout this study, films are not made in isolation, they are necessarily reflective of changes and trends in culture, society and politics. In addition, I have argued that cinema's utilisation of non-cinematic moving image technologies is similarly inflected by both their wider use in other fields and spectatorial extra-textual knowledge of these practices. While I have maintained throughout that all moving image technologies are in some respects interrelated – in the sense that they regularly develop out of a constant process of innovation which builds on advances in earlier and parallel generations of technological development – it is certainly the case that digital technologies have had a considerable impact on several spheres of modern life. The impact of digital communications and the internet has had a transformative effect on many aspects of society. The speed with which information can be disseminated and accessed has had many implications – good and bad – for our institutions, systems of government, commerce and the way that many of us live our lives. In cinema, much has been made of the impact that digital technologies have had on the distribution and exhibition of content – both in theatres and, increasingly, in the home. While outside the scope of this study, I note this briefly to make the general point that, while I have argued that, for example, analogue video has a heritage in earlier small-scale "amateur" film gauges, in the case of digital video and the wider uses of digital technologies in society, the term "revolutionary" does seem to have some validity.

At the time of writing, Facebook has 2.2 billion monthly active users, while twitter has 330 million and Instagram has 800 million.[308] Social media services such as these are one of the most visible and ubiquitous aspects of the adoption of digital platforms by the

[308] Figures taken from https://www.statista.com – accessed 04/12/2018.

general world populace. While these services have experienced massive user growth and popularity, and while their presence within societies and their stated goals[309] were initially seen as harmless, if not benign, this has in recent years begun to change.

Figure 71: Bad publicity for Facebook

Headlines such as the above[310] have abounded in recent times as a series of data privacy, political corruption and hacking scandals have impacted on the general view of social media services and the companies which operate them. While there has been a number of recent mainstream films which have explored the biographical details and inner operations of some of these organisations,[311] these have been accompanied by a minor explosion of horror films which have taken an extremely jaundiced view of the internet and social

[309] "Founded in 2004, Facebook's mission is to give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them." – Facebook mission statement, from https://investor.fb.com/resources/default.aspx - accessed 25/04/2018.

[310] Tim Collins, Matt Leclere, et al., "Facebook keeps creepy secret files on the intimate habits of internet users even if they DON'T have an account", *Mail Online*, March 1st 2018, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5448389/Facebook-personal-data-files-Australia-inquiry.html - accessed 04/12/2018.

[311] Including *The Social Network* (David Fincher, 2010), *Steve Jobs* (Danny Boyle, 2015) and various documentaries.

media.[312] Given that many of these pre-date the wave of scandals which have recently erupted, they seem to betray a deep-seated sense of caution regarding aspects inherent in the nature of social media and digital communications in general.

I will argue here that a number of recent films, in various genres, express anxiety about the way in which digital technology facilitates us in constructing separate identities which we utilise to communicate and otherwise interact with other people and organisations, and the ways in which this interaction can be subverted or otherwise escape our control. As previously noted above, one of the main advantages of digital information is its ability to be copied with 1:1 correspondence – and for this data to be instantaneously shared and disseminated across multiple platforms with great felicity. Rombes connects aspects of digital culture with digital era film:

> Digital culture is not only the culture of bits and fragments, but of continuity. A return to the long day, the long night. A desire so strong that we are creating an entire machinery to duplicate real time – a real time machine. We want a double-life for ourselves: our real life and our real life mirrored in real time. Like the detective who slowly realises she is investigating herself, we realise that we are finding ourselves behind every new digital technology, no matter how cold.[313]

Unlike previous pre-digital modes of expression, digital technologies simultaneously install a direct instantaneous feedback look between our "real self" and the selves we construct and publish on social media, and confer a measure of independence and autonomy to these selves, placing them and a variable measure of their interactions beyond our control.[314] This aspect of social media is reflected in a number of digital era films. These are films, like *Triangle*, which utilise what is a fairly long-established narrative trope – that of the double[315] – but connect the interactions between the self, the double and other characters, to contemporary anxieties about the way that our various constructed

[312] Including *Vlog* (2008), *Chatroom* (2010), *Unfriended* (2014), *The Den* (2013), *#Horror* (2015) and *Ratter* (2015).
[313] Rombes, *Cinema in the Digital Age*, 93.
[314] As a personal illustration, the author's linkedin profile, which describes a previous professional life before the undertaking of a PhD, is still out there hustling for work – and the author often receives phonecalls with job offers as a result.
[315] Examples in classic literature would include Dostoevsky's novel *The Double* (1846), Edgar Allan Poe's short story *William Wilson* (1839) and other examples which do not literally invoke the figure of the *doppleganger*, but instead pair character traits between antagonist and protagonist, as in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). There are, of course, innumerable examples in cinema, including adaptations of these stories.

online identities escape our control and reflect back on our "real life" in a threatening manner.[316]

In *+1* (Dennis Iliadis, 2013), teenage protagonist David spends the night at a neighbour's raucous house party, constantly trying to locate and patch up his relationship with former girlfriend, Jill. As the party continues and the large home fills up with drunken teens, a series of electrical pulses from the nearby impact of a meteorite triggers some sort of temporal break, which creates copies of each of the partygoers, who start arriving at the party just as the original guests move outside to continue partying at a nearby stage show. As events continue, David and his friends gradually realise what is occurring and try to intervene before the groups meet and panic breaks out. On the face of it, this is a film in the standard American teen sex comedy subgenre,[317] with tropes such as the outlandishly-debauched and conspicuously-expensive house party, peer pressure and the sexual politics of relationships between young adults. Even the insertion of a science-fiction element is something which the genre has seen before, in *Weird Science* (John Hughes, 1985). However, the film's utilisation of the trope of the doppelgänger and the way in which this is done through time delay, allows the film to examine teenage relationships in a way which gains considerable contemporary relevance when seen as a commentary on the pressures placed on teens by their usage of social media.

In the film's prologue, David travels to his Jill's college and surprises her with flowers at a fencing competition at which she is participating. After she loses a bout, David confuses her with another girl in similar fencing garb in a corridor and their kiss is observed by Jill. This scene sets up the primary conflict in the film and foreshadows the ending, where David makes a fateful decision between Jill and someone who looks exactly like her. It also sketches in some of the background character detail which, while necessary and standard for the conventions of a romantic comedy, has parallels with the content of social media – specifically, the driving original feature of Facebook, "relationship status". *+1* is, like many teen-focused comedies, obsessed with the romantic and sexual relationships of its characters, but takes place in a world in which such information is no

[316] Kiss & Willemsen describe these stories as "allegories … fuelled by our everyday experiences with new technological affordances, the virtualisation of ourselves through online second lives and videogame avatars, our creation and maintenance of different user profiles on different digital platforms …" Kiss & Willemsen, *Puzzle Films*, 14.

[317] This was extremely popular in the 1980s and was probably inaugurated by the success of *Animal House* (1978). Prominent examples include *Screwballs* (1983), *The Party Animal* (1984) and *Bachelor Party* (1984). It saw something of a revival in the late 90s with the *American Pie* series (1999-2012).

longer personal or traded in the limited peer group currency of gossip, but is self-published and available for widespread scrutiny. As David arrives at the party and spots Jill, his friend Alison remarks, “Yeah, I heard you fucked up.” [10:52] and, soon after, another person says, “I heard you fucked up *big time*!” [11:24]

Figure 72: Jill is not *impressed*

While we are accustomed to such news spreading in social groups – especially amongst teens – it’s conceivable that we now imagine such information being disseminated in social media circles where its reach extends beyond that of those immediately acquainted with those involved, and where transgressions have a recorded permanence that makes reparation and rehabilitation more difficult for both offending and offended parties. What may seem like a small transgression and an honest mistake has become a public humiliation for Jill. When David attempts to make a personal apology it becomes apparent that there is no prospect of a reconciliation and she makes it clear that, rather than just a momentary lapse in fidelity, the incident has made her reflect on the distance that has grown between them – moving away to college, she has outgrown him, become a *different person*. She says he “stepped into a part of [her] life where he didn’t belong.” [24:52] David’s apology falters before it has even begun and instead the conversation is dominated by Jill’s tirade at his inadequacies.

At this point, the traditional character arc of the protagonist in this genre would be that he would reform himself and win over the girl. Instead, the doppelgänger and time-delay conceits of *+1* mean that David literally gets a second chance. Crucially, this time he is forearmed with all of Jill’s opinions, objections and arguments in advance. Cruelly and

desperately, he exploits the situation to undercut and sabotage each of the points she raises against him, sometimes repeating her own words from the previous conversation before she can, causing her some evident confusion, but undermining the force of her objections to his apology.

Figure 73: Jill is bamboozled by David's pre-warned insight

This scene is clearly an example of emotional abuse. The parallel here is with the potential exploitation of people's openness on social media. The pressure, among young adults in particular, to cultivate a healthy follower count on such platforms, and the sometimes opaque nature of sharing preferences, can lead to intimate details being shared among people from whom the user would otherwise wish them to remain hidden. These details can be exploited by a range of people with motives ranging everywhere from casual teasing to outright abuse. Incidents of shaming based on inappropriately shared social media posts has also become a regularly reported fact of life in modern times and has been the subject of a number of feature films, such as *Disconnect* (Henry Alex Rubin, 2012) and *Unfriended* (Levan Gabriadze, 2014).[318] The felicity with which we can easily share details of our personal lives seduces many to do so unthinkingly. We regard this online self as one aspect of our personality, but as has been illustrated in cases where individuals have lost careers due to social media posts, outside agents can regard such content as representative of coherent identities – simply, who we are. In this second conversation, Jill's cogent and

[318] *+1* has a moment which explicitly references this when a girl catches sight of her inebriated double exposing her breasts to some boys and they both react with a horror that seems to extend beyond the momentary confusion of the recognition of the doppleganger [59:39].

well-reasoned arguments are fatally undermined by David's stalker-like pre-emption and invasion of her innermost thoughts. The kiss with which this scene concludes feels deeply troublesome and Jill's tearful response throughout communicates distress rather than a joyful reconciliation.[319]

In contrast to the way in which David exploits the film's science-fiction twist to exploit his girlfriend, his friend Teddy has an encounter with a girl which provides some of the film's more expected genre elements – i.e. sex and comedy. It is the character of Alison, however, who has a character arc that at least provides some evidence of the positive potential of a digital "second life". Introverted and shy, she endures the standard humiliations at the party but when her double arrives she uses this foreknowledge to intervene before these events can happen again.

Figure 74: Alison gets to know herself

[319] This deeply troubling sensation is further emphasised by the film's resolution in which David murders the first version of Jill.

Figure 75: Caged cockatoo with doppelganger

As one of the characters says later in the film – "… from the book of Talmud. To meet oneself is to meet God." [1:10:20][320] Alison is the only character who takes the opportunity to approach the doppelgänger and engage it in conversation. This is presented as a positive experience as Alison finds that, in herself, she finds not only finds someone who – somewhat obviously – understands her, but through the doppelgänger she is given a view of herself as someone of value and emotional warmth, which are values sadly absent in the maelstrom of the party, and even amongst the self-interest of her immediate friends. Sitting in an isolated part of the house – far removed from the chaos and violence which ensues when the two main groups collide – she remarks to herself, "Do you think we'll be alone forever?" [1:17:06], a question which extends beyond the immediate circumstances and is more akin to the kind of question every young person will ask themselves at one point in their lives. Alison, however, gets to ask this question in a position of true intimacy with another – even if it is herself. This suggests the kind of opportunities for self-expression and feedback which are available online, even if this has recently been compromised by the activity of trolls. If Alison does want to stop being alone, however, she will need to get out into the world eventually – if she doesn't want to end up living like the cockatoo she observes earlier in the film, which is accompanied by its own doppelgänger, but is still in a cage (*figure 75*).

[320] This appears to be a misattribution. It is close to the maxim "He who knows himself, knows his creator", which originates instead from Muslim scripture.

Utilising a similar plot element to that in *+1*, *Coherence* (James Ward Byrkit, 2013) focuses instead on an older peer group, as it begins with a dinner party attended by a collection of thirty-something friends who work and live in the Silicon Valley area of California. Halfway through the party, the power and all communications are severed, and – when a subset of the group are dispatched to the only house in the neighbourhood which is still lit – they discover that it is a perfect replica of their own home, complete with the full complement of party attendees. As a low-budget digital feature, *Coherence* refers back to the intimate character-driven approach of early digital films such as *Tape* and *Festen*, utilising multiple lightweight digital cameras, long improvised takes of its ensemble cast and performances captured in a series of handheld close-ups. Byrkit, in the DVD audio commentary, tells us that the film was shot in his own home over the course of two weeks, with a cast which was largely assembled from friends and former associates. Necessarily eschewing any use of special effects the film focuses instead on character and the dynamics of friendship and relationships. As a film which deals with mature professionals, the film spends a good part of the early running detailing the success and, particularly, failures of the character's working lives. The tension that these small disappointments provide build as the character's relationships and sense of trust begin to spectacularly break down under the stress of the situation. As the film progresses the group discovers that there are in fact multiple copies of themselves, and that individuals who have left the house may have returned to the wrong version. The sense of paranoia and mutual suspicion that this instils merely accentuates existing resentments which were buried under a surface maintained by the habits and conventions of an established peer group.

Figure 76: Em (centre) is already vulnerable as the film begins

This is particularly stressed in the character of Em, who emerges from the ensemble in the second half of the film as the protagonist. She is under pressure to accompany her partner on a long work trip to another country and undermined by the invitation to the party of his ex-girlfriend, who then humiliates her at dinner by forcing her to relate the story of her failure to secure a role in a dance production she herself instigated. Other characters are similarly troubled by professional or relationship failures, but Em is besieged by both.

As the film moves towards its resolution, the "coherence" of the group is placed under intolerable strain, not by the malign intentions of others intent on taking over their lives – as in similar doppelganger works such as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956) – but by the breakdown of the group's carefully-constructed sense of friendship, trust and support. The revelation of an infidelity, the suggestion of Em and her partner's incipient separation and a breakout in suppressed alcoholism and drug use, all combine to quickly turn the dinner party into a nightmarish scene of violence and recrimination. While we can read modern digital era films such as *+1* as parables of social media in terms of the construction of separate identities and the threat that their autonomy and proliferation across a network may have for us, *Coherence* instead can be read as a criticism of the way that much of our dispersed, atomised lives and tenuous social

networks are barely held together by the technologies with which we seek to bind them[321]. It's clear from the dinner party conversations that many of these people barely see each other and that many of the tensions that emerge are a function of the triviality of friendships held together by social media networks and other modern communication tools. When a stressful situation is introduced, particularly one which calls attention specifically to a sense of identity – "is this person really who I think they are?" – the fragility of these links are exposed. As the film ends, Em leaves the house in chaos and wanders the darkened neighbourhood, creeping up to the windows of the multiple copies of her friend's home, desperately searching for the version of life in which these tenuous bonds of modern companionship still hold.

[321] There is a clear visual reference to this in the film as not only do the phones go down during the "event", but a number of smartphone screens shatter.

Digital Convergence in *Diary of the Dead* (George A. Romero, 2007)

Romero's long-running series of living dead films chronicle societal breakdown in ways which are reflective of the times in which they are produced.[322] From the era of civil rights and the Vietnam War, to the "Me Decade" of the 1970s[323], to the rise of the gated community and widening social inequality under George W. Bush, Romero has been widely praised for the way in which he utilises the subgenre of the "zombie film" to critique aspects of American society. What has also been evident throughout these films is the way in which Romero seeks to broaden the scope of the stories that he tells through the inclusion of material from other media – particularly television. In *Night of the Living Dead*, the group which is trapped in the abandoned farmhouse relies on a television set and news reports for contextual information about the ensuing apocalypse and in *Dawn of the Dead* the plot begins with Fran, a television reporter, escaping from the offices of a station which remains on the air despite the chaotic events which are underway. Romero introduces such sequences, not only to provide narrative information which is crucial to the survival of his characters – famously, a sheriff instructs people to "shoot 'em in the head" in the first film – but also to project a sense of documentary realism into what would otherwise be fantastical and localised science-fiction/horror stories. In each of the films he periodically incorporates alternate media sources to connect with audience extra-textual and extra-diegetic expectations that if the world were to fall into chaos, it looks and feels like the way they would experience it – up close *and* on television.

Of course, as a film released in 2007, *Diary of the Dead* imagines a zombie apocalypse where spectators would get their information not just from television, but from a variety of internet-connected, digital communications tools. Romero originally conceived of the project as an episodic series which would be distributed over the internet to be viewed on computers, tablets and mobile phones.[324] The film takes the form of a reassembly of an uncompleted documentary, produced by student filmmaker Jason as he and a group of friends make their way home from college, across a United States in the

[322] *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), *Day of the Dead* (1985), *Land of the Dead* (2005), *Diary of the Dead* (2007), *Survival of the Dead* (2009).
[323] A phrase coined by Tom Wolfe, but more generally popularised as an idea by Christopher Lasch in *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: Norton, 1979).
[324] Benson-Allott, *Killer Tapes and Shattered Screens*, 63.

early stages of an undead plague. The documentary is introduced and contextualised through voice-overs by his girlfriend Debra, who has completed his projected work *The Death of Death*, following his own death at the hands of one of the ghouls. Thus, the film is a personal journey and example of on-the-ground amateur journalism of the kind which is now familiar from user-generated and submitted actuality footage, appearing on online video sharing sites and in many traditional broadcast and cable news programmes. The finished documentary, as it is presented to us by Debra in *Diary of the Dead* also incorporates contextual information which – she confirms in voice-over – "we downloaded … what we found on television, on the net, off blogs, images and commentary, over those first three days." [03:00]

Figures 77-80: What a zombie apocalypse looks like.

Romero confirms in the audio commentary that these images were in fact obtained through the same method as that reported by Debra within the film. We recognise images familiar from recent disasters such as the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the Rwandan genocide, but their presence in the film doesn't weaken our engagement with the fictional narrative. Instead these images work to exploit spectatorial extra-diegetic knowledge of, and experience with, images of societal breakdown and conflict, to reinforce the wider

context of the personal journey of the film's characters. In doing so, however, they work to challenge audience acceptance of the truth-value of such imagery.

> *Diary of the Dead* explicitly removes such clips from their historical contexts in order to make them evidence of a zombie massacre, but it also relies on their familiarity to undermine the spectator's faith in amateur recording (or at least its distributors). By borrowing previously posted footage and mixing it in with original zombie footage, *Diary of the Dead* asks its spectator what the proliferation of images has done to her understanding of mimesis and "fakeness". It challenges the spectator to accept the degree to which context controls her perception of images…[325]

Such images are "meta-archival", in Baron's terms, in that they are instantly recognised by spectators as library, documentary and/or news footage of real events. The examples that Baron uses to illustrate her definition are older and highly-established in the image economy of Western societies – the first Moon landing and the assassination of JFK. These are images which – through their constant repetition in a number of contexts are ingrained in the collective consciousness as emblematic and ontologically sound icons of the events they represent.[326] In the digital age, the free flow of images and the ubiquity of audio-visual entertainment and news across multiple platforms, accelerates the process of such images attaining this iconic status. *Diary of the Dead* works to simultaneously exploit this characteristic of recent images of conflict, while critiquing (and tapping in to nascent doubt of) the unquestionably ontological status of such visual evidence.

The images above vary in quality – in terms of resolution, stability and colour fidelity – and would seem to come from various sources. We associate such variances in quality with different technologies and with different reception contexts, as I have illustrated in earlier chapters. We do typically associate digital image technologies with certain qualities – stability, high-definition, accurate colour representation – or, at least, we are encouraged to by the agencies which attempt to market such technologies.[327] However, it seems that the primary role that digital technologies have played in the total image economy has been to provide platforms for authorised and unauthorised preservation and distribution of images from *all* sources. Manovich argues that this aspect of new media

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[325] Benson-Allott, *Killer Tapes and Shattered Screens*, 64.

[326] Baron, *The Archive Effect*, 62-63. Baron also addresses conspiracy theorists who do not believe in the truth value of such meta-archival images, concluding that these objections are the flip-side of their strong associations with the events they depict, which **requires** that they be contested by so-called "hoaxers" or "deniers".

[327] I would include in this, not just manufacturers, but television, cable and content distributors who encourage sales through such claims to high-definition imagery.

works to separate the interface from works of art, in the way that an image of a painting on the internet is just another image, or a film is just a succession of images, regardless of the analogue or digital nature of its substrate.[328] Rombes picks up on the implications of this point:

> One of the more radical consequences of this separation is that works of art – unmoored from the historical conditions of their production – are more easily exchangeable across time. The result is that old images and new are in play with one another, creating opportunities to see correspondences that may have remained buried previously.[329]

Throughout this study – in relation to earlier, pre-digital image technologies – I have argued that the incorporation within cinema of imagery from other non-cinematic sources triggers audience extra-textual knowledge of, and experience with, them. Filmmakers can utilise this expected (or, at least, potential) audience recognition to enrich narrative and film style in a number of ways. However, it may seem that in new digital media – including digital films which work, like *Diary of the Dead*, to construct stories in the form of a tapestry of various sources – such incorporation may work to sublimate the differences inherent in spectatorial recognition of source, in preference to a projected sense of correspondences, of *convergence*. Partially, such a move responds to the viewing habits of today's consumers in the home:

> Increasingly, today's sophisticated media consumers use television, the computer (the Internet, computer games), print material, and the telephone all at once. Such radically transformed media environment suggests that perhaps we are witnessing media user's development of what might easily be described as *fundamental hyperattentiveness*. […] It seems that consumer mastery of digital media's requisite multitasking behaviours and composite texts challenges accepted theories of cognition and spectatorship.[330]

Sadly, such habits have bled out into theatrical exhibition as cinema-goers increasingly complain about fellow spectators using mobile phones during screenings, despite the ubiquity of pre-screening announcements to switch such distracting devices off. This indicates, not just an increasing facility with multitasking when it comes to dealing with sources of visual information, but a clear desire to engage with media in this way. Films such as *Diary of the Dead* and *Open Windows* replicate these experiences within the single dynamic frame of the cinema screen (or other domestic substitute) and, in doing so, seem

[328] Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 5.
[329] Rombes, *Cinema in the Digital Age*, 10.
[330] Anna Everett, "Digitextuality and Click Theory," in Everett & Caldwell (eds.), *New Media*, 8.

to accede to the habits and expectations of modern audiences, while simultaneously critiquing the value in doing so.

I should clarify what I mean by convergence in this context. The primary theorist of convergence media as it has emerged as a topic of study is probably Henry Jenkins and he outlines what he means by the term:

> By convergence, I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want. Convergence is a word that manages to describe technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes depending on who's speaking and what they think they are talking about.[331]

He then goes on to further clarify that "[c]onvergence does not occur through media appliances, however sophisticated they become. Convergence occurs within the brains of individual consumers and through their social interactions with others."[332] Therefore, if we regard digital convergence of the type I describe above to be something which is valid and existent phenomena, then Jenkins would argue that such an activity is a function of the individual subject's reception, and not and intrinsic and necessary feature of any particular technology. To put it in media archaeological terms, Jenkins would seem to be operating within the bounds of the Anglo-American tradition, in that he regards digital-era convergence activity as part of a network of social and cultural influences on the individual subject. I would agree with this to a certain extent, and *Diary of the Dead* illustrates the viability of such a reading. It depicts a group of young adults assembling a truthful representation of the plague and its impact from a disparate assembly of material which converges – not within the various media platforms they access and consume – but within their reception and interpretation, and how this chimes with their situated, embodied experience of the events. However, I also would argue that we cannot exorcise the questions raised by the German theorists who would argue that technologies themselves must express some aspect of their materiality within their products. In the case of digital convergence media, I would argue that this contribution is the negative one described above: the obfuscation of the notion of the interface, and the resultant diminution of the subject's ability to interrogate the origins of imagery.

[331] Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 2-3.
[332] Ibid, 3.

The film asks whether the multiple perspectives presented in convergence media has diluted the requirement that there be any attempt to interrogate its truth-value. As Debra says in her voice-over at the beginning of the film – despite the hypermediated nature of 24-hour rolling news, with its proliferation of textual overlays and competing windows of information – "it was all bullshit." [03:05] This line follows an opening scene which purports to be one of the first reported incidents of people reanimating and attacking others. Captured by a local news team, Debra says that the footage was suppressed and not broadcast, and that it was instead uploaded to a file-sharing site by the cameraman. The footage is seen on two other occasions in the film. On the second occasion, the footage has made it to broadcast news, but is introduced by some reassuring messages from a member of the military, who informs the watching public that the situation is under control and shows violence by "a bunch of illegal immigrants, who were mistakenly pronounced dead." [44:30][333]

Jason's documentary is a reaction to such attempts by mainstream media to suppress facts in the name of social and political cohesion. He bypasses them by uploading his footage, as he captures it, to myspace.com.[334] However, before doing so, he still feels the need to utilise his film-school training to add some professionalism and a semblance of narrative development by editing together imagery from a second camera and imagery from other sources (such as that captured from security cameras in the facility from which they access the internet). Despite maintaining that his motives are simply "to cover everything" [44:58] in terms of a multiplicity of perspectives, he feels the need to modulate this raw footage into a form which meets audience expectation of news material, even on the internet.

[333] This is a cameo by the director. His comments draw parallels with the opening scene of *Dawn of the Dead*, where a residential block containing mainly immigrant people is stormed by the military, who find many of them dead and walking.

[334] Still in existence, this social media network site was still highly popular at the time of the film's production and release, but has now been surpassed by other services.

Figure 81: Jason edits the documentary as they travel

Debra interrupts this scene and is initially horrified that Jason is expending his energies in editing and uploading his footage, when the majority of the group is striving just to survive and return to loved ones. However, soon after this there is a complete broadcast blackout and she realises that information dissemination has fallen to people like him: "… the mainstream has vanished, with all its power and money – now it was just us, bloggers and hackers, kids." [56:00] Benson-Allott states that the film does seem to reinforce the inherent indexical value of such user-generated content on social media and other video-sharing sites, where "signs of the filmmaker's labor become marks of personal indexicality, traces of the individual who witnessed these events and posted them to her user profile. When one watches a video on social networking sites … each video is formally presented to the spectator as an attribute of a profile, and each profile represents a peer in the network."[335] However, the film's various montage sequences replicate the spectator's experience of such material, where focus is constantly disrupted by multiple competing windows and there is always another "recommended video" to be watched. In such a shifting sea of competing images, the provenance and origin of each surely

[335] Benson-Allott, *Killer Tapes and Shattered Screens*, 63.

struggles to maintain spectator recognition and, with that, the power of indexical truth – the "I was there and this is what I saw" – similarly loses force.

The Immateriality of Digital

One of the central themes of this study – in those sections where I have examined the specificity of various pre-digital media formats – is the ways in which cinema treatments of them have foregrounded their materiality, their presence-in-the-world-ness. Central to this is the camera as object – a device which is both an enabler of the cinema spectator's vision of the diegesis, and as a material presence within that diegesis. Cinematic works featuring non-cinematic moving image technologies – especially those, examined here, heavily foregrounding products of (and practices associated with) them - tend to explicate the means through which the featured alternate footage has been realised. I previously discussed this as a form of cinematic suture, where the spectator's view of the mise-en-scène is rounded out and completed, not through traditional editing together of multiple perspectives, but through both the presence of a secondary camera (whether small-gauge film or some type of electronic video camera) and the "footage" it produces. As I have argued, these non-cinematic forms are more likely to provoke extra-textual knowledge in spectators as they are the kinds of non-professional or amateur moving image devices with which they are likely to have had some direct experience.[336] This means that their presence within feature film thrusts the spectator into the frame as an empathetic reader of the image-making process and product depicted.

It could be argued that the focus on the materiality of the various technologies in the pre-digital age was abetted by the relative complexity of the production chain. In *Cannibal Holocaust* and *Peeping Tom*, the sense of small-gauge film as a fragile object which must be carefully preserved and handled is communicated in detail. The results of not doing so are shown in the former film, as Deodata fakes the material evidence of damaged film and missing audio from magnetic tape decks. The work undertaken by the television studio technicians to restore the footage is not only shown to the spectator, but explored in depth in several dialogue passages. Similarly in *Red Road* and *Freeze Frame*, banks of analogue video tape hold the evidence which is required to prosecute or excuse potential criminals. In the latter film, Sean keeps the tapes in a literal vault and in *Red Road* the tapes are locked away in the offices of a private security firm. These tapes are carefully catalogued such that their indexical relationship to specific places and moments

[336] In the case of surveillance footage, while most people have not operated these systems, their proliferation in our society means that we are intimately familiar with them.

in time is retained. However, both films illustrate the economic trade-off which is intrinsic to pre-digital surveillance video in the low-resolution imagery which struggles to make meaning of the raw data of the scenes they are meant to preserve. Analogue media are fragile, subject both to generational loss and to electronic noise, and this fragility results in a paranoid focus on the transport mechanism and its various interfaces with the production and replay of imagery. In *Auto Focus* and *Be Kind Rewind* machines break down and tapes are damaged or erased – with serious consequence. In *Videodrome*, one character exists only through the obsessive retention and indexing of his image on a series of tapes – their gradual degeneration paralleling the brain tumour which has killed their subject.

Does this focus change when it comes to digital video? As I mentioned in my introduction to this chapter, there was a brief period when what we referred to as digital video was a description confined to the means by which information was stored on tape or disc. Early digital video cameras and computer systems worked mainly with local storage devices and formats which – while excising generational loss inherent in pre-digital media – retained the capacity for physical damage. The emergence of high-capacity internet transfer and cloud storage within the last decade has transformed the materiality of digital content, including audio-visual data, to the extent that the chain between production and reception has been radically trivialised. To illustrate this with one of many possible examples, video game consoles such as the Playstation 4 system now have a "Share" button on the controller with which the user can – within matter of seconds – stream video to potentially millions of viewers, using services such as Twitch.[337] The material means through which this is actualised – including the internal workings of the game console, sender and receiver ISP networks, Sony's server architecture, Twitch's use of parent company Amazon's cloud services and CDNs[338] – is completely obfuscated. When we examine the cinematic treatment of these digital video technologies in a film such as *Diary of the Dead*, which operates at the extreme end of mainstream film's remediation by digital video, we find little of the elucidation of the material enablers of image recording and replay which is present in the examples I have taken from pre-digital media. While the film is full of devices such as laptops and webcams, the images which these machines record,

[337] See - http://twitchadvertising.tv/audience/ - accessed 04/12/2018. Twitch is a videogame streaming website and social network. In addition to videogame content, it increasingly is moving into more traditional television content and allows streamers to broadcast webcam footage through channels such "IRL" (In Real Life).

[338] CDN – Content Delivery Network. These are groups of hardware routers, switches and servers designed to assure reliable and high-speed delivery of data to end users.

retain and transmit float freely across networks which are as fluid and transparent as an ocean. While the amateur filmmakers navigate an extremely perilous and chaotic United States, the fragility of the image exists less in the preservation of the temporary storage device, but in the need to periodically connect to the network and ensure its longevity and relevance through distribution. While the television broadcast network ceases to function, the origins of the World Wide Web as a military technology designed to survive just such an apocalypse ensures that it remains accessible – while the underlying technology remains, for us and the audience, opaque and elusive.

Does the difficulty of depicting the materiality of digital networks have any significance for films which feature such technologies? The focus of this study is on a number of films which, I have argued, are interested in depicting not just how non-cinematic moving image technologies produce imagery, but the ways in which they are (or have been) used by individuals and groups within societies. This encompasses the moral, philosophical, economic and social impact that groups of technologies have had within media industries and wider society and engaged filmmakers interested in these questions are, I maintain, philosophers of the moving image as it is actualised in the total image economy of the society in which they operate. This can be a moral question, as shown in my examination of *Benny's Video*. Haneke's utilisation of video technology and the depiction of it in a mise-en-abyme presentation operates – as he says – as a "double screen", a tool which orientates the audience into a perspective through which they can unpick the manipulation which he believes operates in conventional Hollywood depictions of impactful moments, such as those featuring violence or sex. Haneke states that he is motivated to do this through a moral "obligation". The other films in this study do not always perform this kind of deconstruction of the materiality of the non-cinematic image apparatus to provide moral distance, but all – I would argue – do so to provide some sort of outside perspective on the operation of media which, for various economic and ideological reasons, media stakeholders often keep hidden. Successfully finding a way to perform this kind of deconstruction for the "immaterial" medium of, particularly online, digital video will be a necessary challenge for cinema practitioners to respond to, should they wish to maintain their own medium's apex position as a mature site for the contemplation of the total image economy of the digital age.

Conclusion

Digital video started out – as a production format – in ways which mirrored analogue video in the early days of its introduction to broadcast television: as an economical, highly-flexible, but clearly pictorially-inferior moving image format to celluloid. As broadcast television only moved from 16mm as a production format, and as a telecine base for preservation of material, when the technology could justify exploiting the clear economic benefits of recording directly to tape, digital video initially struggled to justify its use as a replacement for 35mm film in cinema. Though early practitioners championed the format for its other benefits – such as shooting in low-light, its economy and lightweight recording equipment – it was only when image quality improved enough to allow cinematographers to meet an imagined audience expectation for a "film-like look," that it began to replace celluloid as the substrate of cinema. In distribution and exhibition, despite some argument over the costs of outfitting cinema chains for digital projection[339], the economic benefits were clear. These days, format is transparent: outside of those few individuals who have an interest in the business of film and its associated technologies, I would be surprised if many people could tell the difference between a modern digital video and analogue celluloid production (or projection). The practice of utilising digital intermediates for special effects and editing had already compromised the analogue indexicality of film in the 1990s. The process is complete, cinema is now digital.

It is, however, still cinema. Despite suggestions that digital technologies would usher in new forms of film entertainment, and that changes in home entertainment and mobile internet-enabled devices would transform the ways in which cinema content is consumed, there is little evidence that this is taking place. The long-form feature film remains a firm fixture on broadcast television, while driving sales of subscription cable and satellite channels and online alternatives such as Netflix. People are still attending cinemas, despite the fact that they can increasingly obtain and watch the same releases at home, or indeed on mobile devices, anywhere. Home entertainment is, if anything, replicating more of the features of cinema – larger screens in widescreen format, surround sound in THX or Dolby Digital-certified forms, high definition, even a digital remediation of film's standard

[339] This is a familiar story from the days of the introduction of sound and widescreen technologies. See Enticknap, *Moving Image Technology*, and Belton *Widescreen Cinema*, respectively.

projected frames-per-second (fps).[340] Premium television offered through new online distributors such as Netflix and Amazon replicate the formal characteristics of cinema and, in many cases, presuppose these kinds of cinema-like home entertainment technologies, such as 4K screens and multi-channel sound systems, to be experienced at their best. Home Cinema magazines offer advice on which projectors to buy and offer instructions on how to build your own home cinema, or convert your regular living spaces into one. It seems that film may be dead, but cinema has never been more alive.

This being the case, how has cinema itself reflected the wider societal move to digital technologies of the moving image? I have shown that – away from discussions about the increased utilisation of digital special effects and the extent to which this practice and the general use (and overuse) of digital post-production processing has exacerbated existing concern over a loss of film cinema's indexicality – cinema continues to do what it always has done, be representative of the world around it. The total image economy of developed societies continues to evolve as new visual technologies are developed and introduced and as the way the world looks to us changes, we find this reflected in the worlds we experience in theatres. Some films – such as *Open Windows, Unfriended, Diary of the Dead* and others – have responded to the multiplicity of competing sources of visual information by splitting the screen in an array of alternately narratively-related or competing windows. Others, such as *+1* and *Coherence* have retained the traditional tools and strategies of Hollywood or independent filmmaking and instead, told stories which are reflective of the way that digital technologies are having impact on individual human beings and wider society.

It is true that digital technologies are felt in the incorporation of a number of digital tools which have made aspects of the filmmaking process simpler in a number of areas. As I have shown in the case of *Triangle* there is some potential for changes to the ways in which the construction of film narrative - and the ways in which this is supported and abetted by the editing process – can allow filmmakers who may be otherwise restricted by logistical or budgetary considerations to tell stories in new ways. In general terms, it is also the case that, despite the loss of analogue indexicality, stories in cinema are not prevented from being *about* the world, when they present scenes which are not necessarily accurate reflections *of that* world. As the continued popularity of historical and period drama shows,

[340] Bluray disc, the premium home format for moving image content, generally defaults to 24fps playback for content which is shot to be projected at this speed.

audiences are not dissuaded by cinema's continuing propensity to foreground its nature as a medium of artifice and explicit (re)construction.

Final Conclusions

This study has examined a number of non-cinematic moving image technologies, as featured in works of broadly mainstream fiction filmmaking. It has done so to elucidate the ways in which cinema, as a form and practice, attempts to represent the way the world appears to an imagined spectator. As the century of cinema progressed, and especially following the widespread penetration of broadcast television into homes in the late 1950s, what I have referred to as the "total image economy" of developed societies necessitated that some filmmakers accommodate their cinematic vision of the world to include the proliferation of other media, increasingly a part of how people experienced their surroundings. Accommodating these other media has some impact on the resultant films, for two main reasons: these other media have varying aesthetic differences to cinema; they perform differing functions to that of cinema, are associated with different practices and, as such, have different associations with cinema audiences when encountered within a work of cinema. The resulting work, whether approaching media hybridity, or sectioning-off the incorporated technology within a mise-en-abyme presentation as an explicit object of study, performs a dialectical function regarding how both cinema and alternate moving image technologies render the world around us. In choosing to examine a number of significant technologies across a roughly sixty years timespan, we can extract ourselves from the reductionist argument that occasional moments of cinematic reflexivity are merely responses to various "crises of cinema"[341] and, instead, gain a sense that there is a continuing pool of films and filmmakers who display a tendency for cinema to engage with, and question, the material basis and practices of cinema and other media in representing the world.

I have described the process by which cinema features alternate technologies of moving imagery as "narrative incorporation", reflecting the focus of this study on mainstream fiction filmmaking. This is not to ignore or downplay the extensive utilisation of mixed-media approaches in avant-garde, video-art or other non-narrative experimental contexts, but instead to analyse the extent to which the discussion regarding aesthetic effects of other media penetrates into the mainstream of audio-visual art. Indeed, this study

[341] From my examples we could highlight the challenges to cinema by 1) television, 2) the video rental market, and 3) the indexical question raised by digital technologies.

extends a number of concepts and theoretical approaches which have been applied to works of an avant-garde or experimental nature, to the mainstream of cinema.[342] This recognises the influence of such work on mainstream filmmakers and, also, focuses on their incorporation and/or remediation of the products of other technologies within narrative worlds aspiring to a measure of consistency with real-world appearances, experiences with, and usages of them. Simply put, mainstream films incorporating – for example – CCTV footage, necessarily engage with, question and assimilate audience experience with such a technology and practices. This focus also works to counter several extravagant claims for – particularly – digital media, which are present in the literature written in the early days of the transition from analog formats:

> All too frequently such academic claims depend not on any tangible historical or sociological evidence concerning anyone's actual identity or reality but on theoretical posturing buttressed by little more than science fiction or digital gallery installations said to 'explore' issues of identity or reality.[343]

Writing about digital media within mainstream fiction filmmaking examines both the practical, material use and products of new media and their reception by audiences who exhibit a measure of knowledge of, and experience with, these technologies.

To this end, I restricted the scope of the project to technologies of the moving image and, in particular, those which retain an element of indexicality or outright isomorphism to the object(s) to be represented. This is an approach which excludes animation, whether through traditional cel or modern digital approaches. I also chose to analyse films which tended to focus on the standard, often amateur or utilitarian, uses of non-cinematic moving image technologies, rather than their application within cinema as part of the evolving special-effects toolset. This approach avoids the cinema-centric analysis of alternate moving image technologies as elements co-opted by mainstream filmmaking to provide spectacle and, instead, posits a more egalitarian use of these devices and apparatus, which questions cinema's own view of itself as at the apex of audio-visual art. To this end, I examined: the other instantiations of celluloid and their application to non-fiction and amateur practise; moving images divorced from any intermediate storage; the destabilising and disruptive introduction of a successful, non-celluloid moving image storage format; and, finally, the submission of cinema to a digital shift transforming all

[342] For example, Rombes, *Cinema in the Digital Age*; Baron, *The Archive Effect*; Elsaesser, *Film History as Media Archaeology*; Marks, *Touch*.
[343] Jeffrey Sconce, "Tulip Theory", in Anna Everett & John T. Caldwell, eds. *New Media*, 180.

aspects of data and information creation and exchange in the 21st Century. Given the breadth of the subject, this study was not intended to be an exhaustive outline of such activity within feature film, rather an exploration of tendencies and themes in such works of cinema. There now follows a summary of aspects I have identified in cinema's narrative incorporation of alternate media.

Themes from Primary Textual Analysis

As noted above, one aspect of non-cinematic moving-image technologies which is explored in a number of films in this study is the amateur status of practitioner and practices and, by extension, the device and associated apparatus itself. As cited in the opening chapter, sub-gauge celluloid formats were marketed at, and were imprinted with ideological associations of the amateur market and a set of practices which placed technology and its products distinct to the professional cinema. Similarly, analogue video formats and technologies such as the video camcorder, which supplanted sub-gauge film, were marketed as consumer products with clearly defined applications which extended the photographic home mode – birthday parties, weddings, domestic social events. In both *Peeping Tom* and *Family Viewing*, there are examples of amateur image recording practice which, while operating in the home mode, clearly shatter the boundaries of what is typically associated with it. In the former, Marc's father has documented his childhood in ways which reveal aspects of abuse and trauma. In the latter, Stan edits and re-records video to imprint or erase similar domestic strife with a constructed view of a harmonious household. Both films extend the home mode in ways which parallel each technology's industrial development. Dissatisfied with the restrictions of the amateur, Marc aspires to the status of professional filmmaker by working on a documentary, the emerging professional application of – particularly – 16mm celluloid in the 30s and 40s. As for analogue video, Stan follows one aspect of video's industrial trajectory by moving into pornography. In *Be Kind Rewind*, Mike and Jerry's temerity in presuming to make works of cinema using the tools of the amateur – specifically, consumer-grade VHS camcorders – is met with legal repercussions. The film critiques the concept of VHS – a rewriteable, highly proliferated consumer format – as solely the base of a theatrical aftermarket for works of cinema. Its use by the amateur is proscribed within the bounds of prior, photographic, technologies of the image.

The ability to represent the world around us in professional or amateur practice - and the responsibilities that may apply when we do so - are critiqued in a number of films. In *Amator*, Filip's journey from amateur filmmaker to aspiring professionalism brings him into contact with a number of authorities who seek to alternately guide, proscribe, circumvent and ultimately censor his work. He proceeds from home mode practice in filming his new-born child, through some of the modes of early documentary (and art cinema) practice by utilising inserts and montage to offer commentary in an initially whimsical, but ultimately explicitly political manner.[344] Although he begins this journey with a small-gauge camera he purchases himself, he is fundamentally compromised by a reliance on others as he moves up the production chain – firstly, in the film stock, 16mm camera, and editing equipment supplied by the company he works for, and ultimately the medium of the television broadcast. The controversial ending, which implies a measure of admission on Filip's part that he has naively exceeded the boundaries of his amateur capability to accurately reflect the political realities inherent in his subject, does privilege *Amator* (the overarching and surrounding film) as the cinematic framing footage which *can* present such issues with a sense of completeness.

On the other hand, films such as *L'Occhio Selvaggio* – and the criticism it extends to an entire subgenre of documentary – indicate that the professional is similarly compromised by such factors as his or her compliance with the economic drive which underpins their filmmaking practice. The mobility and felicity of the small-gauge camera and apparatus is utilised to get up-close and personal to places and people across the globe, but the ideological basis of what is captured, edited and presented to audiences is wholly inflected with deep-seated and localised prejudices and expectations. The economic power of white, Western nations and their associated centres of film production are characterised as tools of exploitation and the drivers of a wholesale subversion of documentary aspirations to unmediated truth. That such presentations have an explicitly political dimension is apparent from films such as *Africa Addio*, with its hysterical, ahistorical presentation of a "savage", undisciplined continent, struggling to cope with the withdrawal of European colonial power. *L'Occhio Selvaggio*, with its many scenes which deconstruct the documentary process, uses montage to complicate the spectatorial associations which

[344] In the documentary which he makes for television he shifts from a purely observational form to one which is expository, although it seeks to avoid directorial subjectivity by utilising commentary from its subject – the disabled worker.

many audiences may bring to non-fiction or journalistic moving imagery. Cavara cuts between images taken from the mobile camera, with all the power and immediacy they convey, and the film camera which reveals the exploitation behind Paolo's construction of such scenes.

These links between certain technologies – their aesthetic effects and associated practices – and a projected spectator's conception of their ontological basis, is exploited in a number of films in this study. At the end of *L'Occhio Selvaggio*, Paolo has completed his documentary; Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust* examines the process which takes place when such raw documentary footage is received and remediated for a television audience. In the "Last Road to Hell" sequence, the television executive demonstrates to Professor Monroe that they are very well aware of the brazen simulation which the director habitually undertakes. The in-house editing of "The Green Inferno" is a project which seeks to excise the evidence of exploitation and simulation, and present a series of events which is not only stated to be ontologically sound, but leverages the accepted conventions of television documentary in a way which underpins this effect. In *Diary of the Dead*, it is argued that mainstream media such as television is hopelessly compromised by political interference and dependence on existing technological infrastructure, such that it is the web-enabled, amateur videographer and commentator who is best placed to document the present moment, where so many challenges such as climate change require a fact-based and unbiased approach. The limitations of mainstream media such as broadcast television, where ratings may force an accentuation of sensation over the potential complexities inherent in the aspiration to a notion of ontological soundness, is extended to other, ancillary media in films such as *Benny's Video*. Benny is a vulnerable young adult who has been colonised by television and – particularly – home video. His bedroom is a highly mediated space which is filled with cameras, VCRs and screens. His view of the outside world is confined to the view from a video camera in an otherwise shuttered window. Fed a diet of television and mainstream Hollywood films on video, he struggles to develop a sense of empathy with other people and the world at large – his obsessive viewing of a video depicting the slaughter of a pig an attempt to apprehend mortality, which ultimately leads to an act of murder. Haneke sees modern media as a colonising force, which divorces people from their surroundings and, subsequently, the environment from which we can gain a sense of embodiment and an attendant morality. This is a view which presents such media as not just ontologically flawed but, implicitly, dangerous to identity formation.

The way in which media intervenes in formation of, and our own and others representation of, our identity is another theme which is common to a number of these films. In *Auto Focus*, Bob Crane's identity is already fractured between his domestic home life with family and his radio and television personalities. When these *professional* personas are subsequently joined by amateur videography, Crane's sex life forms an integral, but highly divorced and mediated aspect of his identity. Although this aspect of his life becomes core to who he is as a person – as he says, "A day without sex, is a day wasted!" – this existence is not just antithetical to his domestic and public life, but is something which he is compelled to experience second-hand, obsessively re-watching the acts on video. He has, in effect, outsourced a core part of his identity to the medium of video. When such representations are moved from the amateur to the professional sphere, however, the increased lack of control we have with how others see us causes a greater crisis in our sense of identity. As we increasingly (willingly or unwittingly) offer our personal data to a number of private and public organisations through digital media, contemporary films such as *+1* and *Coherence* dramatise the alienating and dissociative effect this can have on our sense of a personal unified identity and its connections with social groups. The wholesale outsourcing of aspects of our personal identity is presented as a nightmare-ish extension, and realisation, of the promises held out by the premise of Reality Television – the ability for "normal people" to become famous. In much the same way that digital-era films such as *+1*, *Unfriended* and *Disconnect* deal with issues resulting from inappropriate sharing of personal data and imagery, pre-digital films such as *Edtv* depict the consequences that result from the conflict between our identities and the representation on media such as television. Ed's trajectory from initial excitement at fame, to a realisation that it not only places intolerable demands on his family and relationships, but results in a widespread privatisation of his own identity, bears striking parallels with the way that modern societies are currently wrestling with the legal implications of the corporate use of personal data.

This leads us to the theme of surveillance which, rather unsurprisingly, is a constant theme of films which focus directly on the representation of alternate, non-cinematic moving image technologies. *The Truman Show*, while displaying many of the same concerns of other films critiquing Reality Television - in depicting audience reaction to, and conception of, Truman, as a character – also spends a considerable amount of time examining the impact and operation of the surveillance infrastructure of Seahaven. As I

have shown, the film adopts a multi-layered narrative strategy with reflexively exposes the hybridity of the film as a cinematic remediation of television, but also as an examination of the internalisation of surveillance, where Truman's growing paranoia parallels our own awareness of the increasingly mediated nature of modern life. While, as noted, the film does struggle with issues of narrative consistency, it does present a convincingly cohesive world where Truman's self-identity is mediated by imagery – such as the photograph album which operates as physical evidence of a fabricated childhood. He recreates the face of lost love Lauren from a collage of women's magazine imagery and pines for an idealised painted representation of Fiji, the destination of his projected escape. His increasingly manic behaviour as he uncovers the plot against him is a deeply performative outpouring of rebellion against the impossibility of escaping the purview of outside forces and the control they exercise against him. This embodiment of the surveillance apparatus is apparent to an even greater extent in *Freeze Frame*, where Sean modifies – not just his behaviour – but the record and proof of it, by recording his every move. Interestingly, the film's denouement works to expose the inefficiencies and gaps which exist in surveillance video's capabilities, as Sean constructs an alibi by faking his movements and outsourcing the observation of his actual behaviour to a private third party.

Such third-party private security firms are a highly visible and pervasive part of life, particularly in the UK. *Red Road* details the day-to-day operation of one such organisation and, in doing do, illustrates the limitations of CCTV technologies to fully provide their operators with a sense of the psychological and behavioural explications behind the scenes they observe. This partial view is accentuated by the film's visual scheme, which contrasts the highly pixelated and distorted views from the surveillance cameras, and their preservation on VHS cassette, with the clean, sharp imagery from the surrounding "film"'s digital presentation. This aspect of surveillance video, combined with an absence of audio, frustrates Jackie's attempt to implicate Clyde in continuing criminal activity, which she needs to continue to exorcise the guilt she feels at the loss of her child and husband. The film contrasts the arid, airless and dead views which she receives through the surveillance cameras with the sense of embodied, three-dimensional presence which the spectator is treated to when she attempts to directly intervene in Clyde's life in the Red Road flats. One aspect of this contrast is the treatment of time in the film, as scenes from CCTV cameras defer to material aspects of such technologies by playing out in long, unedited scenes of narratively wasteful events. When the film dispenses with these

technologies, it conforms more readily to those aspects of time-management more common to standard narrative cinema, such as montage.

This is a key differentiator between the technologies featured in this study: many of the media examined have standard operations and practices which differ markedly from the representation of temporality in narrative cinema. As I demonstrated in the case of *Paranormal Activity*, films which defer to formats such as home video often do so in a way which engage with and utilise aspects of their standard practices, in this case resulting in a scene of extreme narrative waste, which is utilised to build tension. And, in the case of *Red Road*, the case of "live" video applications such as CCTV also present these opportunities to modulate the temporal flow of a work of cinema. Broadcast television, when operating in the "live" mode – such as 24-hour news or major sporting events - sometimes obfuscates these aspects through a number of techniques such as montage between multiple cameras, splitting audience attention through audio commentary, etc., while appealing to audiences through an accentuation of the appeal to the excitement of the present moment. Digital-era film, and the application of digital technologies to cinema, in the cases I have examined, does attempt to bring some of this appeal of "real time" to the inherently pre-recorded nature of narrative filmmaking. Films such as *Open Windows* use an uninterrupted real-time conceit and instead of breaking up the narrative by condensing, excising and otherwise manipulating chronology, it breaks up the screen itself – incorporating multiple, competing and narratively self-contained windows rather than a single unified view. This is what Manovich defines as the "screen of real-time", in comparison to the "dynamic" screen of traditional narrative cinema and the "classic" screen of photography and painting.[345] It is an approach that conveys information in a way that conforms to the digital logic of the computer and the database, compared to the linearity of the novel or the theatre, previous media models for classical cinema. Vigalondo himself seems aware of the associations of this approach with the appeal to real-time as he incorporates two incidences of temporal manipulation – specifically, a recursion to pre-recorded video – as moments of narratively-significant audience and character misdirection.

I have examined several films – and noted the general prevalence of examples – where contemporary cinema is displaying a tendency towards narrative complexity, often referred to as "puzzle films". One aspect of this I suggested in my analysis of *Triangle* was

[345] Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 99.

the ability for filmmakers to leverage digital tools - in this case, non-linear editing technologies – to remain open to contingencies during the filmmaking process, which resists the pressure exacted on a production to always work slavishly to a pre-defined script, storyboarded shot-list and shooting schedule. This is a notion of filmmaking tools, not just as part of the machinery which grinds out the result of a pre-planned and scripted narrative, but as enablers of a more democratic, organic and embodied mode of filmmaking. This allows for decisions made on set, in the moment, which may take account, not just of the details of script and schedule, but changes in environment, suggestions by various stakeholders, including cast members and other contingencies. Digital technologies may be opening up greater opportunities for this mode of filmmaking thanks to reductions in costs associated with film stock and extensive lighting requirements associated with shooting on film. However, some of my other examples suggest that such an approach may also be facilitated through the incorporation of pre-digital moving-image technologies. In *Be Kind Rewind* the modified VHS camera which is used both in-diegesis and by the film crew is part of a wider project to ground the overall production in the physical site which is the film's setting and subject. The physicality of the low-budget production design of "Fats Waller was Born Here" and the "sweded" versions of Hollywood films combines with the material contingency of the camera to present an embodied and situated analogue to the overarching film and the process of film-making. The makers of *Be Kind Rewind* did not just point their cameras at Passaic and its citizens, the crew inserted themselves into the community and constructed both the tools and the practices best suited to this approach. The result operates almost as a manifesto for a community cinema, which is a reaction to the corporate hegemony of the contemporary US entertainment industry, as characterised in the film both by the lawyers who destroy the videotapes and the DVD megastores who peddle the narrowest of product to consumers.

Other films – such as *Videodrome* and *Death Watch* – depict the embodiment of media such as analogue videotape and television literally, with both Max Renn and Roddy subject to bodily transformations which mediates their sight in ways which are then open to manipulation and exploitation by malicious and corrupt individuals and organisations. As a pre-digital film, *Videodrome* – like many early 80s films in the sci-fi and horror genre[346] - relies on physical effects to depict Renn's hallucinations. His interactions with these visions has a highly tactile emphasis, as he pushes his face into the television set

[346] Key films here would include *American Werewolf in London* (1981) and *The Thing* (1982).

which is suddenly transformed into the flesh of Nicki's mouth or inserts his hand into the wound which appears on his abdomen. Videotapes transform into living and breathing, fleshy constructs in a way which suggests that Cronenberg views the influence that emerging media has on human beings is as much physical as mental – and, in that sense, as much a direct stimulation on the libido, as merely the eye. The depiction of Roddy's implant leaves open to question the extent that it transforms (as opposed to merely recording) his vision, but its operation turns him into a camera, ensuring that it is actually impossible (in the sense of being physically dangerous) for him to stop recording/seeing. Roddy cannot close his eyes (sleep) or operate in sub-optimal conditions (darkness). His humanity and moral sense seems compromised by the implant and he blankly follows Katherine, chained to her by the logic of the camera, not seeking to intervene, bound by the selective literalism of documentary codes.

Responses to Research Questions

These are the main themes I extract from my analysis of several works of mainstream narrative cinema which extensively utilise and reference aspects and practices of non-cinematic moving image technologies. I will now utilise these to answer the primary research questions of this project.

1) How does the incorporation of sequences derived from and depicting alternate moving image media alter the delivery of narrative in feature films?

Films which features sequences derived from alternate moving image media exhibit modulations of the traditional modes of delivery of story, plot and character information. Often this reflects the difference between the overarching film's professional crew and the in-diegesis character's amateur utilisation of technology. While the film may rely on traditional editing patterns and rhythms, the incorporated sequences may instead feature passages of narrative longueur and "waste", as the absence of in-diegesis editing is represented. While the film itself adheres to principles of narrative economy and ensures that scenes have the required coverage to achieve the successful delivery of story information, the incorporated sequence may obscure certain elements, through stylistic devices such as bad framing or a lack of focus. These affective markers of amateur practice are employed in service of realism, in the sense that the in-diegesis character has limited

command of technology. However, any flaws in the sequences from alternate media are directorial choices which will usually be covered by story information delivered within the surrounding incorporating film.

While such sequences can be employed in a way which is narratively sequential in the sense that they extend, draw upon, and reinforce, story information from the film scenes which precede them, they can also be utilised within a film to tell more narratively self-contained stories. In examples such as these there is an attempt to tell parallel stories, or two or more versions of a story, which gains narrative resonance from the comparisons that a viewer may make between them. This is the case in *Family Viewing* where information regarding the family is communicated at varying levels in the sequences which are shot or recorded on film, studio video cameras and home video. To a minor extent in this film – and to a much greater extent in a film such as *Open Windows* – parallel narratives may be delivered through the utilisation of frames-within-frames, where screens from various technologies present story information which is nested within the overarching film. In cases such as this the viewer makes their own choices, or their focus is directed within the frame through the employ of sound mix, camera movement, etc. In general terms, the utilisation of alternate media tends to result in greater narrative complexity. As noted above, this is perhaps an inevitable result of the expansion of what Bordwell refers to as "film style" as a component of syuzhet, or the way in which the overall plot – or "fabula" – information is communicated to the audience.[347] Film's incorporation of alternate media increases the density of film style (the various tools and textures available to the filmmaker) and, as a result, makes it more likely that a film's story information may be delivered in non-straightforward or non-traditional manner.

A common example of narrative complexity is the manipulation of temporality. Utilisation of non-cinematic technologies which incorporate storage and recall results in shifts in narrative chronology within the film. This can be utilised to deliver plot information – whether that results in the introduction of new story information, or to contradict or modify what has already been established. It can also function to shift audience attention to different spaces within the geography of the film world, either altering the narrative significance of a space which is already established or introducing a new area which may or may not be revisited in a later scene. Where alternate media is

[347] Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 52.

incorporated in real-time, such as footage from a CCTV camera, this displacement of audience attention from a specific site to another results in a broadening of the film's narrative ambitions, as audience members now need to consider parallel actions of varying significance at multiple locations. These techniques introduce narrative complexity in ways which are capable of enriching story delivery in ways which may be similar to traditional cinematic montage and devices such as flashback or forward, but as they are achieved through in-diegesis alternate media technologies they are more closely integrated into the overarching film's master narrative.

The in-diegesis nature of much of the incorporated material results often results in enrichment of the delivery of character psychology and motivation. Carl's motivation and psychopathy in *Peeping Tom* is largely conveyed through the footage shot by him (or by his father), rather than traditional exposition via dialogue. In many scenes featuring alternate media in narrative feature film we share character POV, which results in an audience invitation to empathetically read such scenes in an embodied state. The emotional states of characters can be communicated through camera shake or judder, especially in found-footage horror films. Film also engage with audience perception and knowledge of these technologies through dramatizations of the interface, as a character's interaction with alternate media provoke extra-textual, real-world associations. In terms of the construction of character identity as the narrative plays out, the incorporation of alternate media works to heighten audience understanding of what character's **do**, to a greater extent than what they **say**. Character action, when they are involved in creating media, is something which is visible and material within the diegesis. Media products become narrative objects, which are read by audiences as factual evidence of events, but also become heavily imprinted by the subjectivity of the characters producing them. This is apparent in films such as *sex. lies and videotape*, where Dalton's recorded conversations with women tell the audience more about his character than the people he interviews.

2) To what extent is the aesthetic character of a feature film is modified by the inclusion of sequences derived from alternate media?

As outlined earlier in this study, alternate moving image technologies are utilised in a number of differing contexts to 35mm film. When incorporated within the feature film the direct reference to, or audience associations with, these other moving image practices can

be utilised to modify the film's aesthetic presentation. One of the principle ways this departure from mainstream film aesthetics is evidenced is through the simulation (or incorporation of actual) of amateurism, utilising moving image formats which have been developed principally for this market. I examined this in relation to the concept of "home mode" amateur practice and the effect this has within a narrative feature film, where it expands standard cinematic coverage of what is typically considered relevant for the economy of narrative delivery. Editing patterns that may have become invisible to an audience are disrupted by ragged, "unprofessional" transitions between and within scenes. The materiality of the image-making tool is heightened by this and by erratic zooms, unfocused shots and other aspects which impinge on visibility and audibility, such as insufficient lighting or lack of location sound recording.

I have outlined the association that some alternate media may have with the notion of real-time, for example, with CCTV or other "live" video formats. This can work to impart a greater sense of presence within a scene, for a number of effects – such as tension in the thriller genre, threat in the horror genre. Though video formats can also work on the same record-and-replay paradigm as celluloid, their greater presence on television works to align them with notions of instantaneity than film. The effect this has on the audience of a narrative feature film can also be accentuated by alternate media's embodied presence within the film diegesis, where the technology and associated practices are dramatized within the frame. That a number of these technologies are vastly more accessible to audience members than the cinematic apparatus heightens this sense of embodied presence, as the incorporated media are familiar to the viewing subject. If the technology is familiar to audiences, then the way they are depicted within film often complies with established representational modes. Various documentary modes are employed by feature filmmakers when incorporating alternate media. This works to familiarise these sequences within the narrative, but also employ the aesthetic of the documentary mode to deliver information with visual economy as audiences switch modes of reception when triggered by visual (or audio) keys. Cutting between scenes of documentary representation utilising alternate media and standard cinematic presentation works to remediate documentary content in service of the incorporating film's master narrative and overall aesthetic. It can also be employed to deconstruct the documentary mode, for example revealing the tools and practices as less a determinant of the shape of content than just one avenue that can be pursued in exploring and elucidating a subject.

In addition to utilising and remediating the representational modes and practices associated with alternate media I have examined films which use them to enrich the textural palette of the feature film. Whether it is the saturated colours of various sub-gauge film stocks, the reduced resolution and colour blooming of analogue video, the pixilation of early digital video or the clarity and light-sensitivity of modern HD video, alternate moving image formats have the capacity to widen the aesthetic spectrum of films which incorporate their products. The raft of computerised editing and post-processing tools available to contemporary filmmakers also enables their ability to construct highly dense images which are constructed from a number of sources of differing aesthetic content. The frame can be broken up into two or more competing or reinforcing narrative and aesthetic segments, or the single dynamic screen can be composed of a series of layered images which are a palimpsest of various sources. Scenes can be edited in a non-linear manner which has a destabilising and disruptive aesthetic effect on audiences. Modern computerised tools combine with the database of historical imagery from a variety of alternate and film-based media to provide a rich paint box from which contemporary narrative filmmakers can construct aesthetically challenging films.

3) To what extent does the inclusion of a particular alternate media format reference or comment on wider social, cultural or political issues surrounding the technology?

I mentioned above that the figure of the amateur and their utilisation of various media that are explicitly presented as non-commercial and/or non-professional can be employed to shift the aesthetic presentation of a film. It may be also be utilised to comment on the position that he or she occupies in the wider image economy and associated industries, including mainstream cinema or television. Films which incorporate alternate media have the potential to demystify the image-making process as it operates in the dominant spheres of media production, such as the mainstream cinema, documentary or television genres such as soap operas and news. A number of films dramatize the compromises that are made in the name or either entertainment, truth-telling or adherence to economic imperatives. The figure of the amateur is often presented as naïve and idealistic and is often at odds with figures who are representatives of the power structure that controls and determines the product that reaches an audience. In *Amator*, Filip is broken by the Communist Party representatives that bankroll his productions; in *L'Occhio Selvaggio*, Paolo operates in complicity with his patrons in their demand for greater sensationalism.

These conflicts are presented as not just aspects of the commercial and political structure of the industries, but are often intrinsic to the technologies which are central to image production. As Filip moves up through the hierarchy of documentary he transitions from smaller and cheaper cameras and stock to those which have the association with professionalism.

The deconstruction of various television, documentary and narrative filmmaking genres and practices in these films does allow an enrichment of the aesthetic palette, but also directly enables the filmmaker to comment on both the ideological basis of each. Television is a target in a number of these films and the naked commercialism of much of its output is effectively satirised. However, aspects such as commercial breaks and product placements are criticised by mainstream films which retain much of the same commercial imperative, merely ensuring that the economic aspects are extraneous to the film itself in merchandising, home video sales, etc. A film such as *Be Kind Rewind* is rare in that it fully engages with the extent to which the cinema industry works to ensure hegemonic control of wider moving image culture, through manipulation of home market and censure of amateur or fan-produced content. The extent to which the – particularly, Hollywood – film industry quickly accommodated itself to the benefits of the home video phenomenon is evident from the jaundiced view of the "foreign" VHS or Betamax formats in *Videodrome*, to the almost complete disappearance of home video as topic for discussion in mainstream US film. From the mid-80s it was left to lower-budgeted or foreign films such as *sex, lies and videotape, Benny's Video* and *Ringu* to regard home video as anything other than a positive force for the mainstream culture industries.

In terms of the remediation of the documentary, the narrative fiction film has been well-placed to depict non-fiction filmmaking practice as ontologically suspect. As a discipline of pure artifice, the fiction film – which is constructed from largely the same technologies as the documentary film – has been able to depict documentary as subject to a number of biases which are not filtered in any way by the apparatus of non-fiction filmmaking. A number of films seem to respond to accusations that mainstream cinema relies on sensationalism over more literate subjects, by suggesting that the so-called "discourse of sobriety" are also compromised by, for example, ideological bias or economic factors. That one major subgenre in this area is entitled the "mock-doc" is some evidence that there is a antagonistic, somewhat defensive, attitude at play in certain parts of

the film industry as regards documentary's pretension to greater truth-telling and intrinsic "worth".

One area in which I believe that there has been some evidence of a positive, critical consideration of cinema's own cultural position is the response to digital technologies. While I outlined the initial cautious exploration of early digital camera technologies, and the extent to which this movement threatened to play out as another amateur/professional or arthouse/mainstream film-cultural conflict, I identified a recent strain of films which have been less concerned with digital's impact on film and more considerate of digital's wider cultural and social impact. In what may be an indication of cinema's cultural maturity, film's which explore the impact of social media and other digital technologies on identity, leverage digital film in ways which subtly parallel some of their effects on our lives. While there has been an attempt to engage with the materiality and practices of digital technologies in films such as *Open Windows* and *Unfriended*, others such as *Coherence* and *+1* may be point to one future for digital film where there is a quieter consideration of the issues they raise.

The Original Contribution of the Project

This is a project which engages with the materiality and practices of what I have termed alternate media – specifically, with the way that these are represented in narrative cinema. I have shown how the products of non-cinematic technology are represented and remediated within film. In this sense, the project accords with the theoretical approach of the German tradition of media archaeology, especially in the chapter sections where I examined what I referred to as format specificity. The analysis of media and media products as essentially non-human is perhaps best exemplified by Kittler's outline of the impact of sound recording on music:

> Intervals and chords … were ratios, that is, fractions made up of integers. The length of a string … was subdivided, and the fractions … resulted in octaves, fifths, fourths, and so on. Such was the logic upon which was founded everything that, in Old Europe, want by the name of music… The nineteenth century's concept of frequency breaks with all of this. The measure of length is replaced by time as an independent variable. It is a physical time removed from the meters and rhythms of music. It quantifies movements that are too fast for the human eye...[348]

[348] Kittler, 24.

The mathematical application of frequency to music has its vindication in sound recording devices and its eventual glorification in electronic music which followed the invention of the synthesizer. This analysis is factual, but Kittler's formulation of it stresses the way in which the materiality of media removes them from the sphere of the humanities. There is no method of complete interpretation when the device records frequencies "too fast for the human eye" or sounds too low or too high to be heard by human ears. The machine records detail which is extraneous to any human purpose – whether that is outwith the auditory or visual spectrum or is "noise" which escapes human intentionality.

My analysis of what I termed "format markers" of alternate media notes that these are material aspects of technologies – and that these are often present regardless of human intentionality. For example, Stan does not intend the static and picture rolling that are present in his homemade videotapes, or the leftover content that exists between the edits these format markers denote. They are aspects intrinsic to the videotape format he utilises for his own aims. The CityEye organisation in *Red Road* do not intend the images rendered by the CCTV system to be so heavily pixilated, or to be so badly affected by bloom from street lighting. These are all intrinsic features of the technologies utilised; they are only limitations from our, human, point of view. In this respect, the analysis of film's incorporation of other media could fall within the kind of hard media-technological tradition of Kittler and the German theorists. Taking the view that films such as this are themselves performing a kind of media archaeology, the analysis of alternate media takes place not within the sphere or the humanities *per se*, but primarily through the operation of the cinema camera and its associated apparatus. And, of course, this analysis is double-edged – when we view the representation of the TV control room in *The Truman Show* we are making comparisons between the rendering of Seaview within its confines (and to its fictional audience) and the richer, more detailed and colourful view of the cinema audience.

Of course, this can only take us so far. That the products of media can be wholly divorced from all human intentionality and interpretation seems to reduce all such content to the realm of wallpaper. In films which perform this kind of incorporation there is an attempt to use the cinema to both analyse the products and practices of them, and to employ this in the service of rendering a narrative. This returns us to the realm of the human and the sense that media products are generated as part of a human epistemological project to make sense of the material world. In my introduction I stated that the apparent division between the Anglo-American and German media archaeological tradition may

have been combined in the work of Jeffrey Sconce. In his analysis of what he terms "haunted media" – the public perception of the otherworldly elements of early electronic media – he states the following:

> Although the longevity of such fantastic accounts of the media may suggest an ahistorical 'deep structure' to these tales, as if these stories were somehow the founding mythemes of the media age, I would argue that apparent continuity among these accounts is actually less important than the distinct discontinuities presented by the specific articulations of these electronic fictions in relation to individual media… Tales of paranormal media are important, then, not as timeless expressions of some undying electronic superstition, but as a permeable language in which to express a culture's changing social relationship to a historical sequence of technologies.[349]

So, while Sconce is acknowledging the "continuities" in public discourse regarding early electronic media, which may prompt a Kittler-ian reading which approaches technological determination, he seeks to identify differences which exist in the interpretation of differing historical instances of these technologies. While Kittler employs a media historical review of a class of technologies he employs it to reinforce the extent to which their products are fundamentally divorced from human efforts and understanding. The differences Sconce identifies are a result of his analysis of just such efforts at human interpretation – the poems, plays, stories and news articles which accompanied each iteration of early electronic media.

This is the first intervention the thesis makes in the critical debate surrounding media and the way they represent the material world: while I perform the groundwork necessary to effectively analyse their products and practices as, to a large extent, determined by their materiality, I also analyse the extent to which these are utilised in the service of film narrative. In doing so, cinematic analyses, and utilisation, of alternate media are employed in understanding the way media operate in rendering the material world, in ways which are meaningful in an epistemological sense.

In choosing to construct this thesis around several classes of historical media technologies I aimed to provide some background to contemporary debates regarding digital media. One of the concerns raised with digital is the free-floating, affectless aspect of imagery in what could be referred to as our "postmodern" age. The criticism of postmodernism is perhaps best exemplified in the implications raised by Jean Baudrillard regarding the Gulf War (1990-91), where he claimed that "… this not a war … [a]ny more than the direct transmission by CNN of real time information is sufficient to authenticate a

[349] Sconce, *Haunted Media*, 10.

war."[350] Baudrillard's argument that, under postmodernism, the image become a simulacrum without a referent is an inevitable consequence of the intensely hypermediated nature of contemporary existence, at least in the developed world:

> So, in postmodern culture, 'culture' has become a product in its own right; the market has become a substitute for itself and fully as much a commodity as any of the items it includes within itself: modernism was still minimally and tendentially the critique of the commodity and the effort to make it transcend itself. Postmodernism is the consumption of sheer commodification as a process.[351]

Postmodernism either agonizes over the impossibility of assigning any real-world value and reference to the image or celebrates the liberation of culture from the "grand narratives" of history.[352] Both Jameson and Baudrillard were writing from what has now been widely recognised as the late period of postmodernism and at least a decade before the wide availability of the internet.[353] However, while critical favour for postmodern theory may be on the wane, from the perspective of the visual arts it seems that many of concerns remain highly cogent. Jameson's application of postmodernism to film focuses on what he refers to as a nostalgia that operates solely based on "period concepts [which] correspond to no realities whatsoever".[354] While making a wider point that history struggles to grasp any notion of "period" which can truly apply to any notion of a collective reality of a populace or nation, he outlines the way in which a number of postmodern films leverage nostalgia as a bank of cultural images which originate from other cultural works, rather than any consensual notion of historical fact.

I have examined a number of films which explore the difficulty that exists in assigning a sense of ontological fact to images which are archival, specifically with those that have a congealed aura of historical significance – what Baron refers to as the "meta archival".[355] In *Diary of the Dead* images from disasters are mis-appropriated or mis-used out of context to represent a fictional scenario. This fictional remediation of historical content may just be seen as an expediency by Romero, but are instead incorporated thematically as part of an exploration of the difficulty we have with interpreting the material we receive from the mainstream news media in an age of "fake news". Other films

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[350] Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War did not Take Place* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 53.
[351] Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism* (London: Verso, 1991), x.
[352] As Jameson mentions prior to this passage, where he points out that Benjamin regarded the expansion of culture as "fascism, but we know its only fun". ibid, x.
[353] Alison Gibbons, "Postmodernism is Dead. What Comes Next?", *Times Literary Supplement*, June 2017. https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/postmodernism-dead-comes-next/ - accessed 23/12/2019.
[354] Jameson, op cit, 282.
[355] Baron, 62-63.

unpack and deconstruct the news gathering and production process to examine the ideological bias which ensures that we necessarily must approach such content as ontologically suspect until we can verify proper context. This is the second contribution of the thesis. I examine a number of films which dramatize the production and reception of imagery utilising a variety of image-making tools, at various periods in the last half-century or so, to illustrate the urge that exists to bridge the gap outlined by Jameson. Whether we agree with the analysis that the division between culture as a pool of commodities with either retain some sense of ontological, material reference (modernism) or float free from this connection in a liberating or threatening manner (postmodernism), there are a number of films and filmmakers who are employed in examining the reasons why we are stimulated to interrogate the origins of imagery and the technologies employed in capturing, rendering and distributing them.

Why Cinema?

I will now spend some time discussing why cinema may be the best site for this kind of inter-medial analyses and why cinema as a practice and form may prove best suited to interrogations of the methods, impacts and consequences of moving image technologies which operate outside of the theatre.

As I have pointed out, cinema has been a remarkably stable form of moving image media in the first century of its existence. For the overwhelming majority of that time it has utilised a highly standardised and stable base in 35 film (of, admittedly, various physical materials), projection apparatus and reception circumstances. While I have noted the historical fluctuations of this form in the introduction of sound, colour, and the move to widescreen ratios as a standard, cinema has exhibited an essential formal stability throughout the 20th and early 21st Centuries. A number of more radical formal shifts have proven not to be successful with audiences – including extreme widescreen formats such as Cinerama and several waves of 3D technology – indicating that the cinema audience continues to exhibit either a conservatism, or settled consensus, on the form of the cinema experience. While representing an economic challenge for distributors and exhibitors, and a lively topic for debate among cinema academics, the digital shift has been completed without much popular complaint – perhaps, even, with a measure of nonchalance. Works of cinema continue to be a major source of programming on television schedules, driving sales of cable and satellite speciality channels and packages. This has continued in the

online space with companies such as Netflix and Amazon beginning to produce their own feature films. Presentation of films online and on cable or satellite film channels have taken on more of the features of the theatrical experience, being delivered in original aspect ratios, uninterrupted by commercials, in high-definition and with digital surround sound.

Against this picture of relative stability, I would argue that non-cinematic forms of moving-image record and replay have encountered a far greater range of formal variation and cross-mutation. As products which emerged from related research and development in audio-visual technologies, devices such as the television monitor, video playback devices and consumer and professional recording equipment continued to evolve into new forms, including devices which performed hybrid functions – an aspect which has only accelerated with the digital shift. Devices such as the VCR and classical television set have become subsumed into just some of the functionality of the laptop or smart phone. A number of practices and functionalities have also shifted fluidly between devices, with – to take just one example - news content just as likely to be received on a modern telecommunications device as on a television set. Some of the disruptive formal characteristics of these devices, especially in their relationship to cinema, has encountered obsolescence – in particular, the ability for consumers to build up physical libraries of film content, with bluray and DVD seemingly bound for the same fate as VHS and Betamax. Television technology continues to evolve, with the most advanced examples currently enabling viewers to dispense with prior home entertainment and communication devices such as VCRs, cable boxes, home computers and telephones.[356] The mobile phone continues to advance in ubiquity and complexity and now operates at the extreme end of information and media convergence – with apps remediating, and making wholly obsolete, a range of previously separate image and information processing devices, such as those already noted and others, such as satellite navigation systems. Alongside change in the material devices we use to access moving images and other informational content are new strains in the content itself, with a number of new forms such as webisodes, vines, memes, etc. emerging as distinct formal categories more suited to experience on new media devices, but also conceivably just an extension of forms emerging throughout the evolution

[356] A number of television sets now have video-call functionality, utilising apps such as Skype.

of prior technologies of the image, such as sitcoms, music video, live sports broadcasts and video conferencing.

Whether or not we consider the present moment as full of increasingly rapid and bewildering change in media, or just part of a continuum of development and refinement, how can we best consider and assess these practices and products? I would argue that cinema, given its formal stability, is well-placed to continue to be a site where filmmakers of all kinds can represent and remediate the aesthetic effects, ideological bases and societal impact of non-cinematic technologies of the image. This is not to say that cinematic presentation can aspire to any notion of ahistoricity, or does not inflect representations of other media with aspects of its own materiality and practices (in fact, I have illustrated that this is always to some extent inevitable). However, cinema's relative stability of form compared with other media does qualify it as a good candidate for such activity. Given cinema's continued presence, as either a theatrical experience or as a form which is remediated in a number of increasingly cinema-like presentations in home entertainment situations, we can move past the question of cinema's death and return to the more central question of "what is cinema?", or - to make this question somewhat easier to address – "what is cinema capable of?" I would argue that, in the admittedly niche category of cinema which this study addresses, cinema which engages with the forms and practices of other media parallels the development of the "visual essay" as a critical form of media study. This increasingly popular form of academic and fan practice recognises the limitations of a purely textual form of moving image (and audio) analysis and seeks to leverage some of the tools of image production to critique works of audio-visual art in a performative manner – showing, not telling.[357] While such an approach may contain pitfalls, including the risk of subsuming or overwriting original aesthetic aspects and authorial intentions with the editorial choices of the critic, even these points of conflict have the potential to set up a fruitful dialectical relationship between the work and its analysis. This is exactly the kind of analysis I have argued takes place in films which engage with alternate moving-image media. In the current moment, when we either live in a hyper-mediated reality or – at least – feel that we do, cinema may provide one of the

[357] The online journal *[in]Transition* is dedicated to this emerging form of media criticism - http://mediacommons.org/intransition/. Its co-editor, Prof. Catherine Grant, is a major proponent and practitioner of the form, see - https://catherinegrant.org/category/video-essays/. Accessed 04/12/2018.

tools philosophers of the image can utilise to critique the formal, aesthetic and ideological aspects of the evolving total image economy.

Suggestions for Further Research and Study

To conclude, how can the kind of methodological analysis I have pursued in this work be taken forward? While I have structured this thesis to provide an overview of a number of historically-situated non-cinematic moving-image technologies, of particular importance to present-day scholarship may be the strategies the critic has to unpack the convergence of various media in digital presentations. Whilst I have acknowledged some of the inherent qualities displayed in some examples digital-era cinema, such as its co-option of notions of real-time, where these films seem to differ from my earlier examples is that they utilise and refer to a variety of technologies which are often digital extensions of previous analogue instances. Where digital cinema refers to television, surveillance and video technologies it does so in ways which operate less as an exploration of unique and new ways of rendering the world, rather it blends the products of these technologies into an overall presentation which seeks to mirror the complex media convergence we each experience in developed societies. In doing so, it may obfuscate or pass-over some importance aspects of these technologies and their utilisation in a number of contexts – in entertainment, information dissemination, propaganda or surveillance. Reading films which feature earlier pre-digital instances of these kinds of technologies, in ways which focus on their aesthetic and narrative impact, allows critical schema to be constructed which can be utilised to question the "givenness" of digital-era technologies and their products as they are incorporated in present-day cinema. This is not to say that analysis of pre-digital works which incorporate, for example, CCTV reveals the "essence" of the technology, rather that it allows us employ a comparison between these works and modern examples which exploit similar digital-era instances. In an era where imagery is abstracted into data and, as I have previously noted, the corporate or governmental manipulation of such data is increasingly called into question, films which allow us to unpack these processes present valuable opportunities to examine the ideological operation of digital technologies. Ensuring we are critically forearmed through analyses of similar examples from cinema of comparatively-less mediated times may allow us to approach cinema of the digital age with greater clarity of vision.

Filmography

Primary Film Texts

[note: DVD or bluray edition is specified where commentaries or special features are cited in the text.]

+1 [feature film] Dir. Dennis Iliadis. Process Films/Process Media, USA, 2013. 96mins.

Africa Addio [feature film] Dirs. Gualtiero Jacopetti, Francesco Prosperi. Cineriz, Italy, 1966. 140mins.

Amator [feature film] Dir. Krzysztof Kieslowski. Film Polski/Zespol Filmowy "Tor", Poland, 1979. 112mins.

Auto Focus [feature film, DVD] Dir. Paul Schrader. Focus Puller Inc./Good Machine/et al., USA, 2002. 105mins. [Columbia, CDR33845, 2003]

Be Kind Rewind [feature film, DVD] Dir. Michel Gondry. New Line Cinema/Partizan Films/et al., UK/France/USA, 2008. 102mins. [Pathe/20th Century Fox, P924001000, 2008]

Benny's Video [feature film, DVD] Dir. Michael Haneke. Bernard Lang/Langfilm/et al., Austria/Switzerland, 1992. 105mins. [Artificial Eye, ART555DVD, 2011]

Cannibal Holocaust [feature film] Dir. Ruggero Deodata. F. D. Cinematografica, Italy, 1980. 95mins.

Coherence [feature film] Dir. James Ward Byrkit. Bellanova Films/Ugly Duckling Films, USA, 2013. 89mins.

Death Watch [feature film] Dir. Bertrand Tavernier. Films A2/Gaumont International/et al., France/West Germany, 1980. 130mins.

Diary of the Dead [feature film, bluray] Dir. George A. Romero. Artfire Films/Romero-Grunwald Productions, USA, 2007. 95mins. [Optimum Home Entertainment, OPTBD1093, 2008]

Edtv [feature film] Dir. Ron Howard. Imagine Entertainment/Universal Pictures, USA, 1999. 122mins.

Family Viewing [feature film] Dir. Atom Egoyan. Canada Council for the Arts/Ego Film Arts/et al., Canada, 1987. 86mins.

Freeze Frame [feature film] Dir. John Simpson. Green Park Films/Universal Pictures, UK/Ireland, 2004. 99mins.

L'occhio Selvaggio [feature film] Dir. Paolo Cavara. Cavara/Rewind Film, Italy, 1967. 98 mins.

Mondo Cane [feature film] Dirs. Paolo Cavara, Gualtieri Jacopetti & Franco Prosperi. Cineriz, Italy, 1962. 108mins.

Open Windows [feature film] Dir. Nacho Vigalondo. Apaches Entertainment/Atresmedia Cine/et al., Spain/USA, 2014. 100mins.

Paranormal Activity [feature film] Dir. Oren Peli. Solana Films/Blumhouse Productions, USA, 2007. 86mins.

Peeping Tom [feature film] Dir. Michael Powell. Michael Powell (Theatre), UK, 1960. 101mins.

Pleasantville [feature film] Dir. Gary Ross. New Line Cinema/Larger Than Life Productions, USA, 1998. 124mins.

Red Road [feature film] Dir. Andrea Arnold. Advanced Party Scheme/BBC Films/et al., UK/Denmark, 2006. 113mins.

Ringu [feature film] Dir. Hideo Nakata. Basara Pictures/Imagica/et al., Japan, 1998. 96mins.

Sex, Lies and Videotape [feature film] Dir. Steven Soderbergh. Outlaw Productions/Virgin, USA, 1989. 100mins.

The Godfathers of Mondo [feature film] Dir. David Gregory. Blue Underground, USA, 2003. 90mins.

Triangle [feature film, Bluray] Dir. Christopher Smith. Icon Entertainment International/Framestore, et al., UK/Australia, 2009. 99mins. [Icon Home Entertainment, ICON70194, 2010]

The Truman Show [feature film] Dir. Peter Weir. Paramount Pictures/Scott Rudin Productions, USA, 1998. 103mins.

Videodrome [feature film, DVD] Dir. David Cronenberg. Filmplan International/Guardian Trust Company/et al., Canada, 1983. 87mins. [Criterion, CC248, 2004]

Secondary Film Texts

8 ½ [feature film] Dir. Federico Fellini. Cineriz/Francinex, Italy/France, 1963. 138mins.

2001 [feature film] Dir. Stanley Kubrick. MGM/Stanley Kubrick Productions, UK/USA, 1968. 149mins.

#Horror [feature film] Dir. Tara Subkoff. Lowland Pictures/AST Studios, USA, 2015. 101mins.

8mm [feature film] Dir. Joel Schumacher. Columbia Pictures Corporation/Hofflund/et al., Germany/USA, 1999. 123mins.

A Man Called Horse [feature film] Dir. Elliot Silverstein. Cinema Center Films/Sandy Howard Productions/et al., USA/Mexico, 1970. 114mins.

Alice in the Cities [feature film] Dir. Wim Wenders. Westdeucher Rundfunk/Filmverlag def Autoren, West Germany, 1974. 110mins.

Alien (1979) [feature film] Dir. Ridley Scott. Brandywine Productions/20th Century-Fox Productions, UK/USA, 1979. 116mins.

American Pie [feature film] Dir. Paul Weitz/Chris Weitz. Universal Pictures/Zide-Perry Productions/et al., USA, 1999. 95mins.

Animal House [feature film] Dir. John Landis. Universal Pictures/Oregon Film Factory/et al., USA, 1978. 109mins.

At Land [short film] Dir. Maya Deren. n.k., USA, 1946. 15mins.

Bachelor Party [feature film] Dir. Neal Israel. Bachelor Party Productions/Aspect Film Ratio/et al., USA, 1984. 105mins.

Bamboozled [feature film] Dir. Spike Lee. New Line Cinema/40 Acres & A Mule Filmworks, USA, 2000. 135mins.

The Battle of Midway [short film] Dir. John Ford. United States Navy, USA, 1942. 18mins.

Beyond Shanghai [feature film] Dir. L. C. Cook/George M. Merrick. Mapel Pictures, USA, 1935. 55mins.

The Bird with the Crystal Plumage [feature film] Dir. Dario Argento. Seda Spettacoli/Central Cinema Company Film, Italy/West Germany, 1970. 96mins.

Black Devil Doll [feature film] Dir. Chester Novell Turner. CNT Production Company, USA, 1984. 70mins.

The Blair Witch Project [feature film] Dir. Daniel Myrick & Eduardo Sanchez. Haxan Films, USA, 1999. 81mins.

Boardinghouse [feature film] Dir. John Wintergate. Blustarr, USA, 1982. 98mins.

The Book of Life [feature film] Dir. Hal Hartley. Haut et Court/La Sept-Arte/et al., France/USA, 1998. 63mins.

Bubble [feature film] Dir. Steven Soderbergh. Extension 765/HDNet Films/et al., USA, 2005. 73mins.

Caligula [feature film] Dir. Tinto Brass/Bob Guccione. Penthouse Films International/Felix Cinematografica, Italy/USA, 1979. 156mins.

Cannibal Ferox [feature film] Dir. Umberto Lenzi. Dania Film/Medusa Distribuzione/et al., Italy, 1981. 93mins.

Chakushin Ari [feature film] Dir. Takashi Miike. Kadokawa-Daiei Eiga K. K., Japan, 2003. 112mins.

Chatroom [feature film] Dir. Hideo Nakata. Ruby Films, UK, 2010. 97mins.

Christine [feature film] Dir. Antonio Campos. Borderline Films/Fresh Jade, UK/USA, 2016. 119mins.

Clerks [feature film] Dir. Kevin Smith. View Askew Productions/Miramax, USA, 1994. 92mins.

The Collingswood Story [feature film] Dir. Michael Costanza. Cinerebel Films, USA, 2002. 80mins.

Coma [feature film] Dir. Michael Crichton. MGM, USA, 1978. 113mins.

Conspiracy Theory [feature film] Dir. Richard Donner. Warner Bros./Silver Pictures/et al., USA, 1997. 135mins.

Cypher [feature film] Dir. Vincenzo Natali. Pandora Cinema/Miramax/et al., USA, 2002. 95mins.

Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse [feature film] Dir. Fritz Lang. Nero-Film AG, Germany, 1933. 122mins.

Dawn of the Dead [feature film] Dir. George A. Romero. Dawn Associates/Laurel Group, USA, 1978. 127mins.

Day of the Dead [feature film] Dir. George A. Romero. United Film Distribution Company/Laurel Entertainment Inc./et al., USA, 1985. 96mins.

Death at Broadcasting House [feature film] Dir. Reginald Denham. Phoenix Films, UK, 1934. 75mins.

The Den [feature film] Dir. Zachary Donohue. Cliffbrook Films/Onset Films, USA, 2013. 81mins.

The Devils [feature film] Dir. Ken Russell. Russo Productions, UK/USA, 1971. 111mins.

Dirty Harry [feature film] Dir. Don Siegel. Warner Bros./The Malpaso Company, USA, 1971. 102mins.

Disconnect [feature film] Dir. Henry Alex Rubin. LD Entertainment/Liddell Entertainment/et al., USA, 2012. 115mins.

Donnie Darko [feature film] Dir. Richard Kelly. Pandora Cinema/Flower Films/et al., USA, 2001. 113mins.

Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler [feature film] Dir. Fritz Lang. Uco-Film GmbH, Germany, 1922. 242mins.

Dracula [feature film] Dir. John Badham. Universal Pictures/The Mirisch Corporation, UK/USA, 1979. 109mins.

E. T. [feature film] Dir. Steven Spielberg. Universal Pictures/Amblin Entertainment, USA, 1982. 115mins.

Easy Rider [feature film] Dir. Dennis Hopper. Pando Company Inc./Raybert Productions, USA, 1969. 95mins.

Eaten Alive [feature film] Dir. Umberto Lenzi. Dania Film/Medusa Distribuzione/et al., Italy, 1980. 92mins.

Emanuelle and the Last Cannibals [feature film] Dir. Aristide Massaccesi. Fulvia Film/Gico Cinematografica S.r.l./et al., Italy, 1977. 85mins.

Emmanuelle [feature film] Dir. Just Jaeckin. Trinacra/Orphee Productions, France, 1974. 105mins.

Enemy of the State [feature film] Dir. Tony Scott. Touchstone Pictures/Jerry Bruckheimer Films/et al., USA, 1998. 132mins.

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind [feature film] Dir. Michel Gondry. Focus Features/Anonymous Content/et al., USA, 2004. 108mins.

The Exorcist [feature film] Dir. William Friedkin. Warner Bros./Hoya Productions, USA, 1973. 122mins.

Festen [feature film] Dir. Thomas Vinterberg. Nimbus Film Productions/Danmarks Radio/et al., Denmark/Sweden, 1998. 105mins.

The Fly [feature film] Dir. David Cronenberg. SLM Production Group/Brooksfilms, USA/UK/Canada, 1986. 96mins.

Gang War in Milan [feature film] Dir. Umberto Lenzi. Telemondial, Italy, 1973. 96mins.

Go [feature film] Dir. Doug Liman. Columbia Pictures Corporation/Banner Entertainment/et al., USA, 1999. 102mins.

Graveyard Shift [feature film] Dir. Ralph S. Singleton. Paramount Pictures/JVC Entertainment Networks/et al., USA/Japan, 1990. 89mins.

Halloween [feature film] Dir. John Carpenter. Compass International Pictures/Falcon International Productions, USA, 1978. 91mins.

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey [feature film] Dir. Peter Jackson. New Line Cinema/MGM/et al., USA/New Zealand, 2012. 169mins.

I Spit on Your Grave [feature film] Dir. Meir Zarchi. Cinemagic Pictures, USA, 1978. 101mins.

The Idiots [feature film] Dir. Lars von Trier. Zentropa Entertainments/Danmarks Radio/et al., Demark/Spain/et al., 1998. 117mins.

Inception [feature film] Dir. Christopher Nolan. Warner Bros./Legendary Entertainment/et al., USA/UK, 2010. 148mins.

Ingagi [feature film] Dir. William Campbell. Congo Pictures, USA, 1930. 75mins.

Inland Empire [feature film] Dir. David Lynch. StudioCanal/Fundacja Kultury/et al., France/Poland/USA, 2006. 180mins.

Invasion of the Body Snatchers [feature film] Dir. Don Siegel. Walter Wanger Productions, USA, 1956. 80mins.

JFK [feature film] Dir. Oliver Stone. Warner Bros./Canal+/et al., France/USA, 1991. 189mins.

Jungle Holocaust [feature film] Dir. Ruggero Deodato. Erre Cinematograsica S.r.l., Italy, 1977. 88mins.

Ju-on [feature film] Dir. Takashi Shimizu. Pioneer LDC/Nikkatsu/et al., Japan, 2002. 92mins.

Jurassic Park [feature film] Dir. Steven Spielberg. Universal Pictures/Amblin Entertainment, USA, 1992. 127mins.

L'Avventura [feature film] Dir. Michelangelo Antonioni. Cino del Duca/Produzioni Cinematografiche Europee/et al., Italy, 1960. 143mins.

Land of the Dead [feature film] Dir. George A. Romero. Universal Pictures/Atmosphere Entertainment/et al., USA, 2005. 93mins.

The Last House on the Left [feature film] Dir. Wes Craven. Sean S. Cunningham Films/The Night Co./et al., USA, 1972. 84mins.

Last Tango in Paris [feature film] Dir. Bernardo Bertolucci. Les Productions Artistes Associes/Produzioni Europee Associate, France/Italy, 1972. 129mins.

The Legend of Boggy Creek [feature film] Dir. Charles B. Pierce. P & L, USA, 1972. 90mins.

L'Enfer [feature film] Dir. Henri-Georges Clouzot. n.k.(unreleased), France, 1964. ?mins (unreleased).

Lizard in a Woman's Skin [feature film] Dir. Lucio Fulci. Italy/Spain/France, Italy, 1971. 104mins.

Looker [feature film] Dir. Michael Crichton. The Ladd Company/Warner Bros., USA, 1981. 93mins.

The Matrix [feature film] Dir. Lana Wachowski & Lilly Wachowski. Warner Bros./Village Roadshow Pictures/et al., USA, 1999. 136mins.

Memento [feature film] Dir. Christopher Nolan. Newmarket Capital Group/Team Todd/et al., USA, 2000. 113mins.

Meshes of the Afternoon [short film] Dir. Maya Deren & Alexander Hammid. n/a, USA, 1943. 14mins.

Milan Calibro 9 [feature film] Dir. Fernando Di Leo. Cineproduzioni Daunia 70, Italy, 1972. 100mins.

Minority Report [feature film] Dir. Steven Spielberg. Twentieth Century Fox/DreamWorks/et al., USA, 2002. 145mins.

Moon [feature film] Dir. Duncan Jones. Liberty Films/Xingu Films/et al., UK/USA, 2009. 97mins.

The Mountain of the Cannibal God [feature film] Dir. Sergio Martino. Dania Film/Medusa Distribuzione, Italy, 1978. 99mins.

Murder by Television [feature film] Dir. Clifford Sanforth. Cameo Pictures, USA, 1935. 53mins.

Nanook of the North [feature film] Dir. Robert J. Flaherty. Les Freres Revillon/Pathe Exchange, USA/France, 1922. 78mins.

Napoleon [feature film] Dir. Abel Gance. Cine France/Films Abel Gance/et al., France, 1927. 240mins.

Night of the Living Dead [feature film] Dir. George A. Romero. Image Ten/Laurel Group/et al., USA, 1968. 96mins.

The Night Porter [feature film] Dir. Liliana Cavani. Lotar Film Productions, Italy, 1974. 118mins.

The Omen [feature film] Dir. Richard Donner. Twentieth Century Fox/Harvey Bernhard Productions/et al., UK/USA, 1976. 111mins.

il Paese del Sesso Selvaggio [feature film] Dir. Umberto Lenzi. Roas Produzioni/Medusa Distribuzione, Italy, 1972. 93mins.

The Party Animal [feature film] Dir. David Beaird. Moviestore Entertainment, Canada, 1984. 78mins.

Primer [feature film] Dir. Shane Carruth. ERBP, USA, 2004. 77mins.

Psycho [feature film] Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Shamley Productions, USA, 1960. 109mins.

Quo Vadis? [feature film] Dir. Enrico Guazzoni. Societa Italiana Cines, Italy, 1913. 120mins.

Rabid [feature film] Dir. David Cronenberg. Dunning/Link/Reitman/Canadian Film Development Corporation/et al., Canada/USA, 1977. 91mins.

Ratter [feature film] Dir. Branden Kramer. Start Motion Pictures, USA, 2015. 80mins.

Rear Window [feature film] Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Alfred J. Hitchcock Productions, USA, 1954. 112mins.

Redacted [feature film] Dir. Brian de Palma. HDNet Films/The Film Farm, USA/Canada, 2007. 90mins.

Run Lola Run [feature film] Dir. Tom Tykwer. X-Filme Creative Pool/Westdeutscher Rundfunk/et al., Germany, 1998. 81mins.

Runaway [feature film] Dir. Michael Crichton. TriStar Pictures/Delphi III Productions, USA, 1984. 99mins.

Salo [feature film] Dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini. Produzioni Europee Associate/Les Productions Artistes Associes, Italy/France, 1975. 117mins.

Salon Kitty [feature film] Dir. Tinto Brass. Coralta Cinematografica/Cinema Seven Film/et al., Italy/France/West Germany, 1976. 129mins.

San Pietro [short film] Dir. John Huston. U. S. Army Pictorial Services, USA, 1945. 32mins.

Screwballs [feature film] Dir. Rafal Zielinski. Canadian Film Development Corporation/Famous Players Limited/et al., Canada/USA, 1983. 80mins.

The Seventh Seal [feature film] Dir. Ingmar Bergman. Svensk Filmindustri, Sweden, 1957. 96mins.

Shutter Island [feature film] Dir. Martin Scorsese. Paramount Pictures/Phoenix Pictures/et al., USA, 2010. 138mins.

The Sixth Sense [feature film] Dir. M. Night Shyamalan. Hollywood Pictures/Spyglass Entertainment/et al., USA, 1999. 107mins.

Sledgehammer [feature film] Dir. David A. Prior. n.k., USA, 1983. 87mins.

The Social Network [feature film] Dir. David Fincher. Columbia Pictures Corporation/Relativity Media/et al., USA, 2010. 120mins.

Source Code [feature film] Dir. Duncan Jones. Summit Entertainment/Vendome Pictures/et al., USA/Canada, 2011. 93mins.

Steve Jobs [feature film] Dir. Danny Boyle. Universal Pictures/Legendary Pictures/et al., UK/USA, 2015. 122mins.

Straw Dogs [feature film] Dir. Sam Peckinpah. ABC Pictures/Talent Associates/et al., UK/USA, 1971. 113mins.

Survival of the Dead [feature film] Dir. George A. Romero. Blank of the Dead Productions/Devonshire Productions/et al., USA/Canada, 2009. 90mins.

Tape [feature film] Dir. Richard Linklater. Detour Filmproduction/IFC Productions/et al., USA, 2001. 86mins.

Terminator 2 [feature film] Dir. James Cameron. Carolco Pictures/Pacific Western/et al., USA/France, 1991. 137mins.

The Texas Chain Saw Massacre [feature film] Dir. Tobe Hopper. Vortex, USA, 1974. 83mins.

Timecode [feature film] Dir. Mike Figgis. Screen Gems/Red Mullet Productions, USA, 2000. 97mins.

The Toxic Avenger [feature film] Dir. Michael Herz & Lloyd Kaufman. Troma Entertainment, USA, 1984. 82mins.

Unfriended [feature film] Dir. Levan Gabriadze. Bazelevs Production/Blumhouse Productions, USA, 2014. 83mins.

Vlog [feature film] Dir. Joshua Butler. Twisted Pictures/Iceblink Films, USA, 2008. 71mins.

Weird Science [feature film] Dir. John Hughes. Universal Pictures, USA, 1985. 94mins.

Westworld [feature film] Dir. Michael Crichton. MGM, USA, 1973. 88mins.

White Cannibal Queen [feature film] Dir. Jesus Franco & Francesco Prosperi. Eurocine/Eurofilms, Spain/Italy/France, 1980. 90mins.

Television

The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet [television series] Dir. Ozzie Nelson. Stage Five Productions, USA, 03/10/1952-26/03/1966. 30mins.

America's Funniest Home Videos [television series] Dir. Steve Hirsen/et al.. Vin Di Bona Productions, USA, 26/11/1989-. 30mins.

American Idol [television series] Cr. Simon Fuller. Fremantle/et al., USA, 11/06/2002-. 42mins.

The Andy Griffith Show [television series] Dir. Sheldon Leonard. CBS, 03/10/1960-01/04/1968. 30mins.

Britain's Got Talent [television series] Cr. Simon Cowell. Fremantle Media/et al., UK, 09/06/2007-. Var.

Candid Camera [television series] Pres. Allan Funt. N.k., USA, 29/05/1949-14/08/1950. 30mins.

Dallas [television series] Cr. David Jacobs. Lorimar Productions/et al., USA, 05/09/1978-03/05/1991. 60mins.

Five Came Back [television series] Dir. Laurent Bouzereau. Amblin Television/et al., USA, 31/03/2017, Netflix. 3x60mins.

Happy Days [television series] Cr. Garry Marshall. Henderson Productions/et al., USA, 15/01/1974-24/09/1984. 30mins.

Hogan's Heroes [television series] Cr. Bernard Fein/Albert S. Ruddy. Bing Crosby Productions/et al., USA, 17/09/1965-04/04/1971. 25mins.

I Love Lucy [television series] Dir. Ralph Levy/et al. Desilu Productions, USA, 15/10/1951-06/05/1957. 30mins.

Mission Impossible [television series] Cr. Bruce Geller. Desilu Productions/et al., USA, 17/09/1966-30/03/1973. 50mins.

Monty Python's Flying Circus [television series] Dir. Ian MacNaughton/et al. BBC/Python (Monty) Pictures, UK, 05/10/1969-05/12/1974. 30mins.

The Real World [television series] Cr. Jonathan Murray/Mary-Ellis Bunim. BMP, USA, 21/05/1992-04/01/2017. 30mins.

USA Up All Night [television series] Dir. Dale Oprandy/et al. n.k., USA, 07/01/1989-31/07/1997. Var.

The X Factor [television series] Cr. Simon Cowell. Fremantle Media/et al., UK, 04/09/2004-, 60mins.

You've Been Framed [television series] Dir. Robert Khodadad/et al. Action Time/et al., UK, 14/04/1990-, 30mins.

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